



**The Parish Church of
St John the Baptist
Egglecliffe**

**ANNUAL REPORT
2017**

**Incumbent
The Rev. Sylvia Wilson**

Jesus said, 'I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full'
(John 10:10)

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LEADERSHIP

PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL (from Annual Parochial Church Meeting 2016)

Ex-officio :

Revd. Sylvia Wilson (Priest in Charge)
Brian Robinson (Church warden)
David Wright (Churchwarden)
Dawn Robinson (Vice Chair and Deanery Synod)
Frances Wood (Secretary and Diocesan Synod)

Elected members :

Sharon Morley
Jane Weaver
Tom Daly
Steve Johnson
Steve Ashman
Andie Johnson
Dominic Johnson
Jayne Craig

Retiring in 2017 but eligible for re-election at the APCM:

David Craig
Tom Daley
Jane Weaver
Steve Johnson

There is also space for other volunteers.

It is also the end of the Deanery triennium. We are eligible for 3 representatives on Deanery Synod, to be elected at the APCM.

Fran Wood, PCC Secretary

Report from the chair

It is amazing how time flies! I can't believe that a year has gone by since our last annual report and meeting; so much has taken place. I must once again, very sadly begin by acknowledging our considerable loss in the death of one of our long-term members; Christine Purvis. Chris was a beautiful and gentle person who was very much loved at St John's. She unwaveringly shared her splendid gift of music with us here for many years and we feel the loss of her as a friend and musician as keenly as we did when she left us last July. If you have not already done so please look at the beautiful new piano that, with her family's blessing we have bought in memory of Chris and her son William. This was purchased with some of the gift that Chris very generously left to us at St John's. Everyone who has played it thus far has commented on what a wonderful instrument it is and I know it will be used to enhance our worship experience.

I hope as you read this report you will be able to celebrate with us everything that God has been doing in our parish this year. It has been lovely to welcome new members to our church through our various ministries; especially PIPs and through our marriage and baptism preparation events.

We have enjoyed some lovely events, the highlight for me being the Queen's birthday celebrations with the stunning flower festival. We are blessed to have people who can create such amazing events and indeed make the everyday running of our church happen

Our Partnership for Missional Church journey continues this year with the theme of hospitality which suits St John's very well, bearing in mind the gifts and skills we have here. PMC does not require us to do more things but perhaps continue to develop what we already have with the addition of 'one off community events'. We certainly enjoyed a lovely community event in singing carols at Sunningdale shops last Christmas. If you are not involved in church activities already, what might God be calling you to do? Please feel free to talk to me about anything you might like to be involved in. Hospitality also involves how we show the love of God both to new people and those we have known a long time. It involves honouring God by demonstrating a Christ-like attitude to all and putting the needs of others before our own. I am very grateful to be part of a church that has many people who daily show such love to others.

And so to the year ahead; At our April PCC meeting we read from John's Gospel, chapter 10 verse 10 in which Jesus says he has come that we may have life to the full. May I invite you to join me in praying for us in the year ahead, that in all we do together; the worship, serving, cooking, making coffee and baking, the studying of scripture and growing in discipleship (the list goes on) that we will grow together and experience the 'life to the full' that comes only through growing closer to the life giver.

Sylvia Wilson

Church Wardens

The last year has been another good year at St John's we have been able to keep on top of all maintenance issues as per the schedule within the last quinquennial inspection report. So, we are pleased the fabric of the Church is in good condition. However, we must make you aware that over the next 2 years we will have some expenditure to complete the recommendations made within the report, this work includes; external pointing at the top of the tower, pointing of roof ridge tiles, decoration of the ceiling within tower, removal of plaster re plastering, and decoration of the wall in front of the pulpit, also a small area near the priest door which requires a small amount of decoration.

We will also be looking at repairing the wall at the entrance from Butt's Lane near to the bin storage area. The next quinquennial inspection is due in the second quarter of 2019.

David and myself would like to thank the gardening gang for all the work they do to keep the church yard looking so tidy, also thanks to everyone who helps and supports the work done within the church from the children's work, tea and coffee, flowers cleaning choir and anyone we have missed.

A special thanks goes to Sylvia, Terry and John for all the hard work they do and support they give us as church wardens, we also thank Dee and Dawn for the support they have given us throughout the last year. Thank you

Brian Robinson and David Wright, Churchwardens

Administration

I have thoroughly enjoyed being the Parish Administrator for the past two and a half years; it seems absolutely no time at all since I was first appointed and finding my feet! The main role as was to liaise with couples wishing to be married at St John's. I was responsible for organising the 'practical' aspects of weddings, such as booking bells, choir and organ, and ensuring that banns were read out. I preferred to meet couples early in their planning, to go over forms and fees and to try and answer any general questions. I also assist with the administration of interments and funerals, and would liaise with the funeral directors. I was the first point of contact for a variety of enquiries, and hence there was never a dull day! I print the weekly notice sheet, and am responsible for various other administrative tasks such as photocopying, ordering stationery and church supplies, submitting information to the Parish Magazine and providing quarterly wedding returns to the Stockton registrar. I will be extremely sorry to hand over the reins next month. The administrator's role has been a wonderful job and I will genuinely miss carrying it out (although I plan to still be around and about St John's on a frequent basis!). Please may I take this opportunity to also say thank you to Sylvia for all her help during my time as administrator - she has always been very supportive towards me and I am truly appreciative of her help while I was 'learning the ropes'!

Emma Kensey

PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL (PCC)

The PCC has met on 8 occasions since last April and dealt with all the usual legal and financial matters before us. In September 2016 members of the PCC met with the PMC

team to work on discerning new priorities and how we can aim towards them. In February, there was an extraordinary meeting of the PCC to discuss our response to the plan of Eggescliffe CE Primary School to move towards Academy Status.

The PCC is responsible for, and engaged with, all the many and various activities of our Church life; worshipping God and working in the service of Christ is never dull.

Fran Wood, PCC Secretary

PARTNERSHIP FOR MISSIONAL CHURCH (PMC)

As we reflect on our PMC journey so far we can be grateful that a huge amount of work has been done by a very dedicated team assisted by many members of St Johns. We have looked at our history as a worshipping community, we have done lots of asking questions of people in church and in the community. Then armed with that information, at a PMC/PCC away day in September we discerned that we are especially called to serve those who are lonely and those who are new in our parish.

This year at the cluster meetings we are focussing on the hospitality of God and what that means for us at St John's with particular reference to the lonely and new; not necessarily about adding more activities but reflecting on the things we do already and how we can develop those further. It's also about how we as individuals share the love of Jesus Christ in our daily lives.

Andie Johnson

Electoral roll

The number of those on the Church Electoral Roll this year is 133. Five names were removed and seven added. This entitles us to three Deanery Synod representatives.

Fran Wood

Deanery Synod Report

There are thirteen parishes in Stockton deanery. Synod representatives meet bi-monthly. Currently the area dean is Revd Paul Neville from Holy Trinity and St Mark's. Lucy Falcus from All Saints, Preston is lay chair, Revd Bill Braviner is treasurer, and the secretary is Elizabeth Stout from St. Peter's.

The main themes of the year have been:

- Planning and executing mission events with bishops; the prayer walk in May 2016; "Talking Jesus" in March 2017, with subsequent reviews and reflections.
- Deanery planning - working out our priorities and how to deploy our allocation of incumbency posts (11.5) to meet pastoral need and the aims of the deanery for growth. The financial difficulties in the diocese mean that our allocation of incumbents will decrease to 10 in 2020.
- Financial matters, - helping with parish share. As a deanery we have not managed to meet our pledged share in 2016.
- Mutual parish support especially with events and projects which cross parish boundaries.
- Pastoral matters: Clergy movements and a discussion as to whether Sedgefield should join Stockton Deanery.
- Four parishes taking part in PMC.
- The establishment of "Theology for Everyone".

We face some difficult decisions in the coming year but there are some wonderful stories of grace and loving service in our deanery as we serve Christ together.

Fran Wood

SAFEGUARDING

St John's takes this issue very seriously and it is now an item on every agenda of the PCC. We are pleased to report that there have been no issues this year. By the nature of this issue it is always a pleasure to have very little to report other than continuing vigilance.

*Suzanne Fletcher & Brian Robinson
(Safeguarding Contacts at St John's for Children and Vulnerable Adults)*

PASTORAL CARE

Once again the people of St John's continue to look after those within our church family who need particular care. Pastoral care is the privilege and responsibility of everyone in the church family and one of the strengths of St John's. We do have a dedicated Pastoral care team who are very happy to offer support where necessary. We do often rely on being kept informed of where there are particular needs so that we can help if we are required.

Sylvia

WORSHIP

Choir

Since the last report (2016) we have lost our much loved and respected leader, Christine Purvis, who died in July last year. Not only was Christine the leader of the choir but was also the regular organist for the ten o'clock service. In the absence of Christine, I have been approached to produce a report for the Annual Meeting. Needless to say, the loss of Christine has, in many respects left us not only leaderless but without a regular organist. It had also left us without regular choir practices on a Wednesday evening. Alan Barber and Brian Trenholme stepped into the breach for special services. We have also had Andrew Wilson and Isaac Conroy who give us some of their time for the Sunday services. Additionally we have Kathy Beaumont and although she doesn't play the organ has a lovely touch on the piano. We are very grateful to all those people for their assistance but we certainly miss the regular input from Christine.

Despite the fact that we are regularly appealing for new members from the congregation, none, other than John Mankin, have come forward. Since Brenda Bell, Heather Wills and Alan Lewis have left the choir we are down to the long-term members, Diane Carr, Tom Montgomery, Sharon Morley, Jim and Ann Cooper. Because we are so few in number (6 including John Mankin), Alan Barber proposed that we sit together in the choir stalls and sing in unison, to provide more volume. This certainly seems to have had the desired effect. The invitations to sing at weddings has diminished and I am not sure whether this is a cost thing for couples. It does cost quite a lot of money to have a church wedding and I suppose couples will be looking to save some money by not having the choir.

We had a meeting with Sylvia, our Priest in Charge, to discuss the future of the choir and we expressed the opinion that we would want the choir to continue as an organised body within the church. Sylvia was happy to support this decision and we look forward to being part of the church services.

Jim Cooper

Worship Band

'Sing and make music from your heart to the Lord.' Ephesians 5:19.

2016-17 has been a good year for us. We have played more than 60 different songs both old and new. In addition, we have expanded somewhat as we have been delighted to add Andie on bass and lately Stacey on Cajon or box drum. We have been very grateful to Lucy on piano and Andrea and Rebecca singing again as they did last year. We would be lost without all these valued musicians.

As well as all age services all or part of the band have played at cafe church, "A Way Out", the friendship lunch and the mothers' union.

We continue to be on the lookout for new songs, instruments and players so if anyone would like to join us they would be welcome to come to one of our practices. Just have a word with Sylvia or me anytime.

Rob Wilson

DISCIPLESHIP

Life Group

A small group of people have continued to meet on Friday for bible study, prayer and support. They have followed the York Course material and have enjoyed the time they have spent together. There is the possibility of beginning a new group for anyone interested. Please speak to Sylvia if this is something you would like to consider

Sylvia Wilson

Prayer Spaces

In the week leading to Pentecost 2016 we joined with many churches throughout the world in hosting the Archbishop of Canterbury's initiative 'Thy Kingdom Come' prayer spaces. The church was open to anyone who wanted to visit the six prayer spaces based on the Lord's prayer. This year we will once again join the 'global wave of prayer' between 25th May -4th June. The vision is that together we will;

- be transformed through prayer
- be given new confidence and encouragement by the Holy Spirit
- be effective witnesses to Jesus Christ¹

Please look out for more information and come along when you can to pray for our own church and parish as well as the church throughout the world.

Sylvia Wilson

¹ www.thykingdomcome.global

CHILDREN AND YOUTH

'Start children off on the way they should go, and even when they are old they will not turn from it.' Proverbs 22:6

Sparks at St John's

Sparks is the group name for the children who come to the 10am service on Sunday. They leave after the first hymn to go to the parish hall. The ages range from one to ten years old. The under-fives are always accompanied by a parent/carer to supervise crossing the road and helping with the activities in the hall. The morning session begins with moving and dancing to several songs praising God. Musical shakers are a must – of course! They then listen to a bible story from Scripture Union books 'Splash and Bubbles' studying various themes, e.g. 'The Wonders of God' and 'Rescue'. The activities from the story include; prayers, games and craft activities. This is a great social time for parents and children to get to know each other. The session lasts about 40 minutes and there are five leaders each on a weekly rota. The group return to church in time for Holy Communion. Near the end of the service those who want to, give a short presentation about the story they have heard from the scriptures. Although the group is small it is held in a happy atmosphere and the children enjoy the social contact within their group and members of the church.

Lucy Shepherd

PIPs (Prayer, Inspiration, Play & Song)

Pips continues to be increasingly popular this year as we see our numbers growing (16 children and 19 adults in March 2017). It is a lovely place to welcome families who are new to the area. Parents meet and form friendships as their children have fun learning about Jesus. We meet at 2pm on Tuesday except for the last Tuesday of the month when we meet at 9am. We welcome the nursery children from School at 9am. We begin with action songs then every child has an opportunity to say what they would like to pray for, we hear a story then our time finishes with play time and lovely cakes and coffee. In September 2016 we began to read through the whole bible, using the children's story bible, so the children are hearing the whole story from Genesis to Revelation in a fun way that they understand. We have seen several baptisms and baptism enquiries through our PIPs ministry. Yet again we have a great team; you know who you are – Thank you!

Sylvia Wilson

HILLTOP YOUTH

My goal when I meet with our young people is for them to feel like they have a safe space to be themselves, explore, learn, and grow closer to God. We have met and gathered together through three different events:

Life Group:

On three Tuesdays in the month I meet at the Johnson's house for Life Group. Life group is a night where our young people can come hang out and learn more about God through discussing and reading the Bible. Since starting Life Group in September we have anywhere

from two to three young people show up. I have been able to see the impact life group has had on the young people in our church. They have been able to have a space where they can ask questions about God and learn together what it looks like to be a follower of Christ.

Cafe Church:

Once a month on a Tuesday instead of gathering for Life Group with the youth we attend Cafe Church. Cafe Church is a night where young people from the area gather to hang out at Costa, listen to musicians and here a message about God. I have seen how our young people have grown to love Cafe Church and learning about God in a new setting.

Sunday:

On Sundays with the young people, once a month I take them down to Costa where we just spend time catching up with one another. The weeks when we do not go down to Costa we gather in the Parish Hall and spend time reading and discussing the Bible and doing other activities to help them learn more about God, prayer and worship.

Stacey Perron

PUPPET MINISTRY

It is well recognized that whatever message you are trying to give the use of puppets is a very effective way of doing that. We have had a good year of singing songs and doing puppet skits. It is always lots of fun, either to watch or be part of the team. We have added to our team this year and are grateful for their commitment and enthusiasm. Whatever your age you are welcome on this team. Come and join the fun.

Sylvia Wilson

MESSY CHURCH

Our new format of Messy church (held 4 times a year) is proving ever popular with young families. The team is brilliant and very well organised. We begin with fun worship songs followed, usually by four or five craft activities (there is always cake involved in one corner). We have a play section which has toddler toys and a very popular Lego table. We gather back when all the activities are done, say prayers and finish with a worship song, then as if by magic the toys are cleared from the side aisle and a lovely finger buffet appears. It is lovely to see the pews full of people enjoying their delicious tea together. Thank you to all who make this event happen, your hard work is appreciated very much.

Sylvia Wilson

OOPS!

Well.... Somehow we managed to keep going in 2016 and are still here at the start of 2017.

Numbers remained fairly steady during 2016. At the end of 2016, we had about 18 families on the register; of these, roughly half are grandparents and we have a few families with more than one child. We usually have between 7 and 10 families at a session; our lowest attendance was 2 families and our highest, 12 (excluding the Christmas party where I lost count!). During the year two of our families sadly moved away and of course a couple of the

children moved on to Nursery. Highlights during 2016 – well, our aim is to make every week a fun week. We love having parties to celebrate the children’s – and occasionally an adult’s birthday. In the small hall, we put out a variety of sitting down activities – the children love the craft activities that we do to celebrate particular times of the year such as Mother’s Day and Easter and this year we spent several weeks making sunflowers for the St. John’s flower festival. They also love to paint and we have plenty of other things as well, such as playdough, jigsaws, books, building blocks, colouring and chalk boards.

During the year, with agreement from the members, I started to set up a Facebook page for the group to see if I could drum up a bit of support and publicise it a bit more. Unfortunately this has ground to a bit of a halt but I am intending to get it up and running as soon as I can.

My main worry during the year was a shortage of helpers and this has meant that we no longer run during the half terms and holidays. The helpers who are still with us have been brilliant – I am not going to mention particular names – they know who they are – even my husband stepped in to help set out when I was struggling. Some of the Mums and Grandma’s are also helping out a lot more when we need them. A couple of new people have recently come on to the rota so I am slightly more optimistic for 2017 but not complacent. We are always looking for people to help us so that the group does not become a burden to the wonderful helpers that we do have.

On that note, I am going to end my report by saying a massive ‘thank you’ to my small team of enthusiastic helpers. They keep this group going week on week; setting out and tidying away, making tea and helping with the crafts; keeping an eye on the children and talking to the adults. I also want to thank the Mums and Grandmas who come along each week to play and chat. I know that the people who come along really appreciate and enjoy what we do.

Marian Marshall

YOUTH FOR CHRIST

Youth for Christ is an international organisation, which encourages and supports young people in sharing their faith and serving God. Mike Taylor is the director of YFC in Stockton. Mike is gifted at bringing young Americans to serve in the Tees Valley. We have been blessed this year to have Stacey Perron working with us in Egglecliffe. Stacey is from California and has done an excellent job building on the work started by Alexa and Delaney in the previous two years as well as starting new programmes for our church young people. We are very excited to see our young people growing in faith under Stacey’s guidance, and are grateful too to the other YFC interns who regularly help at Lighthouse and Lifegroup. (more of those later in the report). We owe a debt of gratitude too to Janette Boulton who has made Stacey very welcome in her home for the year. Without this provision we would not have been able to have Stacey with us.

Sylvia Wilson

SCHOOL'S WORK

Eucharist Preparation

Towards the end of the academic year I visit year five at Eggescliffe CE Primary school to teach them about the Eucharist and what it means for us today. We use teaching material provided by the diocese and over three weeks we look at; belonging, prayer, remembering and the fact that everyone is invited. We seek permission from the parents and they along with their children are invited to church. The children can either receive communion, kneel for a blessing or simply sit in the pews and experience the service from there.

Sylvia wilson

Encounter

Yet again one of the highlights of the year has been to welcome children from Eggescliffe CE Primary school to 'Encounter'. We continue to begin with lively worship and a story based on the theme being used in school that term; this year we have 'Being thankful' and you can see our 'Thank you' tree under the tower, this term we are looking at persevering and you can see the stars on the notice board in church and read the amazing hopes and dreams of the children at our school. Our 'zone' time continues; praise, worry, prayer, blessing and learning zones. The children are able to 'encounter' God for themselves as they visit each area and it is wonderful to see their growth in faith. They engage really well, especially in the prayer and worry zones where they write or draw what is on their mind at the time. The praise zone is always full of joyful noise, sometimes with the use of instruments from school. They finish by enjoying juice and a biscuit together. As part of the 'Talking Jesus' event in March Bishop Toby joined with year 3/4. He was delighted at how comfortable they were in church and the way the engaged with the whole event.

Sylvia Wilson

Prayer Spaces for School

On three occasions this year we have hosted the children of Eggescliffe CE Primary School in their prayer space events. We provided prayer spaces at Pentecost, Advent and Lent. When the children come to 'Encounter' they enjoy lively worship and activities, for the prayer spaces they come in their classes for half an hour and they have taken the opportunity to be quiet and reflective as they visited our 5 or 6 prayer stations. It is a lot of preparation and hard work to prepare the creative spaces and to host these events, but to see the children at prayer and their profound responses to world events is humbling indeed. If you would like to be part of the team please speak to Sylvia.

Sylvia Wilson

Assemblies

Once again it has been my privilege to be involved in assemblies at Eggescliffe CE Primary school, Durham Lane Primary, Eggescliffe Comprehensive school and Teesside High School. I visit the comp. about twice a half term and talk to the y7-9 young people to give a Christian perspective on a current topic. Teesside high have invited me to Christmas assemblies and various others throughout the year where they provide the topic. Sometimes I speak to the senior school but most often at the prep school. I have again been invited along with Kathryn Belmont – youth pastor of All Saints’ Preston on Tees to speak at the Christmas whole school assemblies for the last three years at Eggescliffe Comp. Eggescliffe CE & Durham Lane have invited me to lead assemblies at Harvest, Christmas and Easter. It is good to be building fruitful relationships with the schools in our parish.

Sylvia Wilson

Lighthouse

Lighthouse is the weekly kids club I run with a few of the other Youth for Christ workers. Every Friday we gather with the years 5 & 6 in the Parish Hall. Anywhere from 13 to 19 people can come to Lighthouse. The first half hour the kids spend time hanging out, playing football, video games and doing crafts. The next half hour we gather together to listen to a story or lesson about God and play a group game. Then the last half hour the kids are allowed to buy sweets from the tuck shop and play more games. Since October, I have been able to see how much the young people love coming to Lighthouse. Lighthouse is a place where they can come to have fun and engage with God in new ways.

Stacey Perron

Eggescliffe CE Primary School

On four days a week I go into Eggescliffe CE Primary School to help out within different classrooms. I help in the Year 1, 2, 4 and 5 classrooms. The different things I do are to help students with lessons, lead guided readings and assist the teachers in any way I can. Also, very recently I have started leading the Years 3 and 4 in a lunch time worship club. I go into the school and lead about 12 students in worship songs.

Stacey Perron

The Hub

We are pleased to be able to support The Hub which is the fastest growing lunch time club at Eggescliffe Comprehensive school. It is run primarily by youth leaders from All Saints’ Preston on Tees and Tees Valley Community Church. Stacey attends every Tuesday and I attend when I can. From very small beginnings The Hub now regularly has 29 young people attending. In the half an hour or so available they have games and snacks and hear a Christian message by one of the team. Mr White the head teacher visited The Hub and asked why they liked it so much. Some people responded that as they can’t go to church on Sunday it was their opportunity to meet with and learn about God.

Sylvia Wilson

HOSPITALITY

'Do not forget to show hospitality to strangers, for by doing so some people have shown hospitality to angels without knowing it.' Hebrews 13:2

Coffee at St John's

We are very pleased to continue welcoming people to our coffee morning. We have regular guests as well as some people who call in as they pass by. We make the church look as welcoming as we can with lovely tablecloths, flowers and background music. It is so good that people get to have coffee and a chat and the team are very talented at welcoming and serving. As part of our Partnership for Missional church initiative the coffee morning is an excellent way to show hospitality. Is there anyone you know who would love to meet new people or get out for an hour? Bring them along the welcome is always lovely. We have used this weekly event to have occasional special events, this year we supported Fairtrade fortnight with a Big Brew coffee morning on 8th February. We have one or two new

members of the team but if you can make coffee and provide a welcoming smile and conversation we would love to welcome you to the team.

Sylvia Wilson

Friendship Lunch

We are very happy to report that our friendship lunch is still very popular with a good core of people attending. We offer a simple two course lunch, usually soup and desert. We follow that with tea and coffee and some entertainment. We have had singers, a musical quiz, a slide show and various general quizzes. We have served up to twenty five guests and it is lovely to see people enjoying the company of people they know and new friends. A small and very dedicated team delivers this ministry but it is really hard work but also lots of fun. Why not join us for lunch to see what it's like and even better bring someone with you who maybe doesn't get out so much. The food provided by our cooks is beautifully presented and excellent quality. We had a very special lunch to celebrate the Queen's 90th birthday and our Christmas special buffet was a highlight and enjoyed by everyone who was there, it was enhanced by the children from Eggescliffe CE Primary school entertaining us with their Christmas songs.

Jayne Craig

Marriage Preparation

On a Tuesday night in March Rob & I hosted our second annual Marriage Preparation Course. Couples are often stressed and short of time in the run up to the big day. It is our aim to provide for them a lovely evening that is time out just for them. We dress the tables in church with lovely white cloths, flowers, chocolate, table confetti and a glass of prosecco. Generally people are very pleasantly surprised by the atmosphere we create with lovely music in the background. We give our couples an opportunity to reflect on why they have chosen this person to marry, we play a game of 'Mr & Mrs' and we take the 'five love

languages' quiz. We go through the opening words of the marriage service and the vows and how important it is a step they are taking. The evening finishes by all gathering around the altar table with tea lights to pray for the couples. The feedback we have is extremely positive and it is lovely that some people continue to visit our church and one couple have become members here. We intend to host our second annual 'Celebration of Marriage' service on the first Sunday in September.

Sylvia Wilson

Baptism Preparation

Twice a year Dee, Pat and myself host the baptism preparation evening. Parents, Godparents and sometimes children join us in church. Over coffee and biscuits, I share the story of my faith journey and how important a relationship with Jesus Christ is. We talk about the significance of baptism and why it is important to us as disciples of Christ. We attend to the administration involved and finish the evening by asking parents to write a prayer for their children. We gather around the altar table with tea lights to pray for their little ones. This is a wonderful way to show hospitality and we now have several families who attend regularly because of this ministry.

Sylvia Wilson

Events team

The Events Team plan and organise many of the social and fundraising events connected with St John's. We meet as required, to discuss ideas, which have been suggested by members of the team and members of the congregation. We then follow through on these suggestions where possible.

The Christmas Fair in November is well established as an annual event. Last year other events included a Concert by Alan Barber in aid of UNICEF in April, a Flower Demonstration evening in May, a celebration Flower Festival weekend to mark the Queen's 90th birthday in June and a Pudding and Wine party in December.

Future events already planned and booked include a Spring Sunday event in early April, a Hats and Jewellery evening in late April, an Organ Recital by Alan Barber in early May and a concert in memory of Christine Purvis in early July. We also hope to arrange an event on 4th July to raise money for a Youth for Christ worker.

Rosemary Douglas

Church Flowers

At three major celebrations in the church year, Christmas, Easter and Harvest Festival the church is decorated with flowers. Each presents a different challenge to reflect the significance of the time of the year, both in the religious and the floral seasons.

For Easter we try for spring flowers to represent new start to the year, lilies for the passion and Easter eggs for rebirth. At Harvest festival, in October, the flowers try to reflect the colours of autumn and the arrangements often include fruit and other produce to give thanks for the harvest. Then at Christmas, Jesus' birth, the flowers are bright and strong, red being the predominate colour with silver or gold and candles for celebration. Four weeks prior the Advent Wreath is decorated with Candles and greenery.

We still have a dedicated team at St Johns who prepare arrangements for the five windows in the nave, the east window, the screen, the pillar and also porch. The font and the wreath around the Pascal candle are also linked into the overall theme.

In addition to the main festivals, flowers are also arranged for the Patronal festival, palms for Palm Sunday and poppies for Remembrance Day and in 2016 there was a special Flower Festival to commemorate the Queens 90th birthday. This was a two day event and extremely well attended.

Flowers are bought locally either at local florists or floral wholesalers. However the price of flower continues to increase therefore we now use supermarkets as required..

Outside of the festivals, Altar flowers are provided by individuals on a rota basis as is the Memorial vase next to the pillar.

Margaret Farr

Fairtrade

Our Fairtrade Parish's involvement in Fairtrade is an expression of how we follow our faith, as we make intentional choices about how we make our purchases.

I represent the Parish on the Stockton Borough Fairtrade Partnership and the Diocesan working group, and delighted that the Partnership was given an award by the Mayor for its work.

As well as refreshments provided after the 10am service, and coffee morning, we use Fairtrade communion wine, toilet rolls and hand wash.

There are catalogues in Church that can be borrowed with order forms. The Church gets 10% of craft orders, and 5% of food orders, but importantly it is helping a producer work their way out of poverty, make a living with a fair wage, and is a benefit to their community. A stall can be provided at any event in wanted.

In Fairtrade Fortnight his year the Church took part in the "Big Brew" and we did "Take a Break" for Fairtrade at the Friendship Lunch. Also some people had an event at their home.

Suzanne Fletcher

Mother's Union

We have had another good year with some interesting speakers at our monthly meetings, we enrolled another Member but we lost our Member Mrs Christine Purvis so we still have 26 Members. Once more we held our Christmas Lunch at the Parkmore Hotel which was enjoyed by everyone who attended & we had a nice surprise at the end with Mr. Rob Wilson (Rev Sylvia's Husband) entertained us with a melody of Christmas Music while we had our coffee & mince pies. Our Annual outing was to Auckland Castle with good weather & a pleasant day. We had our Strawberry Tea with our guests from Yarm Methodist Church, Yarm Parish Church M. U.& Yarm Widows Group & our Coffee morning held in the Parish Hall all successful. We have been busy as usual with knitting for the Special care Baby Unit &

knitting Teddies for the Children's ward which were much appreciated by all the staff. We would welcome anyone who would like to come to our meetings just to see if it suites them they are held the last Tuesday in the month at 1.45pm.

Pat Wilbert (Branch Leader)

COMMUNICATIONS

Website/A church near you/Social media

St John's website continues to be a source of information for those searching the Internet for a church. It is not always easy to keep it right up to date but I endeavour to update it frequently. It is my hope and intention to make weekly entries. If you have IT skills and are interested in helping with this please let me know. We also have our closed Facebook page,

which is very successful at keeping people up to date with events and activities at church. This is becoming popular with many people and keeps us in touch with families and others who are occasional attenders. You can join by searching for St John's Eggescliffe on FB. We also have a twitter account @SJEggescliffe but this is less frequently used than the Facebook page. I regularly update the Church of England site 'A Church Near You' with information about activities at St John's. This is popular with people moving into a new area who want to find a church.

Sylvia Wilson

The Eggescliffe Eye

Last year we said we were running a very small ship, but it's now even smaller, Joyce having stood down – we thank her for her contribution, but it now leaves David as the only person who can prepare the copy for the printers. Linda is able to assist, particularly with typing and helpful suggestions, and Jim does the final proof-reading.

However, we are managing to produce 10 issues a year, albeit we have had to jiggle some publication dates to accommodate holidays etc. We hope that the Eye will continue to be an interesting read – but this depends on the input we receive from the congregation, and also – a plea; can contributors send their contributions in good time. It is very frustrating to have half of the pages empty a few days before the press date and then find we suddenly have too much!

If anyone can assist with the production in any way David would love to hear from you. We urgently need new blood if the magazine is to remain viable.

David Bate

MISSION PARTNERS

Yarm and Eaglescliffe Ecumenical group

The group met regularly and planned;

- 1, Joint Christian Aid Service-held at Yarm Methodist Church.
- 2, Christian Presence at Yarm Gala, literature and information available.
- 3, Fair Trade Extravaganza, venue All Saints, very successful , sales increased.
- 4, Annual Christmas Cards, All Saints' kindly volunteered to help with our deliveries for 2016. Joint decision made to try new approach, produce leaflet targeted for distribution to

shops, community centres, libraries, health centres, hotels etc.

- 5, Outreach- new housing estates built within our area , leaflet being produced for delivery to these properties.
 - 6, Advent Quiet Day held at Holyrood House 3/12/16 , Speaker Kathleen Turner. New venue and format for 2017 being explored.
 - 7, Joint Christian Unity Service, held January 2017 at St. Mary Magdalene .
 - 8, Fair Trade Fortnight.
 - 9, Lent - 3 lent lunches to be held using York Courses Literature at Yarm Methodist Church, St . John's co hosting with St, Mary's and St, Romaulds. 11/4/17
- Good Friday Service to be repeated in Yarm, similar format to previous year. Dominic Johnson joined us in 2016,

Anne Eyres.

Eddelak

To everything there is a time and a season and so it is with some sadness that we must report that the formal link with our partner church in Northern Germany, in Eddelak, has come to an end. Numbers of participants in either direction of the exchange have been dwindling through changing circumstances, age and/ or infirmity, retirements etc. Only 4 people were planning to go to Eddelak last September when the visit was cancelled by our hosts. Reiner Petrovski, the minister, had just announced that he is moving from Eddelak to another district and the work of hosting and making arrangements for us was suddenly too much to cope with.

Those of us who have been involved with this link have learned much of the international church and have been humbled, but very appreciative, of the wonderfully generous hospitality of our German friends whenever we have visited them. Each visit has had a significant high point : touring the restoration of Hamburg : visiting the border with the old East Germany : experiencing the cathedral of Lubeck and seeing pictures of the cathedral in flames in 1945 (from Allied Bombing): singing together at the evening BBQ : finding people who have become good loving friends.

We each have memories of their visits to Egglecliffe as well. My own favourite is ploughing through the mud across to Lindisfarne in bare feet with wonderfully encouraging companions. Others found excitement in trains!

Some of these friendships will endure despite our lack of formal church context. Sharing the love of Christ across all the various barriers has expanded my vision of who we are as people and churches in relationship with God, and deepened my understanding of the interaction of church and society.

Fran Wood