



ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST CHURCH  
EGGLESCLIFFE



Diocese of Durham

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

## **ANNUAL REPORT 2018**

**Incumbent  
The Rev. Sylvia Wilson**

*...be of the same mind, having the same love, being of full accord.... Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility regard others as better than yourselves. (Philippians 2)*

[www.stjohnthebaptistegglescliffe.co.uk](http://www.stjohnthebaptistegglescliffe.co.uk)

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# LEADERSHIP

## **PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL** (from Annual Parochial Church Meeting 2017)

### **Ex-officio:**

Revd. Sylvia Wilson (Priest in Charge)  
Brian Robinson (Church warden)  
David Wright (Churchwarden)  
Frances Wood (Deanery Synod)  
Dominic Johnson (Deanery Synod)

### **Elected members:**

Dawn Robinson (Secretary & Vice Chair)  
Sharon Morley  
Steve Johnson  
Andie Johnson  
Jayne Craig  
David Craig  
Steve Ashman  
Lesley Lewis  
Rebecca Shipley  
Alan Wilbert

### **Retiring in 2018 but eligible for re-election at the APCM:**

Sharon Morley  
Andie Johnson  
Steve Ashman (moved away so not for re-election)

## Report from the chair

Once again, I am pleased to reflect on a wonderful year of life at St John's. However once again at the outset of my report I must acknowledge our very considerable loss in the death of a most faithful friend and servant of St John's; Terry McCarthy. Terry served this parish for many years and was an invaluable source of wisdom to me. We still feel his loss very keenly and we continue to hold Kath and the family in our prayers.

One of the highlights of the year was the confirmation service held at Holy Trinity Church in Fairfield where, in the presence of the Bishop of Durham seven of our church members made a public declaration of their faith. This is hugely encouraging for us as we see people growing in faith. Not only that, but these people are active in the life of St John's and are a huge blessing to us all.

We are now in the final year of our Partnership for Missional Church journey. We will continue to seek God's vision for the future by continuing to develop the habits of reading and pondering God's word, by showing hospitality and doing our very best together to make the Kingdom of God known in our area.

In 2017 we not only hosted the community event in singing carols at Sunningdale shops but we battled the traffic to host a similar event at Orchard Shops too. We were very grateful to the Co-op, Sainsbury's and Mint Hobo in Yarm for supporting these events. Hospitality 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.

A very exciting and major step forward for us is in the area of social media. Cheryl Roper-Smith has done an amazing job of building our new website and working within the diocesan initiative to make our presence culturally relevant and up to date. Please read her report on page 18 for more details and please check out the website and recommend it to anyone who you think would like to keep up to date in that way.

I was very encouraged in the last year by the number of people who attended our Lent and Advent courses. During Advent, we used a study called ***When God Comes Down*** thinking about how God became one of us in his son Jesus Christ and how God still comes to those who are watching and waiting for him. During Lent, we reflected on ***Walking with the Mind of Christ***. Using Philippians 2 as our guide we considered forgiveness and how to live humbly and with a servant heart in the way Jesus showed us.

I believe this is what God is calling us to in the year ahead and so our text for the year is;

***...be of the same mind, having the same love, being of full accord.... Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility regard others as better than yourselves.***

Once again May I invite you to join me in praying for us in the year ahead, that in all we do together that we will walk together with the 'mind of Christ in love and humility.

*Sylvia Wilson*

## **Church Wardens**

Little activity on the building this year, as previously mentioned there will be some work required prior to the next quinquennial inspection. A defective light had to be replaced and moved. Overall not much different to last year's report.

Once again, sincere thanks for all those who help both inside and outside the building in supporting us, in particular to Alan for all his efforts in making repairs to numerous items. We sadly lost our loyal friend Terry during the last year and he is continually missed. Sylvia and John continue to lead us and we give thanks for their continued hard work.

Brian Robinson & David Wright, Churchwardens

*Brian Robinson and David Wright, Churchwardens*

## **Administration**

I took over the role towards the end of May 2017, and have thoroughly enjoyed finding my feet and learning the ropes as Parish Administrator.

My main role is liaising with couples wishing to marry at St John's, booking an Organist, Choir and Bells if required. I ensure their banns are read out at St John's prior to their wedding, organise forms and generally answer any questions they may have. I print off and copy the weekly notice sheet, and also carry out other administrative tasks such as the ordering of Church supplies, stationery and photocopying. I also supply information to the Parish magazine 'Eggescliffe Eye' generally on a monthly basis. I assist with the administration for funerals and internments and liaise with the Funeral Directors regarding fees. I am the first point of contact for a variety of queries and aim to deal with them as quickly and efficiently as possible.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank Emma Kensey, our previous Administrator for showing me the ropes, as well as Sylvia and the rest of the team at St John's in welcoming me in role, assisting in any queries and making me feel part of the team which has made the transition an enjoyable one. Thank you!

*Vanessa Lyons*

## **PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL (PCC)**

The members of a church Parochial Church Council have the responsibility of making sure the activities undertaken within their local church are conducted in a safe, secure and welcoming manner, whilst always ensuring the religious teachings from our Lord our paramount to the delivery of His word.

Our PCC meetings are always preceded by a meeting of the Standing Committee, whom review the minutes of our previous meeting and determine the agenda for the forthcoming PCC meeting. During the past year our PCC have met six times and for those meetings there has been a consistent number of PCC members attending with very few apologies.

During the past year the PCC have discussed the following agenda items:

- ❖ The appointment of our Parish Administrator, Venessa Lyons, job role, hours and remuneration.
- ❖ The process of our local C of E school (Eggescliffe CE Primary School) becoming an academy.
- ❖ Need for a new photocopier. New one purchased.
- ❖ Organist and choir of our church.
- ❖ Where the bible readings on Sundays are best read from in church.

- ❖ Dedication of pew bibles.
- ❖ Possibility of forming a Friends of St John's group.
- ❖ Lighthouse and Youth Bible Study Group, Stacey Perron – our Youth For Christ worker.
- ❖ Generous Giving – talk delivered by Rachel Phillips – Diocesan Generous Giving Officer.
- ❖ Authorised Lay Funeral Ministry, 2 members of our church are currently undertaking this course.
- ❖ Support of various charities – example Butterwick Hospice, WaterAid & A Way-out.
- ❖ Change in legislation i.e. General Data Protection Regulations – in hand B.R Robinson.
- ❖ Safe way for people to make their way to and from the altar in church.
- ❖ Future bible study group meetings and delivery of our first Alpha Course – April 2018.
- ❖ Parish Hall condition and re-development.

There are many subjects which hold their place on the agenda every month and for which there are individual reports for our APC meeting, these include, finance, parish share, Deanery Synod, safeguarding, PMC, church cleaning and repairs and necessary maintenance of our church and the quinquennial inspection of the church - Inspection every 5 years – next due 2019.

Correspondence. Matters for which we have received correspondence have covered the church organ, thank you letter from Bishop Paul and several thank you letters from people who have been grateful for the service we provide along with our friendly nature and a letter regarding the condition of the Parish Hall.

Being a member of our PCC is not over bearing, we meet at least 4 times per year, we read passages from the bible and pray at the beginning and end of each meeting. It is a responsibility of continuing care for all that we hold so precious in our church family life – join us!

*Dawn C Robinson, Secretary of PCC.*

## **Electoral roll**

The number on the Electoral roll this year is 129. 4 names were added and 8 removed. Our number of Deanery representatives for this amount remains at three.

*David Wright*

## **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. Our DBS checks for those who require them have been renewed this year.

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

## **PARTNERSHIP FOR MISSIONAL CHURCH (PMC)**

Our PMC journey has carried on with the same vision of serving those in our community who are lonely and those who are new in our parish. We have carried on encouraging the five 'holy habits' displayed every week at the back of church. 'Dwelling in the Word' has been a regular item at all PCC meetings as we listen to one another and to God in our given passage of scripture.

We have recently welcomed three new members to the PMC team; Kathy Beaumont and Cheryl & Antony Roper-Smith. At our last cluster meeting armed with the information we have from the last three years we were encouraged to develop a new and short vision statement and then to spend time developing the details of that. Even though this is the final year of the PMC process the 'holy habits' we have developed are to be carried on, and seeking God's plan for the future of our parish will continue. You are welcome to join us when we meet together.

*Sylvia Wilson*

## 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 meet regularly to pray for everyone at St John's but especially those for whom we have a particular care at any given time. We do often rely on being kept informed of where there are particular needs so that we can help if we are required. Please look out for the information poster that tells you who is on the team and their contact details.

*Sylvia Wilson*

## WORSHIP

### Choir

We are in the second year since we lost Christine Purvis and she is still sorely missed by us all. Not only have we lost a dearly loved friend but the leader of the choir. As a result, we no longer have regular choir practices on a Wednesday evening and therefore not able to produce any new music to bring to the congregation. Since my wife, Ann has had her illness, we have lost her services to the choir and for the same reason her attendance at church services, we are left with just four members, Dianne Carr, Tom Montgomery, John Mankin and myself. It is obvious, despite many appeals, we will not be gaining any more members from the congregation and this is very sad. Invitations to sing at weddings have just about dried up as well as invitations to sing at funerals. We were invited to take part in the service for the funeral of Iris Dixon who was at one time a member of the choir. We were joined by the choir run by Kate Pickover and this added a great addition to the service. Those of us who are left in our church choir are willing to continue because we feel that it would be a sad loss if it was to be disbanded. There may be just a few of us, but we like to think that we add something of value to the 10-00 a.m. Communion Service on a Sunday and would be missed if we weren't in attendance.

It is sad to have such a short Annual Report from a choir which was thriving in Tim and Doreen's day, but, for one reason or another, the choir has diminished in size and is not as buoyant as it once was.

*Jim Cooper*

### Worship Band

**Come let us sing for joy to the Lord; let us shout aloud to the Rock of our salvation. Psalm 95:1**

We continued to grow in 2017-2018 in the sense that we have expanded our repertoire and have accompanied both older and newer songs. On a personal note I have greatly enjoyed the opportunity to grow musically by playing with lots of different musicians particularly but not exclusively Lucy, Andrea, Andie, Stacey, Kathy, Christopher Haresnape and Sylvia. We continue to play and sing in a variety of settings. These include one, some or all of us in the main services, friendship lunch, "A Way Out", the Mothers' Union etc. Finally we remain open to new songs, players, instruments, singers etc. We normally rehearse on the Friday before All Age services. Do let Sylvia or me know if you'd like to come along.

*Rob Wilson.*

# DISCIPLESHIP

## Life Groups

A small group of people have continued to meet on Fridays. We now have a new evening group set up for the adults who were confirmed in September and led by Andie and Dom Johnson. The groups are a great opportunity to get to know others, to love and support one another and to grow in faith and knowledge of God. Both work using different materials (York Courses and 'book club' style discussions). There is scope for developing other life groups. If you are interested please speak to Sylvia.

*Sylvia Wilson*

## Short Courses (Advent & Lent)

We have had a lovely time at Advent and during Lent studying materials by the Rev. James Harnish. ***When God Comes Down & Living with the Mind of Christ***. Each of these gave us an opportunity to read the scriptures together and learn from them and each other about the God who came as one of us to share the joys and sorrows of life with us and to draw us into a closer relationship with him and with one another. It has been wonderful to grow in faith and knowledge of God together. Please look out for future courses and come and learn with us and help us to learn from you.

*Sylvia Wilson*

## Prayer Spaces

In the week leading to Pentecost 2017 we once again 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 25<sup>th</sup> May -4<sup>th</sup> 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 Christ<sup>1</sup>

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*

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<sup>1</sup> [www.thykingdomcome.global](http://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 two 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 'Mosaic' studying various themes, e.g. Celebrations, Rescue and God with us. 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 grow in popularity this year. It is a lovely community place to welcome families who are new to the area. Parents and grandparents 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 to welcome the nursery children from school. The children love our action songs and the opportunity to pray. It is lovely to see our babies developing and beginning to learn the actions and words of the songs as we sing and dance together. We have a lovely children's story bible that we are working through with breaks for the special celebrations. Our time finishes with play time and lovely cakes and coffee. Yet again we have a great team. Thank you!

*Sylvia Wilson*

### **Hilltop Youth**

Over this past year with youth in the church we have done different events and ways of helping our young people connect with God and with one another. My two main goals for the youth in our church is from them to first, continue to grow in their personal relationship with God. Secondly, for them to go out and share about God with others. The various groups are as follows;

## **Life Group**

Three Tuesday out of the month I meet at the Johnson's house for Life Group. Life group is a night where the youth can come hang out and learn more about God through discussing and reading the Bible. This past year we have covered arrange of topics in Life Group. We have discussed Parables, what is the Gospel, how do we share our faith with others and currently we are going through the Book of Proverbs. Over this past year I have seen the girls in this Life Group take large steps in their faith. Through the year I have seen the girls become more confident in asking questions, learning how to read the bible and how to share their faith with others.

## **Refresh & Cafe Church**

Refresh and Cafe Church are events that happen once a month and are for students throughout Teesside. Refresh is a worship service for youth. On one Sunday each month students sing worship songs and listen to different speakers. Speakers from different parts of the UK have come to speak to students. Cafe Church is held in Costa and is a place for students to gather once a month. Cafe Church is a casual church service, students come listen to people play music and listen to a speaker. I have seen both Refresh and Cafe Church enrich our students lives. They are events where they are able to connect with other students who are Christians as well as grow in their own relationships with God.

## **Sunday Youth**

Once a month on Sunday we go down to Costa and spend time together. The other Sundays of the month we are learning about how to read the Bible on our own. We go through the acronym SOAP. "S" stands for Scripture beginning of our time we read through the passage two to three times. "O" is Observation, we write down the different observations and questions we have from the scripture we just read. "A" Application, is where we discussing how the scripture applies to our life and how we can live it out. "P" is prayer, where we write out our prayers and prayer together about what we have learned and other things on our hearts.

*Stacey Perron*

## **BRIGHTLIGHTS PUPPET TEAM**

Our puppet friends continue to be very popular at our All Age worship. We use lots of songs and often 'Tim & Rebecca' share their own insights and wisdom on the theme of the day. We often work under time pressure but still the team produce great work. Thank you to all involved

*Sylvia Wilson*

## **MESSY CHURCH**

Once again I am inspired by the super organisation of the team who deliver Messy Church. The format remains the same and works like clockwork because of the dedication of those involved. Our aim is to provide four events per year although 2017-18 has had only three. We continue 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. If you would like be on this team and join the fun you will be very welcome.

*Sylvia Wilson*

## **OOPS!**

This report is very much as last year and the year before. We have had a reasonable year and are just about managing to keep going thanks to a small but very loyal band of helpers.

Numbers remained fairly steady during 2017 with the usual comings and goings.

We try to provide a safe and welcoming environment and we have a good range of toys. We also try and do craft and other activities with any excuse for a party. Our sessions are friendly and fun and while the group does not suit everyone the families that do come really enjoy our sessions.

Unfortunately, due to personal pressures I have not managed to get the Facebook page up and running yet but I will get around to this.

My two main worries for the future are a shortage of helpers and the state of the hall; we could do with a few more people to come on the rota to cover weeks 4 and 5.

A massive 'thank you' to our team of helpers who keep the 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. In particular I want to thank John and Lucy Shepherd. Thanks also to the Mums, Dads, Grandmas and Granddads who come along each week to play and chat.

*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 indeed to have Stacey Perron working with us in Egglecliffe for a second year.

Doing a second year has produced a great deal of fruit from the work Stacey began in 2016. As you will read in her report the year six life group is doing enormously well as are all the other areas under her leadership. We owe a debt of gratitude too to Andie, Dom, Althea and Marian who have welcomed Stacey into their home and become her family for the year. Without this provision we would not have been able to have Stacey with us so we really are grateful.

*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 followed by our zones. Our 'zone' time continues; 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. They finish by enjoying juice and a biscuit together. As we reflected on the season this year you may have seen some of our artwork displayed as we all made 'snowflakes' representing how unique and special each individual is to God.

*Sylvia Wilson*

## **Prayer Spaces for School**

During the year we have again 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. To hear their interpretation of the Lent animation was nothing short of inspirational. 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. Sadly the Christmas Assembly at the comp which I had planned with Kathryn Belmont – youth pastor of All Saints' Preston on Tees had to be cancelled because of a gas leak in school but 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 we gather in the Parish Hall. Since the 2017-2018 school year started we have had on average 35 kids come to Lighthouse every week. Lighthouse is a place where kids can come to have fun and to learn more about God. This year we have added a small group time to Lighthouse. After the kids listen to a brief talk, we break up into our small groups which have been split up by gender and year. I have seen how through the small groups kids are taking steps closer to God. The small groups are a place where they feel safe to ask questions, interact more with the scriptures and build deep relationships with the leaders at Lighthouse.

*Stacey Perron*

## **Year 6 Life Group**

This Year 6 Life Group is the new Life Group started back in November. I started this group for some of our year 6 kids because I want to create another place where students could be encountering God on a deeper level but also to be coming more into our church. I have 12 students who come to Life Group which meets every other Wednesday in the church. We spend time eating pizza and other snacks together. Go through a bible lesson teaching the students the basics of faith and who Jesus is. Lastly spend the last half hour playing games. Since starting this group I have seen these 12 students grow in their relationships with one another and God. They have created an atmosphere where they can be open and honest and feel safe to share their thoughts and questions. In addition to meeting and going through Bible Studies, I have also planned one off events for the students. In February, we went Rock Climbing together and in March we are having a movie night.

*Stacey Perron*

## **Egglescliffe CE Primary School**

On three days a week I go into Egglescliffe CE Primary School to help out within different classrooms. I help in the Year 3, 5 and 6 classrooms. The different things I do in the classroom are help students with lessons, lead guided readings and assist the teachers in anyway I can.

*Stacey Perron*

## **The Hub**

We are pleased to be able to support The Hub which continues to be a very popular lunch time club at Egglescliffe Comprehensive school. It is run primarily by youth leaders from All Saints' Preston on Tees and Tees Valley Community Church. Stacey attends every Tuesday. 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. It is a good place to keep in touch with our year six students when they go to the comprehensive school if they choose to attend.

*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**

Our coffee morning is growing in popularity as we welcome our regular guests and those who pass by. Everyone gets a very warm welcome. It is so good that people get to have coffee and a chat and the team are very talented at welcoming and serving. 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 'Come on In' coffee morning in February. We have one or two new team members but we always have room for more if you can help.

*Sylvia Wilson*

### **Friendship Lunch**

Our friendship lunch remains very popular as we serve up to 30 guests. It is lovely to see people enjoying the company of people they know as well as meeting new friends. We offer a simple two course lunch, usually soup and desert followed by tea and coffee and some entertainment. We have had singers, a musical quiz, a slide show and various general quizzes. We have added some new members to our team this year. It was lovely to be joined occasionally by church members who gave us a very positive review in the Egglecliffe Eye. Our cooks provide food beautifully presented and excellent quality. The Summer and Christmas special events are very popular. We enjoyed standing in line for ice creams from the local ice cream van in the summer and at Christmas we had lovely food and entertainment provided by the children of Egglecliffe CE Primary school.

*Sylvia Wilson*

### **Marriage Preparation**

Our third annual Marriage Preparation Course was held in March. The church looked beautiful with tables dressed in lovely white cloths, flowers, chocolate, table confetti and a glass of prosecco. Our couples enjoyed a lovely evening together. 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 reflect on the opening words of the marriage service and the vows and how important it is a step they are taking. The evening finishes as we invite the couples to write a prayer for their fiancé, we gather around the altar table and light candles, this is always very moving. 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.

*Rob & Sylvia Wilson*

## **Baptism Preparation**

Dee, Pat and myself continue to welcome baptism families into church at our preparation events. I share my faith story and we are privileged to hear their stories and share part of their journeys too. We talk about the significance of baptism and why it is important to us as disciples of Christ. This year we have had some older children making their own vows and on one occasion we followed the baptism by a service of renewal of wedding vows.

As part of the preparation 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 which is always very moving. 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 welcome input from anyone who has a suggestion or idea for a new event.

Last year's events included our first 'Spring Sunday' – a lunch, with Treasure Hunt, children's craft activity and some stalls. Next came a Hat and Jewellery evening. We then had an Organ Recital by Alan Barber and a concert in memory of Christine Purvis. 'Something Fishy' happened in October when Danby Fish came to give a presentation about all manner of seafood and we had our annual Christmas Fair in November. December saw us back at the Craig's house for another successful Pudding Party. The Cleveland Organists and Choirmasters recital was held in February.

Looking forward, we are repeating the Spring Sunday event, and a Spring Organ Concert. An Afternoon Tea will be held in July and we hope to have a Fashion Show in October. Before you know it, it will be Christmas Fair time again!

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 the religious and the floral seasons.

For Easter, there is the Passion, new beginnings and light. Therefore, we try for spring flowers to represent new start to the year, lilies for the passion and Easter eggs for rebirth. However dependent on when Easter actually falls determines the most suitable flowers. 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.

Christmas, Jesus' birth, here 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.

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

Additionally, to the main festivals, flowers are also arranged for the Patronal festival, palms for Palm Sunday and poppies for Remembrance Day and visits by the Bishop as well.

Flowers are bought locally either at local florists or floral wholesalers, but we are often constrained on prices due to the season and availability of suitable flowers and raid supermarkets as required. Hopefully everyone's efforts are appreciated and we do get positive comments on the arrangements.

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**

### **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.

As well as refreshments provided after the 10am service, and coffee morning, we use Fairtrade communion wine, 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 this year the Church put on a Fairtrade Coffee Morning with cake stall and it was the theme of the entertainment at the Friendship Lunch.

*Suzanne Fletcher*

## **Mother's Union**

We have had another good year with some more interesting speakers. Our Membership has gone down just a little to 24 members due to 2 members lapsing their membership, but we enjoyed another good Christmas lunch at the Parkmore Hotel & once more Mr Rob Wilson entertained us while we had our coffee & mince pies with another surprise when Rev. Sylvia helped with the singing.

Our outing this year was to Sneaton Castle & once more the weather was good to us & due to a misunderstanding regarding the tour we had Joanna to do the honours & the lunch was

very good. We held our usual Strawberry Tea with the invited guests & our Coffee morning, both were very successful which enabled us to donate £30 to the Grenfell Fire Fund through

the Mothers Union & £100 to the Charity "Summer of Hope" so that was good. As usual some of our Members were still busy with knitting for the North Tees Hospital Baby & Children's Units.

We would still like to invite anyone to come along to one of our meetings just to see what the Mother's Union is like they are held the last Tuesday of the month in the Parish Hall starting at 1-45pm

*Pat Wilbert (Branch Leader)*

## COMMUNICATIONS

### **Website/A church near you/Social media**

St John's website has been revised and redesigned. The redesign has helped to make the site much more user friendly and easier to keep up to date. There is now an "I'm new here" section for all new visitors to the church providing relevant information with the purpose to encourage attendance and make them feel more comfortable when starting to attend, with hope that this will help in growing the church community.

There is also a community section which includes; "What do Christians Believe?", "What is Prayer?" and an area for "Prayer Requests". Along with a membership area where people are able to sign up and receive email updates from the church. This is very new and as such there has been little sign up for to date but we are confident this will change in time.

The "Weekly Notice Sheets" are added to the information section of the site each week for those who prefer an electronic copy, were unable to attend Sunday Service or are occasional attenders. As we are a Fairtrade church information on this and a link to a new Blog can also be found here.

Under "What's On" there are clear Timetables and an Events areas, where all new events are added. There are options to sign up to many events online and we have just launched a new function to gift tickets for those who otherwise may not be able to attend events, as we aim to make all church events inclusive. There is a specific area for families and children, hoping to help new families get involved in the church events and feel comfortable attending with children, with a goal of increasing the number of families and children attending church.

We have "terms & conditions" and "privacy policy" documents on the new website to protect the church, it's members and the website users and content. There are links on every page of the website to "The Church of England" website and "Durham Diocese" website. The site also has links to all the church's current social media including, Facebook, Instagram and Twitter.

## Social Media

We have 2 Facebook pages, one is a “public page” which is visible to everyone and is a place for advertising upcoming church, community and charity events and photos of the church and it’s events, and part of the church's initiative to reach the wider community, all posts are reviewed for privacy purposes, again to protect the church and it’s members, prior to being added to the page. The “closed group” continues also, and can be posted to by all members and as well as advertising events it allows members to share photos and communicate with one another and the church. Both pages seem to be successful at keeping people up to date. The public page is helping us keep in touch with families, occasional attenders and the wider community. We are currently working on increasing the use of our Twitter page @SJEggescliffe. An Instagram account st\_johns\_egglescliffe has just recently been set up and we are working on getting information to all and increasing followers, this will be used in a similar manner to the public Facebook page.

The Church of England site "A Church Near You" has been updated with the new website and social media information and we hope that people using this site will proceed to our website for more information and to get a sense of what to expect at St. John's, as this is popular with people moving into a new area who want to find a church.

*Cheryl Roper-Smith*

## **The Eggescliffe Eye**

I have to report that the job of “editor” for the magazine is not getting any easier – as everyone knows it really is a one-man job with regard to the final preparation for the printer and although Linda is a great support and keeps me smiling, I find we are often running up to the final evening before we go to the printers and that can be stressful – and often means we do not even have time to get the copy to Jim for proof-reading. Timing is important so that the finished “Eye” is “in the pews” on time.

I would make one additional plea this year (on top of my persistent pleas for more articles and help generally) PLEASE could I have the copy for the date I publish in the previous month’s edition. This is not a figment of my imagination but one that I know will give me enough time to put it all together.

We are grateful to our distributors, and particularly to John & Linda Henderson, and also to our advertisers for their support. In the latter context I would dearly like somebody to take on the role of Advertising Manager – get in touch if you can help.

*David Bate*

## MISSION PARTNERS

### **Yarm and Eaglescliffe Ecumenical group**

The Ecumenical group have continued to meet regularly, and plan the following,

Service for Week of Prayer for Christian Unity

Lent Lunches- 3 held and well attended

Easter Passion Play in Yarm High Street

Christian Aid Service and collections-Supermarkets collections were successful and more were planned for the future

Fairtrade Extravaganza

Christmas Cards- it was decided to send details of churches Christmas Services and activities to specific locations in Yarm and Eaglescliffe.

Advent Quiet Day- The cost of using Holyrood House in Thirsk was becoming expensive, other venues explored and Jane Hintons House - Whitegates was decided on. Unfortunately the venue can only accommodate a small number of people.

There was much discussion regarding outreach to the new housing developments that were being built, it was decided to deliver a leaflet to each new house that contained information about all the churches in the Yarm/Eaglescliffe area and their services and groups run by the churches.

*Anne Eyres*