

Annual Report

2019



*St. John's Methodist Church
Potters Bar*

www.stjohnspottersbar.co.uk

ST JOHN'S IS PART OF THE ST ALBANS & WELWYN CIRCUIT
www.stalbanswelwyncircuit.org.uk

Registered Charity No 1130633

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INTRODUCTION

As I write this annual report I want to acknowledge once more how blessed we are at St John's to have so many people who are prepared to give of their time, energy and talents to enable the development of the worship and mission of St John's. In June 2018 St John's Church Council agreed the following Growth Plan aimed at increasing the number of people worshipping regularly at St John's and nurturing the faith of our existing congregation.

St John's Methodist Church: Growth Policy

There has been a key desire for growth with enthusiasm for trying new things, however it was felt that it is important that what we do should be done well. If not, we will look at doing something else. There is also recognition that these issues need to form a central part of the prayer life at St John's so we have time to listen to what God is willing us to do. All the points below will be championed by the Church Leadership Team consisting of the minister, the stewards and the treasurer.

Children and Youth

- ▶ Reaching out to families who have previously participated in our **Creative Worship** to ensure our patterns and styles of worship meet their needs. Increase our reach by meeting those who might come to Creative Worship – e.g. Jumping Johns.
- ▶ Participate actively in the **Churches Together in Potters Bar Holiday Club** initiative, and see how we can provide quality leadership for young people in conjunction with other churches in the town.
- ▶ Review our relationship with **Scout Troop** to ensure we have effective engagement even if it leads to fewer occasions.

Adults

- ▶ Continue to provide and evolve a **balance of styles of worship**, particularly reviewing the options available for the main congregation on “Creative worship” Sundays.
- ▶ Introduce a newer contemporary and **less formal worship style**, perhaps on a Sunday evening, without chairs in rows. Quality would be important – of music, prayer, speaking and hospitality. In due course, this might find a way of linking to our own (and maybe Circuit) young people’s work, which already takes place on a Sunday evening.
- ▶ Examine how we can progress with the initiative of a **health and well-being group**, possibly, on occasions in conjunction with the new evening worship.
- ▶ As **the population of Potters Bar is aging**, discover how we can work with them to provide for their needs – and action it, including a review of midweek communion and whether this might become part of work with retirement homes in the town.
- ▶ Encourage greater participation in **Churches Together in Potters Bar events**.

As a result of this Growth Policy St John's participated in the Churches Together in Potters Bar (CTPB) Holiday Club for primary school aged children which took place in July and coordinated and hosted a Churches Together Discover Christmas Event in December which involved crafts and the use of drama to tell the Christmas story. Church members plan to volunteer again for the CTPB Holiday Club in August. St John's has also linked up with King Charles the Martyr Anglican Church (KCM) to take Bible stories into primary schools as part of

the Open the Book project and continues to explore the possibility of sharing a Family and Children's Worker with KCM. In the autumn members of the parade service planning group met with the Scout Troop leaders to look at how we can engage more effectively with the young people attending the uniformed organisations. It was agreed with the leaders that five parade services a year (Oct, Nov, Dec, March and July) was more realistic but that together we would do all we could to ensure greater attendance and participation of the young people. So far this approach appears to have been more successful and it has been great to see the young people contributing to the services. The Leadership Team is still considering new ways in which it can reach out to more families and invite them to our Creative Church.

In July St John's held its first evening café worship. It is an informal service, which involves songs of praise followed by discussion while participants enjoy coffee/tea and cake. Those who attended appreciated it's format and from September onwards the service has taken place on the evening of the second Sunday of every month. There are still plans in the near future to establish a health and well-being group possibly operating in conjunction with the monthly Café Worship. Our initial thoughts about how we could serve the needs of Potters Bar's aging population were focused on the possibility of offering a lunchtime communion in one of the retirement homes in the town. However exploratory conversations led to the conclusion that this was not what was required. Instead myself and some of the other clergy in the town felt that God was calling us to provide a monthly afternoon service for people with dementia and their carers. The first service was on Tuesday 5th March and will take place monthly on the first Tuesday of every month at 2pm at King Charles the Martyr Church.

The work of the Holy Spirit is not restricted to our Growth Policy and it is good to see the beginning of a new group that has been created in response to the desire for a day-time group that discusses daily issues in the context of the Christian faith and passages from the Bible. The group meets fortnightly on a Friday afternoon.

In addition to these new initiatives I want to recognise the hard work, commitment and vision of all those who continue St John's existing outreach and community activities which include our parent and toddler group - Jumping Johns, Junior Youth Club, Women's Guild, Women's Connect (a fellowship group for women of all ages), Scout group, Men Out Tonight (a men's fellowship group), Dominoes for young people at secondary school and a monthly Sunday lunch club for the more elderly in the community.

The mission and life of St John's needs to be underpinned by prayer and I will leave Peter Barlow, our Senior Steward to tell you about our recent prayer initiative.

I want to end by thanking Peter for serving as Senior Steward for the last two years. I have been so grateful for his support, wisdom and leadership and am particularly thankful for all he did while I was off ill and his generous offer to continue as Senior Steward until the end of May when I return from my sabbatical.

"See I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not perceive it?" Isaiah 43:19

Rev Ali Facey

Committee Members

As previously requested, here is a list of those who currently serve on our committees.

Church Council

Rev Alison Facey	Minister
Kathryn Krause	Secretary
Peter Barlow	Steward/Property
Robin Burns	Steward
Chris Humphreys	Steward
Myra Sloper	Steward
Gill Hutley	Steward
Robert Ward	Treasurer
Helen Barlow	Pastoral Secretary
John Sloper	Chair Playgroup Board
Sally Gunning	Social Committee
Pat Griffith	Mission Secretary
Steve Matthews	Safeguarding
Valerie Vessey	Elected 2013
Stephen Krause	Elected 2013
Dave Best	Elected 2015
Jo Hutton	Women's Guild
David Bowler	Elected 2016
Roger Croughton	Elected 2017
Dawn Fenner	Playgroup Board Rep
Tony Ostler	Circuit Steward
Rev Rosemary Fletcher	Circuit Supt
Rev Andrew Prout	Circuit Minister

Pastoral Committee

Ali Facey	Minister
Helen Barlow	Secretary
All Stewards	
All Pastoral Contacts	

Leadership Team

Rev Ali Facey	Minister
Peter Barlow	Steward
Chris Humphreys	Steward
Myra Sloper	Steward
Gill Hutley	Steward
Robin Burns	Steward
Rob Ward	Treasurer

Outreach Committee

Ali Facey	Minister
David Carter	Lay Chair
Fiona Crichton	Secretary
Peter Barlow	Steward
Gill Hutley	Steward
Margaret Rhodes	Creative Church
Dave Best	
Nico Bekooy	
Guy Fenner	Youth Club
Roger Croughton	

Nursery Playgroup Board

Ali Facey	Minister
John Sloper	Lay Chair
Celia Mills	Manager
Alyson Gnesson	Oakmere Leader
Rob Ward	Treasurer
Guy Fenner	Asst Treasurer
Dawn Fenner	
Steve Matthews	
Petra Necasove	

Property & Finance Committee

Ali Facey	Minister
Peter Barlow	Lay Chair/Prop Stwd
Rob Ward	Treasurer
Chris Humphreys	Lettings/Prop Stwd
Roger Croughton	Property Steward
Rosemary Bootle	Secretary
Angela Paren	
David Bowler	Cleaning
Stephen Krause	Health & Safety
David Carter	Environment

Communications Committee

Chris Esdale	Lay Chair
Chris Humphreys	
Margaret Rhodes	
Dawn Fenner	
Gill Hutley	

Social Committee

Sally Gunning	Convenor
Nico Bekooy	
Margaret Jackson	
Maggie Day	

LEADERSHIP TEAM

The Leadership Team consists of our minister, Ali, the stewards and the treasurer and meets to plan the life of the church every 4 to 5 weeks.

Last summer, following an extensive consultation our minister was re-invited to be the minister with pastoral charge at St. John's for a further 3 years until Summer 2022. As part of the invitation process Ali has decided to reduce her days to 5, instead of 6, days per week, and she is now only responsible for St John's. We wish her well.

Sabbatical

Methodist ministers take a sabbatical leave of 3 months every 7 years and Ali is now away until Monday 3rd June. She will be exploring further her interests in health and wellbeing and its part within the Christian Church. Her studies will include further work on the 'Healing Touch' therapy and links between medical care, Christian healing and complementary therapies in hospitals.

During this period Rev Rosemary Fletcher will again take pastoral responsibility for St John's and we look forward to welcoming her on 4 Sundays, including our Church Anniversary and Easter Morning.

Services

The Maundy Thursday Communion Service this year will be led by Rev David Mullins based on the Tenebrae Service. "We will join Jesus and his disciples, as it were, as they celebrate the Passover, commemorating the liberation of the Hebrew slaves from Egypt. At this meal, Jesus gave new meaning to the bread and wine which he saw as symbolising his death and the new future that would open up through his act of self-giving love. The service takes place in darkness except for ten candles that will be extinguished one by one after each reading from Luke's Gospel, and the Christ candle that will remain lit throughout." You will be most welcome.

We continue to look at new options for worship generally. A service on Prayer was very well received on 3rd February, and we will look to explore other themes on the first Sunday in the month when it is not Parade. On July 7th the whole service will link up with the Church Fun Day with an outdoor (or under cover) service planned to be held at the Morven Guide Centre on the Causeway. Transport will be arranged for those who need it but this represents an excellent opportunity for the Church to experience something new together.

We are also recording all the main services once again. These can be downloaded to CDs on request. If you know of anyone who cannot get to church but would like to hear a recording please speak to one of the stewards.

Prayer

As Ali has said in her report, a final part of our Growth Plan was to underpin the various streams with prayer for St John's as our church. We have recognised that a central part of this plan should involve prayer, so that we have time to listen to what God is willing us to do. We very much hope everyone involved in our church community will support us with the new initiative which began with the service on 3rd February. The prayer initiative consists of the following 3 things:

Firstly each month, we will identify 2 or 3 aspects of our church life to focus on in our worship prayers. So far we have been praying for the Junior Youth Club, the Women Connect group, Ali's sabbatical, our Parade Services, the new "Open the Book" venture in partnership with King Charles the Martyr, and for the Prayer initiative itself.

Secondly we have re-launched the church 'Prayer Board' in the vestibule and encourage everyone to put the names of people or situations they would like prayers for on it. It could be a prayer for yourself, for someone you know (with their permission) or an issue or situation you are concerned about. We encourage you to use this Prayer Board regularly so that as a congregation we can support each other more easily through prayer, as well as praying together as a church community for wider concerns that may affect us all. Prayers will be collected and used in the worship intercessions.

Finally we encourage all church groups, bible study groups, church committees, and other regular St John's groups to spend time during their meetings praying together focusing specifically on the aspects of church life identified for that month or any other matter of concern.

We are delighted to have a Growth Plan for St John's, and we very much hope that with everyone's prayerful support, our church community will grow by reaching out to more people of all ages and from all walks of life in the local area.

Children's and Youth Work

We have identified that our Sunday work with children and families would benefit from better coordination. Our Creative Church on one Sunday a month is strong but we are looking to grow the activities on other Sundays to attract greater involvement from those who already come to our buildings at other times, such as Jumping John's and Creative Church.

An opportunity has arisen to join with King Charles the Martyr in appointing a part-time Children's and Families Worker. KCM are looking to fund 15 hours a week and through grants from the District and Circuit, plus our own reserves, we can fund 10 hours to make a worthwhile job for up to three years. The Leadership Team has been looking at possibilities for some while and are pleased that plans are coming together so that we can breathe new life into our Children's and Family work. We expect the worker to be with us on one Sunday a month, but to be part of the planning for the work on all Sundays. S/he will also be expected to work with Jumping Johns, the Junior Youth Club and the 'Open the Book' project. We look forward to developments.

Sadly, the Act 4 project formally closed as it was felt that this had come to a natural end, but allows the way for new projects with schools such as 'Open the Book'.

Our Community

The Church is facilitating the purchase of a defibrillator which will be mounted on the front of the building in a secure box. The unit can be released via a code obtained by dialling 999. We have been touched by three generous donations, one of which comes from the local Sainsbury's. We are pleased to help our local community in this way and join local Anglicans and Catholics who now have devices.

On behalf of many organisations we would also like to thank everyone for their generosity during the year in collections for the Keech Hospice and Action for Children, for Tear Fund through the Big Quiz (which is to be repeated in November), for the World Church through last year's Mission Supper and the Easter Offering, for poverty in the Yemen, Christian Aid, for the 5 local charities who benefit from surplus coffee funds, and by providing money, food and clothing for the Whitechapel Mission.

And finally... I would like to thank everyone who has worked in the church in recent times, whether it is those who make our worship possible and beautiful, those who keep our building operational, those who work with our young people, committees and study groups, and for those who serve us and our guests with food, drink and a warm pastoral welcome. Thank you everyone – we all contribute in many ways and it is you who make St John's what we are.

Peter Barlow - Senior Steward

REPORT FROM THE TREASURER

Report from the Treasurer for the year to 31st August 2018

The Church has two main funds, the General Church fund and the Nursery Playgroup fund.

1. General Church Fund

This fund is responsible for the costs of ministry and the maintenance and repair of the Church buildings.

The main source of income is regular giving from the members and friends and this includes the related Gift Aid reclaimed from HMRC. The total income of approximately £123,000 can be summarised as follows, along with comparative figures for the previous year:

Income	2018 £	2017 £
Members' regular giving	64,114	58,390
Gift Aid on above	13,700	11,632
Lettings	18,079	13,349
Nursery Playgroup	13,843	13,425
Other donations	6,280	4,078
Jumping Johns	2,224	2,254
Sundry income	4,195	5,012
Fund raising	757	976
TOTAL INCOME	123,192	109,116

The main expense we have is our share of the Circuit Assessment; this is the cost of supporting the Circuit ministers, their manses and the funds which the Circuit must pay to support Methodism at District and National levels.

Our total expenses of approximately £111,000 can be summarised as follows:

	2018 £	2017 £
Circuit Assessment	64,002	61,000
Building repairs and maintenance	14,263	10,207
- Less contribution from Nursery	-4,000	0
Church donations	3,895	5,180
Insurance	5,711	5,060
Gas, electricity and water	8,601	6,462
Cleaners' remuneration	8,099	8,416
Other costs	10,286	12,113
TOTAL COSTS	110,857	108,438

There was an overall surplus of £12,335, somewhat more than in the previous year, and this has been added to our reserves which now total approximately £ 99,000. These are kept for major repairs and renewals as needed, together with several months cover for ongoing expenses in case of a sudden decline in income.

The principal reasons for this significant improvement in our finances were increased giving from our members and an increase in lettings income from outside organisations. We were also blessed by several one off donations from members and friends.

Costs overall were well contained. The significant changes were larger gas bills due to a cold winter and an increase of nearly 5% in our Circuit Assessment. Work carried out by the Fix It group during summer 2018 included modifications to the heating system and the installation of improved insulation to parts of the building - this should help reduce heating costs for this year.

The contribution of £4,000 from the Nursery Playgroup is in respect of work to improve the heating in the Rainbow room. New heaters and roof insulation were installed with labour being provided free by members of the Fix It group. As the major users of this room the Nursery agreed to make a donation to cover a significant part of the cost.

Also during the year the following amounts (including Gift Aid where applicable) were collected from members and friends and remitted to the charities. These were either following appeals to the congregation or in memory of deceased members.

Charity	£
Christian Aid -various appeals	573
Whitechapel Mission	665
Action for Children - Christmas appeal	2,844
Methodist World Mission	1,751
Save the Children - in memory of Theo Parry	1,058
Stroke Association	41
Donations from coffee funds to local charities:	
Isabel Hospice	178
Peace Hospice	178
Potters Bar Sixty Plus	178
Friends of Potters Bar Hospital	178

2. Nursery Playgroup Fund

The Playgroup had a satisfactory year financially and achieved almost a break even result with a small loss of £300 before making the donation of £4,000 referred to earlier towards the costs of heating work in the Rainbow Room.

Total Playgroup income from the two settings, at Baker Street and Oakmere School, was £254,000; 86% of this income came from Hertfordshire County Council ('HCC') for children's sessions which they funded, the balance being paid by parents. The Playgroup employs 26 staff; its main expense is staff salaries together with pension costs and training charges which totalled £223,000. It faces the challenge of covering increasing costs while its main source of funds, income from HCC, is not increasing year on year; the hourly rate which they pay for children's sessions covered by them has been fixed for another two years. The Playgroup holds reserves of just over £103,000 to cover the sudden loss of revenue and to provide for other contingencies.

Conclusion

The Church's finances remain in a very satisfactory shape and we were fortunate to benefit from some unexpected donations. We face annual increases in our main expense, the amount we pay to the Circuit for the costs of ministry. We also have ageing buildings which require regular and at times expensive repairs. The improved financial situation will also assist in financing outreach work amongst young people.

The church's accounts will be presented to the Church Council, as Managing Trustees, for their approval and will be subject to an independent examination by a firm of accountants.

Robert Ward - March 2019

PROPERTY AND FINANCE COMMITTEE

Annual Report 2019

Last summer saw a large self-help project by an expanded Fix-It group due to several small leaks from the 40+ year old radiator system in the Rainbow Room, together with comments from the Playgroup staff about how difficult it was to keep warm in the winter. This coincided with measurements of gas and electricity consumption David Carter had been taking as part of the Church's commitment to the environment which had shown how expensive the Garden Room was to heat compared with the other rooms. In addition the team was very aware about the high amount of heat which was escaping from the corridor and Upper Room ceilings through the gaps in the ceiling tiles designed to let in the daylight. To address these and other insulation and fuel reducing issues Church Council therefore approved up to £10,000 of expenditure (£4,000 of which would be met by the Playgroup) to carry out the following:

- Replace the three old existing radiators and cabinets in the Rainbow Room with 6 new low surface temperature radiators,
- Move the Garden Room heating from the main Church Boiler to use spare capacity in the Clifton Room boiler
- Insulate the suspended ceilings in the Rainbow Room, Upper Room, Garden Room, Kitchen, Stewards' Vestry, Gent's Toilet and the Rear Corridor.
- Lagging of large heating pipes above the suspended ceilings and in the Boiler House

- Convert the lighting system in Upper Room, Kitchen, Stewards' Vestry, Gent's Toilet and the Rear Corridor to new energy efficient "led" tubes and in all but the Upper Room to change the switching to detect use of the areas so that lights automatically come on when the areas are used - and go off when they are not. This will compensate for the loss of the 'borrowed' daylight in the corridor, and is expected to save a significant amount of electricity as these lights have always been left on unnecessarily by the users.
- Replace the urinals in the Gent's Toilet which had been producing significant bad odours.

In addition to the above there was also a host of minor and consequential jobs including repainting the bottom half of the Rainbow Room!

Material used included:

- 6 low surface temperature radiators
- 200 metres of pipework
- 250 metres of pipe insulation
- 350 ceiling insulation pads
- 42 led lighting tubes
- 8 movement sensors to replace switches
- 2 gallons of paint

In the project week alone, 21 people were involved who gave over 400 hours of effort between them. What a fantastic response – the Church was so grateful to everybody. Especially blessed were the cake-makers! We also need to note the other work which took place in July including repainting of the old Critall outside window frames to the Worship Area and one side of the Main hall.

This was a fantastic team effort of which very many organisations would be very envious. We know that the Circuit is very envious of our team at St John's.

Our success in reducing gas and electricity bills is being monitored by David Carter and our Treasurer, Rob Ward.

Other work has included repairs to the front door hinges, new Carbon Monoxide detectors, and replacement of an old cast iron downpipe. This has been carried out by our regular Monday morning Fix-It team of up to a dozen folk including two ladies. Everyone will be welcome at 10am – there is always lots to do. Half term has recently been spent carpet cleaning and electrical testing. Other important testing of fire equipment, boilers and lightening conductors has also been carried out.

New equipment has included a new photocopier, and a new digital recorder for the Church Services.

This coming year will see an updating of our Environment Strategy and the Quinquennial Property Inspection – after all that work, let's hope we do well!

Peter Barlow
Chair Property & Finance Committee

PASTORAL COMMITTEE

Pastoral contacts are assigned to every person on the community roll. They are a point of contact at the church for each person to turn to with good news or difficulties. We have a team of 21 pastoral contacts and I am so grateful for the diligence of our team and the time they very generously give throughout the year.

At St. John's we currently we have 166 on the community roll of which 115 are members.

This year Rose Hutton moved to Cuffley and Alan Combes has been delighted to transfer Rose's membership to Goffs Oak Methodist Church. Jacquie Lowe has ceased to worship and Michele Combes has been reinstated as a member after being removed in error.

At the time of writing this report, the annual service of Thanksgiving and Remembrance is planned for 17th February, where a candle may be lit by families and loved ones who have been bereaved.

Helen Barlow

OUTREACH COMMITTEE

The outreach committee brief, which is appended to every meeting agenda, is 'to equip members of St John's to reach out to all those that seek fellowship with our church family. To nurture, pray and support those who are seeking God on their faith journey? The committee is a 'high level' one concerned primarily with strategy and direction.

We have continued to support and encourage the youth activities both in St John's and in the wider Christian family in Potters Bar. It will be repeated next summer, but at the end of the holiday to encourage fuller participation. It is also clear to the committee that the St John's specific youth activities need support and encouragement if they are to flourish and the committee, together with other sections of our church are working to that end. We are also looking to recruit young people from the scouting activities that are linked to the church.

We are always looking to find routes into our church that will bring in new people. Also how to move any new faces on the fringes of our activities into the centre and this leads to reviews of potential catchment situations. We have identified Creative Church, Jumping Johns, and Men's Group amongst others as activities that produce new faces. The drive now is to find techniques to encourage new faces to the centre.

To that end we encourage both the Men's Group and Women Connect to grow. We would also throw our support to any new cell group where we considered potential for growth. The cell groups have the potential to introduce individual adults into our environment, but it requires commitment from each cell group member to make it happen.

The committee is very happy that, after an initial trial, the Café Worship initiative is progressing well and attracting reasonable support, particularly individuals returning after an

absence from regular attendance. The format is refreshingly new and being in the evening avoids the time pressure of a 21st century Sunday. It may appeal to a new group of people.

The committee is also supportive of developments in the Parade Services, with fewer, but more focused events and development of the Creative Church. The need to make the environment more attractive for visiting parents is a priority. To this end a café (or coffee) area where parents and others can relax may have potential.

One thing that has become clear during recent meetings is that the various church committees duplicate functions. This leads to duplication and wasted effort. To this end the Stewards are reviewing the church management structure with a view to improving its effectiveness.

David Carter - 30th January 2019

SUNDAY CHILDREN'S WORK

Every week we provide activities for children during morning worship. This takes a number of forms each week and highlights on the third Sunday of each month with Creative Church – a report from which is below.

On the first Sunday there is Praise and Play for children up to six, although older children and parents are also welcome to stay or leave their children and join in the church service. It starts with a Bible story followed by various themed crafts, games, songs or free play. Praise & Play is planned and led by Maggie Day, Jackie Hart and Nico Bekooy.

On other Sundays, Nico Bekooy, Jackie Hart and Heather Crichton provide activities for children from three to eleven based on a Bible passage, with different versions available for different ages. There is always a craft activity to help bring the Bible alive and this is adaptable for the wide age range. The session is available for 10.15 until 15 minutes after the service is complete so that parents can stay for coffee and a chat. It does not run on Parade Sundays as the children all now stay in church.

Finally a Crèche facility is available in the vestibule at the back of the church for every Sunday morning, coordinated by Margaret Bland so that youngsters up to three can play in the safety whilst being close to their family.

St John's is extremely grateful to all our people who are involved in these activities, including our Creative Church. We are also excited by the possibility of a new part time Children's and Families Worker who will be able to bring new ideas to help us reach out to this important group in our community.

Peter Barlow

CREATIVE CHURCH - ACTIVITIES AND CELEBRATION

Our thanks to the Creative team for another year of crafts and cooking to support our Monthly Creative Church and Celebration.

Families arrive from 10.30 onwards on the 3rd Sunday of each month. The Rainbow Room 'plan' shows those arriving what is on offer and tells them the bible story and theme for the day. Normally there are 4-5 crafts on offer which can include making, modelling, painting, decorating, sticking or colouring. The cooking table is always popular and there is enough time for participants to have a go at some of the other craft activities too. There is also a creche area for the very young. Refreshments are available during the morning too- mainly to keep the leaders and parents going!

After about an hour we get ready to join the service in church so we can tell the story, share what we have made and explain how this links to the bible theme. Two related songs complete the Celebration and thank you to the band for leading these and to the song-pro team for putting the screen display together.

Creative Church has been going for some years now and we have been able to recycle and update material from previous years. The main bible passage and theme is used by the minster or preacher so there is a common link throughout the morning.

There has also been a gradual turnover of families who attend because we tend to attract younger children but not exclusively. The families usually remark on the positive atmosphere of the morning both in the hall and in church, and are helped by the support and encouragement from the congregation.

Margaret and David Rhodes

DOMINOES

We continue with a small number of children who come very regularly. We currently have 4 members but are open to any others who might want to come and join in. We have recently been looking at the ten commandments and their relevance in today's society. We have the last commandment to do as I write, and I up with a summing up session at the end. It is hopefully giving them something to think about. We meet up on a Sunday evening in the Clifton Room.

Dave Best has been my main companion this year and gets involved in the discussions. My thanks to him and the others who have accompanied me during the year - Dawn and Helen.

I sadly have not organised any extra activities, although we did try and join up with the Circuit youth group during the Summer term. However the Circuit Group meet on a 2nd Sunday that coincides with our Cafe Worship which I prefer to attend! I am going to try and encourage them to come to this service.

If anyone is interested in helping out with this group, then please let me know.

Guy Fenner

JUMPING JOHN'S

Jumping John's continues to be very popular, with some families coming along on both Monday and Friday sessions. We remain open during the school holidays, unlike most of the other local groups, and Mothers tell us how grateful they are for somewhere for their children to play and, for themselves, a place to meet up with their friends and make new ones.

We have two activity tables, one with simple crafts and the other with bricks, books or animals. Playdoh is always the most popular activity!

We've been into church for stories and singing at festival times, led by Ali or Graham, accompanied by Margaret on guitar. At Christmas this was followed by a visit from Santa with a gift for every child. We are grateful to Rob for helping us with this again.

My thanks go to our fantastic team of leaders: Jackie, Su, Heather, Lesley and Frances and also to our occasional helpers Liz and Helen.

Margaret Bland

ST JOHN'S JUNIOR YOUTH CLUB

Junior Youth Club continues to meet at St John's from 6.30 to 8pm on Tuesday's during term time, and is open to any child in school years 3 to 6 (ages 7 to 11).

The dedicated leaders who are there every week are Liz and Nico Bekooy and Angela Page, and we are also very fortunate most weeks to have the presence of Dick Waterhouse. Lesley Humphreys is a tremendous help on alternate weeks, and occasional helpers (also much appreciated) are Dave Best, Sina Pinner, Ali Facey and Dawn and Guy Fenner. Margaret Rhodes does a wonderful job of coming up with, and preparing the materials for, art and craft activities - usually on alternate weeks, and often related to a particular time of year or event.

We have greatly missed our young helpers Abby Best and Caleb Rhodes, who went off to University last September, but we are fortunate to still have the welcome help of a number of young volunteers: Luke Esdaile, Lucy Waterhouse and Tommy Guerin who all continued from last school year, and Ellie Matthews, Hannah Thompson and Louise Steff, all of whom are from the Explorer group. It is good to see them gradually developing their skills (particularly in manning the Tuck Shop - a vital part of their duties!) and learning to take on more responsibility.

The club provides a safe environment in which the children can relax and enjoy themselves (sometimes very noisily!) after a hard day at school. They are free to do any of the activities on offer, make up their own games, or simply chill and chat with friends old and new. Activities regularly available include football (in the main hall), table tennis, pool, table football, an assortment of Wii games, and table games such as Four in a Row, Who am I?, Battleships and Othello. Twister is also very popular.

In addition to the art and craft activities, from time to time we have cooking activities (usually masterminded by Dick) which are much enjoyed by the children. Usually sufficient of the chosen food item is produced to satisfy the leaders as well - the recent pancakes, with an extraordinary variety of possible toppings, went down very well indeed!

Each year it is our tradition to have an evening with festive food at Christmas, and a barbecue at the end of the summer term. This year we have had to miss our usual Spring term trip to FunZone (a soft play facility in Hatfield, as our numbers are lower at the moment, following the departure of a large number of year 6s in the summer. The numbers are, however, gradually building back up, largely by word of mouth, and in addition we are planning to do a recruiting 'leaflet drop' in the local schools after Easter.

It is lovely to see the children who come to the club enjoying themselves, and particularly to see children who might start out very unsure of themselves relaxing and gaining in confidence. Talking to the parents and carers at the end of the evening can also be very rewarding - we get some very positive feedback from them.

Finally, a huge thank you from me to all the leaders and helpers who give so much of their time and energy - I could not lead the youth club without such a special team supporting me.

Liz Bekooy

NURSERY PLAYGROUP

Both our playgroups have had a very successful year. Following our re-registration as part of the St John's Charity, the Baker Street Playgroup was inspected by OFSTED at the end of September and was rated 'Good', with some very positive comments including:

"Staff skillfully engage children in conversations that interest them to successfully gain their attention. They sensitively repeat words that are mispronounced to support children's understanding. Children thoroughly enjoy the positive attention and praise they receive for their achievements."

In December, our Oakmere Playgroup was inspected and did even better, being rated 'Outstanding', with comments including:

"Staff know the children extremely well. They use specific and highly effective strategies that meet individual learning needs."

"Staff are inspiring, they all show enormous dedication and passion for their work. They are determined in their efforts to find new and interesting ways to support children's learning."

On a more challenging note, the financial pressures on Playgroups generally, including St John's, are increasing. Over 80% of the Playgroups' income comes from the County and they have fixed their reimbursement at the same level for the next 3 years. However staff salaries

are increased annually in line with Methodist Church policy and we now also have to find pension contributions. We managed to break even last year, but that may prove very difficult this year. We have adequate reserves to cope with this at present, but we will have to keep this under careful review.

Peter Barlow, Rob Ward and I are continuing to try to establish fully the pros and cons of setting up the Playgroup as a CIO.

Outdoors play is very important for children. Both settings are to be congratulated in having successfully applied to Tesco for Grants of £4000, which have been spent on improvements to the outside play areas. Those at Oakmere featured in the local press.

Finally, Theresa Heath has left the board and moved North. We are very grateful for all her efforts and wish the family well. We welcome Steve Matthews and Petra Necasova to the Board.

John Sloper, Chair, St John's Nursery Playgroup Board.

SCOUT TROOP - 4th POTTERS BAR

The 4th PB is a uniformed Scout group which is sponsored by the Church. It consists of three Sections – Beavers (6-8), Cubs (8-11) and Scouts (11-14), which meet at St John's on three consecutive nights.

Helping the Sections is the Executive, who provide control, and raise extra money through events such as Jumble Sales, Christmas Market and Quiz evenings.

We are by far the largest group in the district. Although numbers vary, there are typically 120 children, teenagers and adults members meeting on a regular basis. There is currently a waiting list for all the Sections.

Chris Sullivan heads up the Beaver Section which meets early on a Friday night. The regular programme has badge work as well as games. Sarah Munn is Akela for the Cub Section. This section follows on from Beavers with more challenging badge work and activities. Jess Waterhouse, helped by Colin Smale, runs the Scout Section.

As well as weekly meetings, there are many opportunities to camp and enjoy outdoor life – some examples are Camping at Lees Wood (Cubs), Water Activity Day near Broxbourne (all sections). Green Beret, Fire & Ice (winter camps for Scouts) as well expeditions to Lochearnhead, a scout training centre in Scotland which gives opportunities for more challenging outdoor activities.

Sadly, the Silver Phoenix Explorer section at St John's merged with the Tartan Explorers at Christmas time, so no longer meet here. There are plans though to keep the Duke of Edinburgh and Queen's Scout awards programmes at St John's.

Although this is a successful Group, we should be aware of challenges. Foremost there is the staffing which is a constant concern. We have been extremely lucky to recruit some new (and younger) members to run these large Sections, but personal circumstances can and do change.

We have been fortunate to raise extra cash through events like the Jumble Sales (three per year), Christmas Market, and Quiz evening as well as some smaller events. It is our policy to keep camping and term fees affordable and fund raising is therefore essential. It is wonderful that St John's provides us with light, heat and shelter and tolerates noise, jumble and wet tents on the Stage – Thank You.

Nico Bekooy (Secretary of the Executive Committee)

BIBLE STUDY GROUP

Our Bible Group continues to meet fortnightly during term time at St John's (Clifton Room) on Wednesday evenings 7.45 – 9.00 pm.

At the moment we have 7 regular members with one or two more who come when they can.

During 2018, we spent three terms using a Study Guide to learn about Paul's letter to the Romans. Then, in Advent, we decided on a 4 session York Course entitled "Life to the full", which was a bit different as it came with an audio CD to go with the booklet.

As always, we would welcome anyone who is interested in finding out more about the Bible and how very relevant it still is to our lives today.

We are quite an informal group. Our sessions begin with refreshments and chat, followed by roughly an hour's bible discussion which some of us take turns to lead. There is often a short time of prayer at the end of the session. We value everyone's thoughts and questions, but if you just want to listen quietly, then that is absolutely fine.

So if you have been considering coming, don't put it off any longer. Just come along and join us. Session dates are on the notice board outside the Clifton Room and on the St John's website. You are welcome, of course, to contact me for more details.

Lesley Humphreys. 01707 851320

HAVERCROFT HOUSE GROUP

Our House Group studies have continued during the past year, meeting fortnightly, on a Tuesday evening.

Though we miss their valuable contribution to our HG, we are in regular contact with Alan and Angela Doel and are very pleased that they have settled so well in Bristol and have become active members in their local church.

Throughout 2018 we continued our studies of St Matthew's Gospel and finally completed this early in 2019. Various members have taken it in turns to prepare and lead our discussions. Before our summer break, in July, we enjoyed a pleasant social evening and supper together. The wonderful weather at the time meant we could enjoy the evening outdoors.

At present we are looking at a four session York Course entitled 'Life to the Full?'. This will take us into Lent, when we will be beginning our next long term project, studying the book of Acts. If you are interested in joining us we have the space to welcome one or two more people so, please, do come and see me for further information and with any questions you might have.

Valerie Vessey

STRAFFORD GATE HOUSEGROUP

2018 has been an informative and interesting year for our participants. We have continued to use a variety of editions of the Bible and to compare the translations as we work through each section. What is so fascinating is that whilst some passages are near identical in meaning and often in words other passages appear to be about different subjects. This leads to lively discussion. Recently we have not worked through published works on the various Bible Books, but rather by reviewing papers on the internet and the New International Version notes (which are extensive).

Our numbers have been stable this year at 6 (5 ladies and me). We meet once a month on Wednesdays, twice would be better but we struggle to find one day we can all attend. We are an informal and relaxed group and all our members contribute freely in the meetings. We would welcome new members (especially men says the writer) to build the team and add further views.

At the start of the year we were working through Matthews Gospel. Matthew definitely had a copy of Mark when he prepared his work, and it was probably written a few years after Mark. Matthew was a tax collector and wanted to link Jesus to the Old Testament tradition. It contains many sections which are read in Church on a regular basis but there is a lot more. Matthew has the most detailed accounts of Jesus' birth.

We then moved to study Izaiah. Commencing with a review of the Prophet's life and the situation in the states surrounding Israel at that time. The book is so long that there must have been multiple authors. We found the words repetitive and not too informative so we paused at the end of chapter 39 (the first section) with the intention of returning later. Before leaving Izaiah we compared the Old Testament prophecies with the situation today. There are plenty and repetitive warnings today but nobody listens.

Mark was the next subject for study. Wonderfully brief and to the point. We are working through the text at the time of writing. Mark has no birth story! To Mark Jesus' ministry started with his baptism by John. That is logical enough.

This led us to a review of the biblical support for the Christmas story. Quite revealing and interesting. Matthew has the most information, Luke may have interviewed Mary. The Christmas date was once a heathen festival and the Puritans hated Christmas (but the Catholics loved it).

David Carter - 29th January 2019

MEN'S GROUP

We continue to run a Men's group at St John's with the purpose of creating time for men of all ages to get together and socialise. We are keen to welcome both church members and any other men who would like to come along. Our intention is to meet every two months either at St John's or to take part in an activity at an outside venue. This year we have had a talk by Rob Ward's son about the army, a discussion about Christian vision for men, a fish and chip supper, and a barbecue in the summer. In March we will be visiting Studio 434 in Potters Bar which holds numerous special cars and we have 30 people going as we go to press. In April we will be having a talk from a company who makes coffee in the UK.

Dave Best

WOMEN CONNECT

Women Connect is a meeting for women of all ages and we meet on the 1st Friday of every month to watch lovely movies, have drinks, pudding and most importantly share our thoughts and ideas encompassed with our real-life testimonies where we encourage one another, and we finish it off with prayers.

Women connect was formed to gather women of all ages together from the church and the environs of Hertfordshire. However, the challenges that we are currently facing are e.g. most women from the environs can't commit to the timing and most especially the younger ones are not interested if it's Christian based but they love the aspect of the movies and the discussions afterwards. We have created profiles online/social media to be able to attract more people, these profiles are; Meetup.com with about 40 members online, Facebook page, a WhatsApp group where we update all members regularly.

The movies we watch are very exciting that most people who attend still talk about them, some of which are; **The Cross, My Angel, Fireproof, The Shack etc.** The messages in them are very real, thought provoking and more importantly, interesting and Faith filled. The average lengths of the movies we tend to watch is over 1hr, so we watch them in parts, which helps to create expectations to finish the movie with high anticipation of what will happen next? How does it end? Etc.

In most of our meetings, we discuss lots of current issues facing women in the society today; questions such as : The high expectations as a mum to be perfect always and run a home with no fault, how and what Christ's love really is, A Christian woman and Faith for her household, the commission of a woman in prayers for her home, the possibility of how we as Christians can show God's kind of love in this world today especially to strangers, How can we Forgive in the midst of Pain, How can we love in the journey of Forgiveness, How long does it take to Heal, Who helps us heal, Can we do it alone? Is God here, Really? Why does it always happen to me etc.

Our aim as a group is to nurture each other in Christ's love, encourage women of all ages via the themes we get from watching movies, discussions and prayers for ourselves and others and most importantly create an atmosphere of relationship with each other and relaxing for those couple of hours together in each other's company.

Women Connect group is for all ages from 14years and above. All are welcome and catered for.

Tinu Ade

WORSHIP GROUP

The Worship Group is a band of singers and musicians who lead and support the Church's worship through song. We attend most morning services including Holy Communion, Church Parade and Creative Church, and in 2018 we were able to assist the new evening Café Worship. We also take a leading role in the music for the special Christmas Services which in 2018 allowed us to resurrect the hits of the Spice Girls!

We have a Thursday night slot available for rehearsals but increasingly in recent years we have postponed practice to the Sunday morning before the service due to lack of availability of members midweek.

We have a solid core of 10-12 people who frequently take part but it would be good to see some new members join us.

Paul Guppy

COMMUNICATIONS GROUP

The Communications Group has been in existence since 2011 and currently comprises: Chris Esdaile (Chair), Dawn Fenner, Chris Humphreys, Gill Hutley, and Margaret Rhodes. We meet roughly twice a year.

We are responsible for most mass communications from St John's, including:

- St John's News
- The church website
- Notice boards (internal and external)
- Welcome cards and welcome packs
- Special publicity (eg for Christmas) and miscellaneous issues relating to signage and letterheads
- Group and activity leaflets for display holders

Since the last annual report, we have been working on a social media policy for St John's and thinking through the implications of a church Facebook page. We are also in the process of updating the welcome cards and the flower cards. We have been monitoring the extent to which our website is used, and we have found that, over the past 12 months, pages on the website have been viewed nearly 9,000 times. Many thanks to Chris Humphreys who keeps the website up to date with forthcoming events and services.

We periodically add new photos to the website, and we are currently planning a "refresh" of the posters used in the Wayside pulpit notice board (the large one on the corner of Heather Way). Many thanks to Robin Burns and Angela Page who assist us in keeping the internal notice boards up to date.

St John's News

This is designed for consumption both by members of the church and also by those visiting and using the church building. The aim is therefore to make it informative and attractive to both, and to be part of our outreach to those using the church premises. It is produced monthly (save for double editions covering December/January and July/August). Regular editors are Chris Esdaile, Gill Hutley and Margaret Rhodes. There is a central email to which material can be sent: sjnews@stjohnspb.org.uk

The Communications Group maintains an oversight of the editorial process, will make suggestions as to content, and several members of the Group will usually proof-read each edition before printing/circulation. Each month around 100 copies are printed (more for the double issues), 32 copies are sent out by email to our list of subscribers, and in addition it can be accessed from the website.

Chris Esdaile

CHURCH FLOWERS

Ten flower arrangers continue to provide a beautiful arrangement at the front of the Church each week throughout the year. Sometimes we have a request for a particular colour or flower to be included - not always though - then it's florist choice.

At Festival times we meet together, generally on a Saturday morning, to decorate other areas as well. These include the Entrance Hall, Vestibule and Window Cills.

After the Sunday Service the flowers are separated into bunches and distributed to members and friends, maybe as a "Thank You" or to any who are unwell or celebrating a particular event. A big thank you to all who have pledged a donation towards the flowers for 2019. If anyone else would like to contribute to remember a loved one or a date special to them - or for no particular reason at all - please add your name to the list at the far end of the vestibule or speak to me to discuss your gift.

I would like to thank everyone involved with arranging or distributing the flowers during the year and if there is anyone who feels they would like to join our group that would be great.

Margaret Bland

FRIDAY COFFEE MORNINGS

We still have a fairly constant attendance - 12-18 each week. It is the place to come and have a good cup of coffee/tea/biscuits (so cheap 50p) and keep up to date with all the family news and gossip.

The money raised at the Friday Coffee mornings (after expenditure), is sent, by rotation, to local charities. For the year to 31st August 2018 £712 (for 2017 the figure was £852) was collected and distributed to the following charities in equal amounts - Isabel Hospice, Friends of Potters Bar Hospital, Peace Hospice and Potters Bar Sixty Plus.

For those of you who come along for coffee on a Friday, will know, the volunteers work in pairs - they arrive in time for a 10.30am 'start' and finish around midday (closing time is flexible). It certainly is not onerous and if anyone would like to join the team, you would be made most welcome and am sure would thoroughly enjoy yourself.

I would like to extend a very warm welcome to anyone who enjoys a good laugh and natter to Friday Coffee in the Clifton Room - see you there??

Pat Goodwin

JMA REPORT

JMA currently has 4 collectors, all of which are families. If any child, or family would like to start collecting for JMA, please see Sandra Bowler and she can explain more; saving some of your loose change for JMA is all that you need to do, any amount would be gratefully received.

The Tiddler/loose change jar at the back of the church is still well supported and makes a valuable contribution to the overall amount raised. As well as this, Sandra and David Bowler continue to run their stall selling home-made jams and preserves on several Sundays throughout the year.

Total amount raised last year for JMA amounted to £447.05 broken down as follows;

Collectors £174.19

Tiddlers £68.91

Fund raising £203.95

Thank you to everyone who has contributed in any way to raising the figures above.

Sandra Bowler

SOCIAL COMMITTEE REPORT

We continue to have our regular social events.

The Beetle Drive was held in March after Creative Church. We welcomed families and individuals to an afternoon of frantic dice throwing. We served soup and sandwiches beforehand and had cake in the interval.

In June we had the carnival stall. This is an outreach event rather than fundraiser. Barbara once again provided a lot of jams and marmalade for the produce stall. Plus homemade cakes from church members. We had our usual 2 sideshows. This year we trialled setting up a Prayer space for people to get away from the hustle and bustle of the fete. Both adults and children tried out the writing a word on a stone for the prayer tree we had set up. The stall does require a number of people to set it up, run it for the afternoon and then pack it away and I am grateful to those who helped this year. Thank you.

In July we had our family fun day and BBQ. This was very well attended and new people came. Again Dick Waterhouse and the explorers set up some giant games and activities for people to try. This was very good. The weather stayed fine and we enjoyed the sunshine.

In November the church ran the national Tearfund quiz so we did not run our usual quiz. This was well attended and enjoyed by all.

Our church family quiz is now scheduled for March 2019 and the Beetle Drive for May.

If anyone would like to organize an event or has an idea for one, we would be happy to hear from them. If anyone would like to join the committee please let me know.

Sally Gunning

SUNDAY LUNCHES

Please take a moment to read this!!

Once a month St John's provides a Sunday Lunch for anyone who would otherwise be alone. It is a pleasurable occasion for the people who come, the team who chats to them, and those who work in the kitchen.

We need another cook to help – just two or three times a year. The lunches take place on the 2nd Sunday of every month, except August. There will be plenty of help and support for anyone who undertakes the responsibility of feeding approximately 30 guests a hot meal. We are indebted to all the folk who come and help each month, and to Helen Barlow and Barbara Thompson for their sterling work as our Cooks. This is a valuable way of reaching out to our community and we want it to continue, but to do that we need more hands.

Thank you

Christine Phillips

WOMEN'S GUILD

Despite decreasing numbers, the group continues to meet every Monday afternoon for a chat and a cup of tea. Unfortunately, during the past year we have lost two of our much loved members – Mary Roberts, who sadly died on Boxing Day had been a member of the Guild since 2005, and Nora Richardson who is now in resident care in Enfield.

During the year our programme has included a talk by Mr Terry Goulding of Potters Bar Historical Society about Potters Bar during the Second World War, Lisa who runs the Ballet School about her teaching experiences, Mr & Mrs Perry entertained us with a slide show and talk about the hidden gems of London (how do they find all those interesting places?) and Martin gave us a talk about glassware before the 20th Century – did you know the Romans brought glass working to England as early as 43AD? We always learn some interesting facts when Martin talks to us. We have also enjoyed some musical afternoons organised by Jo, quizzes and Beetle drives – and a Christmas lunch together.

Although some of the Guild members are now in their nineties, we look forward to continuing our meetings as long into the future as we can.

Barbara Biaggini