

2008/9 ANNUAL CHURCH REPORT ST JOHN'S COMMUNITY CHURCH



Please note that this report is available for you to view or download from our website:

www.stjohnscommunitychurch.org.uk

A copy of the church accounts as submitted to the Diocese of Lichfield in accordance with the Church Accounting Regulations 2006, may be viewed either at the church or at the Parish Office.

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Accounts made easy	For year ended 31st December 2008	For year ended 31st December 2007
Income	£	£
Planned Giving (Gift Aid)	42,690	41,076
Tax Reclaimed on general giving & donations	12,386	12,612
Planned Giving (non-Gift Aid)	2,725	3,788
Freewill Giving	5,107	5,162
Donations	706	762
Grants	0	200
Fees for - Weddings, Funerals and memorial stones	12,001	10,538
Less		
Assigned fees (wedding, funeral etc)	(4,891)	(4,361)
Verger (Wedding or funeral)	(275)	(200)
Organist (Wedding or funeral)	(440)	(295)
Net Fees	6,395	5,682
Young peoples ministry - Grant	12,500	15,000
Young peoples ministry - Other income	5,074	5,545
Church - Hire	5,499	5,792
The Rooms - Hire	6,259	5,808
Oscar Income	39,005	35,021
Light for Children Romania	677	4,187
Fund Raising – Christmas Fayre	1,362	1,125
10th Anniversary Celebrations	155	
Little Friends income less running costs	1,237	1,799
YPC income less running costs	40	1,143
Interest on Deposit Accounts	3,044	2,497
Interest earned on Current Account	3	1
Total Income	144,814	147,200

Expenditure	For year ended 31st December 2008	For year ended 31st December 2007
	£	£
Tithe Allocation	6,216	6,219
Parish Share	40,375	38,846
Vicar's expenses	796	682
Other Ministers expenses	51	5
Honorarium to Co-ordinator	3,578	3,347
Parish Administrator	4,761	4,930
Payments to Children's Worker (A.H.)	13,960	10,646
Music & Books	0	19
Youth Work	196	199
Youth Outreach	132	104
Payment and gifts to guest speakers	59	150
Oscar Expenses	30,227	29,290
Church - Cleaners & Caretakers	4,231	3,610
The Rooms - Cleaners & Caretakers	670	667
Church - Cleaning & Consumables	718	681
The Rooms - Cleaning & Consumables	73	86
Church - Heat / Light / Water / Refuse	6,123	5,036
The Rooms - Heat / Light / Water / Refuse	1,321	1,398
Churchyard - Water / Refuse	228	227
The Rooms— Maintenance, Parts & Repairs	113	790
Churchyard—Maintenance	94	1,340
Church - Maintenance, Parts & Repairs	2,967	2,616
Church - Insurance	658	408
The Rooms - Insurance	606	586
Children's Insurance	177	176
Worship Consumables	602	481

Expenditure continued	For year ended 31st December 2008	For year ended 31st December 2007
	£	£
Community Care running costs	88	(20)
Evangelistic Literature etc	20	60
Burntwood Churches United subscription	125	50
Church Away Days – Parish Weekend	600	0
Conferences and Retreats	195	145
Light for Children Romania	660	6,426
Publicity, promotion of mission	306	158
Training Courses and Activities	1,621	983
Church Telephone	155	300
Vicarage Telephone	596	631
Parish Office Telephone	505	538
Postage	121	134
Office Consumables & Sundries	373	206
Paper & Ink Supplies	523	649
Photocopier charges & supplies	887	520
Printer supplies, disks etc.	787	115
Deanery Synod	40	40
T.V. Licences	135	132
Christian Copyright Licence	322	304
Interest on Diocesan Loans	1,398	1,576
Audit Fee	550	550
Gift Aid Envelopes	0	51
Miscellaneous	876	956
Depreciation for the year	3,096	3,718
Total Expenditure	132,911	130,761

Excess of Income over Expenditure	11,953	16,439
Including		
YPM grant and contributions	3614	
Oscar's contribution	8778	
Deposit Accounts	£	
Mortgage Saver	24,000	
Young People's Ministry	17,437	
General	15,135	
Oscar's	9,144	
Diocesan Loan		
Amount Remaining on Building Loan	42,151	
Loan minus Mortgage Savings =	18,151	
Interest % payment on loan this quarter	2.75%	

Until deposit interests rates fell below 3%, the interest we received on the Mortgage Saver Deposit was 5% + and paid our loan interest.

If interest rates don't improve, now might be time to think about paying some of the loan off, using the Mortgage Saver Account and one off gifts from the congregation.

NB Parish share for 2009 is £41801. The full accounts can be viewed on a separate link from the church web site www.stjohnscommunitychurch.org.uk

Burntwood Churches United

Pentecost 2008 was celebrated with 'Birthday Funday' in the grounds of Chase Terrace Technology College. There was a Pig Roast, inflatable's for children and a variety of entertainment including a United Choir.

In November there was a Barn Dance held at Chasetown Methodist Church, with a Fish and Chip supper. The evening was thoroughly enjoyed by all present and gave a good boost to funds.

The annual 'Advent Service' was held at Emmanuel Church with Julie Street-Anderson bringing the message. The worship was led by a combination of St John's and Emmanuel musicians. People were very generous in the offering toward the Pathway Project. Everyone present felt this to be a very worthwhile service.

All Christmas Services in Burntwood Churches were advertised this year in the centre pages of the Look Local booklet. This year some of the special Easter Services were advertised by BCU for the first time using Look Local.

Another first this year has been our involvement in the 'Week of Prayer for Christian Unity'. On both the 18th and 25th January some clergy went to preach in a different denominational Church. (David Langton was much appreciated by St John's and Duncan by Burntwood Methodists). In the week between these Sundays, there were Prayer Meetings held each day, in a different Church, looking at issues facing Christians in the world today. The overall support for this was disappointing but we have ideas to encourage more support next time.

Gifts were presented to Rev David Weaver and Rev David Ditch on their retirements. David Ditch's unexpected retirement leaves BCU without a Chairman until the next AGM in September. David Weaver's successor Rev Margaret Mattocks is to be installed at Christ Church Burntwood on 23rd April. Please pray for her Ministry in our town.

Steve Taylor and Ken Whinray

Church Wardens Report: 2008

Another year has passed in the life of St. Johns Community Church and we thank the grace of God once again for the many things that have been accomplished.....

In November 08 the wardens had an individual meeting with the Rural Dean and Assistant Lay Chair. Their position is to act on behalf of the Archdeacon and seek to encourage good practice and look for ideas to share with the rest of the Deanery.

We discussed , Fabric, Morale and Policies. We produced evidence for the work of St John's in these areas and the Rural Dean and Assistant Lay Chair were satisfied with our progress and just highlighted minor items for review. Action has now been taken on these, (for more information please see Andy or Paul).

Last year it was mentioned how church members could have the opportunity to discuss church concerns in private with the wardens. These issues can then be reported to the relevant area for discussion (anonymously) and reported back to the person raising the issue. This helps to keep a 'healthy' atmosphere within the church community as concerns/problems can be dealt with (*hopefully*) quickly and satisfactorily. Therefore, this year we have seen the start of the 'Church Wardens Surgery', which has been attended by a number of the congregation.

Work undertaken over the year:

- We have installed blinds to all the rooms which have improved the visual effect when entering the church and offers a sense of privacy to the rooms.
- One of the next important jobs which will require attention is the external wooden window frames and doors. Although they have been wood treated, this was two years ago and they are now requiring further treatment or they will need replacement in the near future.
- A further area that will need attention is to replace the carpet throughout the church. This needs affirming with the PCC in order

money can start to be put aside for this work.

- The boiler system has been serviced although there are a few jobs that still need to be undertaken.

Keeping a watchful eye:

- Vandalism is still causing us concern, the latter part of last year we had a number of windows broken and more recently a number of the shrubs were pulled out of the ground.

Thanks:

- Thanks go to all who have spent time in cutting and tidying the church hedges and shrubbery area. Also for the regular cutting of the lawns and general tidying up and cleaning.
- The wardens would like to thank the deputy wardens for all their work on Sunday services enabling them to run smoothly. If any member would like to be involved in this valuable work please see one of the wardens
- We would like to thank the assistance of the Real groups on providing refreshments, welcoming the congregation and taking part in the service. Also the tidying and putting away the tables and chairs after some of the services, this is a big help.
- We should also like to thank all the hard work that goes on behind the scenes in the Church and Parish offices. On occasions we take all their work they do for granted but without their dedication we would not be a body function.
- This year also sees the resignation of one of the church wardens following his 3 year commitment. Paul wishes Andy and the new warden all his support in the valuable job for the forthcoming year.

There are so many people that assist us in our positions as church wardens and so many people to thank, so we would like to thank not only those mentioned above but you all for your help, support and more importantly your prayers over the past year.

As a community church we have shown over the years that we involve the community in a number of our events and we should be congratulated on the work that teams and individuals put in to make these events a success. God is with us.

Andy and Paul
Church Wardens

Community Care

We managed to arrange 4 events since the AGM last year.

The first was on 2nd August. It was a Summer Time Afternoon Tea where 70 people sat down to sandwiches, strawberries scones and cake.

The next event, a Harvest Lunch, was on 4th October. We provided a ploughman's platter and homemade apple crumble and custard. 71 people attended.

On 6th December we held an Advent Buffet Lunch for 68 people. The food this time included sausage rolls and quiche.

We are holding an Easter Lunch on 4th April. At the time of writing this report I don't know how successful it will be. I do know that quite a few of the regulars are on holiday at this time so numbers will be down.

Our resident entertainers, Janice and Peter Howard and Margaret Nicholls (with guest appearances by John Nicholls and Esther Wheeler) have provided music, song and laughter at each event. Our guests seem to thoroughly enjoy joining in the singing.

We have a wonderful team of helpers now in Di and Andy Pointon, Karen and Roger Houghton, Linda Burrow and Hazel Hart. A great big THANK YOU to all of you. We couldn't do it without you.

It has been wonderful to see so many people coming along to join us. The numbers have increased gradually over the last couple of years by word of mouth. We have been extending the invitations to bring a friend and quite a few people have done so. Some of the friends have then asked to be included on the list. It is good to see members of our church family and the parish and members of other churches in the Burntwood area, meeting up to enjoy chatting with old friends and making new friends.

Please pray for all who attend these events.

Thank you and God Bless.

Irene and Mike Holmes

Community Church Co-Coordinator

It is my responsibility to hire out the rooms at church and at Ironstone Road. I receive bookings via telephone, email or in person. I prepare invoices, booking forms and receipts. I also prepare the weekly newsletter and the booking lists that can be found displayed outside church.

In my role I am the first point of contact some members of the public have with the Church. This gives me immense pleasure and satisfaction and I hope that I shine with God's light and love in welcoming them into our church, not only to enjoy and use the facilities but also to join us at our services.

My duties include coordinating the caretakers and cleaners duties and the purchasing of their supplies and any supplies required by the church.

At the start of the year it became my responsibility to pay the cleaners wages using the BACS system. This has been an interesting experience! Carol Whinray is excellent at preparing the wage slips so that I know what needs paying and I thank God for her willingness to help.

God's Encouragement

I feel God's encouragement in the way people have been impressed by our facilities and have recommended us to others. We are now meeting the needs of a wide section of the community from the very young (at Little Friends) right up to our golden oldies! (At Darby and Joan). I have been encouraged by the continued support of our team –John & Marg Nicholls - caretakers, Sharon Adams, Joan Gorman, Julie Atkinson and Janice Howard – cleaners along with George Green (grounds man). Carol Whinray in her support and admin talents - their continued hard work and enthusiasm are all a reflection of God's love.

How we can Pray

Please pray for the continued enthusiasm and dedication of the team that they may grow and feel valued in their roles.

Deanery Synod

A number of presentations have been made to the Synod over the last 12 months. One of these was about the redevelopment of Shallowford House (conference and retreat centre) and we are asked to consider giving some of our Tithe to this.

The main theme of Deanery meetings at present is 'Mission Shaped Deanery'. There is a concern in the Church of England nationally that there are not enough people completing ordination training to fill all the vacancies coming up due to retirement etc. The Midlands is not seen as an attractive place to become a vicar in comparison to many places in the South who can afford to enhance salaries. We are pleased that Christ Church in Burntwood has been able to fill their vacancy, but there is no guarantee that other vacancies will be filled.

How should the Deanery organise itself if there is a post that cannot be filled? Is this a time to question everything that the Church does at the moment, stop doing things that are not producing fruit? Forget the notion of one Church – one Vicar? Work as a team using each person's strengths? Recruit non ordained people to work with children/youth/admin etc? Discussions have hardly begun.

It was felt that there should be a change in policy with regard to younger people applying for training. Not telling them to go away and get some 'life experience', but encouraging them. Any young people who get accepted and trained need to be placed into Churches where there is potential for them to reach more young people.

The debate has only just begun.

Ken Whinray

Gift aid and planned giving

Thank you to everyone for your continued giving during these difficult financial times. We are committed to giving to help maintain our church for the benefit of the community, and also to help finance the various ministries.

There are 3 ways of regular giving :

Monthly standing order

Weekly envelopes

One – off envelopes

As long as you pay sufficient tax to cover the amount of your annual giving, you can gift aid at no additional cost to yourself. In fact those paying tax at 40% can claim the extra back for themselves! Our church will benefit to the tune of 28p for every £1 given. All you need to do is complete a gift aid declaration form.

Tax is claimed back twice a year. The first claim is for the period from 6th April to 30th September, the second from 1st October to 5th April. We have received £5,384.98 so far this Tax Year on giving amounting to £20,009.

Since 1st October 2008 to 28th February 2009 the giving totals £16,944.

The next claim will be made shortly after the start of the new Tax Year.

If there are any new members of our church family who pay tax and wish to start regular giving, or indeed anyone who wishes to change their method of giving, please contact me on 01543 672970 and I will give you the necessary forms and answer any questions.

Irene Holmes

Gift Aid Secretary

Lay Readers:

Linda Hood - training for ordination

The Task

I have continued training part-time at St John's College, Nottingham, completing modules in Biblical Studies, Practical Theology, and Christian Thought and Worship. I also spent 8 months undertaking a Church Placement here, supervised by Duncan, during which I was able to spend time reviewing the work of the Friday YPC Leaders, thinking about how the church includes children in its life and worship, and encouraging some

people to identify and develop their gifts, as well as being involved in the day-to-day work of the church.

God's encouragement

I have been strengthened by the support of many people here in the church, and it has been good to see how God has been at work in so many ways here. I have really enjoyed my studies too (despite the pressure of exams and assignments!), and have made some very good friends at college.

How we can pray

The next three months will be very busy for me, with pressure to complete all the studies on time. I am looking forward to completing the training and being ordained at the end of June 2009, ready to become an assistant curate here at St. John's, with all the challenges that will bring!

Dave Barnsley—As Lay Reader. I would like to thank you for the privilege of preaching during this past year. I have appreciated the challenge of serving in this way. It has been good to share in the different topics and themes we have covered as a Church through a variety of services. As a leader of the 'Family Time' event each month, I have been encouraged and challenged to see the work develop and I thank Andrew and Ian for the experience of working with them. It will be interesting to see where God takes us as a church in this new year ahead.

Little Friends

For the first time in our 15 year history we have had to temporarily close our waiting list - it was just too long and we couldn't promise a place soon enough for a child before going to nursery.

This enabled our members to be more manageable and created a calmer atmosphere as well as giving the helpers time to actually talk to our mums.

However, this might change in September.

This year has been fairly similar to previous years with regard to activities – usual celebrations at Christmas Easter and Harvest as well as leaving parties and a trip to Go Bananas last June.

Yvonne has kept children busy with loads of craft ideas. Peter Howard helps enormously with his music on the accordion. I have been very encouraged by mums' requests for prayer. A couple of our members have been very poorly and we have talked about and prayed for them and people have asked us to pray into situations as well as our offers to pray for them.

I would personally appreciate it if people with an hour to spare could just come and chat to folk!

Thanks once again for our dedicated team of helpers:- Yvonne, Michael Betty, Jim, Sarah, Lindsey, Sheila, Pam and Hazel, Andrew, Peter and Janice

Marriage Preparation Course

The new revised and shortened Marriage Preparation Course runs for 3 weeks.

The course contents include DVD clips from Care for the Family's 'The Sixty Minute Marriage', combined with audio tapes from the Alpha 'Marriage Course' and a sprinkling of paper exercises and handouts taken from the various courses we have used over the years.

It sounds a bit of a mixed bag, but seems to work well, and because of the variety, helps to make the sessions interesting and not too intimidating. The aim is to engender a relaxed atmosphere in order for the couples to feel at ease and able to discuss different topics on a one to one basis and take lessons learnt home with them to lay the foundation for a long and happy marriage.

The main areas covered by the course are Communication, Commitment, Resolving Conflict and Love and Intimacy.

We had a lively course in June with participants, Viv and Stuart, and Mark and Hayley. They all joined in the discussions with gusto and the mix of different age ranges added another dimension and stimulated conversation. We hope that we will all remember the lessons learned and apply to them to our marriages, helping us to get the very best out of our lives together.

We start this year's course on 29 April and again invite anyone to join us.

Paul and Mary Aplin

Oscar's AGM Report 2008/09

Oscar's has seen yet another busy year with many changes

Becky Beeley left us early in the year to take up full time employment and Karen Cruxton joined us in June, settling very quickly to become a valued member of the team. The team since then has bonded well with each supporting and caring for each other and the children in our care. Sadly Shirley Povey after almost nine years has decided to 'hang up' her sweatshirt and she leaves us at Easter. She will be sorely missed by both children and staff and I thank her for her love and commitment to Oscar's. We wish her well and hope she will keep in touch.

Training has been ongoing throughout the year. Karen started her NVQ level 3 in Playwork in September with Tamworth College while Nancy Ennis has just begun her NVQ level 3 based in the workplace. We thank them for their commitment as these courses are 1-2 years long. Other training such a Safeguarding Children level 1 and 2, Food Hygiene, , Promoting Positive Behaviour, Fire Risk Assessment etc have been undertaken by staff.

Changes in Ofsted regulations resulted in we had no deputy to cover for me during all day opening and so my thanks go to Linda Hood & Ken Whinray who have stepped in to cover a few hours each day enabling me to have a break. The increased paperwork that Ofsted requires seems at times to overshadow our time with the children and it is a constant battle to keep on top. Thanks to Carol Whinray who does so much to keep our policies and finances in order, it is a mammoth task.

Our numbers of children have remained stable during this increasing difficult national financial time. One or two parents have cancelled their places because of lost jobs but we are regularly registering new children. Our mornings are particularly busy with us often having 20 children. At one time we were pleased if we got to double figures! Friday evenings see us transferring approx 6/7 children to the 4.30 YPC while older children return for the 6.00 session.

February 22nd saw us reach our tenth birthday and with the help of our St John's family we celebrated on Sunday 29th March with a wonderful party where every child, staff and volunteers who has been involved during our ten years were all invited. Andi Markham with Jack (remember him at Smallwood Manor) came to entertain while Andrew did a wonderful job of planning and leading the celebration. Thanks to Carol for organising the invitations, caters and making a fabulous cake. I wonder what the next ten years will bring!!

Finally I want to thank everyone, children, parents, staff, committee and St John's who have supported me and especially Oscar's during this past year and again I thank God for His many blessings on us. *Thank you God!*

Sue Southall - Playleader

Parish Administrator

The Task

Responsible for the running of the Parish Office which basically means doing anything and everything I can to assist in the smooth running of the parish in general. I am new to the role which was previously held by Sue Southall - a real veteran in this field! I work alongside Sarah the Coordinator and we are mainly based in the office on Ironstone Road.

God's Encouragement

I experience God's encouragement on a daily basis in this role, both with the help and support that Sarah and Sue have given me and also by the constant Prayers that I know the parish has been saying for my health. I am sure that I would not be finding my illness quite so easy to deal with if it wasn't for this and I would like to thank you all.

How we can Pray

It is always difficult starting a new job, there is a lot to learn and remember. This coupled with my illness has made the process a little harder and I would ask that you would pray for my health and that I can return to the position renewed, able to commit my full attention and be of assistance to the Parish.

Marie Hiley

PASTORAL CARE

The task

As a church, through the REAL groups, friendships, prayer groups and visits, I know that pastoral care is strength.

The REAL groups continue to be at the hub and I count them as my 'team'.

There has been some movement within the groups and new people have begun to attend.

We have added a morning group for those who are unable to attend groups at night.

Birthday cards are still going well, but don't forget that even though I send the card, it is from 'everyone' in the family of Christ at St John's

God's encouragement

There have been occasions when I have been concerned that people needing support have been missed, but on making enquires I have been very encouraged to find that they are being 'looked after' by someone in church, proving to me that the system we have in place is working.

At the REAL group meeting recently, we looked at 'Are We a Caring Church' and though we acknowledge that we can never get it right all of the time, we're not doing such a bad job. So thank you to every one.

How can we pray?

Continue to hold the body of Christ at St John's up to God, that people who are not so confident at sharing how they feel are not ignored, and that we will continue to love one another as brothers and sisters in Christ.

Norma Humphries

Safeguarding Children

The task

As a church, we continue to ensure that all those authorised to work with children and young people are appropriately appointed, trained and supported.

As there are changes to legislation we have to keep up to date with what is happening, which will be reflected in adjustments when our Safeguarding policy is reviewed this year.

God's encouragement

Thank you for your patience in completing all the forms I have sent out in the last year.

Our team of people involved in children's work and work of other responsibilities that determine they have to be CRB cleared amounts to 44, illustrating the commitment of time that is being given to St John's. This of course doesn't include others where it has not been necessary for people to be cleared.

How can we pray?

Please continue to pray that children are able to visit our church, enjoying the time they spend in our care, having fun, learning about God and staying safe.

Norma Humphries

Pathway

2008-09 has again been a year of expansion, and it is a sad reality that growth is still needed in order to meet the demand for our services. This year has seen our Floating Support Service increase from one worker to three. Since November 08 we have been able to offer an increased and improved service to women living in the community and suffering domestic abuse, in Burntwood, Lichfield and Tamworth.

Increasing our staff team poses the problem of lack of space in our offices. We have been fortunate that a local philanthropist wishes to

support us in setting up an Outreach / Drop In Centre, where women can call and access help and support during office hours. We are busily searching for a suitable building at the moment.

We continue to provide for the needs of women and children through all of our services. The refuges remain full and we have the added difficulty of having had quite serious fires in both Lichfield and Tamworth in the last few months, both of which put a room out of commission for some weeks. I am sure that God was watching over us and thankfully no-one was injured in either fire.

We have been able to install some high quality playground equipment in the garden at our Lichfield Refuge. We are now fundraising for AstroTurf to make the garden suitable for all year round play. We have been fortunate in gaining funding for some laptops and dongles, giving internet access. These are for the use of our service users in training such as Lifeskills, and has increased our ability to support women in gaining new skills. The training programs are running very successfully, and we are busy providing training for other agencies too.

In October we featured in Midlands Today, to highlight the use of BBC Children in Need funding. They showed a very moving film of one of our families who benefitted from the funding and the help that Pathway was able to provide. In fact the film was so moving that the producer cried when she saw it for the first time and promptly made us the lead story on both the lunchtime and evening news.

We work closely with many other agencies across the county, but our biggest problem this year has been the sheer volume of meetings that we have needed to attend. This has meant that myself and my Deputy, Hayley, have spent much of our time in meetings and constantly trying to catch up with office work.

Funding is always a big issue for us. We are in a slightly better position than we were in at this time last year, but still have to raise a lot of money in order to provide all of our very important services.

We would love your continued prayers, for our service users, our staff and volunteers and for the plans and funding needs. God is very good to us, and does always provide, so also we would like to thank Him for His faithfulness to us and for guiding us in the direction that He wants us to go in.

Kathy Coe- Director

APCM report from PCC secretary

The PCC has met six times since the last APCM. The main achievements of the PCC over the last year have included the following: -

- To direct the resolution of practical issues within and around the church. This has included the replacement of uneven slabs along the side path, the painting of white lines along the driveway to discourage dangerous parking and the marking out of a disabled parking bay. The boiler has been attended to and the church given a spring clean.
- The Health and Safety Policy has been reviewed and updated, with improved testing regimes implemented and the appointment of a new Health and Safety Officer.
- The approval of a new parish administrator and a new Oscars playworker and those who volunteer as 'Young Peoples Church' leaders.
- Discussed and approved both the further educational development and the funding of our youth worker.
- Taken steps to improve the sound system within the church.
- Supported a request for a bench to be placed in the graveyard in memory of a parishioner.
- Approved of and assisted with the various events to celebrate the ten year anniversary of the church building last year.
- Approved the distribution of the tithe money.
- Continued to support Linda Hood during her training and approved the project to include children in Communion which she is to

undertake.

- Continued to sponsor a Chasetown FC player, further strengthening links with the football club through the distribution of mince pies to supporters at Christmas for a second year.

Prayer, Mission & Evangelism Ministry

PRAYER *'You can be sure that God will take care of everything you need, his generosity exceeding even yours in the Glory that pours from Jesus!'*
Philippians 4v19

Firstly, as we experience the sad loss of Jose we want to thank God for her passion for prayer and her commitment to pray for others as a member of our Prayer Ministry Team.

During this past year it has been a joy to see people praying together in a variety of settings both corporately and in their personal prayer life. We praise God for the way His Holy Spirit has prompted people to ask for prayer, and trust one another to intercede for them. We have been encouraged to see St. John's becoming a 'praying people' who seek God for their lives and for the lives of others. As we continue to provide space for God to speak to us as individuals and as a corporate body, we can see God opening up opportunities to develop our relationship with Him. Please pray that God will continue to speak to us, as we respond to the Holy Spirit, and we serve one another in this way.

MISSION & EVANGELISM is about relationships. It is our relationship with God our Heavenly Father and our relationship towards each other. **Locally**, we have such opportunities to be Jesus to the people of our community through the vital work of Schools work, Oscars, Little Friends, Youth & YPC Club, Family Time, Community Care, REAL Groups, T6 Youth Project' and Pathway. **Nationally**, we provide support for Ellen Nicholls as she seeks to speak the Christian message into schools through her Collective Encounter band within Innovation Trust. We also support Abigail Barnsley who works for PURE, a charity supporting young people in discovering and creatively developing their individual identity, worth and potential. **International** projects include 'Light for

Children' charity in Romania through Helen & Costel Cosman who live and provide support for orphan children and families. We also have links with Malaysia and Argentina.

Real Groups : - Harvesters

We have had lots going on in this last year. Paul and Mary Aplin came to join us to help me as a real group leader, who I would like to thank for their support, we also welcome Val as a new member who has recently joined us. We have had various studies including some of the Nooma series which have brought a lot of discussion and challenged us in ways we didn't expect.

We now join with Ian and Lisa Mckeown's real group for our socials and they have been very kind and opened up their home to us when we meet and make us all feel very welcome.

We are all saddened by the death of Jose. I am humbled by the way everyone is so willing to be part of this group and have supported one another either in a practical way or by prayer.

I am looking forward to see what God has got in store for us in this coming year.

Wednesday REAL Group – 'The A Team!'

We are now in our 3rd year as a REAL group, how time flies when you are enjoying yourselves! As we reflect upon the past 12 months, it is an absolute joy and privilege to discover 'life' together each week as we build relationship, pray for one another and share our experiences through looking at the Bible as a group. We are very appreciative to Karen, Nigel and their family for allowing us to 'take over their home' each Wednesday evening and providing wonderful tea and coffees! The Lent Bible Study has been inspirational and we would like to thank every member of the group for leading /contributing to make these sessions such quality learning.

Worship

After meeting with worship leaders recently we came up with the following.

During our time of worship – positives were: - A strong sense of family spirit filled church, a sense of joy and good relationships, freedom in worship, a wide variety of musical instruments, a good variety of services.

Areas we could improve on are: - A need to start on time, more freedom for the spirit to move, head for young new worship leaders, sound system needs replacing and those people who operate it need to be trained, fold back needs replacing, length of services needs watching – sometimes too long. Our aim is to finish by 12 noon.

We are greatly blessed by the amount of talented musicians and instruments. However we could do with at least another drummer! Any offers?

It is always a great privilege to be part of the worship at St Johns, We have a unique atmosphere and are where the Spirit of God is present – always, and if we allow, he can take us into a new dimension of worship.

Let us pray that our hearts, minds and spirit become more and more in tune with what God is saying to us as a church as well as individuals.

Youth AGM Report (14 + years)

Our Wednesday night youth group continues to achieve a great sense of fun and camaraderie between the youth themselves and the leaders, mixed with some in-depth discussions about life issues and how to deal with them from a Christian point of view.

We have also been going to local youth events like Resonate and Thanx Live, to continue to broaden their individual journey with God, so that

when we go on the annual trip to Soul Survivor (July) they can feel at home with the energetic style of worship and teaching.

Our trips out have included evenings to the cinema, ice-skating and a visit to Aldridge air cadets.

A Project that was enjoyed by the whole of Youth was producing media clips that expressed the meaning of Christmas. We used these media clips at the Christmas Eve Special. Through discussion we decided to do a take on Big Brother. The traditional characters of the nativity story were thrown into the Big Brother Barn and we saw, in the dairy room, how each character was feeling and had been changed by the birth of Jesus.

We took a part in writing the scripts and playing different characters. What was most surprising was how the nativity costumes fitted us as young people.

As leaders we look forward to seeing the young people grow in their faith and continue to learn what it means to follow Jesus with the whole of their lives.

Mark, Hayley and Andrew

Young People's Ministries Leader' Training -

So, what's been happening during the last twelve months. There is as you will know within your own ministries and lives, that there is so much to say, when you sit down and start to think.

My diploma in children's evangelism, which I am doing at Cliff College, is coming to an end. I have been busy writing my last piece of work, which is a research project titled:

‘An exploration of the role of fantasy worlds in children's literature, and their implications for the development of children's faith. With particular reference to the writings of C S Lewis and J K Rowling.’

All **the** work that I have done during the course has to be presented by

May 6th and I hope to graduate on Saturday 27th June. I plan to continue studying at Cliff College for a further two years which would mean at the end I would graduate with a degree in children's evangelism.

The work I have done while at Cliff has been both challenging and rewarding. I have enjoyed the reading and the deeper understanding of both my own faith and the theories of how faith grows and develops, which have resulted from studies. I would like to thank everyone for their support both financially and practically, and for their interest in my studies.

Young People's Church (YPC)

Our Young Peoples Church on a Friday night is going well and the Junior Leaders who joined the team in September have been a great asset and encouragement to us all. The number of children that come to YPC has fallen due in some ways to another youth club opening in Burntwood. After two terms is noticeable that it is not a phase and as a team we are looking at events and publicity that can be done to raise our profile within Burntwood.

Sunday YPC continues to be a small group of young people which can vary in attendance from week to week. Since Christmas we have been thinking about aspects of Jesus' life.

It is a pleasure to work with an able team of leaders and assistants. The Team at present is Chris Miller, Lisa Mckeown and myself, Karen Proctor and Viv McKay. It would be good to have another person to join the team who would like to assist and work with a leader. Many thanks to Wendy Barnsley who has agreed to step in and help out for the moment.

I enjoy spending time with the children and young people of our church and see myself not as a teacher in a class but as a friend on a journey. It is through this journey that we discuss bible stories and life situations and learn from each others views and experiences. It has also been good to spend time with the children during the beginning of the service before YPC. We spend time together playing games, listening, singing and just being a part of what St John's church family is. I want to encourage you,

that if you want to, come and sit in a different place and experience worship in a different way.

Primary Schools Work

My work with the three primary schools continues to go well. I am able to do an assembly in each school every fortnight and as each school term ends I am asked for new dates for the next term, which I think can be seen as an encouragement.

I have been able to repeat certain lessons, such as the lessons I have done focusing on Christmas and the lessons at church that look at baptism. The lesson which has become known as the 'wedding experience' has proven to be popular with schools as it gives the opportunity for the children to 'role play' a wedding and learn about marriage, and then celebrate with a reception/party afterwards.

In most cases it is the school who requests my involvement in lessons and it was the case when we organised an Easter celebration. The school was keen to come to church to learn and celebrate Easter in a fashion that they had come to expect of their visits to church; namely, fun and games, and where throughout the whole time a message of Easter is present.

Last year during the summer term I was able to go with a year six group from Holly Grove, to Standon Bowers outdoor education centre. As I had previously worked there it was a good time to spend with the staff and with the children, some of whom come to Friday YPC. This summer I am planning to go with the school again to offer my time and support to the children and staff, although I think I gain as much if not more than I give.

It is my plan to run the transition session for year six children who will be going to high school in September. I have run this session with Laura and John (T6 Youth for Christ) for two years and it has grown from running it in one school to three schools. It is my plan to run this session in all the feeder schools that are linked with Chase Terrace Technology College. This would mean that in the September of the year sixes going to high school we could run 'Y6 re-united' group with the hope of meeting the

children at high school and introducing them to 'Quest' a Christian group run by Laura Handy.

FamilyTime continues to run well and has for a long time now been part of what St John's does. Both my self and Ian continue to meet each week to plan the activities and games that are part of this time. I cannot say that this is always easy and that ideas always spring into our minds but we can be sure that God is present with us and guides us through what we do and why we do it.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank Dave Barnsley who has been part of the planning team. He has been a great person to have on the team and I am really happy that he will still be around to help with the running of FamilyTime on the Sunday.

What has been good is that Ruth and Nigel Haywood have joined the planning team and they bring their own gifts and talents which will be and have already been used within FamilyTime.

What is encouraging is that when change comes it is welcomed and not feared. It would be nice if everything could always stay as it is but this is neither realistic or healthy. I am thankful that all changes are met with an excitement for the future and a little nervousness for the present and not the other way around.

Last year I wrote about the vision I had for children's ministry and that we would be able to offer something for all ages. As that continues I think that it is right that we seek to find ways to link all these groups together within the life of the whole church. I think that it is within the whole community that we will find and grow in faith as we journey together. I do not pretend to have any answers or brilliant ideas but what I do know, is someone who does. I am grateful and look forward to what God has for us as a church in the future.

Buzz Lightyear (Andrew Howard)