



**ST THOMAS**  
**CHURCH LANCASTER**  
SHARING GOD'S LOVE FROM THE HEART OF THE CITY

**Appendix to**  
**ANNUAL REPORT**  
**2020**  
**containing the agenda and**  
**reports of Organisations**

Issued April 2021

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## **Agenda for The Annual Meeting 2021**

**Monday 26<sup>th</sup> April 2021 at 7.30pm by Video Conferencing**

### **(1) Prayers**

### **(2) Meeting of Parishioners for the Choosing of Two Churchwardens**

### **(3) The Annual Parochial Church Meeting of St Thomas Electoral Roll Members**

*Members may ask questions or raise relevant matters at any time during the meeting.*

- 1.** Apologies for Absence
- 2.** The following agenda items are all covered in the Annual Report or the Appendix. To save time, the meeting will be invited to accept these reports en bloc unless discussion of specific issues are requested by the meeting.
  - a) Minutes of the previous year's meeting (Appendix p5 & notice board)
  - b) Electoral Roll Officer's Report (Appendix p6)
  - c) Report on the Proceedings of the PCC /Church Members (see the Annual Report)
  - d) Churchwardens' report on Fabric, Goods and Ornaments (Appendix p6)
  - e) Receiving the Reports from Church Organisations given in the Appendix
- 3.**
  - a) Report on the financial affairs of the Parish Church (Annual Report)
  - b) Audited Accounts for the previous calendar year (Annual Report)
  - c) Audited statement of Funds and Property for that year (Annual Report)
- 4.** Elections
  - a) Appointment of 5 tellers for the election, if required.

- b) Introduction of each candidate standing for election
  - c) Election of 4 Electoral Roll Members to serve on PCC for 3 years; and 1 to serve on the Deanery Synod for 2 years
- 5.** Choosing of an independent examiner for the current year.
  - 6.** Formal Motions
  - 7.** Closing Prayer.

## **Summary of the Annual Parochial Church Meeting October 2020**

The APCM was held on Monday 19 October 2020 at 7.30pm (by videoconferencing). There were 94 Electoral Roll members present and 2 members of the clergy. Apologies were received from 2 members. There were 341 on the roll.

The Minutes of last years' meeting in 30<sup>th</sup> April 2019 had been on the Notice Board and are summarised in the Annual Report Appendix. They were accepted by the meeting unanimously.

The Annual Report and Audited Accounts had been seen, accepted and signed at the PCC meeting on March 23rd 2020.

All reports of various church groups and contained in the Appendix to the Annual Report were accepted unanimously.

In summary there were 11 people nominated for the PCC, all elected unopposed. Jill Bundy, John Whitaker, Phil Shentall and Ruth Hassall, were appointed for a period of three years; Ann Dunnington, Sam Arputharaj and Lois Bowers were appointed for a period of one year and Gregor Smith, Derek Matthews, Kevin Glazebrook and Corina Redmore were all appointed to Deanery Synod.

There were no formal motions and the meeting closed with the grace.

# **Reports of Organisations 2020**

## ***ELECTORAL ROLL***

The number currently on the Electoral Roll to be announced at the APCM.

## ***CHURCHWARDENS' REPORT***

Chris Park completed his term of office in October 2020 and Sim Lane-Dixon then took up the role, alongside Linda Hendry, who continued into her second year. 2020 has been a very unusual year, both due to the COVID-19 pandemic, and due to the HOTC building project. This has meant that for much of the year, the church warden's role has been mainly behind the scenes. In this context, we have continued to serve on various sub-committees, including Pre School, Estate Management, HOTC (all Chris) and safeguarding (Linda), with Sim then taking over from Chris on the Estate Management and HOTC sub-committees from the October 2020 APCM onwards. We also meet monthly with our vicar, are members of PCC and Standing Committee, and have enjoyed taking part in the recruitment process for various members of staff. It is great to be serving as part of such a great team of staff and volunteers.

As there have been only a limited number of on-site services, the role of acting as warden during services has been limited primarily to the 11.30am communion service. Chris has carried out the majority of these duties, and continues to do so – for which we are both extremely grateful. Sim has also used his practical skills to carry out minor repairs to the church building as needed. We would also like to thank Terry Legg and Katherine Shentall, for making sure the church has been cleaned and made ready for services during the pandemic and that appropriate cleaning materials are available, with appropriate risk assessments in place. We would also particularly like to thank all of the staff team, technical team and volunteers for making online church possible over the past year. Online church has required the learning of many new technical and presentational skills which have been taken on in a very professional and enthusiastic manner and is additional to all of the other great work that they already do behind the scenes.

Two particular task that we have worked on are gathering potential names for the new church centre, and thinking about how we as a

church relate to the 'Black Lives Matter' movement. The former led to a set of 44 inspiring names, which collectively expressed our vision for the new building to be a place of welcome and sanctuary, from where we can share God's love with our local community. Following an online poll in which church members were asked to vote for their top 5 names, the PCC then decided to name the building 'The Centre @ St Thomas'. We would like to thank all those who either proposed a name, or participated in the online poll, guiding this decision. It was a very encouraging process, helping us to collectively express our vision for the building. The thinking on our approach to the 'Black Lives Matter' movement led to a paper, primarily authored by Chris, with input from Linda and our vicar, entitled "ST THOMAS' CHURCH AND THE LEGACY OF THE SLAVE TRADE", which was discussed and adopted at our PCC meeting in September 2020 as an expression of intent. Please do email us at wardens@st.tees.org.uk if you would like to see a copy of that report, or have any other questions or comments for us. God Bless you all, and we hope to be seeing you in the church building sometime soon.

Linda Hendry & Sim Lane-Dixon

### ***ESTATE MANAGEMENT TEAM***

The group only met occasionally this year for obvious reasons. I am extremely grateful for Chris Park's support and while sorry to see him go we are very happy to welcome Sim Lane-Dixon bringing proven skills to the group! Mike Norbury has stepped down after contributing his considerable wisdom and knowledge of the church and centre for very many years and he will be greatly missed. Jon Dixon has been involved with our electrics over the years and he retired at the end of the year. He helped with handover of some essential electrical work in church in December. EMT ended the year drawing up a new list of projects and activities for 2021.

Katharine Shentall



## **HEALTH AND SAFETY**

This was a busy year due to changing restrictions and requirements of the Covid-19 pandemic. Risk assessments were written and kept under review for staff using the buildings and for congregation and volunteers in church during services and other activities when permitted. We are very grateful to Terry Legg who has worked tirelessly to keep the church clean.

The arrival of Piningtons in October meant that pathways and access have been under review, and our fire risk assessment was amended while the rear door was out of action.

Katharine Shentall

## **SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN**

It is such a privilege to be in a church that prioritises safeguarding. Our team are always willing to learn and there is plenty to do. This year considering the current pandemic, we have not been as busy as usual, but we have been plodding away in the background. We have been working through our parish audit, a document we regularly update to continually challenge our policies and practices. Reviewing our safer environment and activities documents and some of us have attended the virtual leadership safeguarding training online.

I am acutely aware of the pressures that this pandemic has placed on family life with an increase in domestic abuse and mental health issues. It is an exceedingly difficult time for everyone missing the support provided by family, friends, and the church. If you are reading this and in a difficult situation, please get in touch. I would love to support you and offer you a listening ear and some help if you need it. The pressures can range from just needing a chat to being subject to complex circumstances. Sending lots of love and care to you all and looking forward to seeing you again....

Mary-Jayne Carter

## **SAFEGUARDING ADULTS 2020**

It has been a privilege to partner with such a great group of dedicated and caring people over the last 12 months. One of the Church's five marks of Mission – is to 'Challenge unjust structures of society' so



## **Safeguarding**

Safeguarding is most definitely Missional. We have encountered new Safeguarding considerations in the throes of the COVID -19 pandemic. As a team, we have been very grateful for sensitive and accurate communication when issues have arisen and would encourage ongoing questions and alerts.

### **Training**

#### **Personal**

In June 2020, I attended the Virtual Safeguarding Leadership Level Training with the National Team where it was great to connect with other ministers. Our church is very much 'plugged in' to safeguarding with our carefully considered policies and practices sitting alongside the adopted National Policy making ministry effective and safe for all. It was really encouraging to realise we are comparatively 'on it' with safeguarding.

### **Church – Training updates and Amendments**

The National Church of England requires that current levels of training require Basic Training (C0) and Foundation Training (C1) for most ministry areas. If these have been completed within the last three years that is great. If they have expired beyond three years then the highest level i.e. (C1) / Foundation will need renewing. (A reminder that the C0 and C1 trainings are both accessible online).

Parish Safeguarding Officers, Wardens and Licensed ministers are required to have completed Leadership Level training (previously C2/C3) within the last three years to be up to date.

Please ensure you have completed the relevant training levels for your ministry area and contact me if there are any issues with that. We hope to be able to resume face to face Safeguarding Training later in 2021 as we seek to visit and support specific ministry groups.

## **Updates**

Diocesan Parish Audit: This has been worked on recently with grateful thanks especially to Jon but also to Mary-Jayne and the sub group who have reviewed the mammoth complement of questions between them.

Records: Pauline, Mary-Jane and I work closely together updating records with who has completed which trainings. The challenges of Covid-19 has made updating trainings more difficult but we are getting on track.

Safe Recruitment: All volunteers are required to be safely recruited at the required level deemed necessary for the ministry to which they feel called and careful checks are carried out.

Safeguarding Ourselves: A gentle reminder that when we sign up to minister, we are also agreeing to work within the guidelines and leadership of those teams. When we do so, we not only safeguard those we are working with but we also safeguard ourselves which is really important too.

National Safeguarding Policy: The Wider Church Safeguarding Team have thoroughly reviewed the National Safeguarding Policy which we are required to adopt and inserted additional appendices which consider our specific context at St. Thomas'. These have recently been updated.

Confidentiality – Please be assured that all safeguarding enquiries will be treated sensitively and kept within tight boundaries and we hope that invokes confidence to ask questions of the team.

Let's continue to work well together to provide a really safe environment which is honouring to God.

Angie Letchford  
(Parish Safeguarding Officer – Adults)

## **DEANERY SYNOD**

Two Deanery Synod meetings were held during 2020

### **11th March Meeting**

Dr Cheung a GP from the Carnforth practice had been asked to give us some advice regarding the Pandemic. At that point in time his advice was not to panic but because church services home visits and home communions were likely to be cancelled we had to be aware of the need to help those in our communities who were most vulnerable. It was thought that one in three households could be affected by the coronavirus

### **Safeguarding**

The Area Dean spoke about a process known as Post Case Review for reporting incidents of abuse especially cases involving children and vulnerable adults to the Diocese where relevant cases would be checked. It was important churches search their records and report incidents to the Diocesan Safeguarding Team

### **Parish share**

Consultations could be arranged for parishes struggling with meeting their requirements

### **A few points from last General synod**

Deanery Synod membership at present is limited to two terms but now the limitation might be discontinued owing to the fact it was difficult to find persons willing to serve. Churches were urged to maintain Deanery representation.

Churches carbon footprint previously aimed to be zero by 2045 was revised to 2030.

Churches were encouraged to keep up the size of their electoral roles. The house of Laity had lost a seat in the Northern province due to low electoral roles.

### **The Blackburn Diocese World Development Group**

The Bishops Harvest Appeal, Fairtrade and campaigning to combat world injustice were areas of involvement by the WDG a people from different parts of the diocese called to tackle poverty abroad as well as at home.

The last harvest appeal had raised over £21k.

Sadly there had been some difficulties with the Bishops Leadership Team causing key members of WDG to resign.

### **Stewardship**

Stephanie Rankin the Diocesan Stewardship Resourcing Officer had come in place of David Barlow who was ill.

She drew our attention to several verses of scripture Chr29;14, Psalm 16;2 Psalm 8 ;Genesis 2. Reminding us of our responsibilities to creation. Everyone having different situations and responsibilities. Curiously no mention was mentioned of the OT call to tithe (Bishop Julian had informed me that the average giving throughout the Diocese was only about £3 per week per person)

Having a device for contactless giving is not a substitute for planned giving, but useful for ad hoc visitors to make a contribution eg. at funerals.

Following the meeting a letter was sent to parishes from Jacqueline Stamper (Lay Chair) and Rev Cindy Rigby (Area Dean.)

The letter urged parishes to keep churches open in so far as it was reasonably practical - maybe having someone on duty following Diocesan guide lines. It was hoped that arrangements would be put in place to allow parishioners to have meaningful prayer and spiritual support at home. Various parts of the Diocese were gradually developing on- line resources.

### **5th October Meeting**

An open meeting was held in conjunction with Tunstall Deanery to explore and discuss the Draft Vision 2026 Implementation Plan.

Present at the meeting were The Diocesan Vision Coordinator, the Archdeacon of Lancaster and the Bishop of Lancaster.

The DVC expanded her thoughts on - a transformed Lancashire; new heavens and a new earth; living God's future now.

The Archdeacon spoke on some marks of a healthy church; deep roots; growing; producing new growth.

The foundation of vision 2026 centred on Christ; solid theology; repentance; the breath of the holy spirit.

The vision 2026 involved making disciples being witnesses, developing leaders inspiring children and young people as a later strand.

In small groups what we found exciting and challenging in the plan and vision and anything additional we would like to see in it were discussed. The Bishop thanked everyone for the faithful work going on throughout the Diocese. Vision 2026 is an agenda for growth rather than the acceptance of decline.

### **Appointments during 2020**

Revd Carol Backhouse	Vicar of Lancaster Christchurch
Revd Caitlin Carmichael-Davies	Vicar Skerton St Luke and Skerton St Chad
Revd Catherine Haydon	Curate Morecambe Parish Church
Revd Christina Walker	Curate Dolphinholme with Quernmore and Over Wyresdale
Revd Angela Letchford	Curate Lancaster St Thomas
Revd Matthew Guildler	Curate Lancaster St Thomas

(Please pray for the recovery of Revd Cindy Rigney who has been ill for a while. She is Area Dean, has three churches and a disabled husband to care for)

Derek Matthews

### **LANCASTER CHURCHES TOGETHER**

Working and Praying Together for our City

The group continues to regularly meet online, to pray together and plan ecumenical events in Lancaster for the coming year.

### **DIOCESAN VISION REPORT**

Since joining the PCC in November 2020 I have taken on the role of Diocesan Vision Champion within our church.



Many churches in the Diocese need the encouragement of the Diocese to grow their vision and Vision 2026 helps them to do just that. St Thomas' is a pioneering church, which consistently fulfils this vision and we are all currently been challenged to prayerfully consider what the next stage of our own vision will be.

The Diocesan Vision particularly focuses on:

- Making disciples for Jesus
- Being witnesses to Jesus
- Growing leaders for Jesus
- Prioritising work among children, young people and schools

As a Church over the last year our leaders have done amazing work and we have made progress in all 4 areas. I would like to highlight 2 of them.

- The 7pm on line service where students and young adults are growing as leaders, confidently supporting our leadership team, participating appropriately, sharing the Gospel and demonstrating a love of knowing the Scriptures, sharing their own insights and personal stories.

- The work with children and youth and families. We have been encouraged as we have all witnessed the creative ways of sharing Biblical truths and stories. The teams have risen to the challenges of finding new ways to communicate, and support and have fun together.

I look forward to continuing dialogue with the diocese, communicating with other vision champions via our facebook page and meeting in person when the situation allows. I am also enthusiastic to be part of the discussions this summer as we evaluate and produce an update on our visions both in our own church and in the diocese.

Ann Dunnington  
(2026 Vision Champion)

### **9AM CONGREGATION AND WORSHIP ON WEDNESDAY**

The 9 am congregation was led during 2020 by a team composed of Jeanette Main, Natasha and David Ashbridge, Cathleen Dawson, Richard Eglese, and Pam Lucas, headed up by Helen Scamman. Jenny Guilder also joined the team, in September 2020, in her role as ordinand in training at St Thomas' Church.

During the course of the year, we have sadly lost some much loved and valuable members of our congregation. These include Kenneth Maude, Ellen Worsley, Mary Howe and Bill Gardner. They are and will

be much missed, and we hope that at some point when normal worship services are permitted, we will be able to hold a memorial service to mark their passing and remember them.

We began 2020 with a vision Sunday, followed by Mission Sunday, both of which helped us to expand our horizons at the start of the year. We then followed the sermon series 'Jesus' Ministry on the Margins', before we had to close our services abruptly in the week leading up to Mothering Sunday, 22nd March.

Since then, members of the pastoral team, including Helen Scamman, have done their best to keep in touch with members of the 9 am congregation, especially those who are isolated, or have health issues. Helen is also attempting to ensure that she has been in touch with each of the 9 am congregation during this period. Some members of the congregation have come to the onsite communion service, when it has been able to take place.

Since the first lockdown, the church has been offering a main 10 am online service on a Sunday, as well as a 11.30 onsite communion service, where possible. In the autumn, we added a mid-week service of worship, on a Wednesday morning, appropriately named 'Worship on Wednesday'. This has been co-ordinated by Helen Scamman, Jeanette Main, Cathleen Dawson, Angie Letchford, and Jenny Guildler. Every two weeks, the service is recorded and then put on YouTube by Jeanette. The service has a mix of hymns and well known songs, prayers, a Bible passage and a short talk. After the service, there is the possibility of a Zoom chat with others who have also watched the service. We have a mixed group of worshippers, many of whom regularly attended the 9 am service in normal times.

We will hope to be able to restart a more normal pattern of services in the year ahead, but we have valued being able to keep in touch, and are grateful for all those volunteers who have done so much to look out for their neighbours and friends, both within the church family, and outside of it.

Helen Scamman



## **11AM CONGREGATION**

The sermon notes for the start of 2020 begin with the words, 'This spring term 2020 looks set to be a momentous one in the life of St Thomas' Church.' Little did we know! The closure of public worship after 15th March brought the 11am congregation to a sudden halt, though our worship as a church immediately took new life through our online services on YouTube which have continued throughout the rest of 2020.

Before the closure of public worship, the 11am congregation started the year with a series on 'Jesus Ministry on the Margins' focusing on gospel passages in which we find Jesus teaching about his calling to the least and the lost, and embodying that teaching by the way he treats those he meets. The 11am congregation has aimed to be 'friendly and informal,' and before lockdown, attracted approximately 300 people each week, of which just over a third were under 18. To cater for the needs of these young people, the 11am congregation offered 5 junior church groups (Ladybirds, Buzzy Bees, Freckled Frogs, Cool Camels, and Impact) and 2 youth groups (Encounter and The Gap).

The 11am congregation has been led by a team of lay members which I have co-ordinated – these include Kevin Glazebrook, Martin and Jess Walmsley, Chris Park, Dan and Cheryl Brown, Emily Barry, and Maja Moeller. We owe grateful thanks to the many people who have contributed so much to the life of the 11am congregation since it began in 2013, in such a wide variety of roles – serving on the AV team, greeting people through the welcome teams, exercising hospitality through serving tea and coffee, leading junior church and youth groups, wardening, preaching and service leading, playing in the worship bands, counting the collection, and so much more. Thank for all you have given us over the years, and we look forward to meeting in person again soon!

Jon Scamman

## **7PM CONGREGATION**

This has been a huge year of change for the 7pm. The lockdown had a profound effect on the ability to meet but also to produce another digital service online. With this also came changes on the Leadership team and huge thanks go to Nikki Mann, Angela Letchford, Jim Cooke, Ian McGrath and Claire Cook who all stepped down to serve in other ways.

We had a go at a digital service using Instagram Live as our Platform followed by Zoom. This had some really good outcomes and learning points.

The 7pm did manage one onsite communion service led by Claire and Jono with a live Zoom link with myself.

In December Matt Guilder was appointed to oversee the team for the 7pm congregation. The first job was to add to the leadership team. Ali Bell continued, Abi Andrews, Ellen Green, Phil Sentall and Jono Peatman all joined the team.

The Team devised the new look: The 7 @ St Tees which was to launch in January as an onsite and online service. With Worship, Discussion format Input and Ministry Time. Again due to another lockdown this was unable to start as devised.

So the team devised a new look to the new look: The 7 @ Home. Share Life and Faith as we navigate this season together. We hope to point you to Jesus which is where we find our hope! Our Series is called 'Jesus Encounters' As we journey through the Bible using Mark's Gospel.

The format is simple: Zoom Conversation which goes Live via YouTube

- Welcome- Prayer- Bible Reading- Conversation about the Passage- Prayer- Worship Song

Between January 2021 and Easter 2021 we will have seen 23 different faces on our screens!

We hope to see The 7 @ St Tees and the leadership team continue to gel and grow together as we join God as he reveals his plans to us!

Matt Guilder

## **PRAYER**

We started 2020 with a week of 24/7 prayer, held for a final time in 'Room 2' on the ground floor of the church centre. I look back with gratitude and special memories on so many times of prayer in that room over the years. Thank you to everyone who has taken part in 24/7 prayer weeks, for the heartfelt prayer that has been offered, and the creativity that has been expressed through the art work and inscriptions that have gradually grown on the walls as the weeks have progressed. These have been really inspirational times of prayer.

Our regular Thursday evening prayer gathering (Renewal Prayer Meeting, or RPM for short) continued to meet until the national lockdown brought an end to in-person meetings.

However, during Lent, an exciting new pattern of daily prayer emerged, with Morning Prayer at 8am using Lectio 365 on Zoom started by Claire Cooke and then taken on by Glyn Shentall at the end of the year. Helen and I started Night Prayer at 9.30pm using Compline, which has been taken on by Richard and Viv Hawksby from Easter onwards. It's been great to see sometimes upwards of 20 people gathering for daily prayer on Zoom, as we've all adapted to new rhythms of life and prayer.

During the summer holiday period, we set aside a midweek evening each week for prayer and discernment, where we met on Zoom, took time to listen to God, and then shared what we felt He might be saying to us.

Jon Scamman



## **PRAYER MINISTRY TEAM**

Prayer ministry has looked different over the last 12 months during the Covid-19 pandemic and I am very grateful for such dedicated teams who willingly partner with the Holy Spirit in offering this vital ministry each week.

Our usual Leadership Structure / points of Contact:

9am – Pam Lucas

11am – Daniela Flint

7pm – Sim Lane-Dixon

Overall: Angie Letchford

A number of things have taken put in place as we have sought God for fresh vision in the pandemic. These include:

**Whole Team Meeting:** It was really great to see so many members of the prayer ministry team attend the whole team meeting in November. In spite of the pandemic, they were ready and willing to offer prayer ministry safely to others via break out rooms on zoom. This was a fantastic outcome of that evening. It was also a great chance to meet as a team, share how things were going, worship, pray and pray with each other.

**Zoom Prayer Ministry:** I am delighted to say that we have been able to offer prayer ministry after the 10am service for a good number of months via a dedicated team who have faithfully made themselves available on a consistent basis even when their offer has not been take up.

**Preparing for Advent Evening:** In November during Advent, a good number of prayer ministry team members made themselves available so that church members could attend a quiet reflective evening of prayer, worship, reflection, confession in preparation for the celebration of the birth of Jesus at Christmas. At this service, people were offered the opportunity to be prayed for and I am pleased to say some took us up on that.

**Preparing for Easter Evening:** A similar event is planned for the week preceding Holy Week and a team in gathering to put that together.

**Training:** New Wine Prayer Ministry Training day: We hope in the future to host a New Wine Prayer Ministry Training day at St Thomas' Church but that is currently on hold due to the pandemic.

**Safeguarding:** In line with the Church's safeguarding adult's policy, it is vital that all members of the teams are safely recruited, have completed a brief induction training with Angie Letchford and have completed 'Basic' and 'Foundation' safeguarding training.

**Future Vision:** Many of our future vision ideas have been temporarily paused due to the pandemic but will be revisited when possibilities re-open.

It has continued to be a privilege to work with such dedicated teams over the last 12 months. Thank you

God Bless Angie Letchford.

### ***LENT AND EASTER***

Our Lent Course for 2020 was the Difference Course, produced by the Archbishop of Canterbury's team, aimed at helping us understand our differences, learn from each other, and work towards reconciliation. The course was led Linda Hendry (our church warden) and a strong team, but the course was paused when lockdown started, and was completed online after Easter.

The theme for our Easter Meditations in 2020 was 'My Song is Love Unknown' – in which we reflected on songs and hymns that focused on the death and resurrection of Jesus. However, the onset of lockdown meant a hasty switch to recording our meditations on camera, and then distributing them through Holy Week via our new Connect email.

Our journey through Good Friday and Easter were dramatically different to anything St T's had experienced in its 179 year history, with no public services permitted in the building. Celebrating communion to camera in a windy garden on Easter Day was a powerful reminder that the risen Spirit of Jesus is with us wherever we are, regardless of whether or not we can meet in a church building.

Jon Scamman

## **ALPHA**

We broke new ground with Alpha in 2020, by running our first online Alpha course between May and July, led by Claire Cooke and myself with a great team. Each week, more than 20 guests joined us on Zoom to watch the excellent Alpha videos, and discuss them in breakout rooms. We really enjoyed this opportunity to meet with some of those who'd joined us through online worship and discuss questions of life and the Christian faith from the comfort and security of our own homes. We also laid plans to run another online Alpha Course starting in January 2021, led by Jenny Guildler, with Jono Peatman, Glyn Shentall, Sally Wawszczyk, Katharina Walls and myself on the team.

Jon Scamman

## **FAMILY LIFE CENTRE**



The year of 2020 brought the development of the Family Life Centre (FLC) to a pause, as I was on furlough for several months. During this time, I held on to the promise in 1 Thessalonians 5:24 that *'the one who calls you is faithful; he will do it'*, I believe God is growing the vision for the FLC and he will bring it into fruition. I am so encouraged each time I see the next stage of the building project going up, it speaks to me of God's faithfulness and provision and reminds me that we will soon have an amazing building from which to base the FLC in, the dream is becoming a reality! The FLC is borne out of God's heart for his people and wanting to share God's love from the heart of the city. On return to my role, the team and I have sought to consider afresh the purpose and plans for the FLC recognising that there will be increasing need emerging in a post pandemic world for many children and families.

**people**

supporting parents and  
children to learn together

[www.peeple.org.uk](http://www.peeple.org.uk) We remain committed to establishing a PEEP parenting programme and are pleased to welcome Cathy Clarke, Amy Rowbotham and Dawn Richards to the team. We are looking to launch this in the Autumn term.

We continue to promote the work of home for good, recognising that the Church plays a significant role in responding to the needs of



vulnerable children through families considering fostering or adoption. Thank you to Cathy and Sarah for sharing part of their story with us. We are looking towards initiatives that could support those who are fostering and/or adopted.



We are looking to develop a team of informal and formal listeners, after a year of restrictions and isolation for many, being able to listen well to each other and our community is a gift. The training is being undertaken in a phased manner and was well attended by those within the congregation.

Thank you to the FLC team who have been committed to the vision despite a pandemic and to all those within the Church who have supported and got involved with the new initiatives. Please do continue to pray that the FLC will be established and fulfil the purposes for which God has ordained. I pray over the FLC, the new initiatives and dreams of things to come Matthew 6:10 *'your kingdom come, your will be done...'*

Alex Sayer (Family Life Centre Manager)

### **CHILDREN'S AND FAMILIES MINISTRY**

2020 was certainly not the year any of us were expecting. We are so blessed to have lots of children and young people at St Thomas' with all the joy and vibrancy that this brings. We have really missed seeing the children and families in person for much of this year but have found different ways to keep in touch. Our fantastic team have been incredible throughout, supporting us, the families and getting involved where they were able to, delivering packs, doing videos and helping with groups and events on zoom and in person.

Throughout the year we have been keeping in touch through regular emails keeping everyone updated with the latest news, encouraging each other and supporting each other in prayer. During the summer term we sent video messages to our children's groups sharing a bible story or prayer or craft suggestions. In the summer all our children received a pack with some crafts and activities and some summer activity suggestions. Lots of us had fun making pizza and flying kites! We have had occasional zooms with parents to catch up with how we are all doing and with children to play some games together.

So, although this year has been very different there has been lots to give thanks to God for.

### **9.45 Live!**

In November 2020, we launched 945Live, which, as the name suggests, is at 9:45 online on Sundays. Aimed at anyone who love actions songs, Bible stories, and challenges, 945Live is proving to be a great way to engage children, but is also enjoyed by people of all ages.

Each week, we worship God with an action song (thank you to Nick and Becky Drake who are allowing us to use their songs online), explore a Bible story or passage together, and have a challenge which everyone watching from home can join in with if they want to. They've all been a lot of fun, but Jon's toilet roll waddle remains a particular highlight!

We're also using the YouTube chat function to be as interactive as we can, sharing a Big Question each week for children (and adults!) to respond to, which helps us to think about the theme together and reminds us that even though we are in different homes, we are all joining in together.

In this time when we're all missing each other so much, and particularly missing our Sunday morning groups, 945Live is bringing a lot of joy and laughter and helping lots of us to come closer to God. Thank you to everyone on the team, and especially to Matt.

### **Little Fishes**

Little Fishes is our midweek group for babies, toddlers, and their parents and carers. It is a popular group, welcoming young families every week for toys, crafts and refreshments – and, vitally, a place for the adults to meet friends and chat with each other and the team. We try to make sure that the everyone who comes along are supported in the ups and downs of family life.

Unfortunately, since March Little Fishes has not been able to meet. We have been connecting with families via our Facebook page sharing songs and crafts which have been enjoyed by the children. Towards the end of 2020 we started meeting fortnightly on zoom for a story and song time and we able to meet in person for a Christmas



story and song time in church. It was so lovely seeing families again and we look forward to being able to meet in church regularly again.

We are very grateful to our fantastic Little Fishes team. They all work so hard to make the sessions run well and are such a supportive team for families and each other.

### **Families@2 and @4**

Families@2 and @4 is our monthly service for children and their families as we have not been able to meet in our usual congregations. We were able to launch these services in September and the joy and emotion of returning to church to worship God together after 6 months was felt by everyone in the building. Families@ are short services with a story, action song, prayers and a few activities. We get a visit for Eddie the Lizard too all the way from the Amazon!!....

Families sit at tables where they can do a craft whilst talking together about the story and join in with any activities together. Our wonderful team welcome and look after everyone making sure we are as covid safe as possible. Everyone has such a lovely time each month and it is so nice to see everyone's smiling faces!

### **Refresh**

For most of the first term of 2020, Refresh continued to meet in the centre on Thursday evenings in term time, aiming to be a place where children in school years 4, 5 and 6 could come together to really enjoy getting to know each other, the leaders, and most importantly God, more and more.



In the summer term, as it started to become clear that we would not be able to meet together on site with the children in the near future, we began to meet together on Zoom, and have continued to do so since then. We hope to give the children a really fun time, where they can chat together in smaller breakout groups as they do some of the activities. Each week, we spend some time together focussing on God, through prayer, listening to words from the Bible, sharing a worship song together on YouTube, or discussing a "wondering" about God or faith. Recent wonderings include "Who made God?" "Why do we pray?" and "Why do we go to church?" We want to make Refresh a safe space for children to ask questions, express doubts, and wonder together, so that as they grown up, they already know

that they don't have to have all the answers, and are able to bring their questions to God and to other people.

We also want the children to know that God loves it when they have fun and is there with them as they enjoy being together. We play lots of games – scavenger hunts are a particular favourite – and continue to enjoy themed nights that the children can take part in from their homes. Highlights have included a fancy dress evening, making Supertatoes, and a Family Beetle Drive.

Refresh is open to any children in school years 4-6, and we're really pleased to have children from both the 9am and 11am congregations coming regularly, as well as some of their friends from school. Big thank you to the team for all their creativity and care of the children, which comes clearly through the screens!

### **Holiday Club 2020 – 'Superheroes Online'**

In the months leading up to Easter, we had been planning a Superheroes-themed Holiday Club, looking at the stories of the early church in Acts and thinking about how God is with us through his Spirit, wherever we are. What a life-giving theme this turned out to be!

Exactly 4 weeks before Holiday Club came the announcement that public worship, non-essential gathering etc were to closed - lockdown began a week later. As Holiday Club core team, we immediately started to work out a way to make Holiday Club happen online so that children could join in from their own homes.

Superheroes Online was available for free, to any children, anywhere in the country (and beyond!). We had over 300 children registered. They joined in with 4 morning sessions on YouTube, with sung worship, Bible teaching, creative prayer response times, testimonies from leaders applying the teaching to their own lives, and all sorts of fun and games along the way (who knew "throwing" fruit to each other could be so entertaining?!). We also had all sorts of activities on the website for children to do in the afternoons, giving them the "create, challenge and chillout zones" experience they would have had in person, and enabling them to further explore the Bible stories too. Lots of families sent in photos for us to share the next day on

YouTube, building a real sense of community as we took part in different ways, in many different locations.

Feedback was incredibly positive, with so many families really enjoying the experience, thankful for lots of fun things to do in lockdown, and most importantly seeing children coming closer to Jesus, including lots of children responding to the invitation to become Christians and to invite the Holy Spirit into their lives.

This was ONLY possible thanks to our incredible team, who never once questioned whether we should cancel, but instead went above and beyond to record content from their homes, create activities that could be done using things children would likely already have at home, share equipment and technical expertise, turn their dining room into a studio for a week (thank you Dixon family!) and so much more. Thank you to the whole church for holding us in prayer throughout Superheroes Online.

## **Christmas**

We were fortunate in December to be able to hold several Christmas events in person. Refresh, Little Fishes and Families@ all met for Christmas specials. We had a lovely time. In addition to this we were able to deliver Christmas in an Envelope to all the children's homes so they could do a Nativity story as a family. Our Christmas All Age Nativity Service on YouTube was amazing! There were so many children and young people who took part. They did fantastic drama's and beautiful singing which brought a tear to many eyes! Overall, Christmas looked very different but was still a special time celebrating the birth of Jesus.

## **Light Explosion**



Light Explosion 2020 was a joy from start to finish! Normally an alternative Halloween party for children in primary school, this year we created a walk-through experience in church for families to come to, followed by an online session.

48 families, with children of all ages, were welcomed into church at 5 minutes intervals, making their way through socially-distanced games and activities, and collecting a gift bag on their way out. This meant that 8 team members in turn got to chat to each family, and

it was wonderful to see so many people in person – as team, we all miss our children and families so much.

The children's gift bags included things to help them to join in with games, creative prayer, and worship on YouTube, as we gathered together to think about Jesus, the light who shines in the darkness, and to remember that the darkness can never put the light out. With a second lockdown beginning just a few days later, this was an important message to share and we are so thankful that Light Explosion was able to go ahead.

Thank you to everyone who came and made it such a joyful day, and to everyone on team who made it possible.

Emma Dixon & Sarah Evans  
Children's and Families Pastors

### ***PRE-SCHOOL***

2020 was a year of exciting growth and development for our preschool. We now have over 30 children on roll, and have recently extended our opening hours and appointed three new members of staff to help us to meet the growing demand for our ministry. Every child is a huge blessing; we have the most delightful children from Lancaster and beyond coming through our doors every day and we are thankful for all of them.



The children have really enjoyed the exciting vehicles that have been around since work started on the new church centre and it has been very exciting for them to watch the building take shape. We are making the most of all the learning opportunities, and lots of our children are now considering careers in architecture or construction as a result!

Preschool was closed for part of the spring and summer term due to the coronavirus lockdown, but re-opened in June 2020 and has remained open to all children since then. It has been a difficult time for all our families, with many parents feeling overwhelmed and pressured. We have provided an endless supply of encouragement

and support; prioritising relationships and connection and letting our parents know the value and importance of being mummies and daddies.

As a church preschool, one of our main objectives is to share God's love with our children and their families. In the autumn term, preschool took part in a study investigating how preschools can nurture spiritual development. We collected many beautiful examples of children's spirituality in preschool. This is one of them:

"Ben's Song"

*Ben was sitting near the bookshelf and singing himself a song. It was all about Jesus being King.*

*I said, "That's a great song Ben, did you make it up or is it one you know?"*

*"No I made it up" he said. He went to wash his hands ready for snack time.*

*"Was that a great song?" he asked, "That was in my tummy."*

Preschool is a place where children are encouraged to develop their relationship with God, supported by adults who nurture this. As we prepare our children for an increasingly secular society we take every opportunity to protect and validate the things that the world may later try to take from them. Some of our parents have been surprised that preschool will not be moving into the new building - by comparison our building must seem very old and tired. But we remember that Jesus was born in a stable and that changed everything. He is still King in preschool, and still changing lives. We are humbled and amazed by our children's awareness of this.

There is always an opportunity for more volunteers in preschool, and we would love to hear from anyone who would like to join our team. Recently we have not been able to accommodate all requests for places due to not having enough adults. It is a shame to have to turn people away, and it would be great to be able to meet all the demand for our service. If you would like to volunteer in preschool please get in touch with [jessica@preschool.tees.org.uk](mailto:jessica@preschool.tees.org.uk).

Jessica Fitton

## **YOUTH WORK STY:LE**

2020 started with change, full of plans for a new way of doing Thursdays and continue building Sunday morning provision.



Firstly, I need to recognise how hard this year has been. However, I am incredibly grateful to the young people who adapted to all the changes made by going online. Despite the huge difficulties and uncertainties they faced, they continued to get stuck in, engage with technology and want to grow and develop in their faith. There was always a desire to meet in person, but when this was not possible they still showed up. Thank you.

At the beginning of the year Style Live on a Thursday was changed to offer more optional content. The beginning half of the evening was a more relaxed youth club, with different games, craft and chill out areas. The second half offered a deeper session, to grow in spiritual maturity, involving group discussions, short talks and intentional worship led by the youth worship band. For those who wanted to leave early or arrive later, there was a 15 minute overlap, allowing all the young people to be gathered together, have some food and pause to think about the message for the evening. It was a safe place for people to bring friends and introduce them to Jesus. It really started with a bang and we were excited about what would follow.

As we progressed on line, we continued with the same format, offering different break out rooms for games, challenges, exercise, craft, acting and chat. Aware that many young people did not want to spend hours on zoom, we said goodbye to those who wanted to leave after 45 minutes (still having given them the opportunity to explore who Jesus is) and then went deeper into the passages with teaching led by Keith Robinson. Breakout rooms on zoom offered group discussion time and we were able to share our screens to lead worship, show slides and play music. Particular memory making moments on Thursdays involved The Great Car Escape, a Fireworks and Light Party and a Maundy Thursday meal, alongside huge controversy in competitive moments!

The weekender in the Lake District was one of the last “normal” things we could do in the year. Walks, talks and sharing was a really important part of the weekend, looking at Psalm 23. In order to build

a more personal community again as well as share the vision of who we are as Style, we feel that this needs to happen earlier in the academic year and are hoping to be able to do this in October 2021 (restrictions permitting).

Sunday provision has been predominantly within age groups, with Encounter (yrs 7-9) and The Gap (yrs 9-13) being our online groups. For the majority of the year they met on different zoom accounts, but with a decrease in numbers in Encounter in the autumn we started meeting as one group and then splitting after a game together. We followed the service programme, adapting it to each group, making the application more age specific. During the holidays and for Vision and Mission Sundays, we joined together as Gapcounter. This often involving a lot of competition and helped build community that has suffered by not being able to meet in person.

### **Huddles**

As restrictions lifted slightly in the summer, we were able to meet as groups of 6 and then even 15. As a result, we created small groups called Huddles so that the young people could meet in person. The uptake for this was higher than our online uptake and it was really good to be able to offer these when we were allowed. It was particularly important during the autumn term, when many year 7s had not joined us online but met as a huddle. I am incredibly grateful to the leaders and volunteers who helped enable this over the summer period. It made us realise how important meeting in person is and the desire for face to face contact.

Partnerships with Resolute, the Diocese and Ripley have been harder this year as we have been unable to physically meet. Resolute happened at St Tees in the autumn with smaller numbers. But we are excited that once things reopen and larger gatherings can happen that young people and leaders will be able to connect again, encourage and support each other.

Amongst the chaos and uncertainty of the year, the team of dedicated volunteers did not change. Those who left Lancaster to be with family continued to engage online, some even from other countries! Their dedication and love for the young people shone through. Tom Swallow (Assistant Youth Minister) even drove back to lead huddles! Sadly, we were unable to recruit new volunteers and

in September we lost 5 leaders who were moving to new cities and 3 other leaders stepped down due to other commitments. In the autumn, our small and incredible team were supported on Sundays by Capernwray students and we welcomed Nina Hartman (our Work Based Placement Student) onto the team who has had to step up very quickly! Our ministry would not be able to happen without our volunteers and I want to say thank you so much for their time, commitment and servant heart to be able to share themselves and their faith in Jesus with the young people.

So we head into 2021, with hope and prayer that this year will involve more in person meetings, building of the Style community, maturing of faith, and sharing Jesus with other people. And lots of fun.

Claire Lunn-Rockcliffe  
Youth Coordinator (Maternity Cover)

### ***YOUTH BAND***

We entered 2020 with our youthband in a great place. They were regularly meeting together, leading worship at STYLE on Thursday nights and growing as a team. However, from March, they haven't been able to continue in the same way. There have been a few times we have been able to get them together to serve, such as all age services, Holiday Club and Christmas, but we hope and pray that 2021 is the year where we can regather this amazing group of young people and help them to grow in their giftings in worship.

Jono Peatman, Sung-Worship Co-ordinator

### ***STUDENT MINISTRY***

Another ministry profoundly dented by restrictions! So no student teas, or gathering for student ministry or no offer of a 7pm from March- October.

However in September the team did take up the challenges and come up with Student Wednesdays!

We meet on Zoom from 7pm-9pm every Wednesday, we have the first 15 mins together and then head into breakout 'Deeper groups'.



- Digging: At Digging Deeper, we eat, we laugh and we explore. Our aim is to build a personal relationship with the God who was, is and is to come. Hosted By Bobby.
- Thinking: Deeper thinking is for those curious enough to seek answers to some of the hard questions of our faith; those who like to be stretched. Hosted By Phil.
- Living: At Deeper Living, we are seeing how faith in Jesus changes our lives! As we journey together, supporting and encouraging each other. Hosted by Jan.
- Being: Deeper Being we're hoping to laugh lots, share life together and get to know Jesus better. Hosted by Matt.

Matt Guilder

### ***PASTORAL CARE TEAM***

It has been a great privilege to partner with such a great group of dedicated and caring people over the last 12 months.



One of the Church's five marks of Mission – is to 'Meet People at their Point of Need' so Pastoral Care is most definitely Missional. We cannot always know what is going on for individuals but please make situations known to us that may not be being addressed through Life Groups.

**Team Members** Include: Jon & Helen Scamman, Matt Guilder, Jenny Guilder, Cathleen Dawson, Jenny Gibson, Jeanette Main, Maria Walker, Judith Seal & Angie Letchford (Coordinator).

### **Aims**

The Pastoral Care Team meets twice a month on a Tuesday morning and looks at how best we can offer to support people struggling with difficulties such as: Serious illness, bereavement and other situations that are not covered by Life Groups other networks.

I am grateful to God for such a hardworking and dedicated team and are also thankful to God for His calling other people to this role. We would encourage people to make their needs known...this is a big church which is great but it can mean that situations inadvertently slip us by. Please contact the church office or one of the leadership if a particular need arises.

## **Links**

We have worked hard to keep linked into the pastoral prayer chain and are very grateful for Margaret Stocks' work with that and for good communication.

We acknowledge that Life groups are already well established hubs of ongoing pastoral care that have often plugged the gaps of much needed support and encouragement so that our team and concentrate on those with specific and more urgent needs.

During the pandemic a large number of people have been rung regularly and at Christmas Helen and Jeanette organized a fantastic Christmas drop round which many others helped with.

## **Training**

All members of the team have been safely recruited in line with the national C of E Safeguarding policy and completed 'Basic' and 'Foundation' safeguarding training. We have reviewed our safe working practices in the light of the pandemic and more recently will national safeguarding policy updates and its implications for us.

## **Vision**

- The pastoral team is linked to the wider pastoral ministries group at St Thomas' church where discussions help to keep good communication with Angels and prayer ministry.
- We hope to offer training opportunities in time.
- More recently pastoral care approaches have been modified in the light of the Coronavirus outbreak.
- Related to Pastoral care – a listening team is being recruited and trained and a counselling service is pending set up.

Member's update

This year we said goodbye to Claire Cooke and thanked her for her years of sterling work on the St T's pastoral team. This was to make way for a call of God to mission at Scotforth – exciting news.

God is good and we thank Him for all of those who He has ministered to through this ministry. An exciting year!

God Bless,  
Angie Letchford

## **LIFE GROUPS**

Like many groups, Life Groups have risen to the challenges of meeting online through this year. It has been a new experience to many, but we have been grateful for all the creative ways in which Life Group leaders and members have continued to support each other through prayer and practical activities this year. In fact the current situation has meant that many people have sought the fellowship and support of a Life Group for the first time during 2020. The newly formed group at Silverdale has thrived, despite only having one meeting before Lockdown and also a new group has also been formed in Galgate led by Alex and Phil Sayers.

Despite the challenges, it would seem that the value of Life Groups, has been appreciated by many this year. We currently have 23 Life Groups meeting at a variety of times and places, and if you would be interested in joining a Life Group, please do get in touch via [lifegroups@st.tees.org](mailto:lifegroups@st.tees.org).

Jon Scamman and Anne Gager

## **REPORT FROM THIRD AGE COORDINATOR**

While all in person events for Third Age had to stop in March 2020 the work continued to maintain relationships and reach out to those who were finding themselves alone and isolated during the lockdown.

**Extra Time** had to stop but the team took on phoning members regularly to keep in touch. Grateful thanks to Pat Williams for coordinating this and keeping it going throughout. I know it is greatly appreciated.

The Pastoral Team has also shared out our older and vulnerable people and each team member has taken on a group to phone every so often, which has been excellent and has formed some new relationships too.

My particular concern has been people with no internet connection and how to keep in touch with them. I have been producing a weekly DVD (and latterly for those who prefer it, a CD) of the online 10am services and latterly Worship on Wednesday has been included. I have also sent out regular update letters, had some doorstep chats and phone calls, and sometimes met someone for an occasional walk. When in-person services have been running we have done our best

to make sure that non-internet connected people can access booking by phone and that they know when it is happening.

We have produced **Holiday at Home** packs with a DVD, booklet of Bible notes and puzzles, crafts and gifts for almost 100 people and also sent out a Remembrance Sunday DVD, the Diocesan Advent and Lent booklets etc. At Christmas we were able to hold an in-person communion service which we recorded for those who couldn't be there and we sent out packs of Christmas goodies to about 60 people through the Pastoral Team, who did doorstep visits. We identified a small number of people who would be alone on Christmas Day and arranged a short doorstep visit and a slice of Christmas cake for them on Christmas Day itself.

### **Online Meetings.**

Early in lockdown we began an online meeting for those who were feeling lonely and wanted to be in contact with others through a computer, making this also accessible by telephone for those who didn't have internet. Virtual Coffee, Reflection and Chat has taken place fortnightly with worship, a short talk and then time to split into breakout groups for more personal chat. It has been well attended throughout, with around 15-20 devices joining most times (some having 2 people or even 3 using them.)

### **Lyrics and Lunch**

Initially Lyrics and Lunch tried meeting on Zoom but after the first term we discontinued this as it was difficult for people to engage with. Those who joined by phone often couldn't hear very well, those who were on computer sometimes couldn't quite understand what was happening and that they could talk back to the people on the TV. Latterly we have encouraged our members to join in a weekly YouTube broadcast by one of the Lyrics and Lunch member groups from Christ Church Thornton and I have also been able to take part in this.

However, at times Lyrics and Lunch has been able to meet (but not to sing!) We were able to have a smaller gathering for lunch and entertainment and we found that we could let people enjoy the music they love without being too tempted to sing by doing chair-based exercise together. Just before Christmas, when cafes and restaurants were closed, I had a meeting with Environmental Health locally and

obtained approval to continue offering lunch as they were satisfied we had good COVID secure arrangements and people living with dementia need in-person contact and routine. Unfortunately, we then went into another full lockdown so we couldn't meet anyway!

### **Worship on Wednesday**

In the Autumn a small team of us started a fortnightly service which is more aimed at our older people and this has been very well received.

### **The Future**

We go into 2021 hoping that we will soon be able to get back to in-person meetings, lunches, services and groups. However, I hope we will be able to continue offering services on DVD, CD and/or live on YouTube for any who are housebound. There have been comments from people that they have never felt so connected or cared about, so that would be something very positive to come from this time.

Jeanette Main

### ***WORSHIP***

2020 has been a year of great change, but also opportunity for the worship team. On one hand, we have all desperately missed gathering together to sing and play our instruments in worship to God. Adjusting to online church has been tough for the team, and has meant some haven't felt confident or had relevant technology and time to be able to serve.

However, we have been presented with some amazing opportunities to learn new skills in recording, and as well as facilitating weekly Sunday worship, the team have recorded some beautiful versions of songs that are available to be watched back on YouTube in the future too. It's great to have these as a reminder of where we have been, and what God has been saying to us in the midst of it.

We have, as ever, seen some people step aside from the team and I thank God for them and their faithfulness to this ministry. However, it has also been so encouraging to see new people step and join the team during the pandemic, clearly indicating God is very much still active in the sung worshipping life of the church.

Jono Peatman, Sung-Worship Co-ordinator

## ***A/V Technology***

Moving church online in March has meant a huge amount of change with the technology. I want to start by thanking each and every person who has helped make this possible. It has required lots more time, work and a huge amount of patience. Moving to video streaming services, editing videos, and leading live services on YouTube has been a huge step for us, but is something heading into 2021 that we are keen to develop and keep as part of the life of the church. We have, through a grant and a legacy left to the church, been able to purchase some new equipment to allow us to really step confidently and competently into 2021. We are excited to see more people find creative gifting in the church through the AV team, in this ministry.

Jono Peatman, Sung-Worship Co-ordinator

## ***PASTORAL PRAYER CHAIN***

The Pastoral Prayer Team has 20 members, all waiting to receive prayer requests, and pass them down the chain, confidentially.

It has been a quiet year, despite the pandemic, perhaps because there is also The "Prayer Ministry Team" well advertised.

We have seen answers to prayer, and are still awaiting outcomes on others. Updates will always be welcome!

Margaret Stocks

## ***THE ANGELS***

This year St Tees Angels have been mainly cooking! We did take one person for a hospital appointment, but mostly our meal makers have been creating wonderful dishes for 5 households. We made 47 deliveries, in all 104 meals, mostly for families with new babies. The standard was high and varied, from Chicken Risotto and Turkey and Peach Casserole to Holy Trinity Louisiana Gumbo and Pumpkin Cake!

A huge Thank You and God Bless You to all you Amazing Angels who willingly set aside time and funds in all this strangeness to lovingly care for others. You are inspiring.

Wendy Moore

## ***WOMEN'S GROUP***

As I'm sure others have said in their reports, the year has not turned out as we expected this time last year!

The women's Prayer chain has continued to function in our usual way, praying for matters large and small, through our email chain.

Obviously it has not been possible for us to meet in person, either for prayer or coffee, however we have been able to meet-up via Zoom for coffee on Saturday mornings., to discuss matters large and small.

We look forward to being able to meet up in person once more SOON!

Ingrid Eglese

## ***MISSION SUPPORT TEAM***

The mission support group has continued to meet over Zoom on a quarterly basis. On each occasion we discuss the prayer needs of the missionaries we support and divide the finances on the basis previously agreed. We also divide any spare finances as one-off gifts or on a short-term mission basis.

One member of the group, Helen Wadeson, decided to step down due to other commitments. Otherwise we had a full contingent of 8 members attending all 4 meetings.

We had a very successful Mission Sunday in January when we were able to hear from 3 partners during the service and also most of the partners attended breakout rooms on Zoom afterwards. It was encouraging to be able to meet in this way whereas normally only those in UK can attend. We had zoom links to Pakistan, Kenya and Nepal. Several people said it was the best mission Sunday yet and we hope to take this format forward sometime in the future.

The finances have remained stable and we were able to give extra gifts to all the different MPs at some stage during the year , which helped with the far reaching effects of Covid, both at home and overseas.

We were sad to see the end of Nicola Anderson's ministry in Thailand; however, we have recently interviewed 3 new CMS missionaries and have recommended one couple for support going forward.

Martin Bateman stood down as chair in January 2021; we are very grateful for his leadership and ministry over the past 5 years and hope he will remain a group member in the years to come. Alison Johnstone took over as chair .

I would like to thank the group members for their support and enthusiasm over the past year in this important ministry

Alison Johnstone

### ***THE ARK***

The Ark is currently operating from Lancaster and District Homeless Action Service (LDHAS). We moved in a few weeks before our church centre finally closed its doors in April 2020. Phil Moore (the manager) has made us very welcome.

Since March 23rd, 2020, (the first lockdown the Ark team have been providing a hot meal, sandwiches, cake and frozen meals every Friday to the temporarily 'housed homeless'.

Craig Abbott contacted, 'Eggcup' a charity based in Lancaster who provide frozen food to those in need. The Ark receives a delivery of frozen food every three weeks from Eggcup. This is a welcome addition to the food parcel.

The Mustard Seed and New Life Church collaborated with us in providing a hot meal on a Tuesday in the early days of the first lockdown.

We currently feed around 40 people a week. This includes those in temporary and permanent accommodation, and also including regular people who turn up every Friday to receive a food parcel. However, the numbers do fluctuate as people move on or have to leave their accommodation for a variety of reasons.

We have a dedicated team of drivers who deliver to people housed in Morecambe, Heysham and around Lancaster.



We provided a Christmas meal and gifts (with money donated from St Tees') to everyone in accommodation and those arriving at LDHAS for their regular food parcel on a Friday. The gifts and Christmas food were really appreciated.

Our team are dedicated to offer a service deeply rooted in Christ's message of compassion to the vulnerable and lonely who often face hostility and negativity from the wider community.

We look forward to welcoming our guests back, when restrictions are lifted and it's safe to share meals together again.

Anne Carman Ark co-ordinator

### ***ASYLUM SEEKERS SUPPORT NETWORK***

It is now almost 4 years since the St Thomas Church Asylum Seekers Support Network was set up as an official mission group of the church. It is supported by a steering committee made up of 11 church members. The aim of this group is to provide a coordinated response from within St Thomas church in relation to supporting Asylum Seekers and Refugees (AS&R). We aim to work alongside the key groups that already work with asylum seekers in Lancaster and Morecambe District (such as City of Sanctuary, Global Link, RAIS, East meets West and others).

We currently have an internal network of about 80 members who support the work of Asylum Seekers and Refugees (AS&R). These individuals are all connected via a mailing list that gives them updates about ways in which they could volunteer, provide items and other forms of support to AS&R. We are gradually getting more involved in supporting the work of Lancaster City of Sanctuary especially in relation to hosting AS&R and providing English conversation classes. For the latter, we have up to 8 regulars who join our zoom classes on Thursday lunchtime and some also provide 1:1 English conversations online. For the former, a member family of the church is hosting the stays and is providing accommodation for two refugees and one otherwise destitute AS. Other members of St Tees have also offered short term accommodation for various refugees over the years.

In addition, we have created a befriending leaflet to help church members become more confident in befriending – for example, by including our AS&R friends in their social groups or inviting them around for meals. This can be found on the church website.

Apart from this ST Thomas' is also linked to the Acts 435 group which can provide funding for small urgent requests. It has been possible already to support several ASR within Lancaster with vital support, such as buying laptops or funding childcare. The church also provides information and support to AS&R who are interested in exploring Christianity. Members of the network are also active in mobilising support for AS&R through their work-place or through informal/community networks that they are part of.

During the corona virus epidemic, steering group members are in regular contact with AS&R individuals and families who come to our church. They are also supporting other groups within CoS by advertising requests for help and signposting people to key groups that are providing support during this crisis. We have a page on the church website that details ways in which people can engage with local AS&R [www.st.tees.org.uk/Groups/290564/Local Asylum Seekers.aspx](http://www.st.tees.org.uk/Groups/290564/Local_Asylum_Seekers.aspx).

Thank you to all for the welcome, practical and financial support, and prayer that you have provided again and again over this past year. We as a church are blessed by the arrival of these people from all different corners of the world. It has helped us to reflect on our own biases and assumptions and re-imagine a world based on Christ's teaching.

Sunita Talks and Maja Moeller

### ***ST THOMAS@ FOOTBALL***

St. Thomas's Church is involved in football activities through partnering with Ambassadors Football and Lancaster United FC in providing Saturday morning football provision for primary school aged kids at Dallas Road Boys and Girls Club throughout the year. It also runs Monday Night Football at Ripley School as a social football event for adults.

## **Monday Night Football**

Monday Night Football stopped when the UK went into Lock Down in the Spring of 2020. This was disappointing as at least 30 different men attended during the first few months of the year.

Ripley St. Thomas School then allowed external groups to use its facilities from September 2020. Unfortunately without informing us, they gave away the time allocated for Monday Night Football to another group. There was no explanation given for this.

As a result Monday Night Football was paused and due to restart in January 2021. The 2021 lock down meant that was also cancelled. During the time of closure Richard Hawksby indicated that, after almost 20 years of being involved this activity, he was going to focus on other areas of ministry in and around Lancaster. On behalf of the church and Ambassadors Football I would like to thank Richard for his incredible work ethic and commitment to Sunday Night and then Monday Night football. He helped it provide an environment where especially men who would not attend church normally could feel welcome to play, get to know people from a diverse range of backgrounds and be able to get integrated into the life of the church. Barbecues, watching football matches together and attending tournaments are just some of the ways in which Monday Night Football brings people to know more about Jesus. Asylum seekers, Spanish migrant workers, students from all nations and local students have all benefited from being able to attend over the years. Thank you Richard (and Vivien as a long-suffering football widow!)

Chris O Neill has also helped a lot with the organisation of MNF and we also have appreciated his input to the activity running well. It is likely that he will not be involved in the running the session going forwards.

In light of this - WE NEED PEOPLE - one person in particular to volunteer to help organise Monday Night Football on behalf of St. Thomas's. Please contact Martin Bateman if you can help. We also need either Ripley to reverse its decision and allow the church to use its facilities on Monday night or find another location. Prayer would be appreciated for this.

## **Saturday Morning Football**

Saturday Morning Football started 2020 well, with up to 40 kids attending four age related groups each Saturday morning. Then Lock down began and all activities were stopped. The eldest group still tried to meet via zoom, which continued right up to last week. Lock Down has affected children in a big way, and the lack of exercise and social interaction has been difficult for many. As soon as it was possible to play again, Saturday morning football began, with one parent commenting that she had not seen her 11year old son smile so much for three months. We continued Saturday Morning football throughout the summer and into the Autumn term.

In August a football camp was held in partnership with AFGB and LUFC. 24 children attended. We managed a whole term of football up until Christmas when a special message was shared with the children and their carers by Matt Guilder.

Lock down eases on March 29th and another camp will be held with 24 kids attending.

We are thankful for the opportunities football provides the church to be in the heart of the city on a weekly basis, interacting with families from a wide variety of ethnic and economic backgrounds. When activities cannot take place indoors it is still possibly to worship God with all our heart, soul, mind and strength through the footballing activities we do. We pray that this influence will continue and that many will be drawn closer to God as a result.

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