

Welcome

Welcome to the annual report of the Church of the Good Shepherd. Once again I would like to thank the huge team of people who help keep this parish running, a lot of which goes on quietly behind the scenes and often is unseen by the rest of us. To all those who contribute in whatever way to the life of the church work a big thank you. I am grateful for your support and commitment.

I do hope you enjoy reading the report, and together we can give thanks to God for all that he is doing in this parish. As you read it why not ask Him if there is anything he would like you to do in the church? If there is anything you would like to be involved in just let us know, the names of the co-ordinators of the tasks are in the front of the newsletter, or speak to one of the ministry team.

Dave Maher



Christian Aid

“Is this not the kind of fasting I have chosen: to loose the chains of injustice and untie the cords of the yoke...” Isaiah 58.6

Christian Aid works to bring an end to poverty around the world, tackling its root causes as well as its effects. Last year we raised just under £1000 at COGS as part of the national fundraising effort during Christian Aid week. This year, Christian Aid week is between May 15th-21st. If you would like to be part of the collecting team this year, or have any other fundraising ideas, please sign up for a street in the parish. The sign-up sheets will be put out in April.

Clare Redfern



Church Flowers

We have enjoyed arranging the church flowers over the past year, however Jeanne and I have decided that this will be our last year in

charge of the flower arranging. We would be very grateful if someone will join us with a view to taking over at the end of this year, of course Jeanne and I hope to be around to arrange a stand occasionally. We desperately need more people for the flower rota. Please give this some thought and contact either of us if you can help in any way – you do not have to be an expert – if I can do it so can you.

Iris Brown



Church Hall

The hall has been well used during 2010 and hosts many and varied activities during the week, from Puppy Training to Rainbows, not forgetting Line Dancing, Tai Chi and Toddler Groups. At present, there are no spare time-slots to accommodate any further activities.

During the year, the lighting has been upgraded and the heating system has been fully refurbished, much to the delight of all the users. All we are waiting for in 2011 is a new ceiling!

Ruby Leyshon



Church Wardens' Report

2010-11 has been another good year for the Church of the Good Shepherd. We rejoice in modest but sustained growth in many areas of our life together especially the expansion and flourishing of our housegroups, and the worship and community building in Orchard Park.

We welcome our new noticeboards and our new website, and with them the increased visibility of the Church of the Good Shepherd in real- and cyber-space. 'Godly Play' is now flourishing and popular with our pre-School and Sunday School children.

We are grateful for the time and practical abilities of our 'Buildings Team' who work with the PCC on big and small problems and projects around the church and hall.

A big thank you to everybody who gives their time and talents, prayers and money to contribute to the varied witness, service and activities of the Good Shepherd. Please don't think you are taken for granted and do come and talk to us if you would like a break or a change or involvement in a new way.

Terry Barringer & Rhodri James



Fund Raising

We're sorry to report that most events held in 2010 raised less income for the Church than the year before, probably because most of us have less disposable income due to the current austerity measures. The notable exception was this year's Christmas Market, which increased income by £60 over the previous year. This was due to the increased effort from the donors and stall-holders rather than visitors, as the number of attendees was about the same as 2009.

Arbury Carnival was a big disappointment this year, being poorly supported by the congregation. Due to this we had less to offer and made far less money than last year. Additionally, there was little support on the day and the stalls were inadequately staffed. This is a pity, because this event is far more than a fundraiser; it is really a great opportunity for the Good Shepherd Church to make itself more widely known to the parish and its people. Let's hope that we can muster more support in 2011 and make it an event that everyone remembers for the best of reasons.

Ruby Leyshon



Godly Play

At the Good Shepherd we are now offering a Sunday morning group for children aged 3 to 6 using Godly Play as the basis. We meet together in the Lady Chapel, leaving the main body of worshippers after the collect and rejoining everyone at the Sanctus, a pattern established after a short period of experimentation. Godly Play is essentially spiritual exploration, enabling people to encounter the Bible within the context of worship and

then to reflect on them using a variety of media, free to select whatever is their own choice for the day. The setting is important, each of the stories is embodied within a set of physical material which is laid out in the room to reflect the patterns we find in the Bible: those with Bishop David's Bible Challenge booklet might like to try using it to guide them around the Godly Play room when it is set out in the Lady Chapel on Sunday mornings. We are looking to recruit some new story tellers. The training is enjoyable, offering an opportunity to increase your own knowledge of the Bible and develop a life of prayer and reflection, as well as working with the children and getting to know them.

Gill Ambrose



Good Shepherd Young People

It is always a joy and a privilege to spend time with the young people of the Good Shepherd as we journey together sharing God's love.

This past year has, as always, been busy. We finished our preparation for first communion course and it is wonderful to be able to take the bread and wine together on Sundays. We have also joined with the rest of the church, in our own way, in the studies on the Creed and James' letter. In our regular Sunday sessions we have ranged far and wide in our exploration of Jesus' love for us: from having a cocktail party with characters from the Bible; doing various bits of wiring with batteries, bulbs and LEDs; making an astrolabe cross; horticulture; thinking about the tallest building in the world; falling over (and being caught!); and a re-enactment of Elijah's transport to heaven including the chariot of fire. We hope that this journey is as much fun and as interesting for the young people as it is for us.

Alison and John Phillips



House groups

During 2010/11, the house groups have gone from strength to strength. The number of people regularly attending the groups has grown to 50 - 60 people, with a group now based at Orchard Park taking the total number of groups to six.

The first house group series of the period was based on the subject of Eco-congregations, and two more series have followed this. In the autumn of 2010 we had a series of sermons and house groups on the subject of the creed. This gave us an excellent opportunity to look at some fundamental aspects of our faith in a deeper way than we often do. In looking at the creed, we were able to engage with some of the controversial issues the church has faced in its history about the nature of God, descriptions of the Trinity, and what happens when we die.

At the beginning of 2011, we turned our attention to the letter of James. Having looked at some 'heavy' theological issues in the autumn, the series of sermons and house groups on James allowed us to take a more practical view of our faith. James' focus on how we live with each other as a Christian community was a useful complement to the series on the creed. Looking at James has helped us to focus on the way we live our lives, and to discuss some of the things that are sometimes hard about living together as a community.

This year's house groups and their accompanying sermon series have been very well received, and they show a healthy appetite in the parish for learning and discipleship. Our thanks go to all those who delivered sermons, those who planned and led the groups each week and to the people who opened up their homes and provided hospitality for each of the groups. And finally, thanks are also due to all the members of the house groups, who have provided some stimulating and interesting discussions each week, alongside deeply moving and honest testimony and personal stories of faith.

Andrew Whitehead



Lunch Club

The Sunday Lunch Club is not just for the Senior Citizens of the Church of the Good Shepherd, but exists for anyone in the local community who

is 60+ years of age who would welcome a “delicious roast meal with all the trimmings”, and enjoy eating it in good company!

We meet on the first Sunday of every month, and the meal costs only £3.00 (no price rise this year!) We start to drift into the Church Hall from 12.00 noon, commence eating at 12.30, and usually finish by about 1.30. Do let us know if you are interested in joining.

As well as serving a three course meal, the Lunch Club provides fun and fellowship for all - not only the members, but also for an excellent team of helpers. For this year we have a good schedule of rota helpers, (a grand total of 32 folk), but there is always room for more. If you think you would like to join the team next year please let us know and we can arrange a “taster” Sunday when you can come along, sample the food and fellowship, and find out what it is all about. Be prepared – all helpers also pay the £3.00 fee!

The helpers serve in teams of six, approximately three time a year. They lay the tables, collect the subscriptions (and do the bookings for next time), give out raffle tickets, serve the food, take round tea and coffee, wash up, and finally tidy the church hall at the end of the event. Perhaps one of the most important jobs they do is get to know the club members by chatting to them as the meeting goes on. The team works hard, but they also enjoy the fellowship and buzz of the club.

There are also three stalwart folk in the kitchen each month. Finsetta Cummings and Pat Marsh bring experienced preparation skills and support for Evelyn Dennington, the master chef, without whom the Club would not be what it is – a great time for all with excellent food included!

John & Libby Lamont (01223) 565559



Monday Club

Yet another year has passed for the Monday Club – each year seems to go more quickly than the last.

Our Club is a place for people (over 55) to meet and have a chat over tea and biscuits. In the past year we have a speaker from Crime Prevention, a very informative afternoon on recycling and an interesting talk from Sergeant Murray from Police Air Operations. We also had a visit from Arbury School Choir which everyone enjoyed very much. In between

these visits we had quizzes and played bingo. Of course, we had our usual Hot Cross Buns, Easter Eggs and a Strawberry tea! To end the year we had our Christmas party with entertainment by Brian Roy. We enjoy ourselves on Monday afternoons – do come and join us.

Eva Hutson



Music

During the year the choir has continued to lead the singing of the congregation at services – and we also provide an anthem during Communion at the 10am service – there is enormous variety in what we sing and all that matters is that it is good of its kind and relates closely to the theme of the service.

Apart from singing regularly at 10 o'clock we have sung at special services throughout the year – a service of words and music for Holy Week on Palm Sunday evening, a service of remembrance on All Souls' afternoon, and at the Advent and Christmas Carol Services etc.

We present two concerts each year which raise money for different charities, alternating local and national good causes and providing an opportunity for choir members and those in the audience to sit and chat together in the Church over the excellent bring and share tea which always follows these concerts. (Very many thanks to the volunteer tea makers!) Again the music is very varied! We enjoy, together with The Good Shepherd Players, a Welsh Evening with appropriate music and words, and other events throughout the year. We love singing carols with the Sunday Lunch Club before their Christmas lunch and had a lovely carol evening at Orchard Park.

We respond, wherever possible, to invitations from local organisations to provide entertainment – we have visited Havenfield and the St. Raphael Club and have been invited to sing carols in our local Budgens for the last few years.

Our regular members provide us with four part harmony and we benefit from occasional visits from relatives and past members. Do think about joining us. Finally, we particularly thank our congregation for the support they give the choir and the music of the church.

Dorothy Holliday



Music Group

Since last year, we have built upon the foundations previously laid. We now have weekly (term-time) rehearsals, where we share an after school snack, pray and then practise the music for the month's all age service. This has promoted confidence and competence amongst the group, which at present is made up of singers, plus keyboard and guitar. We are continuing to increase our repertoire both of contemporary and more traditional church music. At the all age service, we are now positioned up by the high altar, which means we are both more visible and audible. We sing a gentle song, often unaccompanied, while the choir receives communion. Although small in number, we are great in enthusiasm! Any other young people who enjoy making music to the glory of God would be most welcome to join us.

Wendy Lees-Smith



North Cambridge Council of Churches

This year, Castle Street Mission and Castle Street Methodist Church decided to leave NCCC. The Parish of the Ascension previously left the NCCC. These churches have decided to focus their energy on working together as a smaller group of churches. This year, we welcomed Fr Pat Cleary from St Laurence, but said goodbye to Fr David Paul.

At the AGM last year, Neil Harding's term of office as Chairman came to an end, and Stephen Bowring and Anthony Lees-Smith were elected as the new Chair and Vice-Chair. Peter Browne from the North Arbury Chapel agreed to be Treasurer of NCCC.

Churches within the NCCC have been developing closer links through local united events at Christmas and Easter during the year. This has been a great encouragement. The Week of Prayer for Christian Unity has continued under the NCCC umbrella this year, with a shared worship and

Bring & Share Supper at Orchard Park, and also a united service at St Andrew's Hall.

The NCCC has continued to support the "Its Your Move" Booklets distributed to the Manor and Chesterton Community Colleges. It also continues to work with the county ecumenical officer in setting up the Cambridge Churches Contact Group (a contact group for local government and community organisations) and in participating in the NIAB/Histon Road housing development planning.

Romsey Mill Youth Worker. Last year was Romsey Mill's 30th birthday, and various events have taken place including a bungy jump! On a sad note, Ellie Howes has decided to leave Romsey Mill and will no longer be sponsored by NCCC. Mary Simuyandi will take her place in a smooth transition. Mary has given us reports through the year on the Romsey Mill project showing how valuable their work is in reaching out to young people in North Cambridge.

YB4God. This year has also seen a transition for YB4God as the leaders have moved away from the project and new leaders have been chosen, and have grown in their new responsibilities. YB4God continues to meet in Arbury Road Baptist Church providing spiritual encouragement and a meeting place for young people.

Shout Aloud Youth Choir. A new church schools choir is to be started this year in North Cambridge. It will be available for church school events and the age group will be for primary school children. They will be using the Good Shepherd for their rehearsals.

Michael Lovell



Nursing and Residential Care Homes

We are fortunate to have a number of nursing and residential care homes in the parish. Over the past year our involvement with all of them has continued to grow.

Regular monthly communion services have been held at Harry Scott Court and Havenfield. Since the beginning of 2011 we are now also holding a monthly service at Alexwood House. Buchan House have two monthly services, one communion and one which is more informal including hymns, prayers and a reading.

This is an important and much valued part of our ministry as a church and it has been encouraging to be invited by staff to take these services for people who might otherwise be unable to get to church. Many residents we see appreciate the familiar prayers and hymns as well as being able to receive communion. We now have a new service booklet which includes a number of hymns, prayers and readings as well as the liturgy and this has been a welcome development.

David, Anthony and Linda all take services but it has been particularly good to be joined by other members of the congregation and students who are interested in this kind of ministry. The residents enjoy meeting them and having a good chat over a cup of tea. If you would like to come along and join in with any of these services, please speak to one of the ministry team.

Anthony Lees-Smith



Orchard Park

Since last year's report Orchard Park Community Church has seen a lot of exciting changes.

In April 2010 we began a weekly afternoon meeting for worship in the Orchard community centre. This was informal in style with a focus on hospitality and building relationships. As the year went by the format changed to meet a growing demand from children and young families so more activities were included to allow space for people to choose how to respond to the week's reading or theme. This could include all sorts of art and craft, drama, discussion, a prayer station, food and more messy activities.

Since the beginning of 2011 the pattern has slightly shifted. We now gather together with the congregation at the Good Shepherd on the first Sunday of the month for the 10am all age communion service. On the last Sunday we have a new service called 'Something Else' which involves more food, fellowship, live music and prayer in a very relaxed style at the community centre on Orchard Park. On the other Sundays of the month worship continues as before to be informal and family-focussed with plenty of activities and opportunities to get to know one another. Attendance has grown to a regular gathering of between 20 and 30, although we are still at a stage where faces can change week by week.

The Tuesday prayer meeting has now become a well-established housegroup and has been following the same programme as the other Good Shepherd housegroups this year, with the exception that we continue to meet every week for prayer, study and fellowship outside of the termly programmes.

Important events during the year have included leading worship to celebrate the official opening of the community centre, having Bishop David come to officially launch the church and speak at a multi-faith harvest celebration held in the school hall, a messy Christmas party, the annual walking lights procession and carol service, and hosting the North Cambridge Council of Churches for the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity. In the wider community we continue to have contact with a large number of Orchard Park residents through baptisms and weddings, through regular involvement at Orchard Park Primary School and through supporting the community development worker with community events.

The leadership for the church remains the primary responsibility of Dave, but we now have a team on the ground made up of Anthony, Kina Robertshaw and Nathan Dale. Kina and Nathan have brought a huge amount of enthusiasm and expertise to the formation of the church. Kina continues to offer generous hospitality from her home where we hold the housegroup while Nathan has been the driving force behind 'Something Else'. It has also been a great blessing to have a steady stream of ordinands coming to join us - Greg, Cliff, Tom and Paula - all bringing their different gifts to offer as we continue to fumble our way forward and keep up with what the Holy Spirit is doing on Orchard Park.

Anthony Lees-Smith



Parochial Church Council

Such a lot has happened this year! The PCC and Standing Committee has each met in the Vicarage on alternate months (except for December and August), and we would like to thank Dave and Hazel for allowing us to meet in the comfort of their home – and for the refreshments!

PCC Officers have remained unchanged this year and we are still working on the decisions reached in our Mission Action Plan, trying to

effect the changes we have agreed on in a way that will benefit all the congregation and spend our money wisely.

We are delighted to see our church growing and it is a very unusual PCC meeting that does not have a list of names to approve as additions to the Electoral Roll.

Special thanks should go to Clare Redfern and to Evelyn Walker who are coming to the end of their time on the PCC.

Ruth Banger



Pastoral Care

Pastoral Care continues to be a very important part of our ministry here at the Good Shepherd.

A Pastoral team was set up in response to a need for help with pastoral care during the interregnum, and as such, has done very valuable work during the last 4 years. The members of the team have assisted in the care of the sick, those confined to their homes and those living in residential care homes in the parish.

However, pastoral care is now being given in different ways and there no longer seems to be a need for a formal structure. Members of the original Pastoral team are still very much involved in the church and parish but in a less formal way. Their contributions have been, and still are, much appreciated and I would like to take this opportunity to thank Lilas Davison, Shirley Doubleday, Ruth Reid and Pat Givan for all they contribute to the pastoral care in our community. We value them and all members of the church who alert us to people's needs and who respond to those needs themselves.

We continue to invite people seeking Baptism for their children or for themselves to the all-age service on the first Sunday in the month, and after the service they are assisted in filling in the appropriate forms. If at all possible, the person making the booking will be at the Baptism service to maintain a link with the family. The children are then invited back to church around the time of the anniversary of their Baptism for the first 4 years and presented with a card during the service. We hope this will enable people to feel welcomed and encourage them to keep in contact with the church.

Being alongside people who are in any kind of need is a way of living out our faith and following in the footsteps of Christ. We believe that through each one of us he exercises his ministry of healing as we respond to those in need.

Linda Dean



Planned and Charitable Giving

2010 saw an unprecedented level of giving from the members of the Church of the Good Shepherd. Each year a proportion of the Planned Giving income is set aside for donation to charity and in 2010 the charities supported were (local) Able to be Independent and Ellie's Transition Programme, and (international) Mission Aviation Fellowship and Smile Train. Special collections were held for the victims of the natural disasters in Haiti and Pakistan and the following charities were supported through fund raising events and collections:

Alzheimer's Society	Marie Curie Cancer Care
The Children's Society	RDM Parakkanvilai Fund
Jessie's Fund	Royal School of Church Music
Jimmy's	St David's Foundation

Additionally there are the other charities such as Christian Aid supported by members of the Church but which do not pass through the Church's books.

Planned Giving to the church totalled £49,914 in 2010 which enabled the church to break even in 2010 – a happier position than the budgeted deficit. Planned Giving income covers 64% of the cost of the church's activities and is essential to the continued life of the church within the parish.

To all those who gave so generously both to the specific causes supported by the church and to the Planned Giving scheme in the year – **THANK YOU!**

Ginni Carroll



Schools Work

As a church we have regular contact with three primary schools in the parish. David is Chair of Governors at Arbury Primary School and also takes monthly assemblies at Kings Hedges Primary School. Anthony is a governor at Orchard Park Primary School and takes monthly assemblies there as well as running a Thinking Club. Many of the local primary schools visit the church during the year or David and Anthony go into school to assist with RE lessons.

In the past year we have also been delighted to become more involved with Manor Community College. This has meant taking regular assemblies in school where it has been a nice surprise to find that a lot of the children recognize us from when they were at primary school. The church also provided the venue for a superb Christmas concert by the Well Manor'd Band.

Anthony Lees-Smith



Social Awareness

Since I wrote on this topic last year, we have again been busy as a church looking at 'green issues'. A group of us visited Lidgate church near Newmarket which had installed solar panels on top of the tower. It was an exciting scramble to climb up to it and not for the faint hearted, as it was very narrow! There has been much discussion on the issue and Clare Redfern gave an excellent and thoughtful presentation on the matter to the PCC. The PCC decided that it would be a good idea to discuss the church's 'eco' commitment on a wider scale (e.g. heating, insulation and such-like) and hopefully this will be undertaken in the near future.

With regard to the appointment of a family worker mentioned last year, the matter is in hand – watch this space!!

Please pray for a right outcome to both these issues as we try to find God's will for us as a church.

Liz Collinson



Uniformed Organisations

18th Cambridge Scout Troop

In September 2008, the 18th Cambridge Scout Group re-opened a Scout Troop for young people aged 10½-14 years of age and the group now has 24 scouts, with more expected to move up from Cubs in the next few months.

The 18th Cambridge Scout Troop meet every Thursday evening during school term time in the Church of the Good Shepherd Hall. Meetings run for 1 hour 45 minutes and the troop has a subscription of 24 members and almost a full turn out to most meetings. The troop has 4 Leaders, 2 helpers and a “Young” Leader.

Our main aim is to provide activities which are fun and challenging to the 10½-14 year age range, allowing them to try new things, learn life and practical skills, take part in adventurous activities, learn about themselves, others and the world around them, play games, take responsibility and gain leadership skills.

The Scouts are encouraged to reach their physical, mental, social and spiritual potential and to do this we are out and about as much as possible, in all weather conditions. The patrol leaders play an active role in the decisions about what the troop will do each term.

Troop meetings consist of programme activities such as cooking evenings, DIY activities, and scouting skills such as navigation, fire lighting, pioneering (including knots) and first aid. We also do themed evenings based on such scenarios as elections and the chocolate trade.

Camps and hikes have become a common activity for the troop and have proved popular with the scouts. We do regular camping and hiking events both locally and nationally. Early in 2010 a group of scouts set out from the Good Shepherd and walked to Abington to camp overnight and sometime this spring 2011 are hoping to do an expedition style camp and hike in the Lake District or similar location soon.

The troop takes the opportunity to attend numerous District and County activities where Scouts from across Cambridgeshire come together for big scouting events. A team of five of our Scouts recently came 6th out of 14 scout groups at CUSAGC's (Cambridge University Scout & Guide Club) Forward Incident Hike and we have also participated in the County Camp and the County Challenge Weekend at Mepal. 2 teams from the troop also took part in a peak district hiking weekend competition and completed this with success. This year, we will be attending CamJam at Huntingdon Racecourse in August, which will be attended by Scouts around the world.

The Scout Group as a whole across the three sections, Beavers, Cubs, Scouts and Leaders has just under 100 members. We also have a full executive committee which includes the section leaders and this committee oversees the running and management of the group.

Tom Boughton

18th Cambridge Rainbows

This year has been one full of centenary celebrations. The Rainbows have spent lots of time learning about Guiding of the past and thinking towards the next 100 years of Guiding. Designing uniforms and thinking about what Rainbows in the future should do

We attended RACE100 a gathering at Newmarket's July Course and took part in a fun-filled day of activities such as go-karts, climbing walls, face painting and bookmark-making.

As ever our programme has been full of crafts, games and cakes a firm favourite for all the girls. We've also held numerous parties with a variety of themes from Princesses to Pyjamas!! And generally our theme has been fun!

My highlight of the year has to be when we also got busy filling up match boxes with as many objects as possible and being sponsored to raise much needed funds!... the girls did us proud and raised over £200!!

It's been a busy year in terms of membership too with lots of older girls moving on to Brownies, and us welcoming a new group of girls. We are always on the hunt for new members, so please feel free to get in touch. You're never too young to join our waiting list! As well as girls who want to join the unit we are always willing to welcome new adult leaders who would help to deliver the programme. As an unpaid volunteer it's quite possible one of the most rewarding things you could get involved with! Please get in touch if you think you might be interested! (snowys.box@ntlworld.com)

Dana Marsh

18th Cambridge Beavers

We have a group of 24 beavers and there are 6 more waiting to come up and join us.

We have a lot of fun and have had trips and have just done a sleepover at the weekend - that went really well! We enjoy mixing with other groups and having shared activities. On our hike last Wednesday we joined with Beavers from the 26th and the 14th Cambridge and ended up with hotdogs round the campfire. We then sang songs at the 26th hut as arranged by the Cubs which was great fun. We are planning on having a family camp in September.

More helpers would always be welcome!

Emma Roberts



Toddler Group

I run a toddler group on a Friday morning from 9.30-11.30. This group is for anyone who is caring for a child up to school age be you a grandparent, a parent, a carer, or any other you are welcome to come and join us.

The Group is open term time but also sometimes during the school holidays, it is open to any age and we try to provide activities for all.

We provide lots of fun things for the children to do. Along with our toys including animals, bricks, books, cars, trains, and baby toys we also provide an art activity that can be anything from play-do to sticking and glue. We also try to cover all events of the year - Easter, Christmas but also things like Chinese New Year also.

We provide tea and coffee for the carers but also drinks and biscuits for the children with a mix of fruit on and off during the year.

At around 11.00 we ask the children to help tidy up so we can get the ride along toys out - most children are very willing to help with this!!! We also try to include a story and sing time session which the children really enjoy and they love to pick out their favourite songs!!

We also have a Christmas party and a few short services in the church to mark special occasions.

We are a fun group who love to see any new faces!!!

Claire Duell



Vicar

This year it has been great to see the church grow with new faces joining us on a Sunday and in the various groups and socials we have throughout the year. We have also been able to continue developing our links with various community organisations, including schools, nursing homes, both Arbury and the Meadows Community Centres and with the Kings Hedges neighbourhood office.

Since last year we have continued to look into employing a family worker and the development of the office will begin this summer. Our website has been overhauled and has become an effective way of people finding out information about the church. Each month we have between 300 and 500 people visiting the site and, during the recent sermon series, over 90 people listened to the sermons online. The new system of booking baptisms has been a success and it has been great to baptize some of our own members' children this year. Wedding bookings are up again and Anthony and I regularly meet couples in the church for bookings on a Wednesday evening.

I am really grateful for the support from the staff team. This consists of Anthony Lees-Smith (Assistant Curate), John Polkinghorne (Honorary Assistant Curate), Linda Dean (Reader), Edmore Moyo (Self Supporting Minister), and Harry Rose (Local Retired Priest). Anthony, Linda and I meet each week and once a month, along with Ruth our admin support, we get together to reflect, prepare and plan for the busy life of the church.

This year we have been joined by a number of new students. Tom and Cliff from Ridley and Andrew from Westcott have joined us on long term placements. Paula is on placement at Orchard Park and is from St. John's Nottingham. We've also had Greg from Ridley and Gemma from Westcott on short one month placements as they prepare for ordination this summer. Once again the students have been a great asset helping lead and prepare housegroups, being involved in the worship and helping with the lunch club.

The staff team, along with the students, were able to put together and lead two different but challenging house group and sermon series. I know that many appreciated learning and were challenged as we looked at what we believed in the Creed and what we are going to do about it in James.

Once again, as I stop and reflect, I am so grateful to be part of the life of this church. It has been a real joy to celebrate some new arrivals (crèche is booming) as well as share in the sadness as we say goodbye to faithful friends. Time and time again it has been great to see the church rally around those in need and share burdens, praying, caring and looking after each other. As we found out from James, we are not perfect! But as we carry on praying together, studying God's word, worshipping, supporting and having fun together we will, I believe, continue to glimpse God's Kingdom here on earth.

David Maher



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