



## 2012 Vision Sunday Summary Staff Reports

### Introduction

Story and Journey.

These two words are integral to Christian faith. God is the author of His continuing story of salvation. Through Christ, we are all invited to be integral characters in His unfolding story of building His kingdom within us and through us.

And God's unfolding story requires us to journey. We are invited to journey to Him and, empowered by the Holy Spirit, to journey deeper into His heart and purposes. As we do so, we grow into the fullness of God's love and become the channels of His grace, sharing, serving and welcoming others into His new community. The church is this community on earth. As the local church, we have the privilege and responsibilities of journeying in Christ as His story unfolds in and through us for His glory in Burscough and beyond.

As with any journey, it is helpful to occasionally pause, reflect and look ahead before resuming the journey. This is the purpose of today. As we hear some of the stories and read the summary reports contained in this update, I pray that you will gain an improved understanding of how we discern that God is moving in Burscough and how we sense He is inviting us to step out in faith in the year ahead.

As we thank God for His many blessings and consider the opportunities and challenges ahead (time, talents and financial), I pray that you will be encouraged and prayerfully consider how God is inviting you to grow and share in the next chapter of God's story in Burscough. It is exciting. To help, a response slip is attached to this report.

Thank you for being part of the journey together.

In His Love

Vicar

## **Summary Report: Richard Jones (Vicar)**

In all great stories, characters and storylines need to develop. Accordingly, spiritual formation, pastoral care and mission are the foundations of my understanding of ministry that I share with you. This is summed up in our motto verse for this year, *“Love the Lord your God with all your heart, mind, soul and strength. Love your neighbour as yourself.”* (Mark 12:30-31)

Our vision as a church is to be the place where this instruction from Christ is lived out as a growing and deepening community of disciples of Jesus. As I shared nearly three years ago, looking to Jesus, our strategy is to reach out and create “pathways” to invite people to encounter Christ and journey onwards to faith and in faith. To take one step at a time, in their time, as the church offers God’s love in relevant, accessible and biblical ways. As we discern and follow the leading of the Holy Spirit, this is why we are structured as we are as a church, in the variety of services and ministries that we have. As we journey onwards, led by the Spirit, this also means that the Spirit will continually inspire, change and release gifts in us, which we need to be open to prayerfully consider.

As Vicar, my role is to lead, shepherd, nurture faith, oversee and be actively involved in the ministry in all areas and release gifts for the kingdom in our shared ministry. I greatly appreciate the prayers and support of so many who serve in partnership in many ways. During the year, I have also enjoyed serving more widely as a member of the Bishop of Liverpool’s Staff team, Assistant Area Dean and more recently as Chair of Governors at Lordsgate School.

As I reflect on the last twelve months, I sense an overall deepening of faith and releasing of gifts, as well as a numerical growth and developing connections with the community. Below I have selected some key aspects of the past year and the coming year in different areas of ministry.

**Spiritual Formation:** Teaching programme; launch of Cafe church; developing emphasis on prayer; housegroups; emergence of new ministries and increasing number of volunteers in some areas.

**Pastoral Care:** Embryonic debt ministry; visitation; home communion teams; meals ministry; funerals (60 last year)

**Mission:** Alpha; children’s fun days; seasonal events and services; growing relationships with local primary schools and visitation.

**Premises:** Expensive year! Improved heating due to insulation; better security following attempted thefts of lead from the roof. Removal of five rows of pews has opened up space for worship and mission in the church at no cost. The AV installation funded by a specific anonymous donation is a significant enhancement. Preparatory work has begun to develop ministry through developing the church hall and other buildings.

**Communication & Support:** popularity of the website (300+ unique visitors per week, event bookings, sermon downloads); weekly church email; press releases and media coverage; “The Bridge” (450 copies per month); growing AV team & practical help with premises and grounds of our three places of worship and hall.

In challenging economic times, I was humbled by the collections for Japanese Tsunami, East Africa and WaterAid. These collections were intentionally seeded by gifts from our depleting financial reserves. I am also delighted that we honoured our commitment to give away 10% of annual giving (£11,500) to support Christian mission locally, nationally and internationally. However, as our parish share (paid to the Church of England to fund ministry across the Diocese) has increased to £93,200 this year and costs rise in an ageing building, despite endeavouring to keep costs to a minimum, the PCC (church council) have reluctantly accepted another deficit budget. If giving does not increase, the projected shortfall for 2012 could be as much as £15,000!

### **Year Ahead**

**Spiritual Formation:** Deepen prayer (e.g. new Morning Prayer on Thursdays @ 10.30am); encourage and develop housegroups; continue to develop ministry to aid discipleship (e.g. quiet days, relevant teaching programme etc.); new groups (e.g. Martha's Morning)

**Pastoral Care/Mission:** New ACTS group; exploring development of a deanery debt ministry; actively consider running Marriage course and offering Parenting course; extend Alpha; more Fun Days; new Welcome event.

**Premises:** Need to update IT infrastructure; Hall development; St. Cyprians, Hoscar; working on future Curate's accommodation.

**Communication:** Review and update Vision Statement and Values; Welcome Pack; continue proactive use of website and social media;

**Challenge:** Time, talents & finance in a difficult economic environment. In faith, last year, we ran at a deficit. This year, having reviewed all costs, we project another deficit which will further deplete reserves. Hence the important need to prayerfully review our giving.

As we journey onwards, my hope and prayer is that we will all grow into the fullness of God's promises as we follow His command summarised in our motto text. I thank you for your support and look forward to deepening and growing together in Him.

## **Summary Report: Ian Greenwood (Curate)**

Life as a curate is varied and challenging but above all great fun and very rewarding. People often ask me 'what do you do?' usually followed by the old favourite of, 'you only work one day a week!' If only that were true!

I have focussed on three areas of ministry that I head up, which are written about in more detail below. However, on a day to day basis I share in the full range of ministry of the church as my curacy continues. This includes preaching and teaching at services and in small groups; pastoral visiting; funerals and weddings; and mission and outreach, including special events such as the Easter Labyrinth and the Christmas Nativity Service. I enjoy being a governor at St John's CE Primary and am part of the team going in to schools to take assemblies and lessons. As a curate, I am required to participate in training days most weeks at the Cathedral, write assignments and undertake training placements, as well as attend wider Deanery and Diocesan meetings.

### **Baptism:**

The baptism ministry within St. John's continues to grow and develop. We have over the last 12 months seen 29 separate families through the preparation course and baptised 29 individuals, we currently have 5 families with baptisms booked for 2012. Due to the growth and demand for baptisms we have increased our team from 5 volunteers (plus clergy) to 8 volunteers (plus clergy). It is an exciting time for us and we are beginning to witness seeds of growth through this ministry. During 2011 a number of families who have attended the course have become regulars at St. John's, others have attended the ALPHA course and have made a commitment of faith. Relationships within the community continue to grow and feedback from those attending the course is good. It seems that the majority of people really value the investment of time and energy that is put into the preparation sessions.

Alongside the usual initial home visit, three session preparation course, clergy visit and baptism service there is now a new venture in place for 25<sup>th</sup> March. A yearly baptism celebration service, which will be another opportunity to further develop relationships with those families who have had a child baptised over the past 12 months. Families will be invited to attend a special service of celebration, which will include songs, act of celebration and a short talk.

With the installation of the new AV equipment, we have begun to record our baptism services onto DVD. Upon completion the disk is delivered to the family by a member of clergy (another way of continuing to build and develop relationships). At the time of writing I had delivered our first two disks and these were well received.

### **Men's Ministry:**

**Men's Breakfast:** At the time of writing there have been 4 breakfasts. Attendance has grown with each event. We started out with just 12 men and at our last breakfast this had grown to 28. Our first breakfast saw Rev. Canon Gordon Greenwood share his reflections on a life in ministry. Followed by his Son Ian Greenwood on 'being a curate' at our second breakfast. Our Third breakfast was Rev. Mike Ridge speaking openly and sharing his life story. We have just started a new series on 'A day in

the life of...'. And our first session was led by our very own Brian Cox. It is hoped that these breakfasts will continue to grow and provide the opportunity for men to get to know each other, share together and grow together. (It seems to be working so far!!)

**Fella-ship:** We have seen a real development in this area of ministry over the past 12 months. Our focus has been to develop relationships between the young men at church. This has been done through a series of social events. We have held various games nights in the church hall, been Go-Karting a couple of times, climbing at Awesome walls, bike rides, pub visits and various walks in the Lakes. Each event has seen a range of men attend and has provided opportunities to talk and develop/deepen relationships.

2012 is to be an exciting year for Fella-ship. The core team are to attend a conference in January held by CVM (Christian Vision for Men) and it is hoped that we can tap into this organisation for further ideas, resources and possible speakers. We hope to spread our vision for the growth of men's ministry here in St. Johns and endeavour to provide opportunities to preach the gospel to those men who either don't attend or are on the fringe of church.

In July we are holding our first camping weekend. This will be open to all the men who have attended the various events throughout the year. During the weekend, we will have plenty of time of fun and relaxation, but will also have times of bible study and prayer (hopefully around a campfire).

We also hope to meet up with other men's groups from other churches. The first of these took place in January when we meet with a group from Kensington, Liverpool.

2012 will also see the Fella-ship group begin an outreach initiative at the Hop Vine pub. We will be starting a bi-monthly discussion night. It is our aim to hold a current debate which is open for anyone to attend and we will strive to put forward the Christian view and perspective. Another opportunity to talk about and share the gospel message.

### **Social Events:**

The 'Summer Socials' entered its second year in 2011. Six events were planned throughout the summer months. Things kicked off with a laugh at the St John's comedy night where over 100 people attended a fun filled evening. Various other events were planned, including a church BBQ and the now annual Car treasure hunt when over 80 people followed the clues to complete the course. We are all looking forward to this year's events.

These socials are designed to appeal to a variety of tastes, recognising that not everyone enjoys the same things. It is hoped that throughout the summer we offer something for everyone. One of the frustrations we have is the relatively small numbers that attend many of these events. It is our hope that through these events our church relationships and community spirit will grow and deepen. It would be lovely to see a few more people supporting these events next year.

## **Summary Report: Brian Abraham (Ordained Local Minister)**

### **Outreach to the Community:**

Whatever situation I find myself ministering it has been my intention to always proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ on every occasion.

During the year I have continued to visit the elderly, sick, housebound, residential care homes, hospital visiting and spending time with bereaved families and have also been available pastorally in other areas of need.

Another area of my ministry at St. John's has been the Reflective Service on a Tuesday morning. This attracts, not only regular attendees at St. Johns, but also appeals to people who work and shop in the village i.e. Tesco and from the estates around Burscough. It has provided a point of contact for bereaved families and people who are lonely. Along with the church coffee mornings this service has/does provide a "drop-in" point for people with pastoral needs.

### **Church Services:**

As a member of the ministry team at St. John's I have regularly led Sunday services and administered communion at the Parish church. Served at the mission churches. Led Healing services.

Have been privileged to take funeral services/celebration of lives on numerous occasions and been able to follow up visiting bereaved families on a regular basis – I have been encouraged when families are drawn back to coming to St. John's at a sad time in their lives. It has also been a privilege to conduct marriage services and see young couples and families become members of the family of St. John's.

### **Personal:**

I have undergone a Ministerial Development Review with Rev. Ross Moughtin, completed a questionnaire for Rev. Janet Roberts (OLM Adviser) and initiated a personal "reading plan" that will to be extended into 2012.

### **Looking ahead- 2012:**

1. Review of the Tuesday Service.
2. Extend role in a "pastoral" capacity – liaising with Jenny.
3. Plans for this new year are dependent very much on guidance from the Diocese and Richard and the team at St. John's.

Looking ahead I would feel privileged to continue to serve where it is felt my areas of ministry can best be used given that I will "officially" retire as an OLM in November this year.

## **Summary Report: Eileen Heaney (Non-stipendiary Curate)**

It has been seven months since my ordination and joining St John's as a part-time curate (non-stipendiary), while maintaining my police work.

During this time I have become involved in a number of ministries, including leading and preaching at a variety of the weekly services as well as seasonal events such as the Advent Meditation and Nativity Service.

I am enjoying being part of the baptism team and becoming involved with pastoral work, as much as my 'day job' allows. I am also gaining experience of funerals and sharing in bereavement care.

I, together with Jo Jones, have assisted people with money management and have both supported them and signposted them to CAP for further assistance. We are actively seeking to develop this work in the Deanery as we believe there is a considerable need.

As a curate I am required to attend regular ongoing training with the Diocese, write assignments and go on placements as well as attend a wide range of church and Diocesan meetings.

### **New events:**

With the help and support of church members I am becoming involved in the ongoing Fragrance Group, and from February will be involved in an all age women's breakfast group 'Martha's Morning' and each Thursday, Morning prayer when we follow the book of Daily Prayer and Common Worship.

I am also looking forward to speaking at other church groups and participating in the Bala Pastoral Weekend in April.

## **Summary Report: Jean Orritt (Parish Administrator)**

Given that much of my work happens 'behind the scenes' I thought it would be helpful to outline what I do below.

### **Work & areas of responsibility:**

- Day to day enquiries (visitors and volunteers to church and telephone)
- Give administrative support to clergy, staff team and laity as and when needed
- Attend weekly staff meeting, staff prayers (lead on a rota basis) and occasional staff quiet days
- Management of church heating for services and events
- Weekly pre-service PowerPoint
- Weekly noticesheet
- Design "The Bridge" magazine covers and prepare some content
- Design posters for front of church and organise printing
- Produce Term Cards and welcome leaflets
- Church Hall bookings, monthly calendar of users, raising invoices
- Assist with Diocesan returns

- Tickets, posters, publicity material for services and events
- Circulation of monthly Prayer Letter
- Meet with couples planning to marry in church
- Administration for annual wedding preparation day
- Prepare marriage registers, licence and quarterly returns for Registrar
- Prepare banns of marriage book and banns certificates
- Receive initial enquiries for Baptism with letter follow-up of invitation to preparation evenings
- Oversee preparation of baptism certificates, Godparent cards, baptism register and suitable gifts
- Produce personalised baptism services for individual families
- Prepare annual flower rota
- Ensure fresh flowers are arranged on the communion table weekly by a member of the floral art team
- First point of contact for funerals – arrange clergy cover, verger, organist and liaise with funeral directors and gravedigger
- Upkeep of burial registers and other records
- Locate graves for monumental masons and oversee applications for headstones and inscriptions
- Prepare service rota and allocate laity liaising with clergy and wardens
- Minute taker at Parochial Church Council meetings
- Administration for Annual Parish Church Meeting
- Support West End Bookstall ministry
- Circulate housegroup teaching material
- Word process services as and when needed
- Assist finance team with general administration
- Liaise from time to time with Record Office & Ormskirk Family History Society
- Receive family history enquiries
- Electoral Roll officer
- Photocopying and printing
- Order stationery consumables

I have been employed as a part-time administrator at St. John's for 15 years and consider it a joy and a privilege to work alongside clergy and other staff members in ministry and outreach for our Lord. Each day is different, can be challenging at times but is very rewarding.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank several servant hearted volunteers who support me in my administrative role. Firstly, to Hilda Walker who undertakes most of the printing and photocopying required on a weekly basis and prepares paperwork for the monthly baptism services. Hilda also supports Joanna Marshall with the children's and youth accounts. Secondly, to Pauline Rimmer who tirelessly continues to update our historic burial records after extensive research undertaken by the Ormskirk & District Family History Society. Pauline has also completed a church terrier and inventory on behalf of the wardens and continues to give administrative support to All-Stars. Thirdly, to Maureen Ashton who weekly visits church to tidy and sometimes arrange flowers.

#### **Highlights:**

- Sharing, discussing and praying about new ideas for ministry and outreach with the staff team.
- Going to a Church Leadership Conference at Holy Trinity Church, Brompton, London.
- Helping to plan for the Parish Weekend to Grange.

- Helping with the Easter prayer labyrinth.
- Preparing the harvest “Seeds of Hope” material.
- Pastoral and prayer opportunities with visitors to the office.
- Being a signpost, encourager and facilitator to visitors and enquirers for baptism, weddings etc.
- Working alongside volunteers.

### **Challenges:**

**Time management** - It is virtually impossible to fulfil all my duties and responsibilities within my allocated 20 hours but I’m in the fortunate position to be able to work additional hours as part of my voluntary commitment to St. John’s.

**Heating** - A continuous challenge during the winter months is working in an old building which never seems to heat to a sufficient comfortable working temperature. Even though the room often feels warm on entering any accumulated heat rapidly disappears whenever the office door is opened.

**Water ingress** – Despite building expertise being employed to stop the ingress of water through the ceiling in the parish office from the flat vestry roof which the lead theft has exacerbated, this problem remains. I have a bucket permanently placed to catch rainwater which, when heavy, fills to about four inches. I also have to protect adjacent electric sockets with plastic sheeting. Unfortunately this is close to where the computer is currently sited and water has in the past affected the printer.

**Printing** - The photocopier and printing machine are both aged and often problematic. Damp paper during the winter months often causes jams in the machines. It has also been confirmed by representatives of both companies that spare parts are no longer available for these machines.

If the church hall was to be redeveloped and the offices re-sited then this would be the ideal opportunity to review all our copying facilities. I often feel disappointed and frustrated when I produce art work for publicity materials which then copy very poorly. In some cases images have to be modified or changed completely for copying purposes.

Over the years as different staff members have joined the team, various computers and printers have been “added on” to our system. I feel that consideration should be given to improve our networking capability and facilities. One “quality” printer could perhaps serve us all which would obviously reduce costs expended on all the different consumables. At present all our colour printing is kept to a bare minimum and outsourced. Public expectation in this twenty-first century is for coloured printed matter, which today, because of the considerable advances in technology, may be affordable to us as a church.

## Summary Report: Joanna Marshall and Christine Spencer (Youth and Children's Workers)

2012 has started out well with our children & young people settling in quickly to their new groups. We thought that it might be helpful for you to see what we get up to in a typical week, although rarely are two weeks alike!

Our week begins on a Sunday with **Sparklers** crèche. Volunteers work in teams of three, helping to ensure that our babies & toddlers (0-3 years) are cared for, thus enabling parents to take part in the service. There are always toys to play with and pictures to colour. There is sometimes a little craft activity, a story or song and always a drink & a biscuit!

Our primary age children come along to the service and after a short time of worship & teaching in church; they make their way over to the church hall. Once over at **All Stars**, the children are split into age appropriate groups. Generally following the themes set out in church, our team of 8 volunteers plan activities, games & crafts to help the youngsters in their journey with God. Each term, the older children are invited to go on a trip, maybe bowling & then onto MacDonald's! The children in Years 5 & 6 also enjoy an annual trip out to Rock & River, where they take part in a number of outdoor activities & spend some time exploring their faith. Numbers at All Stars are good, although irregular attendance sometimes makes it difficult to plan sessions. Caroline McCaul has changed roles this term & will now be working alongside the team of FROG leaders. Christine Spencer is going to be heading up All Stars along with Pauline Rimmer.

Our teenagers also meet on a Sunday for food & a chat before the service begins. After sharing in the worship with the adults, they too leave & divide themselves into **JCs** (Y7& 8) who meet at the Prescott's house and **FROG** (Y9 & 10) who meet at the Greenwood's house. Again our volunteers plan sessions based on our church themes and are delivered in a way that reflects the age, interests and spiritual maturity of the youngsters.

Monday evenings see our **PUSH** group stir into life. PUSH is for young people in Year 11 and beyond. They are enjoying the new more adult house group type format. We have two groups (approx. 20 in total), one meeting in the Church Hall lounge & one at The Short's house. With a recent change in leadership our focus in these groups has been to build relationships. This term we are moving onto explore the Seven Deadly Sins! The diversity within the group sometimes makes leading it a real challenge, but it also stimulates us as leaders to question our own beliefs and actions. It is always good to be kept on your toes!

Tuesday night is a busy one for some of our families, as both the **Puppet team** and **the Youth band** meet. The puppet group has gone from strength to strength, largely due to Phil King's enthusiasm and expertise. The puppets have been used for Mothers Day, Easter, Harvest and Christmas services as well as at several of the Fun Days, where they have been used to give a gospel message through songs.

Youth band is continuing, despite fluctuating numbers over the year. Jen is now taking a break from leading it so it is now just Kerry and Christine working with this talented group of young people. Last year they not only led some of the services in church, but also led some sessions for All Stars,

encouraging them in worship, and a Monday evening Engage session with several prayer stations, which encouraged people to refresh and renew themselves in God.

**Baby & Toddler** meet on a Wednesday, holding two similar sessions (morning & afternoon) over in the church hall. These two groups aim to reach out to children & their carers. Each session runs for 90 minutes & gives the babies, toddlers & carers the chance to play, listen to a story, have a go at craft, while also sharing stories over coffee. Once each term the groups meet in church and have their own **Little Stars** service, where a short, child friendly gospel message is shared. Over the year numbers fluctuated but we currently have approximately 60 registered. We are very grateful to Sylvia Birch, Olwen Huyton & Sandra McCall, who stepped down from many years of leading the Baby & Toddler group. We are looking to build a new team of volunteers. If you are free on a Wednesday morning or afternoon & would like to chat about helping out, please do not hesitate to make contact with us!

Wednesday night sees our Outreach groups meet. We have two groups: **JCs** (23 youngsters) meeting in the church hall and **FROG** (averaging about 26) who meet in the Church. JCs have lots of fun! Each week is filled with activities & games which are often linked around a theme, which helps the youngsters to think about different areas of their life and what Jesus would have to say about it. FROG is a much larger group than previously and so has necessitated finding more leaders. God has prompted several people to step forward to help, some do it weekly, some once a fortnight. So a big thank you to them and all the existing leaders who make the group happen. We are particularly grateful that the pews have been removed as with the increased numbers at Frog it would be very difficult to provide suitable activities for the young people. We have used this space for parachute games, umbrella hockey, team games, group work and even sleeping, when we had the Push sleepover before the summer and JCs /Frog sleepover in November.

Thursday night is a quiet one & a time for the leaders to refresh before the various weekend activities that they so often get roped into. Once each term on a Friday evening, we take a group of teenagers to **SPACE** - a youth event based in Wavertree.

Each group is invited to go on **annual weekend away**. Last year each JCs went to Coniston, while FROG & PUSH spent a weekend in the Yorkshire Dales. This year we are already well underway with planning for a weekend in March on the Wirral with youngsters from all the different groups. These weekends away are always very special times for relationship building and deeper learning about God. Please keep that weekend away in your prayers. For the first time we took a group of young people to Soul Survivor, a huge youth event, under canvas! It was both challenging & fun & good time to build relationships and to realise that thousands of young people are searching for and finding God. We are already booked on to take another group this year!

Each year we try to organise a **retreat day** for all our youth & children's leaders. Last year we spent a day up in The Trough of Bowland, spending time with God & enjoying fellowship together on a very wet walk & a lovely meal.

Our work in **schools** takes place throughout the year. We do assemblies once each fortnight in both of our church schools and try to help out with their RE lessons where needed. The schools have also joined us at Christmas, Easter & Harvest and are always keen to support our appeals here in church.

Our favourite event this year was taking some of the youngsters from each school to the Operation Christmas Child Warehouse, where they were able to help package the boxes ready for distribution around the world. In July we also have a service in school for all the Year 6 leavers.

Each term we have held a holiday **Fun Day**. They have proved very popular with primary aged children and with registration now available online, many families have been looking at the St John's website who would not normally log on. There are always lots of volunteers to help with these days and they are great fun and a good opportunity to reach out into the local community.

A new project for this year is our link with the time bank at Oaks in Skelmersdale. Our Youth groups have linked up with this initiative and are hoping to be involved in a project there in February half term. We are also collecting tins for their well used food bank.

In Jan to April, five young people attended our **Youth Alpha Course**. This is a great way to challenge a small group of young people about what it means to have a faith. It is a chance for leaders and young people to build strong relationships and to have time to explore Christianity. At the end the young people are given the option to go for confirmation if they want to – all 5 went on to confirmation in April.

In July Julia and Phil Marshall spent time with Christine & those who were **preparing to go to university**, to help them think about things like budgeting, finding a church, meeting new friends, managing the work load etc. It seemed really important to spend the extra time with them in prayer and discussion before they left the St John's family.

In addition to the groups and clubs that we run, we try hard not to forget the individual. We try to make ourselves available for those youngsters who just need another ear to listen.

One really rewarding aspect of our work is when we see so many of our young people **volunteering as leaders** themselves. So often, young people are given a hard time in the media. We are so blessed with the young people we have here at St Johns and working alongside them is a real privilege. However, our work is certainly not without challenges and we would really value your continued prayers & support for our work here.

### **Summary Report: Jenny Cosslett (Pastoral Coordinator)**

2011 was a busy and challenging year for our Pastoral Teams. My responsibilities as coordinator include trying to ensure that everyone gets the help they need or ask for, recruiting and encouraging volunteers to enable this to happen and visiting both volunteers and those needing Pastoral care, to assess what is the appropriate and most effective way of caring.

As a member of the staff team here at St. John's, I work with Richard and the others to plan and carry out the vision for the future of our ministry. We meet weekly for discussion and feedback and attend staff prayers. I have also been involved in helping at Café Services, Funerals, Healing Services, Bereavement Service and others when required. I am available after most services to listen and to

update the clergy on those needing our help. We also meet regularly to ensure that each person needing Pastoral Care is assigned a visitor or clergy member to respond to whatever may be needed. All are prayed for, some may need home, hospital visits or home communion, some may need transport or meals and some may just need a friend or someone to talk to.

I am responsible for all the Pastoral Teams at St. John's and those who volunteer to work in them. Healing Teams, Tuesday Service Teams, Lunch Aid, Prayer chains, all four nursing and residential homes and the Harvest Tea for the older folk are just a few of the many pastoral care roles I am involved with.

We began the Year with a Pastoral commissioning service where it was wonderful to see so many of our volunteers being recognized for all that they do. Then there have been changes too. Following a review of the New Horizon Bereavement support group, it was decided to move this to a Tuesday after the morning service, to enable better accessibility. The annual Parceval Hall holiday taken by Alan Rimmer and myself, although a rewarding and spiritual few days, was so low in numbers, it has been decided not to go as a church this year.

Another aspect of my job is to write a magazine article each month and I am grateful to those who encourage me in this ministry opportunity. My role is so varied that I never know what may I may be needed for. I have accompanied people to Police stations, sat with the dying, taken people to hospital and supported those who have lost loved ones or face serious illness. I visit the residential homes, buy gifts for those in hospital, having new babies and celebrating momentous moments in life. Last Christmas, found some of us walking round in the snow ensuring those on their own were ok and warm and Oh Yes! I did help clear the church paths of snow a few times.

This year we are having another Pastoral training weekend in Bala where Ian Greenwood and Eileen Heaney will be leading us on the theme of 'His Hands – Our Hands'. This is always a great opportunity to listen, talk, make new friends and learn more about serving our neighbour in Jesus name.

Following the successful award of a grant, we are also starting a new group the second Saturday afternoon of each month to support those suffering from depression. This will be called ACTS and is an informal therapy group. A different taster workshop will be offered each month, including, Art, Music, photography, relaxation techniques and many others. There will then be opportunity to chat to others and our volunteers and to have access to resources which may be able to help. We also hope to offer an 'ask the Doctor session', summer walks, outings and a Christmas party.

Unfortunately, many people in St. John's experienced great suffering last year and this year looks already likely to prove more of the same. We have a substantial number of folk facing cancer treatment or other serious illness and others facing the worrying prospect of redundancy, loneliness, and depression or family problems. Without the enormous hearts and love of our many caring volunteers we would not be able to help and I am so very grateful to you all for what you do. "It is in this work that we Love our Neighbour as Ourselves" Thank You!

