

## **Ministry Report to the Annual District Meeting of Stewton on the 17<sup>th</sup> March 2017**

2016 /17 has been a very positive year for the life and outreach of St Andrews. We started at Easter 2016 with the visit by my daughter Victoria and myself to our project in Kenya and to see the church in Wiyumiririe which the contributions from this church had helped to build. It was touching to see a photograph hanging on the vestry wall of an 18 years younger self handing over that first cheque enabling them to make a start on the work. While we still have a good proportion of that congregation in the photograph actively still with us, some have transferred to the Kingdom of God and we continue to build on their legacy.

Of the three specific items we agreed to focus on while we were there, the Aids Medication, the Goat Unit, and the classroom in the village school for children with learning disabilities; just before Christmas we heard that the anti viral drugs are now being delivered to the Health Centre in the village twice a week; the Goat Unit has been costed out and we are awaiting final details before the money is transferred to them for this; and the classroom is awaiting other estimates for the build. But don't think of European style classrooms, think of black painted corrugated iron with an earth floor as we saw in the other three local schools we visited.

Here at Stewton, as we had hoped, the long awaited toilet has opened the doors to an expanding range of activities. Helen's initiative of setting up the Book Club followed by Alan's Cacophony singing group for those who supposedly can't sing, have fitted in alongside the regular monthly Community Coffee Events in which we focus on not our own needs, but outreach to our project in Kenya, Romania and worldwide through Toilet Twinning – we have twelve twinned toilets so far. We are the first twinned village in the country, being up there with Dundee, Chester, the Isle of Man and Stewton!

For the first time this year we are offering the opportunity for people across the Parish to join us in a Lent group considering the Meaning of Everything and this has been very well received. Re-arranging the chancel has enabled us to work much more flexibly in this old building and is ideally suited for small group activities, Quiet Days etc.

All of this is only achievable by our coming together and working together, but it demonstrates my philosophy that by doing this , even a tiny community can make a very big impact, not just here but in the wider community and further afield.

Rev Robert Mansfield

## Ministry Report to the Annual District Meeting of St Michael's, Louth on 20<sup>th</sup> March 2017

	2015	2016	% change
Electoral Roll	39	39	0
Baptisms	24	14	-42
Thanksgiving for the gift of a child	0	0	-
Marriage	7	7	0
Prayer and dedication after civil marriage	0	0	0
Funerals in church	13	17	31
Funerals at crematorium	-	-	0
Easter communicants	47	41	-13
Easter attendance	53	46	-13
Christmas communicants	28	19	-32
Christmas attendance	200	187	-7
Normal Sunday attendance	31	26	-16
Normal Weekday attendance	1		-100
Fresh Expression' attendance	0		0
<b>Normal TOTAL weekly attendance</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>-19</b>

During the course of 2016 the number of people attending regular acts of worship showed a marked dip compared to the relatively stable period since 2010 (Av. Attendance – 32). Other signs of concern during 2017 was the decision to stop the monthly practice of praying the Stations of the Cross as it was being attended by very few people other than those involved in taking the service or opening the building. However, a glimpse of better news can be seen in that, after some erratic levels of attendance in the first couple of months of 2017, figures seem to have stabilised in the few weeks leading up to the Annual District Meeting.

Despite this blunt start to the report there are a number of things to bring hope and give us heart:

- We moved our focus on to making sure that we are fulfilling the spiritual needs of the worshipping community. The price of this is that we are looking inward – but until we are fulfilled in our own worship we will not be in a position to reach out effectively to others.
- We have started to hold a monthly social event on the first Saturday of every month. Although early, the first event was a positive occasion that gave a chance to come together in fellowship in a way that is not always the case on Sunday mornings.
- We have started to have conversations with the local orthodox community to see whether we can grow closer together, and whether one part of the future life of St Michael's will be to become home to this congregation as well as the existing Anglo-Catholic congregation.

In summary, although the past year has not been one of unbounded hope and optimism it has given us a chance to look at what is essential. As a result, we will continue to sustain a pattern of regular worship and grow together in fellowship, whilst looking for signs of where God is calling us to grow in the future. Alongside this St Michael's remains a key location for the Parish Ministry Team to exercise its pastoral ministry through Baptisms, Weddings and Funerals and that is another area for focus in the time ahead.

## Ministry Report to the Annual District Meeting of Louth St James on 4<sup>th</sup> April 2017

### Worship and Prayer

Statistics for 2016	2016	2015	2014	2013	2012
Usual Sunday morning attendance (weekly)	74	75	73	75	64
Usual Sunday evening attendance (weekly)	25	28	23	19	18
Usual Weekday attendance (weekly)	15	18	16	16	12
<b>Usual Average Weekly attendance</b>	<b>113</b>	<b>119</b>	<b>112</b>	<b>110</b>	<b>94</b>
Christmas attendance	1,419 (822)	1,351 (801)	1,466 (815)	1,302 (675)	853 (683)
Christmas communicants	169	181	225	226	239
Easter attendance	206	256	204	212	172
Easter communicants	134	122	121	142	116
<b>Total attendance on Sundays/Festivals</b>	<b>8,599</b>	<b>8,455</b>	<b>7,962</b>	<b>7,575</b>	<b>5,565</b>
Baptisms	24	27	38	16	21
Weddings	7	12	8	15	-
Funerals	14	16	19	24	22

### Review of our worshipping communities

#### (i) Sunday morning and evening congregations

Attendance at both the Sunday morning and evening congregations is stable, after the growth that took place in both congregations in 2013-15. Whilst a few familiar faces are no longer with us we have welcomed into our community several new faces, including some who have altered the age profile. It is now common to have two or three families in the congregation as well as young people in the choir and serving, and some people have found or returned to faith in older age brackets as well. During the year we saw five members of the congregation confirmed at the cathedral and they are continuing to take their place in our community in different ways.

#### (ii) Tuesday communion

Again this has remained a stable group after similar growth during 2014. As with Sunday congregations there has been a change as old faces have left and new ones have taken their place. Of those people who are still with us a number are now seen in nursing homes for the Home Communion services.

#### (iii) Prayer and Pint

Having been introduced a couple of years ago this group has settled into a steady rhythm of reflection, prayer and discussion and provides a useful opportunity for learning and fellowship.

#### (iv) KEVIGS

School worship has been maintained, with the church full to bursting now that the school is expanding. In addition to the full school services there are now regular assemblies for multiple year-groups taking place in church on a roughly fortnightly basis.

#### (v) Occasional informal worship

Our occasional informal evening eucharists has continued, with one on Trinity Sunday and another planned again for Remembrance Sunday evening. The aim is to add another into the cycle so that there is one each term. They seem to be appreciated by those who have attended.

#### (vi) Civic worship and United Services

St James' has continued to host the regular round civic and ecumenical services. In addition services at St James' were cancelled so that we could join together with the congregation of St Michael's in celebrating their patronal festival.

#### (vii) Review of our worship over the Christmas period

The round of services for the Christmas season started in good for with our Advent Carols and Christingle Services – each of which saw an increased number of people attending, and each of which received good feedback from those attending. As we approached Christmas itself the last couple of days of the school term saw us welcome thousands through our doors. Amongst this we welcomed members of the wider community to Carols for All – again to increased numbers and much praise for the music and atmosphere (despite the lack of heating!). The continued growth in people attending acts of worship at Christmas continued over Christmas Eve and Christmas Day – with the one exception being Midnight Eucharist which saw slightly fewer people attend than in previous years. One might wonder whether the lack of heating was a factor in this. However, overall both the services beforehand and at Christmas itself saw an increasing

number of people attending and being open to the key message of Christmas as a part of the Christian story. Remembering that the Christmas season continues well past Christmas Day we also welcomed a number of hardy souls to a bring-and-share supper after marking the Epiphany with a special service of Evening Prayer on the 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday of Epiphany.

Thanks must go to everyone who worked together to make our worship meaningful and keep the building ready for use, despite what have sometimes been challenging times (particularly with the failure of the heating system just as we embarked on this routine of special services, concerts and other events.

**(viii) Plans for the future of Music at St James**

Over the past two years we have been able to trace a steady increase in the quality of choral music in our worship. Choral music has been a key part of the life of St James' for much (if not all) of its existence and it is good to know that we now have more secure foundations to build upon. However, there are two proposals that are made with the aim of securing this tradition and setting foundations for its future:

- (i) Firstly, following the resignation of Lisa Taylor in November, we are taking steps to recruit a permanent Organist or Organists. This will enable Allan Smith to focus on his key responsibility of building up the choirs and bring focus onto organ performance in the liturgy, both as a support to the work of the choirs and in its own right.
- (ii) Secondly, to provide greater financial security for the long-term future of music we should bring together a group of people to focus on raising funds to support the DCC in resourcing the music and liturgy of the church. Initially this would be entirely under the banner of the DCC, and would start with the existing Music Endowment Fund, but could over time develop as an independent group working to raise funds for the music. Ultimately, the aim could perhaps be that this group would aim to fund all the musical activity of the DCC apart from the payment of the salary of one of the musicians (which is expected to be paid by the DCC). This will take some time to achieve but, if everyone is in agreement, I will convene a group to start looking at what is required and to organise events under the banner of the DCC to support this aspect of our life and worship.

## **Welcoming visitors and encouraging pilgrims**

Those involved in this aspect of our work have not yet met, but will be meeting takes place this week and will look at plans for the coming year. A very brief summary follows.

**(i) Coffee Shop**

The transition of management seems to have gone reasonably smoothly, with the two Sue's recruiting more volunteers so that the Coffee Shop has remained open throughout the season. Takings have been reduced slightly this year. We were attributing this to the fact that the building has not hosted as many events as it did in 2015 (with the many and various InSpire500 activities). However, in September we found out that someone had helpfully told the Tourist Information Centre that the Coffee Shop was no longer open as there were not enough volunteers. This was quickly corrected and since then we have seen an increase in visitors to the Coffee Shop! With the start of the Christmas Card sales, there has been a further increase in trade so we hope for a good end to the season. Looking to next year it is being investigated as to whether the Coffee Shop can remain open for Market Days in the otherwise 'closed season' as an experiment.

The end of the season picked up considerably and the period when Card for Good Causes was open was the most successful in recent years. Once work on the heating is complete, it is proposed to open for a trial period on some market days before the normal start date of the beginning of April.

**(ii) Guides and Education**

The regular provision of volunteer guides has continued, and most days are covered (even if not all day). In addition to the regular presence of guides a number of other activities have taken place, including a number of talks and guided visits undertaken by Stuart Sizer. Other items of note include:

- (i) **Louth Cross** After initial publicity work has moved on to providing permanent display and, once this is complete, a further publicity drive will take place.
- (ii) **Publications** In connection with the Louth Cross a booklet was produced, which has been joined booklets on other subjects so that there is now quite a range of small booklets on sale detailing various aspects of the church building. As well as writing several of these, Chris Marshall has undertaken the production of all the booklets.

(iii) **School visits programme** After a pause this project has been taken up by Kate Toogood and has seen several classes visit the church as part of a pilot, with other schools interested in taking part in the future.

**(iii) Exhibitions etc.**

Following from the InSpire 500 activities a number of exhibitions and activities were held in St James' during 2016, including:

- (i) Money installation
- (ii) Embroidery and tapestry groups
- (iii) Art Installations
- (iv) Cards for Good Causes

Looking ahead, invitations have been sent to some organisations who indicated that they might be able to put on exhibitions. So far, the only concrete plans are for an exhibition of embroidery focused on the Psalms to compliment the Lenten theme, and ArtsNK to bring an art installation in the early summer period. A date is also booked in for a number of single events such as Party in the Pews with the aim of continuing to broaden the number of community groups engaging with the building.

**(iv) Education outreach**

Kate is continuing to develop curriculum resources for both primary and secondary schools to use when they visit the building. Several of these resources have been used by Kate with groups visiting St James.

## **A community of people gathering together**

Some members of the Pastoral and Fellowship Group have met and are hoping to reconvene and reinvigorate its work to bring people together in fellowship and care for each other. The following priorities will be discussed at a meeting on 4<sup>th</sup> February:

- Establish a celebration calendar and social noticeboard so that information can be shared.
- Build on existing social events to develop a programme of regular events for people to meet (e.g. Lent Lunches, Epiphany Party, BBQ etc.).
- Continue to promote small groups (e.g. Guild, Pilgrim, P&P) as a way of people growing together in faith.
- Establishing a programme of 'practical events' (e.g. Craft Afternoon in the Coffee Shop) to encourage wider community links.
- Build on existing plans for pastoral care to develop a systematic way of welcoming newcomers, caring for each other and responding to people in need, including developing a group of Pastoral Visitors.

All are welcome to the meeting on 4<sup>th</sup> February – planned for 10 30am in the Coffee Shop, but at a nearby location should the church not be available!

## **Resourcing our work**

### **Stewardship resources**

The need for focus on Stewardship remains and we need to identify some people to take this forward on a longer-term basis.

### **Christmas giving**

50% of collections was given to 'Louth Churches for Refugees' to support their work and work taking place by the Diocese of Jerusalem in the Middle East. Our contribution has been received with thanks and gratitude.

## Ministry Report to the Annual District Meeting of South Elkington on 5<sup>th</sup> April 2017

	2015	2016	% change
Electoral Roll	29	29	0
Baptisms	10	6	-40
Thanksgiving for the gift of a child	0	0	-
Marriage	5	4	-20
Prayer and dedication after civil marriage	1	0	0
Funerals in church	1	4	300
Funerals at crematorium	-	-	0
Easter communicants	23	18	-22
Easter attendance	23	21	-9
Christmas communicants	26		-100
Christmas attendance	30		-100
Normal Sunday attendance	11	14	24
Normal Weekday attendance	0	0	0
Fresh Expression' attendance	0	0	0
<b>Normal TOTAL weekly attendance</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>24</b>

It is pleasing to record a general increase in attendance at services during the course of 2016, returning to the levels of previous years. Not indicated in the bald statistics outlined above are the special services that took place during the year. Harvest and Christmas were both marked with special services – and there was a distinct advantage shown by having advertising on the main road. We also welcomed Greenwich House School to use the church during the year, and this is an important (if little seen) part of the church's ministry.

As well as regular and special services All Saints has continued to offer people a place for prayer, and has been used for the celebration of the occasional offices of baptism, marriage and burial. The changes in the number of each of these services reflects the changing fortunes of our community. The church remains a popular place for marriages, with its well-kept building and picturesque setting being a significant attraction to couples.

I am grateful to Matt Harbage for taking a majority of services during the past year or so. Despite demands on our time from the wider deanery I hope that Matt and I will be able to share in the ministry at South Elkington until the time comes for him to look ahead and beyond our life in this parish.

**NB: A verbal report was given at the Annual District Meeting of Welton le Wold summarising the activities of the church there. This is recorded in the Minutes of that meeting.**