

**The Parish of St. Andrew's Corbridge with St. Oswald, Halton  
and St. James, Newton Hall.**



# **ANNUAL REPORT**

## **for year ending**

## **31st March 2015**

**Incumbent**

The Revd D B Hewlett The Vicarage, Greencroft Avenue, Corbridge. NE45 5DW

**Bank**

Lloyds Bank, Priestpopple, Hexham. NE46 1PA

## **ANNUAL CHURCH & PAROCHIAL CHURCH MEETINGS**

**St Andrew's Church, 26<sup>th</sup> April 2015, at 11.00 a.m.**

### **AGENDA**

1. Apologies
2. Minutes of the meeting held on 27<sup>th</sup> April 2014 at 11.00am.
3. Election of Churchwardens  
Linda Hunter and Gilbert Marshall elected 2014 2 vacancies
4. Financial Statement to include charitable giving Cliff Wright
5. Reports in this booklet

PCC Annual Report 2015

Electoral Roll

Vicar's Report

Maureen Davison

Rev David Hewlett

### **Children and Youth Work**

Creche

Junior Church

Messy Church

Louise Stubbs

Louise Stubbs

### **Outreach and Communication**

Social events

Church Welcomers /Guides

Musical Events

Website

Parish News

Food bank

Fundraising

Rev Jenny Kinnaird

Rosemary Baker

John Bishop

Simon A Hunter

Simon A Hunter

Monica Philbrick

Linda E Hunter

Church Music

Fabric, Goods and Ornaments of the Church

Church Cottage

Safeguarding

Colin Williams

Linda E Hunter and

Gilbert Marshall

Suzette Milne

Linda E Hunter

Sidespersons  
Church Flowers  
Prayer Group  
Home Group  
Corbridge Deanery Synod  
Lay Voices Conference

David Welsh  
Sheila Goldsworthy  
Tony Macdonald  
Max Philbrick  
Richard Dixon  
Max Philbrick  
Elizabeth Robson

Churches Together in Corbridge  
Women's Fellowship  
Corbridge C of E First School

Linda E Hunter  
Jennifer Aynsley &  
David Watson

## 6. Elections

### **Parochial Church Council**

Jackie Webb, Suzette Milne, Carol Maskell (2012 – 2015) retiring

John Bishop, John McNamara, Jennifer Wright (2013 – 2016) continuing  
David Welsh, Mike Stephenson, Monica Philbrick (2014 – 2017) continuing

3 vacancies

## 7. Appointment of Independent Examiner

## 8. Any Other Business

**MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL CHURCH AND ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHURCH  
MEETINGS HELD IN THE CHURCH AT 11.00am  
ON SUNDAY 27<sup>th</sup> APRIL 2014**

The Vicar welcomed all those who were present and reminded them that this meeting combined the two meetings, Church meeting and Parochial meeting.

**1. PRESENT:**

Revd David Hewlett (vicar), Revd Julie Robson (NSM curate), 3 retired clergy, 32 laity.

**2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE:**

Apologies were received from Mr John Bishop, Mrs Helga Marshall, Mr Gilbert Marshall, Mr Warwick Milne, and Mr Edward Pybus.

**3. MINUTES OF THE LAST ANNUAL CHURCH AND PAROCHIAL MEETINGS:**

Minutes of the Annual Meetings held on Sunday 14<sup>th</sup> April 2013 were approved unanimously and signed as a true record. There were no matters arising.

**4. ELECTION OF CHURCHWARDENS:**

The Vicar reminded the meeting that churchwardens are elected for one year with the recommendation that they serve no more than six consecutive years. However it is not always possible to find people willing to take on the role. It was proposed by Mr Cliff Wright: To rescind the motion that Church Wardens can only serve for a maximum of six consecutive years. After some discussion and a vote: 25 were in favour of rescinding the motion, 3 were against and 4 abstained.

**5. FINANCIAL STATEMENT:**

The Vicar thanked the Treasurer, Cliff Wright, for the comprehensive Financial Statement for the year ending 31<sup>st</sup> December 2013 (circulated). The accounts were adopted by the meeting

## **6. REPORTS:**

The Vicar thanked all who had contributed to and compiled the Annual Report booklet. He commented on the amount and variety of work it shows going on in and through St Andrew's church and asked for any questions or comments. The new Parish news letter is now in circulation

## **7. ELECTIONS:**

### **Parochial Church Council:**

Four nominations were received for the three vacancies on the PCC to be filled. Monica Philbrick, David Welsh and Mike Stephenson were elected. Carol Maskell was elected for one year to take the place of Laure Rhodes who left during her time in office.

## **8. APPOINTMENT OF INDEPENDENT EXAMINER:**

It was agreed that Cliff would again approach Roger Jones to see whether he would be willing to look at the accounts again in 2015

## **9. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

The Vicar thanked the churchwardens for their hard work and support during the past year and reminded the meeting that much of their work goes on unseen. Linda Hunter thanked the Vicar for all that he does and the inspiration he gives to us. She also thanked Tessa for the unseen support that she gives to David. The retired clergy were duly thanked.

The meeting closed at 11.35am with thanks to all for their attendance.

## **PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL ANNUAL REPORT FOR YEAR ENDING 31<sup>st</sup> MARCH 2014**

### **Introduction**

The PCC has the responsibility of working alongside the Vicar, in the community of Corbridge, to build not only on the past but to look to the future, moving forward prayerfully and enthusiastically to embrace the challenges of the church in the world today, which are set out in the vision planning of the Diocese.

**Generous, Engaged and Open** are the keynote qualities of Diocesan priorities – to pursue Bold Evangelism, to provide Useful Buildings, to Develop Disciples, to encourage Lively Worship, to promote Vocations, and to draw in Young People.

In Corbridge the PCC are very clear that there is a welcome for everyone, no matter what their story, background, marital status, gender, nationality or sexuality. We are an inclusive church.

### **MEMBERSHIP**

Members of the PCC are either exofficio, elected by the Annual Parochial Church Meeting (APCM) in accordance with Church Representation Rules or co opted by the PCC.

During the year the following served as members of the PCC:

Vicar:	Rev. David B Hewlett
Assistant Curate (NSM):	Rev Julie Robson
Reader:	Roger Lowans
Churchwardens:	Linda E Hunter and Gilbert Marshall

Representatives on the Deanery Synod:  
Richard Dixon, Max Philbrick Elizabeth Robson

Elected Members:			
John Bishop	Brenda Ford	John McNamara	Suzette Milne
Louise Stubbs	Jackie Webb	Jennifer Wright	David Welsh
Monica Philbrick	Carol Maskell	Mike Stephenson	

Co opted Cliff Wright and Jane Stephenson

It is a requirement by law that a Standing Committee is appointed. It has the power to transact the business of the PCC between meetings, subject to any

direction given by the PCC.

**Members:** Vicar, Churchwardens, Treasurer, Lay Vice Chairman, Secretary and one elected member. Our elected member is Richard Dixon

## **REVIEW OF THE YEAR**

Six meetings of the PCC and five of the Standing Committee were held during the last year. The Vicar chaired the meetings with support from Linda Hunter as Lay Chair. The PCC receives reports and debates on a very large amount of information throughout the year. This review only covers that material which is not reported on in reports which may be found separately in the Annual Report.

### **Financial Matters**

Cliff has kept us updated at our meetings, providing us with a variety of graphs and charts to enable us to understand better our own financial situation. These are enhanced with detailed reporting on funds and bank accounts. The annual accounts for the year ending 31<sup>st</sup> December 2014 will be found in an accompanying booklet. In the current climate we need to be aware that our expenditure is rising steadily and our income is not keeping pace with our outgoings.

As it is 5 years since our last Planned Giving Appeal we have now begun the process again, beginning in April with a series of addresses on Sundays 19th, 26th & 3rd May 2015 during the Parish Communion Service and on SUNDAY 7th June at 10.00am when we will explore YOUR CHURCH. ITS FUTURE.

Richard Gascoyne, Diocesan Planned Giving Adviser, is working with a Steering Committee comprising Vicar, Treasurer and Churchwardens to set the up the Parish Giving Appeal. Another committee of previous Funding Chairmen, Planned Giving Administrator and Churchwardens is looking at the practicalities of implementing the appeal. If you are able to give through a regular standing order it would help us with our budgeting that would be really great

We are grateful to Roger Jones for taking on the Independent examination of our accounts again this year.

### **Charities supported this year**

PCC grants of £861.67 each were allocated to Tearfund and Church Urban Fund and £430.83 allocated to Natural Ability and the Lunch Club.

**APPOINTMENTS:** Thanks should be extended to Yvonne Piper who for many years has been the Planned Giving Administrator and decided this year to stand

down from this position. Thank you Yvonne for the time you have given to this very important role. David Welsh has now taken on the role of Planned Giving Administrator.

**OUTREACH:** A welcome Pack to be used when visitors move into Corbridge is in the planning stages. Max Philbrick has put some ideas together. If you would like to be involved in this please speak to the Churchwardens.

**The PARISH NEWS:** continues to be one of our many routes of communication with most people receiving this by email. However, we still need more regular contributors of copy. Please think about whether you have anything that you can contribute.

**GRAND DRAW:** Suzette and Warwick Milne organised the Grand Draw this year. Thank you to them for all the work this involved.

**USE OF THE CHURCH:** We continue to support other organisations by letting them use the church for different activities. A joint concert between our choir and Jubilate for Help the Heroes was held. We are looking forward to an event in July to link with the Village Dementia Friends Initiative.

**SPEAKERS AT 9.30am SERVICE:** It has been good to welcome a range of speakers at the 9.30 service which have included: Tear Fund. Tynedale Hospice at Home, Christian Aid and Tom Collins.

**MISSION ACTION PLANNING:** We have continued to work through items on our Mission Action Plan (MAP) and it will be updated in the Autumn.

**CHRISTIAN AID WEEK:** Jennifer Herrmann organises this on behalf of the Churches in Corbridge and we are very grateful for the time she spends doing this.

Do remember that if you want anything discussed at a PCC meeting please ask one of the members to ask for it to go on the agenda. Minutes of PCC meetings can be found in the file near the PCC board at the back of church.

## **ELECTORAL ROLL**

### **Maureen Davison**

At the start of this year there were 181 names on the Electoral Roll. During the year there have been 4 additions, 6 moved away and 2 deletions making the current total 178.

Additions	Moved away
Miss Amanda Cregin Mrs Jean A Wilks Ms Fay Dickinson Mr Martin R Stout	Mr Roger E Lowans Mrs Mary Lowans Mrs Sarah J Laybourn Mrs Alison Mills Mr Joel Mills Miss Mena Cunningham

Deletions – RIP
Mrs Muriel Forde Mrs L May Siddons

This year has been a very busy, but a very positive one – again!

## **People**

- We said farewell to **Mary and Roger Lowans** who have both made huge contributions to St. Andrew's: Reader, musician, Chair of School Governors and Editor of The Bridge. We wish them well in 'retirement' [joke!] in Yorkshire.
- **Julie** is still in her training period, but she makes such a large contribution to the ministry here that it feels as if she has been here for years! Thank you, Julie. Without Julie's support and caring pastoral work, I would have been hard pressed to cope this year as I have been looking after so many vacant parishes in the Deanery.
- I want to thank the **Retired Clergy** for their support and especially Jenny Kinnaird who acts as Chaplain to Charlotte Straker , and to Jack Hay who looks after Halton. We have welcomed Brian Topping and Michael Thompson as retired clergy and The McNamaras who have now moved into the village. The help of all the retired clergy is much appreciated, both practically helping cover services in the Deanery and in terms of their support of me, and so in so many other ways in the Parish.
- Our **Churchwardens**, Linda and Gilbert, are excellent. Their expertise, kindness and ability to arrange, organise, welcome and love St.Andrew's and those who come is a valued ministry. They lift so many potential burdens from my shoulders, for which I am personally so very grateful.
- We say a big 'Thank You' to our **Treasurer**, Cliff Wright, whose skill, especially in explaining financial matters to the Vicar and the PCC in a way that is easy to understand, is much appreciated.
- Many thanks to Jenny Kinnaird and her team for taking on **The Social Committee**. We now have more social events and are getting to know one another a little better than before.
- Thanks too, to **Edward Pybus** Hon Churchwarden at Halton for looking after people there.

- I want to pay tribute to **Linda Hunter**, not only as Churchwarden but as leader of worship at St. Andrews both at All Age Worship and at Evensong; and facilitator of the Messy Church planning group. Linda continues her training for Reader ministry. I do hope there will be good support for her when she is licensed on Saturday 3<sup>rd</sup> Oct, at 2pm in the Cathedral.
- This year saw the last edition of **The Bridge** after many years. But The Parish News has come like a phoenix. Huge thanks to Simon Hunter for all his expertise and work in getting this email publication launched so professionally. Are you on the email list to receive it?
- I cannot thank everyone individually ... our churches have **so many people that do so many things**. Without this pulling together as the Body of Christ here we could not witness to the love of God, as we do.

## The Pastoral Offices

- **Funerals:** there were 34 in 2014 and 9 so far in 2015 and it is only 2<sup>nd</sup> March. We said final farewells to a number of people who have been associated with St. Andrews down the years, in particular Dom Abraham who died aged just 40 and who with Kath and Katie and Fen have given so much to the life of this church, especially in its outreach to young families. Our love goes out to them and to all who remember Dom with great affection. May Siddons died recently after a short illness: I have never met a younger person in their nineties! Always looking forward, always encouraging and always secure in her faith. We also remember Molly Lever, Muriel Forde and Roger Riley, who were members of this congregation, with love and affection. May they all rest in peace and rise in glory.
- **Weddings:** 12 celebrated here in 2014. Couples and their families always comment on the warm welcome they receive at St. Andrew's both on Sundays and in the organising of their weddings.
- **Baptisms:** continue in popularity making it impossible to administer them all in regular Sunday worship. 15 in 2014 and 3 already in 2015. We are now following up baptism families and making sure, they are invited to Messy Church and other appropriate events at St. Andrew's.

## Worship

- **Messy Church** has grown again this year and we regularly have over 90 people in church. The planning team is inspirational – it cheers me to see so

many ideas and so much enthusiasm. The Holy Spirit moves in many ways and we have to discern where the energy is and go with it joyfully. I am especially grateful that so many from our Sunday congregations are involved in the planning and the delivery Messy Church too. The newly formed Messy Church Family Choir will be singing at our All Age Worship Sunday services further encouraging the links between the various congregations at St. Andrew's.

- **Music:** How wonderful it is to have such moving music at the heart of so much of our worship. Thank you Colin; to Marc and John who job-share the organ playing so wonderfully; and the choir. It is especially gratifying to see St. Andrew's being used as a centre for regional RSCM events, welcoming John Rutter for a study day here this year, and Margaret Rizza next year.
- We do have a huge responsibility to offer the best worship we can, as so often we are host to people who only come irregularly to church. They so often say how welcome they feel –our church is open to all who want to come without exception, whether they come once or 100 times a year.
- We welcomed **Canon Martyn Percy**, then Principal of Cuddesdon theological college, now Dean of Christ Church, Oxford as the preacher at our Festival Choral Communion. Martyn's energy and fresh insights made us think, made us smile and he led a stimulating session in the cottage on the Monday night. I was sad that he went to Oxford –I had hopes he might become the next +Newcastle!
- The new **altar frontal** for The High Altar and the banners have now been completed with the arrival of new chasubles and stoles. There have been some very complementary comments made, especially highlighting the way that art can help us deepen our spiritual lives.
- Grateful thanks to those who facilitate the **Friday Prayer Group** and to the Philbricks and The Morris's for using their homes to host the **House Group**.

## Schools

- **Roger Lowans**, as Chair of Governors, has put in hours of work to secure a bright future for our school. We are right to be hopeful for the future especially as Jen Ainsley, our new head-teacher, has really got the school humming again. We now have a virtually new governing body with good commitment, a variety of appropriate skills and a new will for the school to succeed. David Watson is the new chair who brings great experience and

insight to the tasks ahead. I am pleased to say that Michael Collins from our congregation accepted the invitation to join the governing body this year.

- **Corbridge C. of E. First School:** Julie and the vicar take assemblies on a regular basis, often accompanied by 'Mint Sauce'.
- **'Open the Book'** assemblies led by a group from the parish twice a term, and have been very well received by staff and children alike. The team are dedicated actors!
- Linda and the vicar lead **assemblies** at the newly enlivened The Middle School and at Mowden Hall.

## High Spots

There have been so many it is hard to pick out specific ones but:-

- **The Corbridge Chamber Music Festival** and Eucharist with wonderful music ... our thanks to all the home team who facilitate this and to The Gould Piano Trio, their friends and families who make such beautiful music possible.
- We held **carol singing**, the raffle and the mulled wine morning in December –the vicar's Mulled Wine was good, but perhaps not quite as good as Paddy's, whose infamous recipe, sadly, seems to have died with her.
- **The Christmas Tree Festival** has now become a regular event, eagerly anticipated by the whole community and supported by businesses, school and village organisations. Apart from raising much needed money to keep the church going, it provides outreach into the community which we seek to serve.
- I do hope the **Parish Giving Appeal:** "Faithraising" will be a great success. We are always needing to keep our income in line with our expenditure and such campaigns help us to do this..... please do respond with thankfulness for all that God gives to us individually and as a church community.

## Conclusion

I have been asked by The Bishop to serve in various places in the wider diocese this year:-

- As Area Dean of Corbridge Deanery - Where the vacancy at The Moorland Group of Parishes: seven parishes, eight churches will be filled on 22<sup>nd</sup> April with Rev. Helen Savage's induction.

The parishes of Stamfordham, Matfen & Ryal remain vacant, but will be filled very soon.

- As a member of the: Local Ministry Task group  
Continuing Ministerial Development Task group.  
Diocesan Strategy Group  
The Bishop's Council- elected by clergy of Lindisfarne archdeaconry.
- As a Bishop's mentor ( part of the process for supporting clergy going through difficulties)
- Diocesan assessor for those seeking ordination.
- Bishop's reviewer for clergy Ministerial Development Reviews
- Surrogate for Marriages.

## Reflection

- **The Women Bishops Measure.** At last our first woman bishop!! A reason for celebration-yes... but perhaps a little more muted than it should have been, as it is a disgrace that it has taken so long to get to this point. Perhaps justice will be coming soon for gay bishops too.
- We do not, as a church, give much support to evening meetings or groups so we have added a more overt teaching angle to some Sundays in the 'sermon slot', which seems to be being well received. We will also be looking at other possible ways of helping individuals to deepen their spirituality, perhaps through Third Order Franciscans or The Northumbria Community.  
**We need to raise our numbers and deepen our discipleship.**
- and finally a "thank you" to God for +Martin and for Marlene. For their devoted service to this diocese and for their ministry amongst us. Please pray for them in retirement, and for whoever will be the next +Newcastle

As your Vicar, I am always available to be consulted on any matter, in confidence. May I thank you all for the part you play in God's work in this place.



## **CHILDREN AND YOUTH WORK**

Our ministry with Children and Young Families involves so many people on a regular basis. Thank you to all those who give up their time to support this vital ministry.

### **CRECHE**

Crèche is still available but as our number of young children has decreased it is not always used. Thank you to those who help on the rota, it is greatly appreciated by those parents who use the crèche

### **JUNIOR CHURCH**

**Louise Stubbs, Leader**

The average attendance at Junior Church from March 2014 to March 2015 has been limited to 1-2 children attending regularly. Every effort is made to encourage visiting children to join us and they are made very welcome. Junior Church continues to run every Sunday except during school holidays. Monica Philbrick and I continue as leaders with Sylvia Smith as a regular helper. We all have name badges which make us recognizable to visitors. We continue to use the cottage as our base for Junior Church in preference to being in church. This allows us access to all our resources and also space to move around for various activities. Planning is led by materials and activities suggested in the 'Living Stones' series of books. Monica and I supplement this material with our own resources when appropriate. We plan for groups of children but this can easily be adapted if fewer children are in attendance.

Children continue to be involved with services throughout the year, especially with 'All Age Worship' where involvement of the children is key to the service. Activities in the past year have included:

- **Mothering Sunday:** This service was well attended. The service involved the congregation from the start with a quiz for guessing the famous Mums. A short sketch was performed entitled 'Mum's weren't just for Mother's day' All mums were given a small pot plant distributed by the children.
- **Easter:** An Easter Garden was constructed in the main entrance porch of Church. Two children helped to build the garden making it a focal point as people entered.

- **Easter Sunday:** an egg hunt was organized in the church grounds. Sixty four plastic eggs were purchased and these were hidden well (or so we thought!) Monica and I led some singing before we played 'Easter egg scramble' Everyone was offered chocolate eggs at the end of the service.

**All Age Worship:** The theme for this service was 'Journeys' Revd. David Hewitt led the service equipped with a rucksack. This was slowly unpacked to reveal items needed for a journey. Hymns and prayers were all related to journeys. Names or prayers were written on 'cut-out' footprints by the congregation. The church choir ended the service by singing the Irish Blessing.

The **Harvest Festival** took place on the 16<sup>th</sup> October. The theme was 'God is a faithful gardener' Traditional and modern hymns/songs were chosen and the Family Choir also sang. Children from the congregation were willing participants and helped with the telling of a story about an old lady whose life was transformed when she received some gifts from God.

The **Travelling Crib:** Families were invited to have the travelling crib and it passed from house to house in the old Mexican Tradition.

**Christingle** coincided with the **Christmas tree festival** this year. The **Christingle service** was well attended and was led by Linda Hunter. It is always interesting to hear about the origins of this service. As in previous years, all members of the congregation were given a 'Do-It-Yourself' Christingle kit distributed by the children. Everyone successfully made their Christingle before they were lit. The service continued with everyone encircling the church to sing. The church was full of stunning Christmas trees, for this service, as the **Tree Festival** ran from 5<sup>th</sup>-9<sup>th</sup> December.

Junior Church decorated a tree for the Festival. Parents, children and helpers made God's eyes to hang on the tree and also figures of Mary, Joseph and baby Jesus with some onlooking animals. We were delighted to achieve another Gold Award. The event attracted even more entries than previously with children and young people being represented by several different organizations.

Four hundred people attended the **Crib Service** on 24<sup>th</sup> December, where the theme was Dr Tom and the Time Machine – of course the Dr was our very own Dr Tom Collins who, along with Linda, had the children (and adults) on the edges of their pews the entire service.

On **Christmas Day** the children in the congregation were given the opportunity to open their presents (if not already opened) and talk about their gifts to a receptive

congregation. I think everyone was impressed by the children who spoke so well about their gifts.

May I take this opportunity to thank everyone involved with Junior Church and Young People in our Church and the wider community. Their time, enthusiasm and support is greatly appreciated.

## **MESSY CHURCH**

Louise Stubbs

Messy Church has gone from strength to strength over the past year. **Our team** work really well together and all team members now attend the planning meeting which is a change from previously. This has been beneficial for all, as everyone is encouraged to share ideas for activities around the chosen theme. All team members have been issued with a name badge which makes us instantly recognizable as a helper on the day. The Methodist Church representatives continue to give their support and we are grateful for the help they provide. We would welcome any new members to our team and there is no expectation to be an accomplished artist, baker or model maker! Enthusiasm is the key and our current team have it in abundance.

A mention should be made to Max Philbrick for all the stunning graphics he produces for the **Messy Church flyers**. They are certainly eye catching and are always used on the display board in church, and sent to the schools.

Monica, Paul and Ian form the **Worship Group** and continue to provide songs and story-time which is an integral part of Messy Church. It currently takes place before the eagerly anticipated tea. Everyone is encouraged to participate in this part of the day.

**Sue Neve and her able team** organize the tea for each Messy Church. This is always enjoyed by the children and thanks must go to Sue and her team for enabling tea to be nutritious and always on time.

We have built up a wealth of resources which cater for most of the planned activities. When other resources are required the congregation have been extremely supportive in supplying us with necessary materials. Linda Hunter asks members of the congregation to help set up after the morning service on the planned day and everyone helps clear away at the end. Linda also ensures that the Messy Church days always run to plan, thanks to her enthusiasm and organizational skills.

**Messy Church takes place quarterly** and continues to be very well attended. Numbers for this year have been 30+ for children and 50+ for Adults. The best attendance we had was in October when our theme was 'Thankfulness' 38 children and 56 adults attended on the day. Sunday afternoon is the time allocated for Messy Church and it runs from 2.30-5.00 pm. Themes this year have included Wind, Flame and Fire, Thankfulness, Superheroes and Moses.

Children and adults of all ages are made welcome and it is encouraging to see parents and Grandparents coming along and helping their 'charges' to make a decorated biscuit or amazing model whilst avoiding being covered in icing or glue! This year we have also been pleased to welcome families who have been visiting Corbridge for the day, seen the publicity and joined in. The comments from these families have been very encouraging.

## **OUTREACH**

### **EVENTS & SOCIAL**

**Rev. Jenny Kinnaird**

It has been another busy year for the Social Committee. In the year 2014/15 we were involved in the organising of four main events –an outing to visit HMS Trincomalee and the Hartlepool Maritime Experience in June, the annual Mulled Wine and Mince Pies morning just before Christmas, the Pancakes and Quiz evening on Shrove Tuesday, and a Lamb Supper on Maundy Thursday, when as a church we commemorate the Last Supper with music, a meal together and a simple Communion before stripping the altar ready for Good Friday. All of these events were well attended and supported.

As well as these events, Social Committee are increasingly called upon to provide hospitality to visiting groups, Deanery Greater Chapter, choir events, and to support other church functions. This can range from a simple cup of tea and biscuits to a sit-down two course supper with wine. We are fortunate to have some very competent cooks and very willing hands to help out in all sorts of ways. We are very grateful for the many other people, not on the committee, who lend a hand, bake a quiche, set up tables, wash up – and generally help out on these occasions.

Social Committee lives up to its name. We have regular business meetings just to make sure we all know what we're doing (most of the time). These are brisk affairs – about 45 minutes – followed by our social time – a meal at the Black Bull. Our social life together and the offering of hospitality are important parts of our church's pastoral and outreach work. If you'd like to be more involved – have a word – you'll be very welcome.

## **CHURCH WELCOMERS and GUIDES**

**Rosemary Baker, Convenor**

The season started for us at the beginning of April 2014 with 11 Guides who were all able to continue until October and occasionally afterwards when required.

On November 15<sup>th</sup> Professor R Hingley from Durham University Archeology Department brought a large group of students to study the inside and outside of the Church. The University has visited before, and we hope it will be an annual event.

As usual the Visitors Book makes fascinating reading. It is at the back of church. Visitors come from Italy, Canada, Norway, Russia, America, Australia, Holland and Germany to name a few.

Someone from Durham wrote " The Church was stolen from the Catholics!" A note was added " Who stole it from the Celts!" We could tell them " Now we share it with the Catholics".....

Appreciation of this ancient Church is expressed in many ways

" Such an old and interesting Church and Saxon to boot!"

"Lovely and peaceful with a great history."

From France " Tres bel edifice."

One of the Guides had a discussion with a rampant atheist.

Visitors come wearing many hats!

If anyone would like to join us we will be delighted

Please contact Rosemary Baker: 633823

### **Halton Church**

As always it is a quiet oasis. The Visitors Book confirms this:

' A well hidden gem" " A lovely tranquil place"

An Australian wrote " My Grandfather's family is buried here"

A Hadrian Wall walker found it " A lovely quiet place on the path"

Two small children said " We like polishing the pews"

Always a much loved place.

## **MUSICAL EVENTS**

### **John Bishop Events Co Ordinator**

Our ancient church continues to provide a popular venue for a wealth of concerts. Pianist Jill Crossland, The Orpheus Choir, Royal Northern Sinfonia, Northern Chords, The Rubato – Californian Choir all provided well attended events and a joint Jubilate / St. Andrew's Choir all provided well attended events. Perhaps the musical highlights of 2014 were a Choral Masterclass led by John Rutter (no less) and another excellent Corbridge Chamber Music Festival last August.

Warwick and I would like to thank all our helpers, particularly our Churchwardens for their ready co operation. Most of all we are thankful for the music lovers from far and wide who continue to come in numbers to make the events successful.

### **WEBSITE St. Andrew's Church Website. ([www.corbridgechurch.org.uk](http://www.corbridgechurch.org.uk)) Simon A Hunter, Webmaster**

Any organisation's website is now its principal point of presence to the outside world, the internet has become a way to find out information about organisations such as St Andrew's Church.

The number of people visiting the website has steadily increased and we have recorded about 2500 hits since April last year.

We would also welcome contribution for the News and Events section these can be emailed to [sahunter@corbridgechurch.org.uk](mailto:sahunter@corbridgechurch.org.uk)

With the increase use of social media, smart phones and mobiles devices in the next few weeks we will be adding a Twitter feed to the website which you will also be able to view independently from the website.

Scan the QR code with your phone to go directly to the website



**PARISH NEWS**  
**Simon A Hunter**



The Parish News has successfully been produced six times since the last annual meeting with most issues being 4 or 8 pages.

We have reduced expenditure by people having the Parish News emailed to them. Over 105 people have signed up for the email version and 45 for a paper copy.

If you would like to have a copy emailed to you please complete a data collection form which is available at the back of church or email [sahunter@corbridgechurch.org.uk](mailto:sahunter@corbridgechurch.org.uk) to be put onto the data base.

If you wish to receive a paper copy please ring Mrs Pat Harvey: 633221 and she will ensure you get a copy.

We are always looking for photos and information to go into the Parish News please email it to the Vicar.

## **FOODBANK**

### **Monica Philbrick**

St Andrew's Church is a Collection Point for West Northumberland Food Bank. Thanks to the generous support of our unknown donors, the storage boxes at the back of church are cleared once each week. Food goes to a variety of people, but frequently to those struggling when benefit payments are delayed, or some unexpected problem means they are unable to put food on the table.

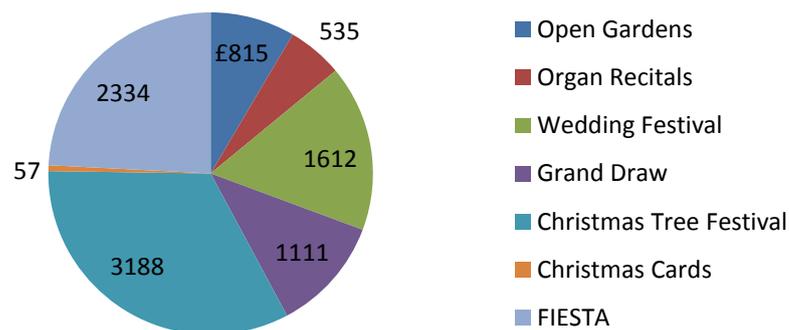
Everything is taken to the Food Bank office and store in Burn Lane, Hexham, where bags of provisions are made up. As well as Hexham they go out to recipients in Prudhoe, Ponteland and Haltwhistle.

By January a total of 353 households had received help – 395 adults and 301 children have benefitted. Its worth bearing in mind that school holidays are often a problem for families, with children at home needing more meals... so a few extra tins and packets will always be welcome.

## **FUNDRAISING COMMITTEE**

### **Linda E Hunter**

### **We had fantastic year for FUNDRAISING**



**THANK YOU** to all who helped in any way with this—your support has been much appreciated.

Do you have an idea for fundraising ? Please speak to the Church Wardens if you do.

## **CHURCH MUSIC**

### **Colin Williams**

In our role as a Parish Church choir there are very few Sundays when we do not lead the choral worship, and our repertoire is now sufficiently comprehensive to enable us to contribute to the theme or mood of the worship with a piece which is relevant and complementary. This report picks out some of the highlights of the musical year, but this is only part of a year of music. In a very real sense the choir regards each service as a highlight, responding to the church seasons and the liturgy of the day.

Following the last annual report a third Come and Sing event was held at St Andrew's: The Crucifixion by John Stainer, sung on Palm Sunday Evening featuring the same two soloists, Jim Laidlow and Tom Rowarth, with John Ross on the organ. This was greatly enjoyed by the singers, and was a fitting start to the week leading up to Easter. The Maundy Thursday meditation and supper provided the choir with an opportunity to sing some reflective music, much of it unaccompanied, as a prelude to the dramatic reading from John's Gospel.

During the summer, our two organists John and Marc held a series of delightful lunch time recitals which attracted a growing following. A further series of recitals took place in February on Sunday afternoons – informal occasions, with refreshments organised by the indefatigable Carol Maskell.

The Autumn is always a busy time for the choir and September included the St Andrew's Wedding Festival Weekend and the highly successful Fashion Show, and the choir was delighted to contribute to the Wedding Celebration service on Sunday.

As is now the tradition, St Andrews again hosted the RSCM singing day in October, this time with John Rutter. Hearing 280 people (just about the maximum number the church can accommodate) singing a wide variety of music under his firm but inspiring leadership was a privileged experience. The music included many of his own compositions as well as the Hallelujah Chorus!

St Andrew's and its setting in Corbridge provides a wonderful venue for this type of event. This year on 10th October, the day will be led by Margaret Rizza, which promises to be a very different but equally special occasion.

November was packed with music. The Remembrance Service always provides

choral challenges, and then we had what has become known as the Conflict Concert, comprising choral & spoken reflections on conflict through the ages. St Andrew's choir, and Jubilate choir under the baton of Warren Smith, came together to hold a charity concert in aid of Help for Heroes, raising over £1,000. An eclectic programme of music included such diverse items as 'Keep the home fires burning' and the magnificent Kyrie from Mess Sollemnelle by Vierne. Marc brought in his chamber organ as this piece is scored for double organ.

Some of Jubilate joined the choir for the Carol Service, which was a wonderful climax to an intense period of music making, including the now customary singing at the Mulled Wine and Mince Pies morning and singing at the three care homes in Corbridge.

In February we had another opportunity to sing excerpts from Rizza's Officium Divinum, this time with two violinists, at a service with a more contemporary flavour linked to St Valentine's Day. This music genre is always much appreciated by the congregation, and we look forward to looking at more of Margaret Rizza's compositions in October.

The highlight of February was another concert, this time to raise money for Rachel Lewis. She is hoping to go to India in the summer, on a trip organised by the Trinity Youth Group, helping in several relief and development projects. Rachel has been a faithful member of St Andrew's choir for over eight years and the choir were delighted to work up some of our favourite repertoire for what proved to be a most enjoyable and successful concert. The response from the church and other members of the audience has been stunning – the amount raised is currently over £600.

Colin has had an extremely positive and receptive meeting at the Middle School, with the Head of School and the Head of Music, both newly appointed last September. We are determined to do something together musically in the near future – it is just a matter of fitting in with the very busy school programme. We hope that one possible outcome of this newly established relationship will be to attract some younger singers to the choir. Sadly they are not currently present in the congregation. St Andrew's, in common with so many village parish churches faces real challenges with regard to future sustainability, and the musical life of the church which is so strong and buoyant at the moment will only continue into the future with careful nurturing and planning.

One reason for the choir's strength this year has been the enthusiasm and

commitment of our two organists, John Ross and Marc Bryant. The choir has benefited enormously from their consistent support and musicianship. We are one of the few parish churches in Northumberland with a robed choir, and we are certainly unique in having two professional organists in a shared role, which is working brilliantly on so many levels.

The music at St Andrew's is very special, and none of us should take it for granted. This leads me appropriately to record my thanks to key individuals. I have already mentioned John and Marc. Liz Collins continues to look after the robes. Warwick Milne and John Bishop put in an enormous amount of time looking after our music library, Liz McCoull keeps an eye on the choir finances, and Margaret Cuthbert is our irreplaceable choir secretary. We are grateful to Carol Maskell for organising refreshments at the recitals and other choir events. On a personal note, I have to thank 21 choir members for their continued dedication, hard work, laughter, and that unique and much treasured experience of making music together.

The choir on their part would like to thank a very large number of people, too numerous to mention, who in so many ways support what we do either practically or in words of encouragement.

## **FABRIC, GOODS AND ORNAMENTS OF THE CHURCH**

### **Linda E Hunter and Gilbert Marshall Churchwardens**

The year 2014 has been very busy with a myriad of little jobs to be done to keep everything in good order and to support the many Church activities which form part of our outreach programme. We are pleased to be able to record the completion of a number of more major works in terms of scope and cost, and to acknowledge the teamwork necessary to handle the wide diversity in what we tackle.

We want to record our particular thanks to Michael Rae who monitors ladder safety and oversees much of the building works we do and his work with David Welsh to keep the clock running sweetly and regulating village activities; to Colin Williams, John Ross and Marc Bryant as careful custodians of our organ and to John for his useful work to refurbish and secure our piano, and also his invaluable help with the replacing of the organ at St. Oswald's; to John Bishop and Warwick Milne for their patient setting-up of the raised flooring and readying of the church for the many musical events we host; to all those who 'lift and shift' and who help with the preparation of the church for our liturgical programme; to all who help with photocopying and respond to appeals by the Churchwardens for assistance. We would like to thank our church cleaner Geoff Ross and cottage cleaner Linda Burnett who retired this year and to welcome our new teams of Church and Cottage cleaners.

We can report that the fabric of the church is in serviceable condition and that all goods and ornaments are as required for Worship to take place in both St. Andrew's and St. Oswald's.

#### **Statutory Requirements:**

During the year the required inspections of fire fighting equipment have been made; the intruder detection equipment has been serviced; and the boilers have been tested and certified. When accidents occur the details are recorded in the book and it can be reported that none gave rise to the need to alter any procedures. In this connection it should be emphasised that Risk Assessments must be made for all activities which take place in the church.

#### **Tower Work:**

The improvements made to tower access were largely completed last year but two important aspects were held over and completed this year. Firstly an inspection was carried-out by a representative of Ecclesiastical Insurance to satisfy themselves that they would give insurance cover to persons ascending the tower to carry-out

specific tasks, and secondly we were visited by the Chief Fire Officer to acquaint himself with the procedures his men would have to put in place to make an emergency evacuation of an incapacitated person from the roof. In both cases the visits were satisfactory and churchwardens are now clearer as to the part to be played by our operatives in such a situation. This will now let us complete the safety procedures in our Manual.

### **Church Clock:**

The work needed to keep the clock mechanism in good condition has been identified and costed at £543. The clock was put in place by the Corbridge Parish Council in the Jubilee year of 1897 but the responsibility for its repair and maintenance is not known now. The Council has always accepted the bill for the annual maintenance but has refused to meet the cost of this repair. Unless we can produce evidence to the contrary by way of a Faculty or other formal document it appears that we will have to pay such costs. It is planned to have the repair work done at the time of the next routine maintenance which will be in late summer.

### **Church Roof Leaks:**

It has been the experience for many years now that the North Transept West roof leaks in the valley between it and the North Aisle. Several contractors have inspected these roofs and have carried-out some work on them, but to no avail, when the rain is heavy and the wind is blowing strongly from the West the roof leaks. This happens about once a year but there is concern that the leaking may cause rotting of the main roof timbers. At the time of cleaning out gutters Messrs. M.J. Proud, Plumbing & Heating Engineers were asked to take a look at the possible sources of the leak and they reported that it was impossible to form a conclusion without removing tiles and inspecting the gulley sealing in detail. They recommended that this work be placed with a roofing contractor in summer and it is intended that the work be done in 2015.

### **Church Organ:**

Concern had been expressed by Director of Music and our Organists as to the state of the church organ and possible future refurbishment work for which provision should be made over the next few years. The PCC approved the preparation by the Director of Music of a specification for the work and the calling for Tenders from suitably qualified persons. The Tender Report recommended the appointment of Mr. Paul Hale to carry out a consultation and this was approved by PCC. He will carry out his inspection in May 2015.

### **Cottage Windows:**

The wooden windows in the cottage require both repairs and repainting, and PCC decided to examine the possibility of replacing them with uPVC windows of similar appearance which would enable double glazing to be provided thereby reducing the heat loss and avoiding excessive condensation. As work of this nature requires approval by Northumberland County Council the proposal was submitted to them. They replied to us saying that they had referred the matter to English Heritage who ruled against it and required replacement with like for like. This decision can be appealed against but the process could be lengthy and it was decided by PCC to accept replacement. The Council also reserve the right to inspect the process of the work and accordingly we have engaged the services of an architect experienced in such matters to prepare a specification and schedule for the works to be submitted to the Council before work commences. It is hoped to undertake the work in Summer 2015.

### **Church and Cottage Heating:**

The boiler in the church has operated satisfactorily during 2014 and has been tested and recertified. The church heating has been set carefully on a weekly basis to match the use of the church and the needs of the particular activities and this has enabled the lower gas usage of recent years to be maintained.

The cottage boiler broke down in Autumn and required replacement of some parts. At the same time as the repair work the boiler was tested and recertified. It is now working satisfactorily and the newly programmed seven day settings are letting us match the heating to the use made of the cottage. The gas consumption in 2014 is some 6% lower than in 2013.

### **Churchyard Maintenance:**

At the beginning of 2014 the churchyard was untidy and overgrown and a meeting was held with Maurice Hodgson, chairman of the CPC, to review the grass cutting, weed control and tree trimming needs. As a result the grass cutting has improved keeping the churchyard neat and tidy. The weed control and tree cutting has not progressed as well and this aspect needs to be followed-up in 2015.

### **Memorial Garden:**

The engraving of the stone surround to the Memorial Garden has been brought up to date and there is now not much space left for more inscriptions. It will be necessary to consider continuation of the stone edging along the west side of the Garden.

## **St. Oswald's Church Graveyard.**

The survey work undertaken by John Bishop and Richard Dixon has been completed and now forms part of our records. We are in a position to accept new applications for burial sites.

## **Energy Procurement;**

All energy contracts for both churches run out now and steps have been taken to procure new supplies at the best prices. Some prices have dropped slightly in the last few months and the churches have been able to contract favourably showing a saving of 7% compared with 2014. Our supplies will come from:-

St. Andrews gas	Gazprom.
Cottage gas	Scottish Power.
St. Andrew's electricity	Scottish & Southern.
St. Oswald's electricity	ditto
Cottage electricity	ditto

## **Quinquennial Survey:**

A new survey is now due and our church architect Mr. Ian Ness has been engaged to do the work which is planned for September 2015. Churchwardens are keen to confine the survey to items of importance and to avoid preoccupation with minor issues.

The work identified in the 2010 survey at St. Andrew's involved minor structural issues attendant on the work done recently in the tower to make it safer to ascend and to access the flagpole on the roof. These items are complete now and the Faculty closed off. Certain other items relating to rain water staining have been resolved by greater attention to gutter clearance and to repairs to poorly installed drain piping. There are no other issues to be attended to.

The 2010 survey identified numerous items at St. Oswald's church which have been present there for decades and do not affect the functioning of the church fabric.

The fabric of our churches is well looked after and we are extremely grateful to all those who contribute to this in any way either in person or financially. It is impossible to thank all those who play a part in this. Many people are involved.

Thank you to all volunteers.

## **CHURCH COTTAGE**

**Suzette Milne, Convenor**

Over the last year we have lost 2 regular bookings. As a result we are left with 2 regular bookings, namely, the Mahjong group and the embroidery group.

Sadly the cleaner has retired after many years of faithful service. I have organised a rota of cleaners from the congregation, which is working well.

Heating and lighting costs continue to be carefully monitored.

## **HALTON ST.OSWALD**

Edward Pybus continues to assist us at Halton. Rev. Jack Hay takes the monthly services with great enthusiasm and presides over the administrative arrangements generally. Attendance is reasonable, with numbers increasing a bit which is helpful and encouraging.

The Hammond F3000 organ at Halton was obtained second-hand through the Church Exchange by Michael Morphy. It operated satisfactorily for about 10 years but when it failed in 2014 it was pronounced irreparable and a search was made for a replacement. Assistance was given by the St. Andrews' organists to find an instrument suitable for a church. Several were found either on private sales or eBay but those deemed suitable were too high in price for Halton where only fourteen services are held in the year.

Temporarily a keyboard was borrowed from Mary Rae and then an organ specialist friend of John Ross' offered him a GEM Chorister which was to be taken out of a church near Liverpool. He tested the organ for us and found it to be in perfect working order and offered to give it to us at no cost. John judged this organ to be entirely suitable for Halton and kindly offered to make the journey to Liverpool to collect it claiming only fuel expenses. John also tested it in his home and fitted a background heater to it to combat the condensation occurring in Halton during winter.

Firstly a work party was arranged and with the help of Sir Hughes staff the Hammond was manoeuvred out to clear the way for the GEM. When John was ready a further work party was arranged to transfer the GEM to its place in Halton. The installation was complete just before the next Service at Halton and their organist Edward Pybus, pronounced himself happy with the GEM.

We hold evensong in Halton Chapel on the day of the Red Cross Open Gardens – this year Evensong will be held on Sunday 21<sup>st</sup> June at 5.00pm

## **SAFEGUARDING**

**Linda E Hunter Parish Safeguarding Officer**

There is a growing understanding that protecting children, young people and adults at risk is at the centre of our faith. Safeguarding is about creating churches that are safe spaces for everyone; spaces where children and adults can flourish and fulfil their potential.

**TOWARDS A SAFER CHURCH CREATING SAFE SPACES** the new Diocesan documentation adopted by the Diocesan Synod is based on National Documentation and gives an easy to read set of guidelines for Diocese and Parishes to follow. A full set of guidelines for the Diocese has been written this year (2015) and Parishes are asked to update all their policy documents in line with these. An extensive Diocesan Training Programme has been produced and those working in positions requiring information / training are invited to attend.

In order to endure that we are compliant with all current legislation our documentation will be revised over the Summer and, as usual, along with the Health and Safety section, now renamed : **CREATING A SAFE SPACE : Keeping Safe on Church Premises** will be presented to the PCC at the September meeting for approval.

Margaret Preece continues to be the person in charge of CRB now DBS checks and she maintains the up to date register for the Parish. Thank you Margaret for all your hard work with this.

### **CREATING A SAFE SPACE : Keeping Safe on Church Premises ( previously known as Health and Safety)**

The Church Wardens are ever mindful of health and safety issues. Regular checks are carried out and all our maintenance work adheres to the regulatory requirements of the Diocese, who advise us via the DAC (Diocesan Advisory Council) We are always keeping up to date, and our updated Health and Safety Manual goes to PCC every September.

Please note that further detailed information may be obtained by reading the documents which can be downloaded from the Diocesan website:

## **SIDESPEOPLE**

**David Welsh, Convenor**

We are greatly indebted to our team of Sidespersons whose sterling efforts ensure that all who attend services at St. Andrew's and St. Oswald's are properly welcomed and cared for. If any member of our congregations would like to offer to become a sidesperson, he/she would be added to the team very quickly !

## **CHURCH FLOWERS**

**Sheila Goldsworthy, Convenor**

We could do with more help with the altar flowers. Out of the approx. no. of 44 Sundays, there are on average 6 to 8 people who consider helping with the flowers for Church. We need team leaders for March, September and October and extra help for January and February.

The Flower Teams do a wonderful job in the decoration of our Church. It is a very rewarding pastime and we meet so many people from around the world. The contributions to the Christmas and Lent boxes have provided our Church with so much beauty for special festivals.

Please sign up to provide flowers for your chosen weekend i.e.: celebrating your birthday or an anniversary, it's not expensive, see Sheila. More information will be gladly given by me and any of the Flower Teams

## **PRAYER GROUP**

**Tony Macdonald, Leader**

Prayer is a lifeblood of the Church, and prayers are said every morning at St Andrew's – prayers for the Church, for the world and peace, for Christians everywhere (especially those who are being persecuted), for the particular needs of St. Andrew's, for individuals and for those who have left their prayers on the prayer tree.

The Prayer Group carries this out on Friday mornings (at 9.30 in the cottage – being the day that the Vicar is off and prayers are not offered in the Church). The Group offers in addition prayers for people who have especially asked for particular and personal reasons to be prayed for, but not in any public or open way. So, if you want prayers said for yourself or someone else, please let us know – you can be assured of confidentiality. And of course you will be welcome to be part of this prayer process any or every Friday. God does answer prayer.

## **HOME GROUP**

### **Max and Monica Philbrick and Paul Morris**

The Home Group has continued to meet for short series of evenings, followed by gaps of varying lengths – we don't meet at all over the summer. This year we have usually been in the home of Max and Monica Philbrick in Crofts Avenue, but when we have evenings of readings, reflections and singing we meet in the Cottage: we hope this may be a more neutral location for some who may be unsure about 'trying out' the group.

Over the past 12 months our times together have included:

An evening of Easter reflections based on material written by David Adam, former Rector of Holy Island.

Discussions around DVD presentations by Philip Yancey, author of 'What's so Amazing about Grace?'

During the autumn we read the book 'Made for Goodness' written by Desmond Tutu and his daughter Mpho. This was such an inspiring and encouraging book that some of us have read it again (and again), and bought copies to give to friends and family members.

We met in the Cottage twice during Advent, drawing on material by David Adam and others for quiet but valuable evenings of reflection. We didn't try singing when Paul Morris wasn't there to lead us

In the weeks before Lent we tried out the mysteriously named 'Lectio Divina' using guidance from the Bible Society. Dating back to AD300, this approach to reading the Bible 'invites us to savour and mull over God's words quietly, slowly and intently until we begin to respond to what God is saying'. It was good!

For Lent itself, we have – together with a Methodist Church group – used a 'York Course' entitled 'Praise Him'. Discussion focusses on a New Testament passage, using stimulating interviews with Archbishop Welby, Sr Wendy Beckett and David Suchet.

Through sharing thoughts and experiences together, our understanding and faith has deepened. The atmosphere is very relaxed, inclusive and supportive; and we have got to know each other better by exploring ideas and reflections. We have all valued having a few new members this year – and more would be welcome!

## **CORBRIDGE DEANERY SYNOD**

### **Richard Dixon**

What is the Corbridge Deanery you may ask? Well it is the collection of parishes in a geographical area bounded by Stamfordham with Matfen and Ryal in the north, Heddon on the Wall and Snod's Edge in the east and Hunstanworth in the south and west. Our Vicar, David Hewlett is the Area Dean, and the Deanery forms part of the Lindisfarne Archdeaconry presided over by the Archdeacon, Peter Robinson. The Deanery Synod administers the Deanery.

It looks very much to Synod Representatives that the Deanery Synod in 2014-2015 has been getting down to more significant and useful work, than it has done in the past. In addition to receiving reports from General Synod and other statutory church organisations, the most notable of which was the acceptance of women bishops, the Deanery Synod began to address some equally significant impending changes.

The most immediate cause for concern has been the vacancy in the Moorlands Parishes (Blanchland, Healey, Hunstanworth, Muggleswick, Waskerley, Slaley and Whittonstall, Edmundbyers), the vacancy at Stamfordham with Matfen and Ryal, and the House for Duty post at Blanchland. (House for Duty means exactly that, the provision of a house in return for working as a parish priest.) This fairly long running vacancy situation has improved with the appointment of Dr Helen Savage to the Moorland Parishes, and an expected appointment at Stamfordham later in the year. However, very recently we find are to lose Alison White as Vicar of Riding Mill, to whom very many congratulations are due on her appointment as Suffragan Bishop of Hull.

Some headway has also been made towards the allocation of Parish Share, which is the sum of money each parish has to contribute each year to the central church finances. Each parish in the Deanery has now agreed to publish their financial status so that they can demonstrate to the Deanery whether or not they can afford the new proposed share or if they can afford to support other parishes in genuine need. By this means the sometimes uncooperative nature of previous negotiations around Parish Share can be avoided. A resulting agreed figure for each parish is expected later this year.

A subcommittee of the Deanery Synod, the Deanery Development Group has been formed to look at the ways to move towards strategic management of change in the Deanery, rather than crisis management as exists at present. The nature of the

Deanery and the parishes within the Deanery will have to change in the face of future constraints on full time paid posts for priests and changes in the nature of funding from the central church. The Group has started on this process by gathering data on the needs of people within each Parish, noting that these needs are those of each Parish as a whole, not only the needs of those on the electoral rolls. The intention is that when changes in Parishes arise, there will be thought out and carefully considered strategies for moving forward instead of the current thinking, which is to arrange for more of the same format.

## **LAY VOICES CONFERENCE held on 25<sup>th</sup> October 2014**

### **Max Philbrick and Elizabeth Robson**

*A sort of Lay-Away-Day for people in Newcastle Diocese...* There were around 100 delegates present at the Centre for Life, from all parts of the diocese (and beyond), for what proved a very enjoyable and stimulating day. From St Andrew's, Elizabeth Robson and Max Philbrick were there, with several others from Corbridge Deanery also present. A random allocation on arrival meant people were well shuffled between the round tables in the conference room, so it was a good opportunity to meet and engage with new people.

**The first session** was designed to relax everyone and to be good fun – which it was! Emily Smith, a trained soprano who is Director of the Children's Choir at the Sage, got us up and singing for about 40 minutes, culminating in multipart harmonies and a series of rounds: sophisticated stuff including 'Swing Low', and 'She'll be coming round the mountain'. Emily seemed impressed with us all – perhaps churchgoers are more used to singing than some of the other groups she works with!

**There was some more serious business as well: Nick Hills, who is Secretary of the House of Laity**, explained the role of General Synod, along with the election process which starts at deanery level and will lead to 3 members of the House of Laity representing our diocese when the new General Synod is inaugurated in November 2015. He outlined some of the issues 'on the horizon' for Synod:

- Changing patterns of ministry, with fewer people and fewer clergy in the years ahead.
- With a huge decline in male stipendiary (paid) clergy projected for 2022, it may be appropriate to redirect training resources towards developing lay ministry. (Lay church members cannot continue to just 'have ministry done

to them’.) Can we learn from other denominations, eg Methodists and United Reformed, who have faced this issue earlier?

- Are we training the right kind of people, and in the right way, to successfully reach out to young people?
- Lay Readers are perhaps being wasted and could help with a broader role.
- Issues of sexuality will prove ‘divisive, bloody, and much harder than women bishops’.

**Shane Waddle, our Diocesan Secretary** and convenor of this conference, explained the process for the appointment of our next Bishop, including the role of the Vacancy in See Committee. This august-sounding body agrees a description of the diocese and a statement of the qualities and abilities that should be looked for in the next Bishop. It elects six of its members to sit on the Crown Nominations Commission which will meet next summer to consider an appropriate appointment. We can all make comments to the Vacancy in See Committee, and indeed everyone at this conference had the opportunity to suggest 3 important attributes for the next Bishop, and 3 key challenges facing whoever is appointed. You’ll have to ask Max and Elizabeth what they wrote!

Over lunch (a pleasurable buffet experience with more opportunities to meet and chat to people, whilst juggling a plate and a glass) there was an opportunity for a free trip on the Life Centre’s ‘4D Motion Ride’, and despite the various health warnings a good number of people took the risk...

**Penny Stradling works for CMS** (Church Mission Society) in Oxford, and has been a full-time youth worker in south London. She talked about the decline the church faces in both reaching and keeping young adults – the 18-35s with no children. The proportion of regular churchgoers in this age band is about a third less than the proportion in the population.

Those who aren’t churchgoers may be ‘disagreeable de-churched’ – they don’t want to come back; or ‘the unthinkable non-churched’. She explained that for many young adults, the way they ‘exercise faith’ is very different to their parents’ generation, or even to those just a decade older. Penny focussed on a research-based report produced jointly by the Church Army and Fresh Expressions<sup>1</sup> called ‘Authentic Faith’<sup>2</sup>. The report identifies 5 distinct types of young adults’ churches, connecting with different kinds of young adults, and practicing faith in different ways. *(If you would like to read this quite short (36pp) report, do borrow a copy from Elizabeth or Max.)*

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<sup>1</sup> Fresh Expressions was started in 2004 by the Archbishops of Canterbury and York with the Methodist Council. As an organisation it ‘seeks to transform communities and individuals through championing and resourcing new ways of being church’. See [freshexpressions.org.uk](http://freshexpressions.org.uk).

<sup>2</sup> ‘Authentic Faith: Fresh Expressions of Church amongst Young Adults’, Beth Keith (2013)

One questioner, who admitted to being a church treasurer, was concerned that these initiatives could take people away from traditional parishes. Penny quoted Archbishop Rowan Williams as saying we 'need a mixed economy of churches': she is not interested in just sustaining existing structures, and reminded us of how Taizé started reaching young adults in the 1960's and is now visited by thousands each year. She challenged the diocese to find 20 people, and send them out to develop 'fresh expressions' churches reaching the de-churched and non-churched.

**David Goodhew is Director of Ministerial Practice at Cranmer Hall**, a theological college within Durham University. As well as having written about Fresh Expressions, he has experience of planting a new congregation whilst a vicar in York Diocese. His talk on Church Growth (*hand-out available if you are interested, also a report<sup>3</sup>*) began by addressing the unexpected question 'is it ungodly?'. His answer focussed on the New Testament church, where continual growth was centred on local Christian (church) communities through which people were offered: Pardon through Christ, Purpose in Christ and Peace At Last with Christ. We were reminded of the work of pioneers from St Cuthbert through St Francis to John Wesley, and of the enormous number of new churches established on Tyneside in the Victorian era. Spiritual and numerical growth are vital if the church is to maintain and grow its service to the whole community.

And growth is not impossible – he provided statistics to illustrate this: Nationally, church membership (all denominations) has remained almost static since 2000; and the number of congregations has actually increased. For us Anglicans the picture is mixed, but the London diocese, having declined from 1972 to 1990, has grown since (it is the best-performing!). Cathedral congregations overall are growing. Mainly or wholly ethnic minority churches are growing (30-40 new congregations in the north-east since 1980). Alternative forms of worship such as Messy Church are growing – and the largest Messy Church in the UK is in Newcastle (at Holy Trinity, Jesmond). It seems that churches which grow tend to be those where leaders rotate: in 'Fresh Expressions' of church, over half are run by lay people, and around two thirds are growing.

Two memorable quotes: "If we don't as churches *pray* to grow, God will honour our choice." and: "The only thing worse than a mediocre Mission Action Plan is none at all." Far more churches with a clear sense of purpose will succeed in growing. So his six key points for growth were:

- Pray
- Use courses to nurture new/existing Christians

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<sup>3</sup> 'From Anecdote to Evidence: Findings from the Church Growth Research Programme 2011-2013'

- Have a Plan
- Grow and rotate lay leaders
- Focus on children and young people
- Work on your welcome
- Ethnic minorities – a particular welcome

**Feedback on the day seemed to be positive**, eg: Enjoyable. Eye-opening. Frustrating. (The last relates to the difficulty of addressing the issues raised, not the day itself!)

## **CHURCHES TOGETHER IN CORBRIDGE**

Although Churches Together does not exist as a formal group the churches in Corbridge continue to work together on the following initiatives:

- Lent Lunches
- Prayers for Peace during Lent
- Women's World Day of Prayer
- Christian Aid Collections
- Service for the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity
- Village Christmas card
- In addition the prayer groups at The Methodist Church and St. Andrew's meet and pray together.
- Members from the Methodist Congregation are on the planning team for Messy Church

## **WOMEN'S FELLOWSHIP**

**Linda E Hunter, Leader**

We began our year, as always, with our AGM at the Wheatsheaf. This was a most enjoyable evening. Thanks to Rosemary and Sheila for all their hard work in organising this.

Our topics for our monthly meetings have been varied. We started the year with a talk about East African wildlife and people, what amazing pictures Keith Hildreth showed us. What a photographer he was. An informative talk with glimpses of what it would be like to work for BBC TV was given by Hannah Bayman. Charlotte Osborn enlightened us about her work as a Chaplain at the Airport. Incredible India was the title of the talk given by Lindsay Crack. We couldn't believe what we heard – people more than two to a bed, relatives sleeping under the patients bed and caring for them whilst in hospital. We all really appreciated the hospital care we have had. We all enjoyed the pictures of Mike Pottage's Himalayan adventure. Mel Stone along with a representative of the Alzheimer's Society involved everyone in a participatory meeting about Dementia. Anthony Atkinson gave a fantastic talk about Gertrude Bell, an extraordinary explorer, what an interesting talk that was.

We had a very successful warm, Summer Saturday morning to raise money for our charities when we had a variety of stalls outside the Lych gate. Our Summer Outing to St. Oswald's Heavenfield was an opportunity to learn more of the history of the Battle of Heavenfield which was put over most ably by Judy Lloyd. This was followed by a tasty supper at the tearoom.

We held our Advent Service and our Lent service in St. Andrew's church .As usual we have given a substantial amount of money away to charity this year. We presented cheques to the Night Stop and Chrysalis.

Our membership has fluctuated as some of members find it more difficult to get out in the Winter evenings. We have however welcomed people as visitors and then as members. It has been a pleasure to have some husbands and interested men to some of our meetings this year too.

Thank to all those who have been involved in any way but special thanks to Rosemary Rayfield, Sheila Neilson, Mary Gray, Mary Rae, Margaret Logan, Elsie Fletcher and Joan Welsh who all help to keep things running smoothly.

We welcome all women to our meetings..... and men if the topic is of interest to them! Please continue to spread the word of our existence among your friends.

## **CORBRIDGE CHURCH OF ENGLAND FIRST SCHOOL**

**David Watson, Chair of Governors and Jennifer Ainsley, Headteacher**

### **SIAMS Inspection**

The school was inspected in November 2014 and was graded as a GOOD Church School.

The **strengths** of the school were listed as:

- The team work of the teachers and other staff, their commitment, resilience, humility, faithfulness and professionalism, has led to the modelling of clear Christian values resulting in a school that is a genuinely Christian organisation.
- Collective worship provides a valuable space in the day for personal affirmation, reflection, the exploration of core values and foundational stories and the expression of spirituality, shared and individual.
- The openness and enthusiasm with which the new religious education syllabus and assessment system has been introduced is strongly supporting children's engagement with the subject and developing teachers' confidence.
- Energetic, faithful, absolutely honest, clear-sighted and grounded leadership by the head teacher and governing body is enabling the school to build on its strengths and to develop where growth is necessary.

Areas to **continue to develop** included:

- Support children in the shaping and delivery of collective worship, leading to increased confidence and clear affirmation of connections with subject based learning.
- Encourage teachers in the confident delivery of consistently high-quality religious education by sharing good practice both within school and with other colleagues.
- Embed the culture of truthful self-assessment based on gospel values and the school's vision statement to generate confidence and renewed poise.

Governors, staff and parents welcomed this positive report which reflects the progress being made in school.

### **Leadership**

Ms Jennifer Ainsley was appointed in September 2014 and has been supported by the appointment of an Acting Deputy Headteacher and SEND leader, Ms Louise Storey. The leadership in school is secure. A Steering Group still meets each month to reflect on the progress being made against the school Ofsted Action Plan.

Mr David Watson is now the Chair of Governors and Andrew Neal is the Vice Chair. The Governing Body offers support and challenge and is active in monitoring key aspects of school life, including standards, curriculum, worship and value for money. We wish to thank Shona Burrows for her dedicated service as a member of the Governing Body as her post reaches conclusion this term.

Mr Andy Patton will take up the appointment as our new Parent Governor. Currently there is one vacancy for a foundation Governor and one vacancy for a staff governor.

### **Staffing**

We said farewell to Mrs Kershaw who completed her time with us following Autumn Term 2014. We wish her well and thank her for her contribution over the many years she has served Corbridge First School. We also thank Ms Janice Richardson for her valued service as she has now moved to a new post closer to her home. To strengthen our management team in school we are currently recruiting two appointments – a Deputy Headteacher and a middle management fulltime teacher.

### **School Improvement**

All members of the leadership and staffing team are continuing to drive improvement in teaching and learning and standards across the school. Monitoring, training and support are ongoing to ensure good practise in teaching and learning is reflected through attainment and achievement by the pupils.