



***making Christ known in the community of Holmes
Chapel so that all can share in the joy of God's love***

Annual Parochial Church Meeting – 7th April 2019 Report for 2018

INTRODUCTION

Under the Church Representation Rules (2017), every parish must hold an Annual Parochial Church Meeting (APCM) before the 30th April each year – ours this year is on 7th April 2019. For the APCM, the PCC must provide a report which has to include information about the Church Electoral Roll, details of proceedings of the Parochial Church Council (PCC) and parish activities generally, information about Church fabric, goods and ornaments, details of proceedings of the Deanery Synod, and a statement about compliance with Safeguarding. This document forms the required Annual Report for the past calendar year – 2018. Some individual sections may also include information about activities since the last APCM. Advance copies of the Annual Report have been available in church from 24th March 2019.

The PCC also must provide for the APCM independently examined financial statements for the calendar year 2018. Copies of a summary of these financial statements have been available in church since 31st March 2019.

CHURCH ELECTORAL ROLL 2019

Like all parishes, this year an entirely new Church Electoral Roll has been established for the APCM replacing that prepared in 2013. Notice of the opportunity to apply for entry to the new Roll and of qualifications to be entered have been published on the Church Noticeboard, Magazine, Sunday Link and Website since early February. Applications closed on Sunday 17th March after which the new Roll was established. A copy has been available to review in church for errors and omissions from Sunday 24th March, two weeks before the APCM on 7th April 2018. There are 187 members on the new Church Electoral Roll.

Wendy Bond - Electoral Roll Officer

FABRIC GOODS AND ORNAMENTS

Our Grade I listed church building and the church goods and ornaments are in reasonable condition, given their general age. The church inventory was reviewed for the Archdeacon's inspection in September and all items were accounted for. The required annual maintenance has been carried out to the organ, church clock, fire extinguishers, lightning conductors and the two church boilers. This revealed extensive work will be required to the church organ and fundraising is being planned so this work may be phased over a period of time. One of the church boilers is not in operation, but this is being addressed. All portable electrical appliances in church and in the Church Hall have again been tested for electrical safety and either approved for use or replaced with new appliances.

Church Lighting - The faculty application for our project to replace the high-level quartz-halogen lights with a low maintenance LED solution was filed with the Chester Diocesan Advisory Committee (DAC) in January 2018. The current light bulbs need replacement every 2-3 months using an inherently unsafe, long ladder procedure. The LED solution will eliminate this and significantly reduce our energy consumption. We believe that recent technical questions raised by the DAC have now been resolved with the help of our new architects, Bench Architects, and that faculty permission should soon be granted for the work to start.

Closed Circuit Television (CCTV) - CCTV was installed in church in June following a successful application to the DAC. The system provides an increased level of security and safety for our building and for anyone visiting church.

Church West End Project - The PCC submitted a detailed brief of requirements to our architects to propose possible developments at the west end of the building to improve safe access and address future needs. Bench Architects are working on some high-level concept designs for the PCC to consider. Whichever design is selected will be a major project in impact and financial terms and will require careful consultation and extensive fund raising and grant support to enable the project to proceed.

Churchyard Maintenance - Clive Nash Landscapes continue to maintain the main churchyard, the border outside the church hall and the Knutsford Road churchyard to a high standard. A group of volunteers weeded and made tidy the memorials area for cremated remains on a regular basis during 2018.

Knutsford Road Churchyard Extension Land - The boundary between the existing churchyard and the new extension land has been opened up and a new path laid by contractor Mark Rebbeck Landscaping & Groundworks. Flagstone bases have been installed ready to receive memorials for cremated remains.

Alastair Cragg, Jayne Weaver, Val Cragg, Stephen Haigh, Peter Cotton – Churchwardens and Assistant Churchwardens

CHURCHWARDENS

Paul's retirement - We were all sorry to say goodbye to Paul after 14 years as our Vicar. However, we would like to thank him for his spiritual guidance and his friendship during his ministry at St Luke's. We celebrated with a retirement party for him in January in the Church Hall which was very well attended and greatly enjoyed by Paul and all concerned.

The Interregnum - During the Interregnum, services at St Luke's are being taken by a small group of local retired clergy. We are would particularly like to thank Revd Rick Gates who has conducted many of these services for us in his very personal and empathetic style.

The advert for our new Vicar has just closed and we are looking to interview in early May. Given that there may be a period of notice for the incoming incumbent, we are hoping to have our new vicar by September. We would like to thank the Church Council and all the congregation for their continuing support and encouragement during the Interregnum.

Wardens Team - With Alan Rickards completing his time as a Deputy Churchwarden, we were delighted that Peter Cotton accepted as role as an Assistant Churchwarden. Peter brings many skills to the team and was appointed as our Fire Safety Officer.

We have met each month with the Vicar, Reader, Secretary and Treasurer as the Church Council Standing Committee, to carry out general business of the parish between Council meetings. We are well aware that we could not fulfil our duties without the support we receive from so many people throughout the Church and beyond. We are particularly grateful to William Hall and Steve

Smith for their substantial contributions as Church Council Treasurer and Secretary, respectively, and to Steve for bringing together the new Parish Profile used to advertise our vacancy.

Sidesmen - Our Sidesmen provide a warm welcome and support through all our services. They assist not only during the Sunday and Wednesday services, but also by covering funerals, baptism, weddings, Christingle services and any other special service through the year. We were pleased to celebrate their special contribution at a social evening in March 2019.

Church Hall Management - Our Church Hall provides an important resource for Church activities and valuable income from use by external lettings. Its operation is overseen by the Church Hall Committee (which is a sub-committee of the Church Council). Val Cragg continues to be our link to this committee which is chaired by John Murfin. John also continues to be responsible for the letting of the Hall. We are grateful to him and everyone on the committee for ensuring that the Hall runs smoothly and efficiently.

Parish Weekend 2020 - Just to advise that Willersley Castle has been booked again for the next Parish Weekend on 25-27th September 2020. Although it may seem a long time off, please reserve the date in your forward planners now! Further information about the weekend will be coming out in the next few months so that individual reservations can be made.

Registered Charity - The PCC is a registered charity and must operate within statutory controls. New data protection regulations, General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) were introduced in May 2018. To ensure the Council continues to comply our Data Privacy Notice was revised and is on display on the church website and in the church porch. An audit was undertaken of the personal data held within the parish and consent to store and process their data was requested from members of the Planned Giving Scheme.

Special Thanks - We are fortunate to have so many people serving in different Church committees and groups, volunteering for specific tasks, and working on ecumenical groups like Churches Together and Christian Aid.

We record our thanks again to everyone who provides their time and efforts to maintain the church to such a high standard: Jean Paton for the beautiful laundered linen; Michelle Carter, our church cleaner; and our teams of brass-cleaners and flower-arrangers. Thank you also to Wendy Macdonald, our Music Director; our choir and musicians; to Annette Morgan, our Sacristan; and to Mervyn Harrison and our team of bell-ringers. Our grateful thanks go also to Mike and Barbara Street for providing our Harvest Sheaf and to Anne and Alan Lane for providing our Christmas tree.

Alan Rickards continues to do a wonderful job as Editor of our excellent Church Magazine, which provides a valuable and enjoyable read every month. Our Social Committee continues to come up trumps in providing first class catering and entertainment to ensure our social events are a success.

Thank you to everybody who gives their time, knowledge and enthusiasm to make St Luke's an active and caring Church within our local community.

**Alastair Cragg, Jayne Weaver, Val Cragg, Alan Rickards, Stephen Haigh -
Churchwardens and Assistant Churchwardens**

CHURCH COUNCIL

Council proceedings - The Parochial Church Council (PCC) of Church Hulme met on six occasions during 2018 to conduct general business and financial matters in support of the Vicar and the Church's mission in the parish. In the course of this business, the Council received and discussed reports from the Churchwardens, Treasurer, Deanery Synod representatives and other Church officials on a variety of issues, including those summarised in the Fabric Goods and Ornaments

and Churchwardens' Reports above. In September, the Council adopted a Health & Safety Policy (based on a template from its insurers, Ecclesiastical Group) appointing Jayne Weaver as its H&S Officer and in November a Church Fire Procedure was adopted with Peter Cotton appointed as Fire Safety Officer. The Council continues to be compliant with the House of Bishops' guidance on safeguarding children and vulnerable adults and in September adopted the Diocesan Safeguarding Policy Statement. Anne Smith continues as the Council's Safeguarding Officer.

At the end of 2018, the Council had 21 members as listed on the church porch notice-board. Council meetings have been chaired by the Vicar or the vice-Chairman, Alastair Cragg. Agendas and Minutes of meetings are published on the PCC page of the church website (www.holmeschapelchurch.com) and a paper copy is available on request from the Secretary, Steve Smith. The Council now has 20 members, following the resignation of the Vicar. Alastair Cragg has been appointed as Chairman and Jayne Weaver as Vice-chairman of the Council from 1st January until a new incumbent is installed.

Annual Parish Meetings – The Annual Meeting to elect Churchwardens for the coming year and the Annual Parochial Church Meeting to elect other Church officials and conduct other business are again being held consecutively in church on Sunday 7th April 2019 at 9.30 am and will be followed by a service of Holy Communion. Nomination forms for Churchwardens, Assistant Churchwardens, Council members and Sidesmen have been available in church since Sunday 3rd March.

Financial Statements (Annual Accounts) - A summary of the Church Council's independently examined financial statements for the calendar year 2018, prepared by the Council's Treasurer, William Hall, will be available for inspection in church from Sunday 31st March 2019. The full Church Accounts are available to inspect in church on Sunday 7th April.

Steve Smith - Secretary, Church Council

DEANERY SYNOD

The Congleton Deanery Synod met on three occasions during 2018.

In the March meeting, held at Alsager Christchurch, it was announced that Emily Allen, the Diocesan Development Officer, was planning to build up a "Tradesmen's Register" of trustworthy people whom parishes could use to carry out essential repairs on their buildings. Quite often parishes have to work in isolation when it comes to finding good builders and the prospect of having a central reference point was welcomed. A list was being circulated to each parish for them to add suitable names etc. It was also suggested that PCCs may wish to inform their builders that their names were being placed on the list so that they would appreciate where any new business is coming from.

The "National Church Maintenance Booker" is a new online resource allowing churches to book online for work on their churches, notably the clearance of gutters and lightning conductor checks. These are carried out by contractors who have been quality checked through a competitive tendering process.

The diocesan initiative "Thy Kingdom Come" is being rolled out with details and guides being available on the diocesan website. Group discussions took place to consider ways of putting forward this prayer venture across our parishes. It may also tie in with Christian Aid week in the future.

At the June meeting, held at Church Lawton, a report was given on the topics discussed at the latest Diocesan meeting. There had been debates on homeless and on modern day slavery. The Committee for Social Responsibility aims to help churches become more involved in social action within their parishes. "Transforming Lives Together" is a joint venture with the Church Urban Fund

to assist parishes in recognising the issues of poverty and social deprivation faced by many in our midst. The CSR is involved in mental health, dementia, counselling, loneliness and isolation, disability, debt and the needs of older people. It has established an Older People's Forum and a Criminal Justice Group. A "Mental Health Day" is being arranged to focus on young people and their mental health.

At the October meeting held in Sandbach the Synod was asked to respond to the Bishop of Chester's paper on adapting parishes to missional communities in the future. Concern was expressed by the Synod that the issues raised by the Bishop had not been fully explored, particularly as we could learn from the way in which the Methodists are organised. Rather than simply ditching the existing parish system it was suggested that greater use could be made of the Anglican/Methodist Covenant to use resources more effectively.

William Hall and Barbara Smith - Deanery Synod Representatives

CHURCH HALL

Accounts: In overall financial terms, the financial surplus arising from Church Hall activities in 2018 was £1300 (down from £2921 in 2017 mainly due to reduced bookings this year).

Following a request from St Luke's Treasurer the committee agreed to transfer £6000 from the Church Hall account to Church funds to assist with PCC approved projects. Accordingly, our account balance has reduced by £4700 in 2018.

Bookings: This year both of the existing drama groups have stopped using the hall and other groups have reduced their regular hours. However, we do have two new children's groups using the hall and also several U3A groups have recently started to use the Massey Room again.

We are grateful to Mrs Anne Lane for taking over the organisation of the volunteers for the Thursday morning coffee mornings, which continue to run very successfully. The car scheme run by Christian Communicare continues to provide transport to the Church Hall on Thursday mornings for those who need it.

Maintenance: In December we had to replace the water heater in the kitchen when the existing one failed dramatically just before the Christmas Market. Other maintenance items include the purchase (and assembly) of a further six upholstered chairs with arms, and a new mirror in the ladies' toilet area. In addition, in order to support the 'Dementia Friendly' campaign in Holmes Chapel, we have replaced all the toilet seats with red ones.

General: I would like to thank all the committee members for their help during the year, and thanks also to our caretaker, Mrs Broderick.

John Murfin - Chairman, Church Hall Committee

CHURCH GROUPS

Bell Ringing

I begin this report by again mentioning how important it is that new ringers step forward to ensure our bells can continue to ring out over coming years. Yet another year has passed with no "new blood" and existing ringers another year older. There could come a time when the bells are silent from lack of ringers. We currently have nine regular ringers who between them do ensure that our bells ring for Sunday morning service without fail.

The highlights of our Celebratory ringing in 2018 were two-fold. Firstly, we took part in nationwide ringing for the Centenary of the end of WW1 on Sunday 11 Nov 2018, and secondly, we were pleased to complete a quarter peal to mark the retirement of our vicar, Revd Paul Mason. This was on the eve of his final Service at the end of December.

On 16th March 2019 we won the South Cheshire area ringing competition at St Leonard Warmingham as the band ringing most accurately and keeping best time over a 5-minute period. We will now go forward to the represent the area in the Cheshire competition later this year.

If anyone wants to find out more about this ancient and rewarding art, then please come along to one of our Friday practice nights. We will be delighted to see you!

Mervyn Harrison - Tower Captain

Fairtrade

At the end of 2018 it was announced that Traidcraft - the company that supplies our Fairtrade goods - would cease trading in the new year. So far, up to March 2019, we are still able to order from Traidcraft without any difficulty. The proposed changes to make the company more streamlined, profitable and relevant have not affected the way we work.

Indeed, our total orders for the year at around £2250, are up 50% on last year. This is largely due to the dedication and hard work of Jan Rayner and Ann Jack who have placed and sorted most of the orders and set up and run many stands at St Luke's and elsewhere. Credit is also due to Angela Gilmore who runs a stall at St Luke's, Goostrey and Pauline Whitehurst who runs a stall at Goostrey Methodist Church.

I would, once again, like to take this opportunity to thank the people of St Luke's and of Holmes Chapel for their continued support and remarkable generosity, especially our loyal, regular customers. Thanks must also go to Lesley Mosely who generously provided the working capital for our Fairtrade venture.

Gareth Griffin – Fairtrade Co-ordinator

Floristry – altar flowers

Flowers continue to have had a special place in our church and, from the feedback from members of the congregation, are much appreciated. When I first started to help (more years ago now than I care to remember), I had to wait my turn even to go on the weekly flower rota! Sadly, volunteer numbers have fallen in recent years and we have moved to a fortnightly rota. This simplification is working well, given that the flowers often last for two weeks with minimal attention. This year we

have also suspended the normal altar flowers during Advent (in recognition of its penitential nature like Lent), and simply provided poinsettias at either end of the altar.

At festival occasions such as Christmas, Easter and Harvest, in addition to altar flowers, a wider band comes together to decorate the seven window ledges, Lady Chapel, pulpit and font – and very fine the church always looks.

So why not consider joining our team adding to the visual beauty of St Luke's? You really don't need to be an expert or use the most expensive flowers – novices are made very welcome. We enjoy our time together making simple arrangements. Suitable vases, containers etc are always provided in our cupboard on the south side of church. Anyone can have a try with guaranteed, great results, very much appreciated by the congregation and visitors. Just ask one of us if you are unsure what is involved.

Ann Stafford and Anne Lane

GENESIS – Sunday School

'Genesis' continues to be a place for young people from 2-11 years to explore faith through craft, music, drama and friendship. We have been delighted to welcome a new family to Genesis and Olivia Middleweek has joins us as a young leader. Our numbers remain around 15 children in attendance and four teachers.

Our aims at Genesis remain the same:

- to provide a regular pattern of worship and teaching to the children in our congregation.
- to reach out to families in the wider community.

Our support of Church events and ecumenical activities includes:

Within Church services, we have contributed to Family services providing music, prayer and Bible readings. Additionally, we have enjoyed taking part in other services such as Mothering Sunday, Harvest, 'A Miracle in town' nativity and our Christingle and Crib Services.

Outside Church services, Genesis led the Operation Christmas Child and Mary's Meals campaign; led the Centenary Remembrance activities for over 120 children from the uniformed groups; hosted an Open Church at the Christmas market evening; and supported the St Luke's Music Festival event 'Striking a Chord', working alongside the Holmes Chapel primary schools to celebrate music in Holmes Chapel.

Genesis continues to support the pastoral Prayer Networking system. We network the children in Genesis and their families as well as each other.

Our success and mission within Genesis are dependent on team work, encouragement, enthusiasm and faith. Thank you to the team of teachers, children and parents that inspire us and to the Church congregation and leaders for their encouragement. We are looking forward to the year ahead as we embrace our Church mission, "Making Christ known in the community of Holmes Chapel so that all can share in the joy of God's love." Thank you.

Fiona Pullé - on behalf of Genesis

House Group

On two Monday evenings a month, about eight or nine members of the congregation have enjoyed the welcome at Stephen and Steph Haigh's home in Portree Drive. They offered their home for

Revd Gail Miller to lead a House Group and we have enjoyed several years of fellowship together. With Gail's increasing involvement in prison ministry, in April 2018 Tim Fryer took over leading the House Group with vicar Paul's support.

Colossians 3:16-17 epitomises the role of the House Group in our lives. The House Group is an opportunity to join in fellowship and encourage each other in our faith. We sing, pray and study God's Word, and seek to find its relevance in our daily lives. Sharing our own stories, concerns and lives together, and supporting each other, is a joy we have all grown into.

Over the last year we have studied some of the Old Testament Prophets and the fulfilment of their prophecies, especially in Jesus' life. We have also studied other characters from the Bible: Mary, Elizabeth, Zechariah, John the Baptist and Phoebe. Since Christmas we have shared songs that mean a lot to us and Bible verses or passages that have spoken into our lives. We are now enjoying looking a little deeper at the passages that have been shared.

It is an extension of the fellowship we enjoy in Church and, knowing that others are thinking and praying for us, gives us confidence in our daily lives.

Tim Fryer – for the House Group

Mothers' Union

The Mothers' Union is a worldwide Christian organisation of 4 million members whose aim is helping families around the world.

Here at St Luke's we are successfully run by a small committee and have 34 members who meet on either the 2nd Tuesday evening or the 3rd Wednesday of each month. Due to our ageing congregation we now have a small group of members who are no longer able to join us for one reason or another but still need our prayers and thoughts, and these are prayed for at every meeting. We have a Prayer Circle so that if any members are ill or need our prayers the Committee is able to contact all members to let them know. As well as this we all have prayer Partners who we pray for throughout the year, and at Christmas we buy a card and present for them.

We have established firm friendship and contact with other MU groups outside our Deanery area – such as Knutsford St. John's, High Legh, Henbury, and Northwich Holy Trinity.

Our members aim to help families in our own diocese in as many ways as possible:

- Some members help in the baby changing tent at the Cheshire Show
- Others take 'Virtual babies' round to secondary schools to demonstrate to teenagers the problems of looking after babies
- Others knit premature baby items for the Neo-natal department at Leighton Hospital
- Still others knit trauma teddies for hospitals

We also raise money for our National and Overseas MU charities through collection boxes and our annual Strawberry Supper in June. We sell books and have cake stalls to raise money for Away from It All holidays for families who cannot afford a holiday.

We are a charitable organisation and have had many interesting visiting speakers and demonstrations as well as good social gatherings. Our meetings are open to anyone, male or female, mother or not.

Carole Elliott and Dorothy Wood – Branch Secretary and Treasurer

Music

Our annual Music Festival weekend was held in April and was well-attended. On the Saturday morning a Young Musicians' concert included performances by pupils from Holmes Chapel and Hermitage Primary Schools and Holmes Chapel Comprehensive School. Outside the church, local Scouts provided refreshments. An evening concert included varied items from the Slipper Band, Community Choir and soloists, and was followed by refreshments in the Hall. On the Sunday there was a Songs of Praise service in the morning. Stephen Haigh played the piano in the hall during the Afternoon Tea, which was hosted by Girlguiding.

The church choir has nine regular members. Several additional singers supplement the core choir when needed.

The music group of five instrumentalists plays at the 10 am service on each 3rd Sunday. Peter Cotton and Stephen Haigh assist with playing the organ.

The St Luke's Community Choir meets weekly with about 25 people, singing a variety of light music. The choir performed at Capesthorpe Hall's Christmas event and at the Westbourne Care Home.

Thank you to everyone who contributes to the music at St Luke's.

Wendy Macdonald - Director of Music

Networking

Our Prayer Networking Scheme has been running for nearly ten years embracing around 200 people connected to St Luke's Church family. The success of the scheme depends on the commitment of individual networkers. Each networker prays daily for a small group of people/families, supplementing the pastoral work provided during interregnum by visiting clergy and our own ministers. GENESIS staff complete the networking by extending their prayers for the children in their groups and for their families.

Our prayers encourage us to look out for and care for those we network, so we are aware when they may not be in church for a week or two or if we do not see them elsewhere. Each networker is sustained by the daily prayer of another within the Church family. We belong to each other and to our Church through this prayer. We still need more networkers to keep our promise to care for everyone in the Church family.

Our vicar Paul led a meeting of the networkers in October 2018. He was very positive about the future of networking, encouraging us to look forward and continue to show love in action. We included the opinions of several absent friends and enjoyed a lively, honest discussion about ways to improve communication and ensure that messages about infirm or sick people were passed on. Paul's backing for and overall leadership of the Networking scheme has been a great encouragement to us.

We continue to be grateful to Ron and Anne Smith, Tim Fryer, our Churchwardens and Sidesmen for their active support and involvement, as well as to the team of sensitive visiting clergy who offer a listening ear to any who may be in need.

Judith Hall and Jean Paton - Network Leader and Co-ordinator

Social Committee

The Social Committee consists of five members, who serve the whole congregation by organising and catering for a wide range of parish social events.

In February we arranged an afternoon tea for 35 people and raised £170.

On Good Friday, we provided refreshments and Hot Cross buns for the combined congregations of the three village Churches who attended the Ecumenical Service.

We served wine and provided canapés after the Church Music Festival evening event in April.

Our Harvest Supper was held in October, serving hotpots, apple pies, and with a mini-quiz. This was a very successful evening, and we raised £556.60 which was donated to the Sycamore Tree- Prison fellowship. Pat Riches, who volunteers for the charity, came along to give us valuable information about the work of the fellowship.

We also served mulled wine and mince pies after the Christmas Carol Service in December which was very well-attended.

We were fairly active in 2018 and hope to continue this during 2019. We had considered recruiting more people to the committee to share the work but have found that members of the congregation are happy to volunteer for specific occasions by making cakes, or serving food and drinks. We meet once a year to plan activities for the year, and then as and when needed to sort out events. The committee has worked very well together and produced some very good ideas.

Carole Elliott - on behalf of the Social Committee

ECUMENICAL GROUPS

Christian Aid

Christian Aid, originally known as Christian Reconstruction in Europe, was set up in the 1940s by 41 British and Irish churches to alleviate the suffering of European refugees, no matter what their faith. Christian Aid now works with 650 partners in 50 countries around the world. It is a major member of the Fair Trade Foundation and the Trade Justice Movement. In Holmes Chapel the three Churches work together to raise money for this highly respected charity:

- **Lent lunches** Each Friday during Lent volunteers provided home-made soup and biscuits. Some of this was taken out to local businesses and much appreciated. The event raised £1,529.28.
- **Christian Aid Week** The Sunday before Christian Aid Week special services were held at the Methodist Church and St Luke's. These were both informative and deeply moving. The total House-to House collection for the village raised £5,924.18 plus Gift Aid amounting to £770.
- **Coffee morning and Christmas card sale** This is always a popular event and the sale of quiz sheets helped to boost our takings, which were £1,224.45.
- **January Quiz Night** This is probably our most popular annual event, and the atmosphere at the Victoria Club was one of great enthusiasm. We raised £793.00.

We have welcomed some younger members to our committee, but we would very much like still more.

Margaret Thompson, Sue Wood and Steph Haigh

Churches Together

The group has continued to meet twice a year to organise the events, which are detailed below:

- **Church Unity Week** - We started the year with Church Unity Week, when a prayer meeting was held at the Methodist Church on the Tuesday. Unfortunately, with no Vicar and an absent Methodist Minister we were unable to have the usual pulpit exchange.
- **Good Friday Walk of Witness** - Around 70 people attended this from all three congregations. We followed the usual route around the village centre, stopping five times for a reading, a prayer and a hymn. This year we had a sound system which made it much better for all to hear the readings.
- **Village Christmas Card** - We designed, printed and distributed the Christmas Card to 3,300 homes in the village and Cranage. The new developments have been coped with and many thanks go to those who helped to pack the cards and those who turned out at the beginning of December to deliver them.
- **Village Christmas Market** - We had a stall on the market. The Committee had agreed that it is important that the Churches are represented at this village event. We distributed a small booklet of the Christmas story to young children and one for adults. There was also a game for the children.
- **Nativity Crib** - The crib and banner were erected on the north side of the church during Advent and remained in place until the Epiphany.
- **Churches Together Notice-Board** - The board continues to be updated each week with a poster and weekly bulletins for each Church.
- **Village Prayers** - We continue to meet in the Methodist Church once a month to pray for those who live and work in the village.

- **Welcome Packs** - We have continued to deliver a Welcome Pack to the new build residents. It comprises a sheet for each Church, which details Service times and activities.

Pete Shackleton - Co-ordinator for St. Luke's

Focus

Focus is an ecumenical fellowship group which meets at 8:00pm on the second Friday of each month, between September and June, in the Methodist Church Hall. Details may be found in the parish magazine, in the Sunday Link, on posters in the Church Hall or in the printed syllabus. All are welcome at our meetings.

Our 2018/9 session opened in September when Rev Derek Oldham shared his experiences during his temporary pastorate at a vibrant, wealthy church in Florida. The following month, we welcomed Alan Chappell from the Macclesfield Eye Society, since renamed East Cheshire Eye Society. He enabled us to experience how our sight might be affected if we suffered from various eye conditions and explained how the Society could demonstrate and supply specialised living aids to those with reduced vision.

In November, Revd Heather Buckley, the new vicar of Goostrey, shared her inspiring testimony of her route to ordination and beyond. Later in the month, Rodger Burgess explained how he had become a police officer and showed us clothing and equipment, some of which was rather antiquated, to illustrate his service with the Cheshire Constabulary as policing changed over the decades.

The group celebrated the New Year with a tasty 'jade banquet' at the Fortune City Chinese Restaurant. We shared Anne Vaughan's journey along the Nile from Khartoum to Cairo, witnessing the differing architectural styles of pyramids, temples and monuments constructed by ancient Sudanese and Egyptian societies. In March, Stephen and Judith Coyne illustrated their journey from Delhi to Kathmandu along the Ganges via a succession of stunning photographs and videos covering religious ceremonies, wildlife, cremations and temples in Kathmandu, both before and after its recent earthquake. Early in April, David Greatorex shared the illuminating results of his investigation into the origin of surnames and maiden names belonging to group members.

You are cordially invited to a guided walk led by Ian Doughty of Congleton Museum around the town, focusing on the silk industry, and entitled 'From Weaver to Wearer' on Saturday, 11th May.

This year's programme will conclude on Friday, 14th June with a presentation on the South Island of New Zealand by Brian and Christine Donlon and the planning of next year's programme

Barbara Smith – Group Secretary

CHURCH PUBLICATIONS

Facebook page

www.facebook.com/holmeschapelchurch

Our Facebook page, which includes details of services and other events at St Luke's, continues to be widely viewed. Anyone wishing to publicise church events is welcome to let me know and I will gladly include them.

As I write this report, 240 people from the UK and around the world have "liked" the St Luke's Facebook Page. Delving deeper into these statistics it's interesting to note that some of those 240 Facebook users come from as far away as the USA (6 people), Australia (2), Spain (2), South Korea (1), New Zealand (1) and Pakistan (1).

Alan Rickards - Facebook page moderator

Parish Magazine

A number of churches around the country are ceasing to publish paper copies of their magazines and either making it an on-line only magazine or stopping it completely. However, here in Holmes Chapel, with the support of the readers and advertisers, the parish magazine continues to flourish as a traditional printed publication, for which I am very grateful!

This year, the number of regular subscribers stands at over 320, with a number more being bought in church. If you do not already have your monthly copy delivered to your door (at no extra charge!), please consider taking out a subscription for £6 a year by contacting Sue Wood on 01477 534842. Magazines are also available to buy from The Print Room in Church Walk, thanks to the support of David and Marie Bennett. At 50p a copy, I hope you consider the magazine to be good value.

I am very grateful for the services of Tom and Jos at Cranmore Instant Print in Macclesfield, who continue to provide an excellent printing service – and always have the kettle on the boil when I call for my monthly visit!

Other key people I would like to thank include Lew Riches and Rod Pickles, who are our joint logistics managers, and Sue Wood, our unofficial director of distribution. Sue sorts the monthly consignment of magazines into the delivery rounds for her willing team of 34 deliverers, without whom your copy of the magazine would not arrive in your letter box. Thank you everybody.

Thank you very much to all of you who regularly contribute items for inclusion in the magazine. When I speak to other editors from churches around the country, I feel privileged to have so many willing people at St Luke's who provide me with reports, announcements and even jokes for inclusion in the magazine. Please keep up the good work!

Finally, I would like to thank my wife, Jacquie, for putting up with me poring over my laptop each month, compiling the following month's edition!

Alan Rickards - Editor of Church Magazine

Sunday Link

Each week, our Sunday Link is published on behalf of the Church Council with details of Church notices, services and events, mainly for the week from the current Sunday. "Looking Ahead" points briefly to major events further ahead in the Church calendar. This information is printed on the reverse of sheets from Redemptorist Publications, pre-printed to reflect the Church calendar and lectionary readings. A copy is posted on the Church Hall notice board (to the left of the main door), on the Churches Together notice board (near the Fire Station) and on the Church website.

Most content for the Link comes from that supplied for the Magazine and from GENESIS, the MU and Social Committee. Ecumenical events, such as activities of FOCUS and Churches Together are also included.

Information requested for inclusion in the next Link must be received by me (preferably by email: the preceding Tuesday evening to allow time for editing, approval and printing sufficient copies for everyone in the Sunday and Wednesday congregations to receive one – around 150 copies. I am grateful to everyone who supplies this information although I cannot guarantee to include everything immediately.

General feedback is that the Link makes a valuable contribution to keeping all the Church family fully informed. However, having edited the Link for many years, I need to find one or more people who can assist me and provide some backup. If you are interested, please speak to me on a Sunday or ring me on HC 535 497.

Judith Hall - Editor of Sunday Link

St Luke's Websites

holmeschapelchurch.com stlukesholmeschapel.uk stlukesroof.net

Our Church web presence started in September 2009, using the name holmeschapelchurch.com, aiming to give up to date on-line information about St Luke's and its mission, supplementing paper-based information in our Magazine and Sunday Link. The website has been regularly updated since then with notices, diary, register and rota information, as well as with reports of MU and other Church activities, especially during the major roof and tower works. Typically, there were about 10-12 different daily users, some coming from outside the UK.

Unfortunately, because of a serious security issue with the operational software, the website had to be taken offline in July 2018 and replaced by a temporary site at stlukesroof.net whilst a new site was being constructed using WordPress software at stlukesholmeschapel.uk. I am particularly grateful to Trevor Jenkins who is working with me to complete and maintain the new site which is nearing completion. It will include new features with information from the old site but also be easier to update and give the site a more modern look and feel, adapted for access from mobile devices.

By all means have a look at the new site at stlukesholmeschapel.uk and let us have your comments, but until it is completed (hopefully around Easter), please check the temporary site for updated information, by entering either holmeschapelchurch.com or stlukesroof.net in your web browser.

Steve Smith - Webmaster: nupharms@gmail.com