



PARISH CHURCH OF  
**ST LUKE**  
HOLMES CHAPEL

**Come to Christ, love to learn, learn to love!**

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## **Annual Parochial Church Meeting – 9<sup>th</sup> May 2021 Report for 2020**

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### **INTRODUCTION**

Under the Church Representation Rules (2020), every parish must hold an Annual Parochial Church Meeting (APCM) before the 31<sup>st</sup> May each year. Last year, in view of the COVID-19 pandemic and the consequent restrictions on holding public meetings, our APCM and the Annual Meeting to elect Churchwardens (AMP) had to be delayed until 25<sup>th</sup> October. Although the pandemic is declining in the UK, it is still not possible to hold our Annual Church Meetings together in person and they will again be held by Zoom telecommunications on Sunday 9<sup>th</sup> May 2021 from 11.00am.

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: 2020. Some individual sections may also include information about activities since the last APCM on 25<sup>th</sup> October 2020. Advance copies of the Annual Report are available on our website (<https://stlukesholmeschapel.uk>) and in the church porch from 2<sup>nd</sup> May 2021.

**The PCC also must provide for the APCM independently examined financial statements for the calendar year 2020. Copies of a summary of these financial statements are available on our website and in the church porch from 2<sup>nd</sup> May 2021. Copies of the full financial statements are available on request from the Hon. Treasurer, William Hall (HC 535497).**

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### **VICAR'S REPORT**

My first full year in Holmes Chapel has been a strange one, with the effects of the spread of the Covid-19 virus dominating many aspects of our lives. For 8 of the last 12 months, we were not holding services in church, due to the requirements of our government and church authorities and (since Christmas) because of the level of infections in our area and the guidance for so many of our number to be shielding. Although our work has been curtailed, the Lord is still at work, and so this annual report will mark and celebrate the Lord's work amongst us over the last year.

The first lockdown started over the weekend of Mothering Sunday 2020, meaning overnight there were to be no services, no opening of church, and no small groups. Our plans to open a new toddler group were shelved. By the following Sunday, we had a Zoom account and tried a Church Coffee Time, with a rather spontaneous attempt to sing a hymn, which was the start of a steep learning

curve. We started daily Morning Prayer on Zoom (average 9 screens), Sunday Zoom and recording short services for the Website and Facebook page, in time for Holy Week and Easter, and this has remained our basic weekly pattern ever since. For those without access to Zoom, or our regular email communications, we have had seasonal messages with a gift e.g. palm cross at Easter, Bible Study notes at Pentecost, Prayer booklet at Harvest.

Gradually our 10am Sunday Zoom service became established with an average of 45 screens. Growth Groups (we could no longer call them house groups!) followed us onto Zoom, as did Sunday Genesis. We started a new Growth Group in April, and a new Youth Group (Exodus) in July, and another new Growth Group after Christmas 2020, all on Zoom.

In late July, we were able to resume limited services in church, socially distanced, wearing masks, no singing, maximum of 30 people, communion bread only. We had our Sunday communion service at 9am, helping more non-Zoom participants to come (meaning our Zoom service moved a little later to 10.30am) and our Wednesday midweek communion at 10.30am.

Zoom has been successful to a degree, and infinitely better than nothing, in helping us build up a proportion of our existing congregation. But it is not good at reaching newcomers and adding to our congregation. As lockdowns ease, this needs to be our priority, as our church age profile is top heavy, and our challenging financial situation will be best helped by growing in all age groups, including working age.

As we make plans for the resumption of the full use of church and church hall buildings, it will be good to build on our progress and to establish a new normal which gives us more opportunity to grow. Spiritual growth is God's gift, but we can ask the Lord and make plans with every hope of our prayers being answered.

We want to be a church which sees people "Coming to Christ; Loving to learn; Learning to love." We pray and plan for that to be true in 2021/22.

Yours in Christ,

**Canon Rob**

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## **CHURCH ELECTORAL ROLL 2020 REVISION**

A new Church Electoral Roll for 2019-2025 was established for the Annual Parochial Church Meeting (APCM) in April 2019. The required annual revision of the Roll by the PCC took place between 14th March and 18th April 2021 ready for the 2021 APCM on 9th May 2021. This APCM will again be held using Zoom telecommunications because of the COVID-19 emergency.

The revised Roll has been published for information and checking as required under the Church Representation Rules (2020) on the noticeboard in the Church porch and website from Sunday 25th April. No address or email details are permitted to appear in the published Roll.

There are now 214 members on the Church Electoral Roll after the 2021 revision, there having been 29 additions and 3 deletions.

**Wendy Bond - Electoral Roll Officer**

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## **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 has been reviewed 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. 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.

**Organ** - As documented last year, the further deterioration of the Church Organ has accelerated our plans to look for a replacement. We were delighted to secure an organ from the Church of the Good Shepherd at Heswall. Following a competitive tender exercise, we were pleased to appoint Philip Cartwright to undertake our renovation and installation project. A fundraising project was launched in the community to fund the Organ Replacement.

**Lighting** - As mentioned last year, this replacement project was planned to be relaunched but following Covid travel restrictions, progress has been limited. At present, we are expecting to submit a revised Faculty application in May/June 2021 with installation of the new LED system, subject to faculty approval, by the end of the year. A fundraising project was launched in the community, alongside the organ appeal to fund this Lighting Project.

**Land 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 normally meet to tidy the area around the cremated remains on a regular basis. The volunteers still managed to meet in July and September, in between national Covid lock downs.

**Churchyard extension** - The newly extended churchyard (at the Knutsford Road site) is now in full use for both Burials and interment of cremated remains.

**Big project** - We have previously mentioned our high-level plans for a Big Project that would develop the church building to make it more accessible/useable for the future. Covid has restricted our ability to meet and move this forward, and although some plans have been created, no tangible progress has been made this year. Our focus has been on the Organ and Lighting projects. Once these projects have been completed, we will revisit our original aims for this project. Whatever changes may be planned, will require extensive fund raising to enable the project to proceed.

**Alastair Cragg, Jayne Weaver - Churchwardens**

**Val Cragg, Stephen Haigh, Peter Cotton - Assistant Churchwardens**

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## **CHURCHWARDENS REPORT ON GENERAL PARISH MATTERS**

**Covid 19** - As we mentioned in the previous annual report, the devastating effect of the pandemic was just becoming evident. As a church, we have responded and followed the necessary Government and Diocesan guidelines at all times. Examples of these changes were, socially distanced services, maximum congregation numbers, sign in sheets, closure of whole building, single use service sheets, opening church for private prayer, no singing, distribution of communion wafers only (no consecrated wine) to communicants remaining in their pews.

At this time, we have recently opened church again for restricted services on Sunday and Wednesday only and will continue to follow Diocesan guidelines for the roadmap back to normality, whatever the new normal may be.

**Churchwardens team** - We were pleased that all Wardens and Assistant Wardens continued in their posts for the year, and we have continued to meet each month (sometimes fortnightly) to conduct church business with the majority of meetings conducted via Zoom. We are all well aware that we could not fulfil our duties without the support we each receive from so many people throughout the church and beyond. Looking forward, Val Cragg has decided to not continue as Assistant Warden and we would like to thank her for her 12 years of service to the Wardens team and also for being our link into the Church Hall committee.

**Sidesmen** - The team have always provided a warm welcome and support through all our services. With the suspension of our normal worshipping pattern, the sidesmen have therefore not been required this year. We are hoping that, following a resumption of normal services, our team will be able to return to some sidesmen duties.

**Church Hall Committee** - Our Church Hall has always provided an important resource for Church activities and valuable income from use by external lettings. With the Church Hall being closed during the pandemic, the Church Hall committee have met on a few occasions and will plan for a re-opening at the right time. Judith and Derek Copley are acting as joint Interim Chair of the committee and Mike and Barbara Street are jointly acting as interim booking secretary. We would like to thank John Murfin for all his sterling years of service in being the chair and booking secretary.

**Major Contributors** - We would like to thank Steve Smith again for his continuing role as PCC Secretary and for all he has contributed for the Organ Project. Steve will not be standing for re-appointment and so we would like also to record our appreciation for him and for all his years of support.

This year has been very different, and whilst church has had sporadic opening, we would still like to thank 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 cleaner; our teams of brass-cleaners and flower-arrangers; Wendy Macdonald, our Music Director; our choir and musicians; our bell ringers and our Sacristan team.

We have relied heavily on digital communications this year and we would like to specifically thank our Communications team - Trevor Jenkins and Steve Smith - for all their hard work. We have also been working hard to contact those in our Church community who can't join our online services by telephone contact and hand delivering material and information. For this we would like to thank Jayne Weaver for her consolidation and co-ordination activity as well as Judith Hall and the Networkers who are such an asset in keeping us all updated with news from around the community.

Grateful thanks also go to Mike and Barbara Street for providing our Harvest Sheaf and to Anne and Alan Lane for again providing our Christmas tree.

Alan Rickards does a wonderful job as Editor of our excellent Church Magazine which provides a valuable and enjoyable read. Covid caused temporary suspension of the production and delivery of the magazine for a time but it has recently been relaunched for the Easter edition.

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

**Registered Charity** - The PCC is a registered charity and must operate within statutory controls. Following the new General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) rules in May 2018, our Data Privacy Notice was published and is on display on the church website and in the church porch.

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 - Churchwardens**

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## **SAFEGUARDING STATEMENT**

In the light of the recent independent report on the failure of policy and practices of the Church of England in relation to safeguarding issues, particularly those of child abuse, our continued vigilance at St Luke's in relation to these matters is vital. We are reminded that the responsibility for providing a safe environment for parishioners is one that involves us all and not just those appointed to particular offices.

The provision of care and safety for the community at St Luke's over time has been excellent as required checks are in place for those directly involved with our children, young people and the vulnerable and safe practices are in place and reviewed. Members of our PCC and those responsible for our children and youth groups have completed the appropriate levels of online safeguarding training via the Church of England portal. All documentation and certificates are held in a secure electronic file.

**Reporting any concern is necessary and information about how to this is posted in the church porch, in the Church Hall and on our website at:**

<https://stlukesholmeschapel.uk/safeguarding/>

While the current pandemic restricts the Church meeting as normal, it does not restrict the ways in which the internet may be used for sending messages and images for grooming the vulnerable and for bullying and intimidation. Social media sites which are used particularly by the younger generation may be a source of abuse in this way and we need to be aware of this possibility. Maintaining good relationships with each other provides the trust to report any concerns and, should this be necessary, any matter will be dealt with speedily and in confidence to effect a resolution.

**Paula Lavin - Safeguarding Officer for St Luke's**

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## **CHURCH COUNCIL**

**Council proceedings** - In 2020 the Parochial Church Council (PCC) of Church Hulme met six times to conduct general business and financial matters in support of the vicar and Churchwardens. During 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.

Because of the COVID-19 restrictions, first introduced in April 2020, all PCC meetings from May 2020 onwards (except that in September) have been held by Zoom telecommunications. The PCC

Standing Committee has similarly met regularly by Zoom between full Council meetings to ensure parish business and church services were maintained.

**Safeguarding** - The Council continues to comply with the House of Bishops' guidance on safeguarding children and vulnerable adults and follows the Diocesan Safeguarding Policy it adopted in September 2018. Paula Lavin was appointed as the Council's Safeguarding Officer at the Council meeting on 9th Nov 2020 in succession to Anne Smith. She was also co-opted as a Council member until this year's APCM.

At the end of December 2020, the Council had 21 members (including 12 elected lay members listed on the noticeboard in the church porch). Council meetings were chaired by the Vicar, Canon Rob McLaren. Agendas and Minutes of meetings have been published on the PCC page of the church website (<https://stlukesholmeschapel.uk>) and a paper copy can be supplied on request to the Secretary.

**Annual Parish Meetings** - This year these are again being held through Zoom telecommunications because of the COVID-19 restrictions. The Annual Meeting to elect Churchwardens for 2021/22 and the Annual Parochial Church Meeting to elect lay representatives to the PCC and conduct other business, are being held from 11am on Sunday 9th May October, preceded by a short service of Morning Worship at 10.30am. The Annual Meetings can be accessed through **Zoom ID: 856 031 5150 passcode: apcm21** .

**Financial Statements (Annual Accounts)** - A summary of the PCC's independently examined financial statements for the calendar year 2020, prepared by the Council's Hon. Treasurer, William Hall, is available for inspection on the church website from Sunday 2nd May 2021. Paper copies of the summary accounts are also available in the church porch from 2nd May. A copy of the full Church Accounts will be supplied on request to the Treasurer (tel. HC 535497) or Secretary ([secy@stlukesholmeschapel.uk](mailto:secy@stlukesholmeschapel.uk)).

**Steve Smith – Hon. Secretary, St Luke's PCC**

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## **DEANERY SYNOD**

Congleton Deanery Synod last convened on Thursday, 6th February 2020 at Christ Church, Alsager. Canon David Page described how he had spent a recent sabbatical investigating local funeral provision and conducting funerals for four local funeral directors. The majority of full services at local crematoria are now conducted by an increasing number of Civil Celebrants. They are good at advertising their services at crematoria and elsewhere, whereas the church is not. The Church of England's funeral ministry is likely to dwindle markedly within the next thirty years. David recommended developing good relationships with funeral directors, creating a chaplaincy service and offering bereavement follow-up to the family.

In autumn 2019, Deanery Synod forwarded a motion proposed by Rev Jeff Cuttell to Diocesan Synod requesting that faculty fees from the incumbent, churchwardens or PCC should not be levied on the PCC but paid for by the Diocesan Board of Finance. This would bring Chester Diocese in line with best practice in some other dioceses. Bishops' Council accepted this motion on 1st January 2021 – very welcome news for St Luke's and other parishes within the diocese.

**Barbara Smith, William Hall, Lee Hardy and Tim Fryer - Deanery Synod Representatives**

## **TREASURER'S REPORT**

Our day-to-day income was adversely affected by the Covid pandemic which forced the closure of the church building for some months in 2020. The resultant loss of income from collections, funerals, weddings and Gift Aided donations has had a marked effect on our overall income which was over £20,000 lower than 2019 at £119,520. Despite this, we were still able to pay our full Parish Share amounting to £80,505, an increase of 2.5% on 2019.

The absence of services in church has continued to make it difficult for our worshippers to donate regularly though several have made extra donations to help us meet our outgoings. Unfortunately, the return of services in church in the autumn was not accompanied by a surge in donations as regulations severely restricted the numbers of worshippers permitted to attend. It is hoped that with the roll-out of Covid vaccinations worldwide during 2021 the risks of infection will gradually reduce allowing us to return to normal church gatherings.

A major appeal for £80,000 was launched on 1st October to raise funds for the installation of a refurbished organ to replace our existing instrument. Funds are also required to upgrade the church lighting system with LEDs to reduce our energy consumption. At the year-end a total of £50,000 had been pledged or donated towards our appeal target.

At the end of September, the vicar moved from the vicarage into a new house (74A London Road) which had just been built in the grounds of the old house. The old house is being sold on behalf of the Diocese.

Once again, we are grateful for the services of Mr Jeremy Bostock, a partner with accountants, Thompson Wright in examining our 2020 accounts.

**William M Hall – Hon. Treasurer, St Luke's PCC**

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## **CHURCH HALL**

The Church Hall was closed in March 2020 due to the Covid-19 restrictions and currently remains closed. The Church Hall committee have met on a few occasions by Zoom telecommunications and are planning for a re-opening at the right time.

At the committee meeting early in 2020 it was agreed that we should have the old ceiling tiles replaced. As high-level access equipment would be needed for this, we will also investigate overall redecoration of the hall at the same time. Committee member Mike Street kindly agreed to obtain quotations for these items.

The Thursday coffee mornings, which ran very successfully in 2019, continued until March 2020 but the proposal to involve children as part of the 'Bridge the Gap' initiative, could not be carried out because of the Covid-19 restrictions.

For personal reasons, John Murfin stood down as committee Chair and Hall Booking Secretary. Judith and Derek Copley are now acting as joint Interim Chair of the committee and Mike and Barbara Street are jointly acting as interim Booking Secretary. They join the Churchwardens (see their report above) in thanking John for all his sterling years of service on the committee and in coordinating much of the hall management.

**Church Hall Committee**

## **THURSDAY MORNING COFFEE**

The weekly coffee mornings in the Church Hall on Thursdays were well attended until the Covid-19 lock-down. We were able to hold a second-hand bookstall and music was provided some weeks by the village guitar group with Bob Monks on the keyboard.

We would like to thank all the volunteers for their help and look forward to reopening in the future.

**Anne Lane and Sue Shorrocks**

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## **CHURCH GROUPS**

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### **GROUPS FOR SPIRITUAL GROWTH**

#### **A note from our Vicar, Canon Rob McLaren**

As part of our strategy to follow through our Church strap line, **'Come to Christ, love to learn, learn to love'**, in 2021 we have more small groups with people loving to learn more from Jesus, with short studies based on our Sunday Bible teaching, with encouragement to pray, and a chance to share experiences.

We have not been able to launch a new Christianity Explored group this year, but the Sunday evening Jesus-100 group has continued to thrive with Rob leading and Yvonne assisting.

Two new Growth Groups on Zoom have been set up: Rob's Tuesday group which Lee has been leading too, and Rob's Monday group most recently. Tim's Growth Group continues happily. The Thursday morning Growth Group in church stopped due to Covid-19 restrictions but we hope that it might reconvene as a women's Growth Group under Yvonne's leadership. The Tuesday Exodus Group on Zoom led by Rob and Rachel Copley is like a Youth Growth Group.

In a time when the opportunity for congregations to meet was severely curtailed, the valuable fellowship of Growth Groups became even more important.

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### **BELL RINGING**

As we all know the world changed at the end of February 2020, and for us it meant the bells fell silent, here and all over the country. This will probably be the longest period of silence since WW2.

If you have missed the sound of the bells remember that it only happens when there is a band of dedicated ringers and, to repeat appeals from many previous reports, we need new blood. This silence could so easily be a foretaste of the future without it.

We are planning how we can resume ringing as we emerge from lock-down in accordance with Government and Church guidance and can keep all the ringers safe.

If anyone wants to find out more about this ancient and rewarding art, then please do give me a call **(HC 537187)**.

**Mervyn Harrison - Tower Captain**

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## **FAIRTRADE**

We were able to maintain our activities right up to lockdown with orders for the year being roughly equivalent to 2018/19 at around £,2250. Unfortunately, we were unable to find a way to sell from our stock during the pandemic and so encouraged everyone to continue supporting Fairtrade and Traidcraft by ordering directly from the company's website.

Our success is due to the dedication and hard work of Jan Rayner, Ann Jack, Angela Gilmore, Pauline Whitehurst, Linda Race and Abigail Rayner. Between them before the lock-down they placed orders and set up and ran stands at St Luke's Holmes Chapel, St Luke's Goostrey, Goostrey Methodist Church and elsewhere. We hope that will again soon be possible as we emerge further from lock-down.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone in the parish for their support and generosity, especially our loyal regular customers.

**Gareth Griffin – Fairtrade Co-ordinator**

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## **FLORISTRY – ALTAR FLOWERS**

The Altar flowers have continued to be arranged by volunteers for the few weeks the church has been open between lockdowns this last year. We have been able to celebrate Harvest, Remembrance Sunday, Christmas and Easter with more floral arrangements.

The flower rota for the Altar flowers is now in the porch for volunteers to sign up for a two-week slot. No special flower- arranging skills are needed and new people are very welcome.

I would like to thank all the people who have helped with the Altar flowers and for the main festivals.

**Anne Lane**

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## **GENESIS – SUNDAY SCHOOL**

Despite Covid restrictions 'Genesis' has continued to meet on Zoom on a weekly basis from 9.45-10.20am and although we have not maintained the numbers we would have for face-to-face sessions, we have regular, loyal and engaged attendance from 6 families. Another 3 families hope to return to us when we can meet again in the Church hall.

Within Zoom Church services we have contributed Bible readings and have shared learning with the congregation about our Genesis sessions. We recorded our nativity and prayers for our morning service and supported our Crib Services on Zoom.

Outside Church services, Genesis led the collection for the 'Storehouse Food Bank' at the New Life Church in Congleton through our harvest giving appeal, coordinated boxes to be gifted and delivered for Operation Christmas Child and organised the production and distribution of Mothering Sunday cards to all the ladies on the Electoral Roll and known to us at St Luke's.

Genesis continues to support the pastoral networking system at this most important of times. We network the children in Genesis and their families as well as each other. Thank you to the team of teachers, children and parents that inspire us and the Church congregation and leaders for their encouragement.

Let us now continue to look forward to a more settled year ahead and embrace our Church mission to bring people closer to Christ.

**Fiona Pullé - on behalf of Genesis@@**

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## **MONDAY HOUSE GROUP**

We have enjoyed an enriching year of fellowship and, until the last month, have been made very welcome at Stephen, Steph and Katie's home. We have enjoyed sharing our lives, praying, singing, studying God's word and growing as disciples under the leading of the Holy Spirit.

We were thrilled that both Rob and Jean McClaren came to join us on the first Monday after their arrival in the Vicarage and, whilst Rob has gone on to start up several other groups, Jean has become a very important part of our fellowship together.

I have personally found it a joy to share God's Word growing out of the themes that Rob has introduced through the Sunday Services. We have studied the book of Acts, Ruth, Philippians, the life and times of King David and so much more. Our meeting pattern was to join together on a Monday evening on the first and third Sunday of each month. This was all before we experienced 'lockdown'.

It would have been easy to say that due to the constraints of Covid-19, we would wait until better times to carry on. Thanks to a desire to maintain fellowship, the wonders of the internet and, in particular, Zoom, we have been able to join together for 40 minutes to an hour and even increased the frequency to every Monday. For those that live alone it has been a welcome opportunity to see each other and find encouragement in our shared walk with God.

We have grown from eight to twelve during the last year and Zoom has allowed several, who would find travel at night difficult, to join us.

I thank all who are part of this House Group and for Rob's prayerful support.

Hopefully, in the not-too-distant future, we will be able to enjoy Steph and Stephen's home-made cake once again.

**Tim Fryer**

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## **MOTHERS' UNION**

The year of 2020 presented a different kind of year due to the Covid pandemic lockdowns.

We began the year with 29 members, but at the beginning of the lockdown we lost our friend Phyllis Mason. Later we lost Margaret Mustill, and then our Committee member Jane Thomson moved away to be near her family.

As is customary we started the programme with our Epiphany parties in January, with our services led by Canon Rob.

February brought us Pat Riches with a talk about the Sycamore Tree Project, and PCSO Liz Chesters on the role of the PCSO in our village.

The Annual Diocesan Festival was held on February 29th in Chester Cathedral.

The March AGM was rescheduled to April due to holiday commitments.

We managed to get the International Guides for the March evening meeting, and that was the last time we all met together.

Due to limitations within the group, we have been unable to socialise even by means of Zoom meetings but have been in contact with members when issues have arisen, via the Prayer Circle and Christmas cards.

**Carole Elliott and Dorothy Wood – Branch Secretary and Treasurer**

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## **MUSIC**

The church choir had eleven regular members and rehearsed weekly until the pandemic restrictions prevented this in March 2020. Additional singers had joined for services needing a larger choir and the music group of five instrumentalists played at the 10am service on each third Sunday.

Musical activities in the rest of year and into 2021 have been severely limited by the continuing pandemic restrictions. We have been fortunate to have a few members of the church choir to sing at the restricted services in church and are grateful to those who have participated.

The St Luke's Community Choir has continued meeting weekly through Zoom with about 25 people.

The project to remove our failing church organ and replace it with a refurbished instrument is well underway and we expect the replacement organ to be installed and commissioned during July this year.

**Wendy Macdonald - Director of Music**

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## **NETWORKING**

In May 2019, our Prayer Networking Scheme achieved its tenth anniversary. We continue to embrace around 200 people connected to St. Luke's Church family. Success depends on the commitment of individual networkers. Each networker prays daily for a small group of people/families, supplementing the huge pastoral care provided during lengthy lockdowns by our vicar Canon Rob McLaren. GENESIS leaders complete the networking by praying for the children in their groups and for their families and they continue to support Lockdown Ministry on the Drive, enabling safe surprise visits to isolated people.

Our prayers encourage us to look out for those we network. Whilst restrictions continue, we can find our fellow worshippers in church, others in Zoom church and coffee, occasionally around the village, but most often at home near the phone.

Networkers continue to work a strong regular telephone ministry towards those living alone. Other friends shielding have generously and voluntarily offered telephone support to others which has sustained love in action one for another, an "every member ministry" that encourages us all.

Under the vicar's strong leadership during restricted times, we have been most grateful for the active support and involvement of all Churchwardens and Church Officials, PCC members and sidesmen, Tim and Val Fryer, Lee Hardy and Jean McLaren.

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

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## **SOCIAL COMMITTEE**

The Social Committee consists of five members who serve the membership of the whole congregation. Unfortunately, because of the continuing Covid-19 pandemic lockdowns during 2020, it has not been possible to hold any of our usual range of social activities in the parish. However, we look forward to organising future events once restrictions are lifted and it is safe to do so.

**Carole Elliott - on behalf of the Social Committee**

## **ECUMENICAL GROUPS**

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### **CHRISTIAN AID**

Activities in Holmes Chapel and district are organised by the Christian Aid Committee comprising members from all three village churches. The year began with a successful Quiz night in January which raised £743. Then, because of the COVID-19 pandemic restrictions introduced from April onwards, the Committee has been unable to carry out its usual planned range of activities, such as Lent lunches, house-to-house envelope collections volunteers by in CA Week, fund-raising coffee mornings etc. Instead, local CA supporters have been encouraged to donate online.

The Committee hopes to be able to restart local fund-raising activities again in the next months of 2021 as the pandemic restrictions are removed.

**Sue Wood, Margaret Thompson and Steph Haigh -St Luke's members**

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### **CHURCHES TOGETHER**

The group started 2020 activities for Church Unity Week, when a prayer meeting was held at the Methodist Church on the Tuesday. Yvonne Pearson (Methodists) preached at St. Margaret's, Tony Ford (RC) at St Luke's and Rob McLaren at the Methodists. After that, because of the COVID-19 restrictions, the only other activity we were able to undertake was the distribution of Christmas cards throughout the village and Cranage. Approximately 3,300 cards were delivered in conjunction with the November edition of the Village Magazine. However, it was still possible to erect the traditional Nativity Crib and display the Christmas banner on the North side of St Luke's during Advent until the Epiphany.

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

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### **FOCUS**

We thank God for His continued blessing on the fellowship group throughout the past forty years and look to Him for the future.

This past year has been unprecedented as the coronavirus pandemic and repeated lockdowns have prevented us from meeting in the Methodist Church Hall. We are very grateful to Brian Donlon, Tim Fryer and Will Litchfield for hosting presentations on Zoom and to David Carr for managing our finances under challenging conditions. For the first time in our history, we have not printed a programme as meetings have evolved from month to month.

We commenced on Saturday, 19<sup>th</sup> September 2020 with a socially distanced treasure hunt, devised by Rodney Smith, around the centre of the village, which Pat Macmaster won by a narrow margin. In October, Trish and Will Litchfield described their journey from Santiago to the Atacama Desert, Patagonia and Punta Arenas. We also flew with them to Easter Island and viewed the remarkable statues erected by Polynesian settlers in honour of their ancestors.

The following month, Tim Fryer updated us on the relationship that Terra Nova School had established with survivors of the 2004 Boxing Day tsunami in Sri Lanka. The school had supplied smart uniforms and essential equipment to St Joseph's School, Colombo since its opening in 2006. We were delighted to meet some of the teachers and pupils from St Joseph's via Zoom. In December, Carole and Martin Elliott shared their amazing experience of a cruise across the South Atlantic from Auckland to San Diego during March 2020. Although the itinerary promised calls at several exotic islands en route, the arrival of Covid-19 turned the Elliotts into refugees at sea, anxious about reaching the American coast or securing homebound flights.

Our plans for enjoying a New Year's meal at the George and Dragon were defeated by the January lockdown. Following a chance meeting with Rodney in Waitrose, Stephen and Judith Coyne rescued us with an apt presentation of an Arctic cruise encompassing Northern Norway, Svalbard, Iceland and southern Greenland, illustrated by their customary stunning photographs. Paul Redfern, Chair of Blood Bikes Manchester inspired us in February by describing how volunteer bikers had been delivering blood, platelets, medical samples and milk to hospitals and rescue helicopters since 2011. Following Mr Redfern's presentation, our group donated £185 to the charity.

In March, Julian and Wendy Bond led us on a small group journey from Chennai to Kochin in Southern India giving us an in-depth view of the temples and religions they experienced and the people they met along the way. Many people were still engaged in manual labour with salt, sand and rock extraction or with basket making or tailoring.

We look forward to Lee Hardy's presentation on Friday, 30<sup>th</sup> April on 'Grace that Leads' and our May and June meetings. Focus meets monthly on Fridays at 8.00pm between September and June inclusive. Barbara Smith (537301) or David Carr (532412) are happy to supply further details about our meetings. You may join any session – there is no formal membership.

**Barbara Smith – Group Secretary**

## CHURCH PUBLICATIONS

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### CHURCH MAGAZINE

As I write this report, the past 18 months or so have been an eventful time for us all to say the least. Shortly after the start of the first period of lockdown, our long-time printers, Tom and Jos at Cranmore Print in Macclesfield let me know that they planned to close the business and take a well-deserved retirement. They eventually managed to prise themselves away from Crompton Mill in the Autumn. That gave me plenty of time to search for a new printer for the magazine. I didn't have far to look since David Bennett at The Print Room agreed to take on the job.

Unfortunately, due to the pandemic restrictions, it was not possible to produce and distribute six editions of the magazine during 2020 (and a further two in 2021). Details of the revised subscription payments were given in the May 2021 magazine. Thank you to our advertisers for their understanding.

I would like to thank all our deliverers for their patience and understanding during the past year, despite the difficulties, without their efforts, you would not be receiving your monthly mag! A big thank you as well to Sue Wood who has efficiently sorted the boxes of magazines into the various routes!

My thanks also go to all those of you who contribute articles, news and announcements each month (obviously these have not been as frequent as previous years, but let's pray that it won't be long before we may be able to get together again for our various meetings in one form or another.

**Alan Rickards - Editor**

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### FACEBOOK PAGE - [www.facebook.com/holmeschapelchurch](http://www.facebook.com/holmeschapelchurch)

Our Facebook page, which includes summary details of services and other information at St Luke's, continues to be widely viewed. If you use Facebook, then please be sure to follow our page!

Over 300 people from the UK and other countries have "liked" the St Luke's Facebook Page. These come from all around the world.

**Alan Rickards - Facebook page moderator**

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### SUNDAY LINK

Until the restriction on holding public services in church came into force in March 2020, our printed Sunday Link was published weekly on behalf of the Church Council with details of Church notices, services and events, mainly for the coming week. Everyone attending church services on Sunday and Wednesday received a copy as did members of Genesis and copies were posted on notice boards in the church and Church Hall, and on the Churches Together notice board (near the Fire Station). The content was also published on the Church website.

During the restrictions on communal worship, the Sunday Link has not been published in printed form. Instead, most of the regular information has been communicated through the website and

Church Facebook page which are updated at least weekly and by periodic emails to the 154 addresses on the Church circulation list.

The general feedback is that the paper Sunday Link made a valuable contribution to keeping all the Church family fully informed. The format and means of distribution may have to change given the continuing restrictions to control the pandemic but the need to inform remains.

**I have edited the Link for many years now and need to find others to help me in the task and provide some backup. If you are interested, please call me on HC 535 497 or email: [judith.sh9@gmail.com](mailto:judith.sh9@gmail.com) .**

**Judith Hall - Editor**

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## **CHURCH WEBSITES**

**<https://www.stlukesholmedschapel.uk>      <https://www.stlukesappeal.uk>**

Our Church web presence began in September 2009, aiming to give up to date on-line information about St Luke's, its services and mission, supplementing paper-based information in our Magazine and Sunday Link.

In 2020, our main website assumed greater importance in communicating to Church members with internet access during the pandemic restrictions in force from April 2020 and continuing today. These made printing and distribution of our printed publications difficult or unsafe. As a result, both the website and Facebook page have needed more frequent updating. These have been supplemented with regular emails with some key information to the 154 households on our email circulation list.

In addition, whilst the printed Magazine was inaccessible, a web-based equivalent – our e-Magazine – was developed to provide continuity of content, although recognising that many of the subscribers to the printed Magazine have no internet access. The back numbers are still available at: <https://magazine.stlukesholmeschapel.uk/>

With the launch of the Organ & Lighting Appeal in October 2020, our new website at: <https://www.stlukesappeal.uk> has also been regularly updated to show progress towards the target. The website allows secure online donations to be made by PayPal or a debit/credit card through a secure link to **TotalGiving: <https://givi.ng/1132587>**.

**Steve Smith and Trevor Jenkins – Web Admin team**

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