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This Collection of Reports

This booklet represents the twelfth annual report of the Parish of Blackwell. The 2009-10 PCC Year was one in which the church community settled into the new church building and made great efforts to lay the foundations for the next chapter in its life and mission. This collection of reports shows how broad and full the life of All Saints and Salutation is: and how much people are doing to further God's Kingdom through its worship, ministry and activities. In this document we have an invaluable insight into what the Church in this parish stands for; it bears witness to the countless ways in which people are worshipping and serving God. This booklet is a great source of encouragement and inspiration. You will find that the reports that are included range from those of the PCC (the secretary's) and its committees, to those of groups and charities that we support as a parish. There are also those of organisations such as the West Darlington Group of Parishes, the Deanery Synod and the Millennium Centre Trust Company. I hope that all the reports included will be read by regular worshippers and by a good number of parishioners and friends as well. I am sorry if we have failed to receive a report from a particular group with which you are connected. I do hope that you will take the time to read all those that are here and to pray for those who are involved in all the different activities, groups and organisations. This year we are putting the full report onto the parish website in an attempt to be wiser stewards of the world's resources and reduce the number of copies that need to be printed. I am extremely grateful to those people who have taken time and care to write reports. I am especially grateful to Dee Wastnedge, the PCC Secretary, and those who have helped her to produce this Annual Report.

John Dobson
Vicar

The Vicar's Report **Thanks be to God!**

Gratitude should be at the heart of a faithful life. The author of the Letter to the Hebrews wrote, "Thanks be to God for his indescribable gift!" (9:15) He was talking about the surpassing grace of God that he has give to the Church through Christ. As a church we continue to have a sense of receiving that grace in our life together as well as in our individual discipleship. Thanks be to God! I also thank all those who have allowed God to work through them in the contributions that they have made to the life of this church and its mission. As I often say, the contribution of no one is taken for granted: everyone makes a real difference; everyone is of great value. In a year that followed the rebuilding of the church, it might have been possible for us as a church to think that we deserved a bit of a rest, that we had achieved enough recently and could sit back for a while and enjoy the blessings received. Thankfully, 2009-10 has seen people wanting to use God's blessings to develop mission and ministry further. Many people seem to have been even more enthused and willing to serve. And new people have been drawn nearer to the centre of the church's gathered activity as well as trying to live out their Christian discipleship in the world and community beyond All Saints'. "Thanks be to God for his indescribable gift!"

The Ministry Team

One of the wonderful advantages of being Vicar of Blackwell is that I have the privilege of leading a team of ministers who do much to provide ministry and lead worship both in this parish and, when called upon, in others across the deanery. The church benefits so much from having the Rev'd Brian Holmes as a member of this team: we were blessed when he and Beryl decided to make All Saints' their spiritual home on retiring from St. Matthew's. We also continue to benefit from the ministry of other retired clergy, not least the Rev'd Robin Fletcher who has been coping with ill health over the past year. I'm sure we would all want to wish Robin and Janet well as he continues with his treatment. Of course, we were sorry to lose the Rev'd Ann MacKeith from the team when she and John moved to Bournemouth to be nearer family. As I write below, we miss them. The team of Readers that we have here at All Saints' is a real strength and I delight in working with all of them. Debby Gill, Susan Leatherbarrow, Keith Whiston and Kevin Winkworth make a huge contribution to worship, preaching and teaching, but also take leading roles in vital areas of our ministry. They do this without drawing attention to themselves or looking for recognition. We do well to treasure them! The Darlington Deanery 2020 Vision makes it clear that our hope for the future is that as stipendiary clergy person has to take responsibility for more parishes, each

parish will be blessed with other voluntary ministers. My strong belief is that if ministry could be developed in each parish as it has been here, the church would be much stronger in the future than it has been in the past. There is, however, no room for complacency on our part. There is an urgent need within All Saints' and Salutation to be fostering and discerning vocations to lay and ordained ministries. I am pleased that a number of people are beginning to consider vocations in these areas and my prayer is that we will soon have more people in training. I believe that we could all do our bit to encourage others to ask if God might be calling them in this way.

The Wardens, Treasurers and Secretary

The team of wardens plays a vitally important part in supporting me and providing quiet, faithful leadership amongst the laity of the church. This is a high calling, and our four wardens, Eleanor Winkworth, Michael Shepherd, Jonathan Barker and Sue Elliott-Lyall have proved themselves more than able. Each warden chairs a major PCC committee and as a consequence of the work of these committees we are able to extend the church's ministry and influence more than would otherwise be the case. This year it is Eleanor Winkworth's turn to retire as a churchwarden. She is one of the generation of wardens that has served for five years rather than the usual four, allowing stability during the church's construction period. Eleanor has done a great job in steering the work of the Community Outreach Committee: one whose brief must always be central to our mission. The warm and generous hospitality received at Eleanor's home by members of her committee at their meetings bears witness to many of Eleanor's positive qualities. These have also been evident in the way in which she has organised Vicarage Parties for new parishioners, and often provided coffee after the 8.30am service. We will certainly miss her from the wardens' team, not least for her willingness to ask those questions that are not always the easiest to articulate. The two treasurers play an invaluable role in providing sound stewardship of our financial resources. Following a time of additional work resulting from the church building, last year's stewardship renewal did much to create yet more work – I am very pleased to say! We are grateful to Ian Groves, the PCC Treasurer, and Ken Park the PCC Planned Giving Treasurer for all that they have done. The last member of the Standing Committee whom I want to thank is Dee Wastnedge. She has continued to provide the sort of efficient support that is vital for the PCC to do its work. We are all grateful to her.

The Consecration of the new Parish Church of All Saints

It is not every year that a parish has the privilege of having a new church consecrated by its bishop. In 2008 the old parish church had been demolished and a new one built. The Church had started worshipping in it on 14 December and the consecration by the Bishop of Durham took place on 25 April 2009. This historic service was a glorious occasion. The church was filled with a congregation that included the Vice Lieutenant of County Durham; the Mayor of Darlington, the Lord Barnard, local councillors and head teachers, representatives of the Diocesan Advisory Committee and diocesan staff, the architect and builders, and representatives of others churches including the parish's German link church in Stellingen, Hamburg. The tea that followed the service was a catering triumph! The past twelve months have seen the congregation members, along with many other parishioners and visitors, enjoy the space and atmosphere of the new church. It also saw the PCC deal with many completion details in relation to the new building. Funds were raised to secure the payment of the retention to the builders: we are all grateful to those who made that possible. Design work continues for the baptistery window and for the permanent glazing above the main church door: we are determined to have these in place by the time of the next annual report! At the APCM in 2009 the PCC took the decision to extend the life of the Church Building Group, under the chairmanship of Dr. Colin Price who had retired as Churchwarden, to ensure that final details and snagging were taken care of by the most competent people. The Parish continues to be grateful to the extra-ordinary work done by Colin and the Group. The same can also be said in relation to Michael Shepherd and the Church Building Fundraising Group, not least Ken Park who single-handedly processed all the financial gifts. The new All Saints' Church is still seen as nothing less than a modern-day miracle. The flower festival that is being planned for the first weekend of May 2010 will give us an opportunity to continue our celebrations of this gift. "Thanks be to God for his indescribable gift!"

New Church: New Vision

A major achievement in the year was the envisioning and stewardship renewal programme, called New Church: New Vision. The Finance Committee had recommended to the PCC in 1998 that due to concern resulting from a seemingly ever-increasing Parish Share allocation (over £78,000 for 2009, but less than that for 2010) there was an urgent need for a stewardship programme. Despite the fact that the new church had needed unprecedented financial support on the part of parishioners, and was still being built at the time, the PCC took the very bold step of accepting the recommendation and establishing two groups to plan an envisioning and stewardship programme for early in 2009. The Vision Group was chaired by me, and the Administration Group by Michael Shepherd. There was universal acknowledgement that the timing was not the best, being so soon after the church's rebuilding and in the midst of one of the worst recessions in living memory. Yet again in this parish, God seemed to reward bold faith with greater-than-dreamed-of blessings. "Thanks be to God for his indescribable gift!" The Parish Vision for the previous six years had been to build up God's Kingdom through All Saints' and Salutation. Following the reflections on all the comments made at the 14th March Vision Day, this remains essentially the same, except that we are now thinking of the Kingdom growing, rather than being built up. 'Building' proved to be an appropriate metaphor for the last chapter in this church's story; we hope that choosing the word 'growing' will prove as prophetic! The old vision identified six focus areas for priority. None of these has been lost from the new vision, but we now have three priority ambitions. Each one is about growth and the PCC agreed detailed proposals for how this growth can be nurtured in each case.

The Parish Vision:

To Grow God's Kingdom through All Saints' and Salutation, Blackwell.

We believe God is calling us to do this by:

- 1. Growing the Church**
- 2. Growing as Disciples**
- 3. Growing in Service to the parish and beyond.**

Our aim is to nurture this growth in the following ways:

Growing the Church

We plan to care for members of the existing congregation and attract new people by developing our:

Communication within and beyond the congregations

Welcome and inclusive ethos

Fellowship opportunities for everyone

Outreach to the whole community

Growing as Disciples

We plan to offer appropriate help to those seeking to grow as disciples of Jesus Christ, fostering a clearer sense of personal vocation, by developing our:

Worship by making it as good as possible and meeting the needs of as many people as possible

Prayer, both private and corporate, by appropriate and imaginative support and encouragement

Home Groups for all who desire them

Learning by offering a variety of opportunities that respond to needs

Growing in Service to the parish and beyond

We plan, as the Parish Church, and working where possible in partnership with others, to serve the needs of this parish and the wider world and creation by developing our response to the:

Practical Needs of local people

Particular Needs of people aged 18-30

Pastoral Needs of all ages

Challenges of Injustice

Challenge to care for God's Creation

Much work has already begun on developing some of these areas of mission and ministry. The PCC established a Communications Task Group under the chairmanship of Ken Young. We are grateful to

Ken for his leadership in this: he has already given an interim report to the PCC, but will report more fully in the next PCC year. The PCC Day in March 2010 also picked up one of these themes and explored how to develop the welcoming ethos of All Saints'. This will probably provide an important part of the agenda for the Community Outreach Committee for the next PCC year and beyond.

Church Attendance

During the year the Church Electoral Roll was reported to have 302 members at the APCM, with several more joining through the rest of the year. The average Sunday attendance was 159 adults and 45 people aged 16 years and under. It was extremely encouraging to have several new families and individuals join us during the year. There are, of course, many Sundays, such as Mothering Sunday, Harvest and those on which family services are held, when the attendance figure is far higher than the average. The Patronal Festival, the first Sunday in November, saw a liturgical and musical feast with the Bishop of Jarrow presiding at the Patronal Eucharist; seeing the largest number of people receiving communion in a single service at All Saints' up to that point. The combined choirs of All Saints' and St. Chad's College Durham provided the musical lead for both this and choral evensong. The faith lunch that day saw a packed Millennium Hall with everyone enjoying a great parish party. Christmas saw over eight hundred people cross the threshold for the Christmas Eve and Christmas Day services. Easter Day, however, was a particular joy, with the number of communicants at the 10.30am service being the largest that we have ever had for a single service – thus breaking the record set by the Patronal Festival. The number of people in church was well over three hundred, testing the capacity of the new building to its limits! The Parish will always be stronger when those who regard themselves as regular worshippers attend frequently, either on a Sunday or by taking advantage of the growing number of midweek opportunities: it has been good to see the Wednesday morning Holy Communion, and its post-service coffee morning, become well established. This is a congregation that could grow further. The 7.00am Tuesday Morning Prayer remains a weekly fixture, though few people seem to realise it! The monthly Tuesday Afternoon Salutation Hall Communion which residents of The Gardens Care Home have attended for some time also saw significant growth due to the support of the Town Mission. The quarterly 4pm Sunday Praise and Party events for families have become an established feature of parish life and do much to secure the ongoing involvement of those who bring children for baptism: this is vital ministry that needs further development. The complexity and variety of worship provision does mean, of course, that more people are worshipping 'regularly' than the average Sunday attendance figures suggest. There is no doubt, it is when people make the effort to come together for worship and prayer, and to be fed by scripture and sacraments, that a church becomes more effective in its community and the lives of its members are transformed, becoming more Christ-like. The high number of people taking part in the Big Read home groups during Lent (over 70; 20 more than the previous year) and at other times of the year gives cause for hope.

John Dobson

Vicar

Youth and Children's Minister

In September 2008 the parish appointed a Youth and Children's minister. She ceased to be employed by the parish on 30 September 2009. The Youth and Children's Minister Management Group spent the autumn preparing to advertise the post again. Annual contributions of £10,000 from the Mission Fund, £5,000 from Hummersknott School and £5,000 from the PCC are expected for 2010 and 2011. It is hoped that someone will be appointed before the end of the summer 2010.

Deanery 2020 Vision and the West Darlington Group

The November 2009 meeting of the Deanery Synod agreed to the proposal for the West Darlington Group of Parishes (Coniscliffe, Holy Trinity, St. Cuthbert's, Hurworth, Dinsdale, Sockburn and Blackwell) to be allocated 2¾ stipends for 2016 onwards. The proposal is to have one post for Blackwell and Coniscliffe parishes, one for St. Cuthbert's and Holy Trinity, with an additional ¼ being allocated to the Archdeacon who will remain priest-in-charge of Holy Trinity, and half a stipend to

Hurworth, Dinsdale and Sockburn. The PCCs of the Group have been asked to consider whether they would like to begin a formal process that could result in all the parishes of the present informal grouping being legally constituted as a Group Ministry. As with the Group Ministry that already includes Blackwell, Holy Trinity and St. Cuthbert's, this extended arrangement would leave all the parishes as independent units, with their PCCs and separate finances, but would bind them together in mutual support and mission. So far, Blackwell, St. Cuthbert's, Coniscliffe, Holy Trinity and Hurworth have shown enthusiastic support for this. We are still waiting for Dinsdale and Sockburn to respond. The Groups priorities remain: Work with Young People; Growing the Congregations; Developing Shared Ministry. The need to foster vocations and develop Shared Ministry was also established as an urgent matter at the April 2010 meeting of the Group Council. It is important for All Saints' and Salutation to begin to work out the implications of being wholly responsible for providing the ministry for Coniscliffe parish when the 2020 Deanery Vision staffing proposals take full effect, possible by 2016. It would be wise to begin conversations with Coniscliffe to explore how mission and ministry within the two parishes can be more closely developed for the benefit of both.

Saying goodbye and welcome

This year we were very sorry to say goodbye to John and Ann MacKeith as they moved to Bournemouth to be near their family. They have both done much to further the work of the church in this part of Darlington since Ann took the post of Curate-in-Charge of the Church of the Salutation within the parish of Holy Trinity back in 1988. They have also done much to remind us of the gospel imperative of working for justice for all people, and the need to be sound stewards of God's gift of creation. We miss them. Sadly, a number of parishioners who were members or close friends of the worshipping community have died and, in faith, we have commended them to God's unfailing love: Wally Elliott, Doreen Waters, Inga Horn, Enid Wytcherley, May Fairbairn, Janet Murray, Bert Pitchford, Margaret Lowes, Ken Dobinson and Arthur Valks. Ken Dobinson was a faithful member of the 8.30am congregation for many years, serving as a sidesman and reader. Arthur Valks became a warden in 1992, just as I arrived at All Saints' and was a great support and friend. Wally, of course, we remember as a popular caretaker of the Millennium Centre. It has been very good to welcome some old friends back to church! The Walkers - Daren, Michaela, Becky, Ethan and Rachael - returned to the area from their sojourn in the south: we are delighted that they have returned to where they belong!

Looking forward in hope

Once again, God has richly blessed us. It is clear from what I have written above that the Parish Vision provides the PCC and whole church community with clear priorities for the developing of our mission and ministry. We look to the future in hope because God's goodness to us in the past has given us confidence in his willingness to use us for his mission to turn this world into his Kingdom. This calling to work with God through All Saints' and Salutation is a joy, a privilege and a huge responsibility for all of us. By keeping close to God in prayer and worship, and to each other in fellowship and mutual support, we will find the guidance and the strength that will be needed. I am convinced that there is cause for great hope as we look forward to the future. "Thanks be to God for his indescribable gift!"

John Dobson

Vicar

Secretaries Report

Once again, it has been a busy but enjoyable year. Thank you to everyone for submitting their reports in a timely fashion which has enabled me to put this report together. Once again, I apologise for the 'lack of use of paragraphs within the writer's reports'. This is down to reducing the size of the report for printing purposes and hopefully, this will not spoil your enjoyment in the reading of its contents. This year, you will be able to inform your friends and family that the report can be downloaded from the website using the following link <http://www.allsaintschurch-blackwell.org.uk/pewsheets.php>

Dee Wastnedge Secretary

Finance Committee

The reports from Ian Groves and Ken Park provide detailed reviews of the financial year of the Parish. Following recent changes to the Charities Act and with our Parish gross income exceeding £100,000 the PCC had to formally apply for registration with the Charity Commission during 2009. Whilst in practice this has resulted in few changes, all PCC members, whether co-opted, ex-officio or directly elected became “Charity Trustees”, and in future an Annual Information Return has to be submitted to the Charity Commission. In addition, our letterheads will be amended to show the registered Charity and also the associated number. My thanks go to Laura Wilkinson, who was responsible for collating all the trustee information and for completing the on-line registration.

Michael Shepherd

PCC Treasurers Report

2009 was our first full year in our new building. It was also a year of many records: a record Parish Share (paid in full), a record Garden Party and a record Christmas Fair. Such things can only happen because you are all involved. We knew 2009 would be a challenging year, having just taken possession of our new building at the end of 2008. However, your kindness and generosity enabled us to meet this target and also to leave a little available to pass on to three chosen Charities.

I am truly grateful

Ian Groves
Treasurer

Planned Giving

My thanks go to all those who have given so willingly to the church during the course of 2009. I had mentioned on previous occasions that, although we had a high number of contributors to planned giving through regular means, many parishioners had not reviewed the level of their giving for almost five years. However as you know 2009 was the year in which we held another Vision Day, the aims of which included raising awareness of the need for regular giving. This proved highly successful and we succeeded in getting 24 new givers and 35 of the existing givers increased the amount of their regular giving. Thus by the end of 2009 we had some 120 parishioners giving regularly through standing orders and a further 40 through the envelope scheme in addition to those who make their donations by other means. The net effect of the Vision Day was an increase in giving of almost £10,000 pa which when gift aid tax relief is added will amount to an extra £12,000 pa for the church. The costs of running a successful parish such as ours continue to increase and we must maintain our efforts in the future. I will be pleased to welcome new contributors to the planned giving scheme particularly if they help to tilt the age profile more in favour of the younger membership of the congregation.

Ken Park
Planned Giving Treasurer

Worship and Education

This year has been a busy one, as usual. By the time the APCM takes place, the Committee will have met five times, and some of the topics covered are as follows:

Worship Focus:

- Reviewing and planning services, including a variety of evening worship, such as Choral Evensong (usually on the 2nd Sunday of the month) with two per year taking place at St Edwin’s; Tranquillity and Healing, Taizé and Iona services, monthly Salutation eucharists (2nd Tuesday of the month at 2.00 p.m.) and weekly Wednesday morning eucharists at 10.00 a.m. in church. *Back to Church Sunday* was also to be promoted again
- *Praise and Party* events are taking place regularly, and attract good numbers of children and their families. A very enthusiastic team of helpers makes this possible
- The Patronal Festival of All Saints was a great success, with Bishop Mark preaching in the morning. The Choir from St Chad’s College, Durham came to help lead morning and evening worship, and held a Choir Masterclass in the afternoon, after enjoying a faith lunch.

- Annual R.C.M. Festival at Durham Cathedral – more people to be encouraged to go and support this event.
- The Dean’s Award for Music – this is open to all members of the Choir, not only the Juniors.
- The possibility of a new music group starting up was discussed, and has in fact now had two rehearsals. Lee and Dorothy Puchala are leading it.
- As part of the Parish Vision, a Worship Task Group has been set up, to look at various topics relating to worship, including the possibility of earlier Sunday evening services in the winter, new prayer groups and home groups. The first meeting was very fruitful.
- Flower Festival weekend. The Apollo Choir will be performing in church on Friday 30th April, and a *Songs of Praise* service will take place at 5.00 p.m. on Sunday 2nd May.

Education Focus:

- Study courses were run in the autumn, including an Emmaus course, *Digging Deeper*, a Bible study in St Mark’s Gospel, and a discussion of the book, *The Shack*. The Wednesday Afternoon Reading Group continues to flourish.
- Lent 2010. It was decided to take part in *The Big Read* – a study using Bishop Tom’s book, *Lent for Everyone – Luke*. The number of people participating in groups or using the book for private study during Lent has been exceptional.
- The Parish Vision – *Seeking to Grow the Kingdom through: Growing the Church; Growing as Disciples, Growing in Service to the Parish and Beyond*. This will be on-going. All people who volunteered their services to help with various groups connected with education courses, running the church library or giving teaching event support have been contacted.
- Youth Provision. Following the departure of our Youth Minister the post will be advertised again.
- Deanery Day and PCC Away Day – *Everybody Welcome*. These two day events took place and provided a lot of food for thought.
- Confirmation courses will be running as usual for both adults and young people wishing to be confirmed this year.

The first meeting of the newly-constituted Worship and Education Committee following the APCM will take place on 20th April 2010.

Debby Gill
Secretary

Community Outreach Committee

Parish Bash: as in previous years, “dos” were held in the vicarage for newer members of the congregation for fellowship with other new members & “regulars” to help them settle into the church & its life. Once again Youth Fellowship kindly held a Chile evening to raise awareness & funds for the USPG Chile project. The Passover meal was well attended and enjoyed by everyone. There was a surplus of £35.00 which will be sent to USPG. Morning coffee is served after the 08.30 on a Sunday on an irregular basis. A walking group has been started and is proving very popular. The Communications Task Group, under the able leadership of Ken Young is making great progress. Thank you to everyone one who has served on the committee for all your commitment and hard work and also to all our friends who answer our requests for help with the events. If anyone would like to join us or has any suggestions, please do not hesitate to get in touch.

Eleanor Winkworth

Parish Readers

Another busy and fulfilling year, which has seen the Readers involved in various aspects of parish work, including worship, education, outreach and pastoral care. Kevin continues to have responsibility for the Men’s Group, of which he is Secretary, and organises a very varied programme for the Group. He also continues as Co-ordinator, taking overall responsibility for Children’s Church, and when not “on duty”

there, has been out taking services and preaching at St Matthew's and other churches within the deanery. With his wife, Eleanor, he hosts an on-going home group which also works as a Lent group; and together, along with superb support from the Community Outreach Committee, Kevin and Eleanor ran another very successful Passover meal during Holy Week. As well as being a Reader, Susan wears her Pastoral Assistant's hat a great deal of the time, and continues as leader of the parish's Pastoral Visiting Scheme. She assists the Vicar with funeral services, and takes Holy Communion to the elderly, sick and housebound in their own or residential homes. She has also been leading one of the Lent groups, and works in the Children's Church. Keith's contribution to parish ministry continues to involve him in running Youth Fellowship on Sunday nights. As well as preaching at All Saints' and Salutation, he has enjoyed the challenge of taking family services at St Matthew's, and leading services elsewhere. He also took part in the excellent "Night at the Musicals"! Debby continues as Secretary to the Worship and Education Committee, from which she reports to the PCC. She too has been "out and about" in the deanery, leading services and preaching at Hurworth, St Matthew's and Low Dinsdale. She enjoys exploring the different liturgy and music for Iona, Taizé and Tranquillity and Healing services, and has led services of Holy Communion by Extension both at All Saints' and at Salutation Hall. She has been doing some work with Peter Sinclair and others from the diocese on the "After Sunday" project, and it is to be hoped that the fruits of these particular labours will be seen in the form of a book of prayers, later in the year. All of the Readers continue with preaching and teaching duties at home as well as outside the parish, and have enjoyed working on the recent Lent Reflections. They are always grateful for the support, prayers and encouragement of the Vicar, the members of the Ministry Team and the congregation. Clearly, the work of a Parish Reader is stimulating, challenging and rewarding, and the Readers would wish to encourage anyone who is exploring their vocation, and who may be considering the possibility of Reader ministry, to take the plunge.

Debby Gill

Kevin Winkworth

Susan Leatherbarrow

Keith Whiston

Lay Pastoral Care Scheme

The Lay Pastoral Care Scheme consists of two parts. The first is the pastoral visiting done by the Parish Visitors. About eighty households are visited regularly - at least three or four times per year - thanks to those who share in this important ministry. I am very grateful to: Maralynn Haidon, Pat Williams, Debby Gill, Enid Smith, John Jarvis and Gillian Mortimer. It is also important to acknowledge the important job that Susan Leatherbarrow does in co-ordinating this part of our ministry in her role as Lay Pastoral Assistant: she makes a huge contribution in all the pastoral work that she does. The second dimension of the lay pastoral care scheme is the system of local representatives. Throughout the parish we have representatives who deliver parish cards to neighbouring homes, keep an eye out for people who are new to the area, delivering a welcome pack to them, and generally act as a link with the church. We are grateful to all of them; their efforts help the church to extend its ministry through the parish. We had a very worthwhile review meeting in February 2010 and it was good to be reassured that people still regard this as a valuable part of this church's care for people in the parish. I am grateful to those people who have agreed to become representatives over the past year. There is still more to be done to get the system working as well as it could, but definite improvements have been made recently.

John Dobson

Readers and Sidesmen

A total of around 70 parishioners are regularly involved with the rota. Some just readers or sidesmen, some both. An informal system of substitution if dates are inconvenient works well, but sometimes Nicky Waller does not know of changes in time to amend the pew sheet. Volunteers to fill gaps where people have dropped out for one reason or another are always welcome, particularly for sidesmen at the 8.30 service. The next rota starts in May 2010, and is compiled about four weeks earlier. Any changes to Mike Frankton 350415 please.

Mike Frankton

Organists Report

Jeremy Maritz is the Musical Director and leads the choir and plays for most of the services. Emlyn Warder, John Thorley and Anne Dixon are also involved in a rota and Emlyn plays for the Play and Praise, Iona, Taize and Healing Services. Anne tends to play for Choral Evensong when Jeremy conducts. Jeremy's skills as an organ builder are invaluable and he has spent many hours working to adjust the new speakers in response to comments that the organ can be too loud for those sitting at the back. We hope this has now improved but do welcome your thoughts. I would like to thank everyone involved with the music in the Church and to John for his support.

Anne Dixon

Junior Choir

Junior Choir meets at 6.30pm to 7.30pm on Tuesdays but some come from 6pm to work on Voice for Life which is a scheme for young choristers arranged by the Royal School of Church Music. This provides them with a background in music theory, singing, the role of a choir and an introduction to church music. There are 4 levels and the chorister is entitled to wear a medal and ribbon indicating the level they have achieved. The first medal is with a light blue ribbon, then dark blue, red and yellow. This year Katherine Wingate and Katie Armstrong have achieved the yellow level with Jessica Dobson and Hannah Lofthouse-Hill not far behind. Richard Jones was presented with the Dean's Award at Durham Cathedral and wears his prestigious medal on a green ribbon. Caroline Howarth and Katherine Wingate are currently working on the Dean's Award and have an exam next month. If successful their award will be presented at the Royal School of Church Music Celebration Festival at Durham Cathedral in May. Benjamin Whiston has a dark blue ribbon and sang the solo for Once in Royal David's City very well at Christmas and Nicholas Whiston a light blue ribbon. Matthew Shepherd has joined the choir and is an enthusiastic member. His enjoyment of singing was obvious in the Night at the Musicals in which many of the junior choristers participated. Katie Armstrong has now left the choir and we are grateful to her for her commitment over several years. Emily Lofthouse-Hill is the youngest member and we hope she will return to the choir in the autumn. We had the annual barbecue at the Vicarage in July which was enjoyed by all and are grateful to John and Nicola for hosting it. We welcome any children from the age of 7 upwards who enjoy singing.

Anne Dixon

Orchestra

The orchestra continues to play for Parade Services about four times a year. This year we had a large string group which played before the Carol Service and a brass ensemble for Remembrance Day with Robert Smith playing the Last Post. We are interested in hearing from anyone in the congregation who would like to join us. If you are about Grade 3 standard or better we can arrange music to play before the service and beginners are welcome to join us in accompanying the hymns as soon as they feel confident. It would be lovely to have a small wind ensemble from time to time – so if you can play flute, clarinet or oboe you would be particularly welcome in the coming year.

Penny Jones

Verger's Report

As I write, we have just celebrated Easter, and we are reminded to celebrate our good fortune in having eight Vergers who work together to prepare our Church for Worship. This includes, as well as weekly services:- Baptisms, Weddings and Funerals. With the advent of our new Church, and its growth we would be at a loss without them. I am deeply grateful for their commitment and take this opportunity to thank Gillian, Mike, Alan, Phil, Andrew, Anne and David for their continued support for me and 'All Saints and Salutation'.

Enid Smith (Coordinator) Tel: 487021

Flowers

This is the first full year in which we have had the opportunity to decorate the new church and what a wonderful experience it has been. I am grateful to those who came along to help for the first time this year as well as for the assistance of those who have been regular helpers especially at the busy time of Easter and Christmas. Of course none of the work would be possible without the generosity of those people who have made donations to the Flower fund whether in memory of loved ones or simply for the pleasure of seeing the flowers and to them too I offer our grateful thanks.

Judith Park

Sunday Crèche

The Crèche fulfils a valuable role in allowing many young families the opportunity to worship regularly. We provide a Crèche in one of the Garden Rooms every Sunday morning throughout the year and during other family services such as the Good Friday family service. In accordance with the Parish Child Protection Policy we maintain a staffing ratio of one adult for every three children aged 0-2 years. On average we have 2 or 3 children each week, but often many more when the older children join us while Sunday School takes a break during the school holidays. We usually join the worship during Communion for a blessing. As the number of children in Crèche continues to remain small on most Sundays, and the number of volunteers has declined we now have reduced the commitment to two volunteers on the rota each week, requesting a parent to stay and help if we have more than six children. Each year we say farewell to a few members of the rota who move on to other roles in the Church, but for the second year running we have failed to welcome any new volunteers to our ranks, so that the number currently on the rota has fallen to 12. Additional support, in particular with the supervision of the older children who join us during the school holidays would be greatly appreciated. Please contact me if you would like to find out more.

Sandra Whiston

Crèche Co-ordinator

Children's Church

All Saints is very fortunate. We have a growing children's church with about 40 children attending each Sunday. This enables us to divide the children into groups by age (Pebbles, Rocks, Boulders (who get toast in the kitchen!) and Asteroids. On Sundays we begin with a short service in the hall for Pebbles and Rocks, led by Nicola Dobson. Then we break into our groups for Bible study and activities/games before joining the service during the Eucharist. Apart from our usual Sunday morning activities the Children's Church arranges special Christmas and Easter activities. The Children's Xmas party is also well supported. The Vicar ensures that whatever resources we need are made available. We are also blessed with having a superb band of dedicated teachers and helpers. Thanks to all of them for their work and also to the parents for their support and the provision of their offspring. A special thank you to Alison Hopkins for her work on the administration front. If you would like to help with the Children's Church or would like any further information please do not hesitate to have a word with the Vicar or me.

Kevin Winkworth

Sunday School Co-ordinator

All Saints' and Salutation Youth Fellowship

The Youth Fellowship has met regularly every Sunday evening during school term time throughout the year. On an average Sunday evening we have had between 20 and 25 young people participating in a variety of constructive activities, usually in the Millennium Centre, between 7:30 and 9 p.m. The programme this year has included a wide variety of games and food related activities as well as discussions, debates, and outings. Highlights this year included the annual Chile evening for USPG in which the YF prepared a spicy meal for more than 50 people accompanied by various games. This was greatly enjoyed both by the children and the hungry guests. We organised a very enjoyable progressive supper this year as well as participating in the Diocesan Go Large Event in Sunderland. The Sunday

evening meetings in the Millenium centre are open to all young people of secondary school age involved in the life of the Church and provide a good opportunity for them to meet together for friendship and support. There is a dedicated team of leaders Alan Day, Keith Whiston, Scott Denham, Kathryn Jones, Janet Hillyard, and Nicola Dobson who enjoy working together to make the meetings happen. We are always looking to involve as many young people in the group as possible and welcome any offers of help from other members of the congregation. Plans are well underway for an away weekend at Wydale Hall near Scarborough in October.

Keith Whiston

Confirmation Candidates

The 2009 Confirmation took place at St. Cuthbert's. I was very pleased and proud to present the following candidates: Lucy Alexander, Daniel Cotton, Alice Denham, Michael English, Edward Gill, Aidan Gray, Thomas Redpath, Emily Shaw, Matthew Shepherd, Ben Whiston, Megan Wicks, Neil Beck, Kiera MacKenzie-Wood and Laura Monkman.

John Dobson

Sheraton Park Prayer Report

Up to ten people continue to meet for Prayer on the first Tuesday morning of each month. Prayer groups in many parts of the world have to meet secretly on pain of death. We are so blessed to be able to meet at Pam and Peter's house in freedom and peace and I so appreciate the faithfulness of all our pray-ers who have continued to stand in prayer for our church fellowship – the worldwide Church – the sick – and worldly issues for the last seventeen years. If you cannot join us but have requests for prayer, we would love to hear from you; or leave a not in my pigeon hole.

Enid Smith

All Saints and Salutation Ladies Fellowship

Hello everyone, I hope you enjoy reading this short piece and maybe come along to one of the meetings. Meetings are usually held on the fourth Tuesday of the month in the Millennium Hall at 7.30pm. We meet to promote fellowship among the ladies of the church and the wider community. Since the last report was produced we have had some interesting people entertaining us. One of our ladies suggested we ask the vicar to speak. Well – he got us thinking about the Church, the Bible and Christianity. It was all presented in the form of a quiz. We had some good laughs. Following this we heard about the Hospice and the work going on there. Then we visited Russia and the young dancers from Stagecoach entertained us. We had our popular strawberries and cream evening and an outing. Returning after the summer break the Rev. Robert Cooper took us from Durham to Ely via Coventry. We then made greetings cards for Christmas and followed this with the preparation for Advent service. Our thanks go to John for arranging this, to the choir for their wonderful singing and to our members for the mince pies and clearing up at the end. We had two meals out – a lunch at the College and an evening meal at Coopers. Finally, we learnt about LINK. Hopefully this will get health and social care to work together. This coming season we will be learning about the countryside and wild life, and the work that the Great North Ambulance does; it was called out the last time they were invited. Do come along to one of our meetings. I am sure you will enjoy the company.

Jean Thirkettle

Hon Sec

Mens Group

The Men's group is a friendly, informal organization which comes together on a monthly basis; visits are arranged and events are also held at church. It really does not matter if you cannot attend regularly; there is no membership subscription or attendance requirement; we just hope you will come when you can, get to know a few more people and have fun! If you know someone who might enjoy one of our events please invite them along. During the course of the last year, we have visited the synagogue in Darlington, had a historical walk around the town centre (courtesy of Nick Auty and David Smith), had

our annual trip to the Quoits Club, been indoor bowling at Morrisons, visited the Stockton Planetarium, listened to a talk on Green issues from Rev Andrew Craig (joint event with our church Green group) and gone for a meal out at the Brownlow Arms at Caldwell . Our Eleventh Annual dinner was a great success, with an excellent speech from David Curran on his Automobile Association career. We have recently visited Catterick for a most inspiring talk from a Christian army officer. Thanks to all involved in organising or speaking at the above meetings. Please watch the pew sheet for details of forthcoming events. We have a trip planned to Teesport and hope to visit the Bedale railway in June. If you can attend please put your name on the sheet which is placed on the foyer table.

Kevin Winkworth
Secretary

Parish Lunch

The Parish lunch club continues to be very popular with numbers increasing this year. Sadly we are short of cooks so if anyone feels they could give us some help please ring Anne Wilson on Darlington 350423. We hold the Parish lunch on the third Thursday in the month at 12.45pm.

Anne Wilson

Circle Dancing

Another year of circle dancing has passed by with very few changes. We are still meeting on Monday evenings 7.30 to 9.30pm in Salutation Hall during school term. We now have 22 members after saying goodbye to Ann MacKeith in January. We are always pleased to welcome new ladies to join our group. Our dances are easy and performed to music from various countries. We have a break from 8.30 to 9pm for refreshments and a friendly chat. The cost is £2 per evening and after paying the rent, any remaining monies are donated to charity. We are very pleased to have made a donation of £200 to All Saints' and Salutation Church's flower festival from this year's surplus.

Mary Henry

Handbell Ringers

2009 was a remarkable year in so many ways. We had our first year without the expert guidance of Maurice Henry, we had an influx of new recruits, especially after the Parish Retreat at the beginning of October and we became quite mercenary. As you will know from the intercessions over the past 6 months, the name Thomas Atherton has been included in those suffering ill health. Actually, he is suffering from leukaemia. His mother is a member of staff in our Pre-School group. The charity which we chose to support researches into childhood leukaemia. Thanks to the hard work of Clare Curran, we managed to arrange evenings and days at the four largest supermarkets in town, spread over most of December. In total, I estimate that we rang for a whole 24 hours – although not all at once! The 19th December in particular demonstrated our mercenary streak and also the willingness of people to become involved raising money for such a worthwhile cause. Not only did we ring bells for 6 hours at Sainsbury's but, thanks to our Scouts, Pre School staff and congregation (and all rabbits friends and relations) we also packed bags – and on that single day raised in excess of £1500. We raised a total of £2768.86. This is actually the most we have ever raised, as far as the records I have show. It is thanks to the efforts of everyone in the Church: not only did many people help, shaking buckets and packing bags, but I know there were also very many of you emptied your pockets or purses when you were passing by. Thank you to our merry team of ringers, to our enormous team of helpers and to those who gave financially. It is a good cause and it is very near to home: Harvey Gaydon has also been mentioned in our intercessions over a longer period of time and he also suffers from this disease. I do not know who we will raise funds for this year, but I hope that we can count upon the same level of support which we received in 2009. It makes it all worthwhile.

Ian Groves

Badminton Group

The Badminton Group is made up of a few adults who play in the Millennium Centre most Friday evenings during term time from 8.00pm - 10.00pm. The advantage of having only one court is that there is time to catch your breath after a strenuous game, and to find out the week's news! New members are always welcome. Just give Alan a ring (358936) if you would like to join us.

Alan Waller

Building and Grounds Committee

The Buildings and Grounds Committee has met six times throughout the year. It has twelve active members, all of whom have played their part as stewards of the church's buildings and grounds. We have continued to carry out the work identified in previous inspections of both sites, at All Saints and at Salutation. Some minor repairs have already been carried out and further running repairs are in hand. High level cleaning has taken place in the foyer, corridor and hall, during which all light fittings were cleaned and replaced, as necessary, and all curtains in the hall were taken down, cleaned and then replaced. Many thanks to the people who volunteered their Friday evening and Saturday morning to achieve this goal. Redecoration of the Garden Rooms took place last summer and is due to be repeated in 2010. Quotations have been sought for replacement carpets in the lobby, foyer, corridor and stairs to the Parish office, however, this matter is awaiting implementation as it is still under discussion. Since the building of the new church, the 'snagging' list has been taken over by Colin Price, in order to maintain continuity of the process. He is also project managing the proposed store room extension, adjacent to the existing store room, which is reached via the Millennium Centre hall. Thanks to Colin for easing the load of the Committee members and thus giving them more time to deal with day to day repairs and maintenance of the church. The grounds have been maintained throughout the year by many volunteers – with my thanks to you all. We are grateful to the PCC for agreeing expenditure on hedge trimming at the rear of the church field, and the pruning/removal of several trees. Salutation is undergoing a thorough pruning of shrubs and trees, which will tidy the site immeasurably. My thanks to everyone who has supported the work of the committee over the last twelve months and has made my 'new job' a fruitful experience.

Susan Elliott-Lyall Chairman, Buildings and Grounds Committee.

Social Committee

Another year, another remarkable supply of food to sustain parishioners at our various events and, inevitably, another wet Garden Party. The Vicar, predictably, took the optimistic line, noting that the rain for this year's Garden Party was sporadic (but heavy), rather than the more usual constant (and heavy). Despite this, the event was well-supported and a financial success. Our social calendar began and ended with ever-popular coffee mornings. (This, of course, is a deliberate misnomer - those who come are primarily interested in the scones and cakes, as opposed to the coffee.) We followed the first of these with a quiz. Predictably, this was described by all but the winning team as too difficult, but was well-supported and a successful evening. After the delights of the Garden Party, our next events were other perennials - the ceilidh and the Christas Fayre. After the deprivations of 2008, when the new Church building remained under construction, we were spoiled by the amount of space that we had to use this year and were able to attract an even greater number of stalls to tempt our customers. And so to the New Year, and our penultimate event of the year, the Themed Evening. As many of you will recall, this year's theme was Mexican - quite appropriate, given that tickets went faster than that most famous son of South America, Speedy Gonzales... This brought out the creative elements of the Social Committee again - a menu that this pro-Warden could not even spell; bow ties in the colours of the Mexican flag (no, we didn't know what they were either, but Wikipedia has its uses); and this year's new venture, the themed cocktail - anyone else fancy a Tequila Sunrise after the APCM, now that I've mentioned it.....? My thanks, as ever, to the hard-working members of the committee, as well as to the many who support our events either by manning and supplying stalls or buying tickets and turning up. And this year, it really isn't going to rain for the Garden Party – honestly.

Jonathan Barker

Parent & Toddler Group

The Parent and Toddler Group meets every Friday morning (term-time) from 9.45 to 11.30 in the Garden Rooms. The group has a changeable membership of approximately 30 parents or grandparents with their babies or toddlers. We also have a healthy waiting list. Due to our members support via their half-termly fees we are able to cover our costs (hall fees, refreshments, replacement of toys) and also sponsor two children through the World Vision programme; a boy in Mozambique and a girl in Uganda. Over the past year we have continued to join with the Pre-School children for the monthly 'Play and Praise' service in Church. We have also held successful termly events within our group: we hold a Christmas party, an Easter egg hunt and in the summer term an annual Teddy bear's picnic. The group continues to support Church events. At Christmas the Bran Tub proved as popular as ever and we look forward to being involved in running the toy stall at the Summer Fayre in June. The Parent and Toddler Group is run by a voluntary committee and presently we have 7 members. A big thank you to all those who give of their time and offer support either through their committee membership or via their help at each session, it is greatly appreciated and worthy of recognition. We are also very grateful to Pat Williams and her team of volunteers who provide vital refreshments each week for both the children and the adults. It really helps to make our group special.

Emma de la Motte

Chair of the Parent and Toddler Group

Salutation Hall Coffee Afternoon

We continued our communion service in the Salutation Hall during 2009 and were regularly joined by residents from the Gardens Care Home. The afternoon tea which follows the service provides an opportunity for a friendly chat and discussion. Of course the event is only made possible by the efforts of those who provide help and assistance and may I take this opportunity to thank them and to say that any others wishing to join us would be most welcome.

Judith Park

Co-ordinator

Magazine Report

The Parish Magazine continues to be an important channel of communication within the Parish. I am pleased to report that we continued to produce a magazine for each month of the year, with the contents averaging over 36 pages per month. I am grateful to all our regular contributors, but would like to take this opportunity to assure anyone who would like to produce an article for the magazine that it will be extremely warmly welcomed! Anyone who has odd pieces of news or advertisements for events that they would like including in the magazine can either e-mail them to me on ellis.leatherbarrow@virgin.net (preferably), or leave them in my pigeon hole at the back of church. I would like to take this opportunity of thanking our extremely hard-working team of photocopiers/collators – expertly marshalled by Pat Williams - who work so hard to ensure that the magazine is produced and delivered on time every month, and am pleased to report that the profits from the magazine continue to make a useful contribution to the cost of leasing the photocopier in the Parish Office. Additional creative input is always useful, and I am aware that after 15 years in the job I may be becoming a little set in my ways. If anyone is interested in getting involved with the design and editing of the Magazine, do please have a word with me – all offers will be gratefully received!

Ellis Leatherbarrow

Editor

The Children's Society

Thank you to all our box holders, who have raised over £400 this year for this worthwhile cause. The Children's Society's campaign phrase is "Make Childhood Better", and has innovative national and local projects. For further information see the notice board in the church foyer, or the website at

www.childrensociety.org.uk . If anyone would like to start collecting for this charity, please do contact one of us for a box. We empty and submit the contents in February each year.

Katie Malcolm

Wendy Day, Honorary Local Secretaries

U.S.P.G.

Anglicans in World Mission

We have had two fund raising events in the past year, a coffee morning and the Chillie Evening organised by the Youth Fellowship for which we are most grateful, both events were very enjoyable. In June we had the pleasure of welcoming Andy Bowman and Felipe Saravia who were both involved with communities in the Andes mountains at Alto Bio Bio building their own houses and furniture workshops. Andy and Felipe gave a very interesting presentation of the work they were doing. Andy has since returned to London where he has an administrative position at head office before being sent on another project. Unfortunately after the earthquake in Chile the infrastructure was badly damaged and communications with Concepcion (from where Felipe operates) were extremely difficult. The people in Alto Bio Bio were cut off but fortunately damage to the houses was limited, but there is a lot to do. Thank you for giving to the disaster fund and U.S.P.G. is very grateful for your contributions and for your prayers. There will be another coffee morning in the summer to which you will be very welcome. Please watch the magazine for the date.

Enid Atkinson

U.S.P.G. Representative

Deanery Synod & Group Council Report

We met on four occasions during 2009 and have discussed Shared Ministry, The Recession and how the Church could react to it, a review of suggestions from each Group as to how the 2020 Vision can be implemented (this is the ongoing work of allocating reduced numbers of stipendiary clergy across the same number of Parishes) and, of course, the Parish Share. Taking the last of these first, the Deanery now have full responsibility for the allocation of the Deanery Share (set by the Diocese) across the Parishes. There has been an interim solution for a few years under which we moved slowly away from the old formula for allocation towards one which is based more closely upon the clergy costs for each Parish as well as their ability to pay. For 2010 we will have the first year when the new formula is fully utilised, having previously been more of a hybrid by which the aim was to avoid massive increases for some Parishes, but rather a more gradual change. 2010 will see a reduction in the mount allocated against Blackwell of approximately £9,000, which is most welcome. Looking at Shared Ministry, we were very well represented at this meeting not only by our Synod members but also by others from our Shared Ministry Development Group. The event was very well attended and the Parishes which have already been licensed as Shared Ministry Parishes were able to give advice and pass on their experiences to those just embarking on the adventure. This leads very well into the major discussion topic for the year of the 2020 Vision: Shared Ministry, not only within a Parish but also within Groups and the whole Deanery will become more and more important as the numbers of paid clergy reduce. As is reported elsewhere under the Group Council, each group within the deanery was asked to formulate a plan to function with a revised number of paid posts. Ultimately, our Group was able to formulate a simple plan which has received the unanimous agreement of the PCC's from all our Parishes. There is still a little work to be done by some other groups, but the plan is very much in progress. The discussion about the recession was an open meeting, to which representatives of other denominations and faith groups were also invited. The Speakers included Alasdair MacConachie, Ada Burns (Chef Executive of the Council), Steve Rose (at that time Chief Executive of the Darlington Partnership), Councillor Alan Coultas (Chair of the steering group overseeing the amalgamation of the four Credit Unions in Darlington to form the new Darlington Credit Union), Sue Degnan (from the Women's Refuge) and Karen Grundy (Executive Director of eVOLution). There was a good attendance, a variety of very positive messages from the speakers and a consensus that the most vital project which we should all look to support is the new Credit Union. Based upon recent statistics, 62.5% of the population of

Darlington are excluded from normal sources of credit and are, therefore, prey to the Loan Sharks and Doorstep Lenders which we hear and read about. In February 2010 a presentation was made to the Synod by the Credit Union and we, as a Parish, are looking at the best way in which we can become involved. An interesting year with very positive results coming from our meetings and deliberations. 2010 will be no less interesting!

Group Council

We met on three occasions during the 2009, plus an additional meeting, involving more members from each Parish, to look at the 2020 Vision proposals, prior to them being taken to the Deanery Synod. The 2020 Vision has been the main subject for the year and the Group has worked very positively towards its target: 2.75 stipendiary Clergy, being allocated 1.25 across Holy Trinity and Saint Cuthbert's, 1.00 across All Saints, High Coniscliffe and Piercebridge and 0.5 across Hurworth, Dinsdale, Girsby and Sockburn. The plan was taken to each PCC and agreed prior to its presentation to the Deanery Synod in November. In addition to this important piece of work, we have also followed the previously agreed Joint Mission Principles, namely Young People, Christian Living and Growth & Engaging People. Youth Events involving young people from across the group were arranged at the beginning of the year, but an event later in the year was out on hold after the resignation of Sian Hayward. Christian Living has been championed in two ways. The first is via a Burning Bush course (pioneered by All Saints) for the whole Group. The second is planned series of speakers, the first of whom was Stewart Windsor from Christian Solidarity Worldwide, who spoke in All Saints during September. The next target is Professor Keith Ward which has tentatively agreed to come to Darlington in the autumn of 2010. Growth & Engagement has been pursued through the regular Group Worship events. As the Deanery has arranged a "Ministry of Welcome" day in 2010, this will be used as the basis for next year. It has been accepted that the 2020 Vision work overtook all other areas, so we will need to refocus upon our Mission principles in 2010. A revised rotation of Chair and Secretary of the Group has also been agreed.

Ian Groves

Deanery Synod Representative

Green Action Group

The Green Action Group has met 5 times in the last year. It has organised or been involved with the following activities:

- Regular articles for the Church magazine
- Energy Saving Trust attended the Garden Party
- Raising awareness in the congregation for the 'Countdown to Copenhagen' in December 2009. Over 100 pledge cards were posted to the Prime Minister and other people pledged on line
- Joint meeting in February 2010 with the Men's Group with speaker Andrew Craig, the Principal Resources Manager at Tees Valley Joint Strategy Unit.
- Links with the Diocesan Environment Group.
- On April 11th launched Freecycle scheme for All Saints.

On-going review of:

- Recycled paper for use in the Church Office and at members' homes.
- Installation of some recycling bins at the Church
- Transition Communities

We are continuing to work towards becoming an Eco-Congregation.

We are starting to look at how we can play a part in the Climate Justice Fund, where money saved from reducing the carbon footprint of Church buildings is sent to Tearfund, who use it for disasters in Africa caused by climate change. Information on 'green' issues is displayed on the Green Action Group notice board in the foyer. We are still a new group, and need more members. If you would like to join us, or find out more, please contact or John or Liz Thorley on 243340 or Kathryn Jones. Next meeting, Wednesday May 5th.

John Thornley

The West Darlington Group of Parishes

Please see the section of the Vicar's report headed *Deanery 2020 Vision and the West Darlington Group*. In addition, it is worth noting here that the Group said goodbye to one of its incumbents over the past year. The Rev'd Michelle Ferguson left Hurworth, Dinsdale and Sockburn parishes in August 2010. At the end of this PCC year I relinquish the chairmanship of the Group Council and pass that on to one of the representatives of Holy Trinity. I am extremely grateful to Christine Port, a representative of St. Cuthbert's, who as a first-class secretary for the Group Council has supported me brilliantly. She now passes that responsibility to one of the representatives of Hurworth.

John Dobson

Vicar and Chair of the West Darlington Group Council

Shared Ministry

Shared Ministry is about being a parish in which everyone is encouraged to discover his or her personal vocation and to make a contribution to growing God's Kingdom. For some of us this will involve being heavily committed to supporting the work of the 'gathered' church. For others, one's personal vocation will for the most part involve being an effective Christian at work, in the home, at leisure or through charitable work. The Shared Ministry Development Group has begun to develop some of the parish vision proposals. It has reviewed all of the responses made in the stewardship renewal process and is aiming prayerfully to discern where needs and gifts can be matched. It is clear that as a church we need always to be looking for ways to help people grow in faith and, for some, to develop in ministry. I am grateful to all members of the Shared Ministry Development Group: Keith Whiston, Susan Leatherbarrow, Debbie Gill, Sarah Cliff, Susan Price, Ken Young, Eileen Auty and Ian Groves.

John Dobson

Chair of the Shared Ministry Development Group

Link with the Lutheran Church in Hamburg

This was strengthened further when Pastorin Gabriele Voigt and her husband Uwe joined us for the consecration of the Church, with Gabriele joining Colin Price in the cutting for the cake! In March 2010, a small group of us welcomed a delegation from the North Elbian Church; they called at Blackwell during a tour of the diocese. The Community Outreach Committee is exploring the possibility of a group of us paying a visit to Hamburg this summer.

John Dobson

29th Darlington Rainbows

This year we at 29th Darlington Rainbows we are celebrating 100 years of Girlguiding. We started our year of events in September 2009 with an enjoyable day at Sedgefield Race- Course where we enjoyed lots of outdoor and indoor activities with Rainbows, Brownies and Guides from all over the Durham South area. We celebrated Thinking Day this year at St Matthews and St Lukes. The girls really enjoyed a lively service with lots of fun singing. Our Rainbows have been regular attendees at Church Parade with a particularly pleasing turn out at the recent Mothering Sunday Parade. In our weekly meetings, as well as working towards our Rainbow Roundabout badges, we have been working towards our special 100 year badge. To date this has involved a special music night and a torch lit treasure hunt on the field. We have also enjoyed a visit from a District Nurse who let the girls bandage themselves and their leaders. Recently we had fun at the disco, supporting local guides fundraising for a trip to Canada. We are delighted that Sarah Jackson has come back from university to enthusiastically help us run our unit. We have also been generously helped by Grace McKay and Lucy Applegarth. We are looking forward to another successful year in this special year for Girlguiding.

Alison Hardy Assistant Unit Guider

12th All Saint & Salutation Brownies

I am delighted to report that we have had a busy year for the pack, which has involved several girls joining us as new Brownies and a number of older girls moving up to Guide status. Sophie McKay has taken time out with effect from September to go to University at Newcastle, she is missed by the Brownies but they are pleased she is keeping in touch when at home. Luckily we still have Alison and Charlotte and a new helper Samantha to help and guide them. The Brownies took part last summer in our version of the Olympic Games, after some weeks of getting fit we held our games in the grounds of Carmel School. The girls had a great night representing various countries and taking part in lots of games. At the end of the event we held a medal ceremony and the Brownies were presented with Gold Silver & Bronze. The Brownies went to the Civic Theatre to see the Pantomime in January as a joint event with the 11th All Saints Brownies and this was enjoyed by all and especially Brown Owl and Alison! The Pack also attended the Thinking Day Service at St Matthews this year. The girls have taken part in lots of badges and activities, such as Craft, World Traveller, Computer, Swimmer and lots of Dancer and Cooks. The Brownies have attended all the Church parades, had an interesting evening with our Vicar going round Church and a yummy night at Archers Ice-cream Parlour. We have been celebrating our 100 years of Guiding and will be holding an event during the summer. Overall, 2009 was an extremely enjoyable year for the pack, myself included. I would like to thank Alison, Sophie, Charlotte and Sam for all their hard work and contribution, which made possible many of the activities each week. I hope we can look forward to another successful and enjoyable year together.

Mrs Anita Wilson

Brown Owl

26th All Saints Cub Pack

The Pack has continued to thrive with membership numbering twenty-six Cubs in attendance and it has been excellent that a number of the older Cubs moved up to Scouts. Two Leaders, Joe and Nigel have unfortunately had to stand down as leaders due to work commitments and I would like to take this opportunity to thank them for their past help; and to Simon the Packs Deputy leader for his continued help and support. To compensate for the loss of the two Leaders four Explorer Scouts Joe, Harry, Sam and Kieran have been helping as Junior leaders doing Community work towards their Duke of Edinburgh Silver awards and their help has been greatly appreciated. The Pack attended a combined Scout and Cub weekend in October 2009 at Kirby Stephen staying at a Hostel. The weekend was well received by the Cubs although it rained! and hopefully will be repeated in 2010. During 2009 the Pack also went to two District Camps - one at Dilston, Northumbria and the other at Moorhouse, Durham. These camps were an ideal opportunity for the younger cubs to experience a District camp. The Pack has completed a large number of badges and obtained the Environmental Award Badge for completing a number of environmental tasks i.e. litter picking and a wild life survey of the Church grounds. Pack nights have included Bat watching (although we did not see any!!) and Pond Dipping at South Park Darlington to learning survival skills. Michael, a Cub Sixer has been awarded twenty four challenge badges for his hard work and we are working with him to get all thirty two badges - this will be a first for the Pack!.

Scott Denham

Cub Scout Leader

26th Darlington Scouts

2009 has been another busy year for the Scout Unit. The year has continued to focus on traditional Scouting skills, running with between 20 and 24 Scouts. Within the programme we have incorporated some more off-site activities including hikes, air rifle shooting and climbing. Summer Camp saw the unit head for the Scout Activity Centre at Lochgoilhead for a week's intensive water based activities. This resulted in, among other things, some scouts achieving their Level 2 sailing qualification. We also spent a weekend at Cragside National Trust site and helped staff there to clear Rhododendrons, an invasive plague in the area. This year has also seen 2 of our Scouts achieve their Gold Award, the highest award available while a Scout. My congratulations go to Kieran Malcolm and James Redpath.

The unit also won the District Air Rifle Shooting Competition in July, finishing well ahead of the rest of the competition. The unit would not have been as successful as it has been without the continued help of parent helper, Peter Redpath, Group Scout Leader, Susan Carter, and explorer, Katie Micklethwaite. This year Andy Winkworth has also been helping out, although he is now moving on as he pursues entry into the Royal Navy. My thanks once again to those people. Katie has now moved on to University but while helping the unit achieved both her Queen Scout Award (the highest award available in Scouting, and her Duke of Edinburgh Gold Award. My congratulations go to her on this fantastic achievement. It is a reflection of that success that we continue to have a waiting list to join and still can only accept scouts who have come through our Cub Pack. The group executive continues to work in the background and have supported me during the year, under the leadership of Irene Redpath. With Katie and Andy moving on we once again find ourselves short of leaders and helpers, without which activities, such as Summer Camp, will be adversely affected. If anyone can offer support both to the executive, or can bring skills and / or enthusiasm to Scout nights then please contact me directly. Another warranted leader would be extremely useful for the unit!

Yours in Scouting

Ian Malcolm

26th Darlington Scout Leader

35 Explorer Scouts

Another year flies past. The unit continues to thrive and has around 35 Explorer Scouts which is pretty much the maximum number of people for the Garden Rooms. We try to do as much outdoor activity as possible, even through the winter. This has included Orienteering, Climbing, Scouting Skills, Winter Hikes, White Water Rafting, Cycling, Backpacking Expeditions, Ghost Tour, Ten Pin Bowling, Navigation & First Aid training. The majority of unit members are also working towards their Scout and Duke of Edinburgh Awards and a number of these have been gained during the year. Four Explorer Scouts gained the Queen Scout Award (the highest award for young people in Scouting) and the Gold Duke of Edinburgh Award within the year; these were Daniel Hill, Katie Micklethwaite, Katie Sheen and Josh Roberts. As part of the award work a number of Explorer Scouts continue to help with Scout Sections, Brownies, Mentoring and Church Groups as well as charitable such as Oxfam. A member of the unit was lucky to receive one of the four free Outward Bound places available to Durham County Scouts on the Classic Outward Bound 3 week course in Summer 2009. The unit has also taken part in two county competitions Midnight Madness and the Geoffrey Gordon Cup and the teams represented the unit very well. The unit came second in the Darlington Cycle Challenge run by Darlington Borough Council in Summer 2009 - we're aiming for first place this year! The unit leadership team has increased during the last few months and we are very happy to have additional assistance from Dawn Fowle and Angeline Grieveson. We continue to have the much appreciated assistance of Lesley Hill as our treasurer.

Kev, Juliet, Sue, Dawn and Angeline

Millennium Hall

The Millennium Hall continues to be occupied during the mornings with our pre-school children, followed at 3.30pm by the older children in the Kids Fun Club. This replaces the After School Klub and is under new management. The uniformed organizations meet in the evenings along with the W.I., Yoga, Pilates, Ladies Fellowship and Badminton. Musical Minis for babies and toddlers is starting in late April. Weekends are the preferred days for parties. David is always on hand to help us and we are very grateful. Thank you David.

Mary McLuckie

Booking Secretary

Salutation Hall

This year we witnessed a drop in the hall usage. Only 15 party bookings were taken, usually this exceeds 20. Thursday evening's Pilates class ended in March because there were insufficient numbers to sustain it. Monday afternoon's Keep Fit class was discontinued after the summer for the same reason. Several groups cancelled classes during December due to poor weather conditions. The Pilates class (Tuesday evenings) was postponed for two months because the instructor had a major operation. I am pleased to report that she has made a good recovery and is now continuing with the group. On Monday through to Thursday evenings the Hall is well booked. Friday evenings and the weekend are available for bookings.

Alan Day

Bookings Secretary

All Saints' Millennium Centre Trustees

The Millennium Centre is run by an independent charitable company which is limited by guarantee. The land on which the Centre is built is leased to the company by the church, and to be a member of the company one has to be a member of the parish electoral roll. There are 12 Trustees: The Vicar, seven nominated by the P.C.C. one nominated by the Bishop of Durham, one nominated by the Mayor of Darlington, one nominated by the senior ward councillor, and one nominated by Evolution: the Council for Voluntary Services. Again, all of these have to be members of the parish electoral roll. We are grateful to Alison Barker, Mary McLuckie, Pam Davison, Alison Hardy, Bernard Marley, Alan Waller, Ian Malcolm, Mike Frankton, Colin Price, Andrew Watson and Pat Williams for serving as Trustees. We are particularly grateful for the work that Pam Davison does as Finance Director, that Alison Barker does as Company Secretary and that Mary McLuckie does as Booking Secretary. This year we say a special thank you to Alan Waller and Ian Malcolm as they retire by rotation. We look forward to working with their replacements: Tom Kent and Anne Dixon. The Millennium Centre continues to be very busy, being used by numerous groups. Some of these are parish organisations, some that the church sponsors and others that are community-based or private initiatives. In an average week, over one thousand people of different ages can be using our facilities. This is a wonderful situation in which to find ourselves but it does mean that the building is under constant pressure and often operates to, or beyond, its true potential. The Trustees are very pleased, then, that an additional storeroom is about to be built. This should be complete by the early summer. Also, thanks to a grant obtained by the PCC's Pre-School, a new children's play area will be developed on the land between the Centre and the Vicarage garden. This will require the building of a ramp to gain disabled access. The Trustees are still exploring the details of that proposal but it is expected that it too will be completed by the early summer of 2010. We are extremely grateful for the work done by the Buildings and Grounds Committee of the PCC in caring for the building. The 'spring clean' of the higher levels in February 2010 made a huge difference and we are grateful to the small number of willing volunteers who worked hard on that: well done! The Trustees are still exploring the possibility of renewing the carpets in the foyer and corridor. We are also grateful to the Darlington Blind Club for donating nine tables and a kitchen trolley: these will help enormously. The Trustees were saddened by the death of our former caretaker, Wally Elliott. Wally had always been popular with centre users. His funeral took place in church in April 2009. The Trustees realise that we are very fortunate to have David Curran as caretaker. David provides a first-class service and is always cheerful and willing to help. As I say every year, this does not mean that users can take him or the building for granted. Everyone needs to do his or her bit to maintain the centre to the high standard that we have all come to enjoy. So, we look to the future with confidence and hope!

John Dobson

Chairman of All Saints' Millennium Trust (Darlington) Ltd.

Parish Office

The Parish Office is staffed every weekday morning from 9.30am until 12 noon (by voluntary helpers on Tuesdays) and is the focus of parish administration. There is no doubt that it could do with twice the space and probably twice the staff! As we have said before, it seems to get busier every year. The office is, of course, an important way in which this parish supports the mission of the Church in both the wider Group and the Deanery. It serves as the parish office for Coniscliffe as well and we receive a regular payment from that parish to cover costs. While the Vicar is Area Dean, the Secretary is paid by the Diocese to do additional hours relating to Deanery business. The PCC also receives an annual payment to cover costs. So, in supporting the wider Church, there are definite benefits of synergy that make the office a stronger focus for the parish. We are pleased to report that the staff, both paid and voluntary, remain cheerful in the face of a challenging work-load! This year's Christmas lunch was held at the Blackwell Grange Hotel with seventeen of us enjoying a great festive experience! Everyone was very grateful for the gift of a box of chocolates, a small gesture but one that expressed a huge amount of well-deserved gratitude.

John Dobson**Nicky Waller**