

Introduction

Dear St John's family members,

Welcome to our annual reports! Except, or course, these are not really annual reports. Living in a new era, we find everything has changed. This document is no exception. The lockdown brought a sudden ending to normal life just when we were about to pull this document together for the annual meeting. The reports contained here come to you, therefore, with a six-month lag.

I had intended that we would update each report, but in the end I felt it better to leave them substantially as they came to me at the end of March. In addition, not every report had arrived when things were brought to a sudden halt and it seemed artificial to ask people to fill out these gaps with new out-of-date reports.

So to take proper notice of this gap in the reports I decided to write here my own reflections on St John's and the coronavirus.

God

God has not changed. We have to say, too, that Covid-19 has not even cramped his style.

The problem is not God. He—Father, Son and Holy Spirit—still shines in his glorious perfections. He is still perfectly loving. He is still perfectly just, and holy, and good, and infinite, and self-existent, and sovereign, and eternal. And so on.

The problem lies in our knowledge. As creatures, there is much we do not know and are not able to know. As *sinful* creatures, we cannot properly interpret even what we do know.

Why has this virus had such an apparent freedom to run amok across the globe? We do not know. Even from a scientific and biological and sociological perspective, we do not know.

From a spiritual perspective, we are no wiser either. God has not told us. And in the Bible he has not given us enough clues to answer that question with any confidence.

But God knows perfectly. Not only that; God the Son has delivered salvation for every human being who will turn to him. 'For there is one God and one mediator between God and mankind, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself as a ransom for all people' (1 Timothy 2:5-6).

The one God has brought global salvation through one man for a global humanity under a global crisis. Paul's burden in 1 Timothy 2 is that people hear of this offer of salvation, and come and receive it.

The gospel has not changed. What has changed is our experience and expectation of life. This has been thrown upside down, with no end in sight.

But the gospel fits this world just as well as it fitted the last world.

St John's

What, then, of our life as a church and as members of it? Well, the answer is simple. The gospel we proclaim we need to proclaim still. And the life we live in union with Christ we must live still.

The other day in church Si used what I thought was a brilliant illustration. Picture yourself going to the doctor with a painful ingrowing toenail. The doctor gives you a fairly thorough examination. In the end he comes to you looking grave. He says, yes, your toenail will have to come off; your toe will never be the same again, and the pain will persist for quite a while.

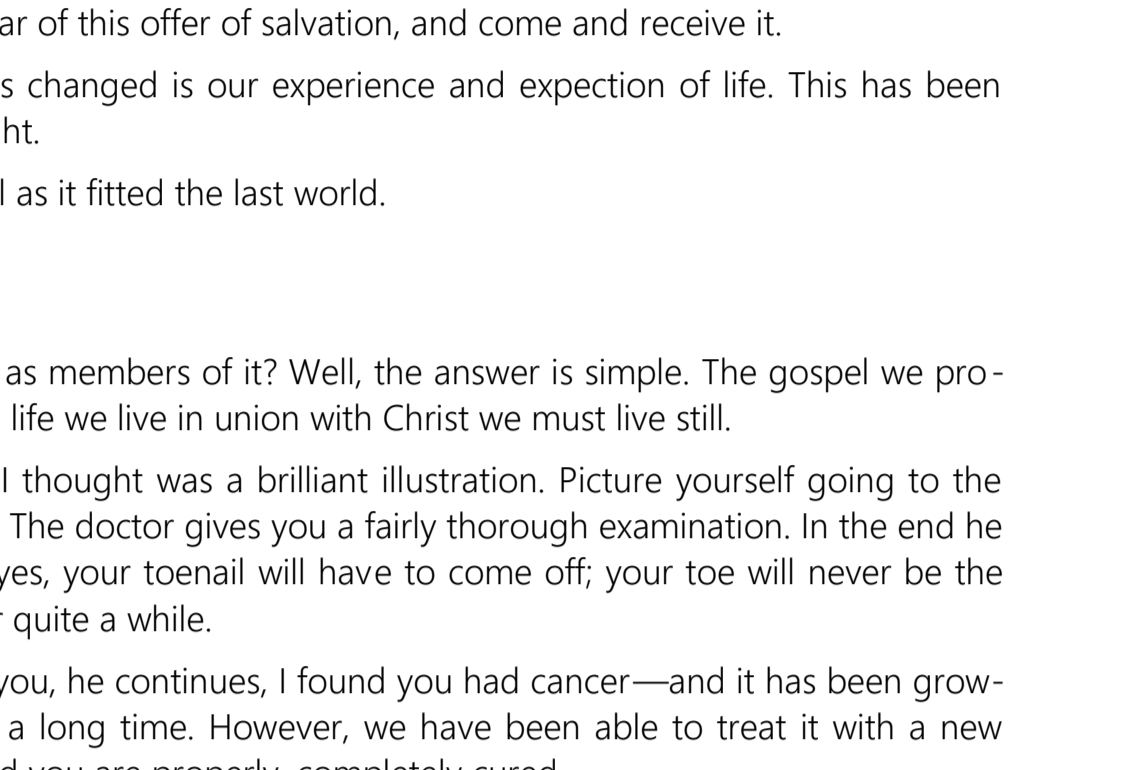
But he has not finished. As I examined you, he continues, I found you had cancer—and it has been growing in different parts of your body for a long time. However, we have been able to treat it with a new drug which means it is entirely gone and you are properly, completely cured.

What are your feelings as you walk out of the surgery? Are you concerned now about your toe?

For toe, read Covid-19; for cancer, read sin and God's judgment, and you'll get the picture. We must urge people to come to the doctor for a diagnosis—for a thorough diagnosis, and to receive the treatment he prescribes.

Our vision as a church, therefore, does not change, even though the circumstances in which we live and minister have changed. Let me encourage you again to look through our [vision document](#). We are trying to work out how to put these same things into practice in our new different world. Pray with us and work with us to this end!

Fergus Pearson



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REACH OUT

The first of the three objectives in our vision:

We want to create opportunities to invite everyone to turn to Christ

and put their trust in him for salvation.

We want to encourage each other, as St John's members, to live evangelistically in all our networks.

The reports in this section have an ultimate focus on unbelievers hearing the gospel and being called to repent and believe.

Week-by-Week Ministry

CAP Whitehaven

Since lockdown Jonathan Berry, the CAP Whitehaven centre manager, has been unable to visit any clients in person and so has been working with a reduced number of clients through telephone appointments.

We hope to take on another debt coach this year to enable us to share the visits and the client workload. Having an extra debt coach will not only cover illnesses, etc, but will give us more security as a centre. It will allow me to keep better contacts within the community and provide a more supporting role for our many teams.

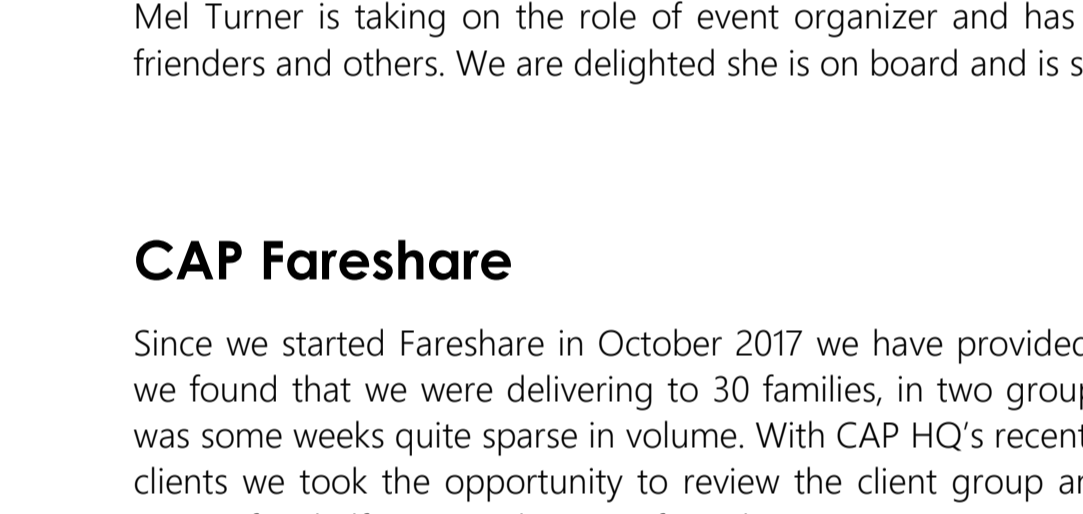
Two clients who have been on our books for a year or two have become debt-free this year. [and more subsequently]

Julian Berkerley is masterminding funding for CAP Whitehaven. The Coalfields Regeneration Trust did not approve our initial grant request but offered ongoing advice in making applications. [Since then it has granted a substantial amount to us after a renewed application]

For a few months CAP HQ reduced the client load substantially as they refocused to concentrate on essential debt work for their church debt centres. One consequence of this rethink is that there will be no more evangelistic Discovery Breaks run by head office.

In the light of this we need to look at events within our churches where we can support clients to belong to our communities, to gain confidence with people and to hear the message of the Lord.

Because a number of people live outside Whitehaven it is difficult for them to travel, especially on Sundays, to our services and events. We need to create more chances for them by reaching out, with the eventual aim of running bible studies and church courses and events.



In order to improve the chances of working with clients who will be serious about wanting to get out of debt Jonathan has held several talks with Whitehaven Council, health and well-being coaches, Citizens Advice Bureau, Cleator Moor Council, CAAS, Home group, Job Centre Plus and other agencies.

Eden Restored, a band made up mostly of St John's members, has managed to generate sales of £700 so far towards support for clients and client events.

Mel Turner is taking on the role of event organizer and has set out plans across 2020 for clients, be-friends and others. We are delighted she is on board and is so focused and dedicated.

Jonathan Berry

CAP Fareshare

Since we started Fareshare in October 2017 we have provided food to 46 households. By Autumn 2019 we found that we were delivering to 30 families, in two groups, on a fortnightly basis. The food supply was some weeks quite sparse in volume. With CAP HQ's recent re-focus and the consequent reduction of clients we took the opportunity to review the client group and their current situation, giving notice to some after half-term and some after Christmas, etc. Some others took themselves off as their circumstances improved.

We now only have ten homes on the books and therefore have been able to give food to them all, weekly, until the new CAP clients start to come through.

The food pantry anticipated for Hensingham has not yet started due to a general shortage of surplus food coming to recycling in Preston, but we are hopeful to start in a small way soon.

Mildred Linstead

Cleator Moor Church Plant

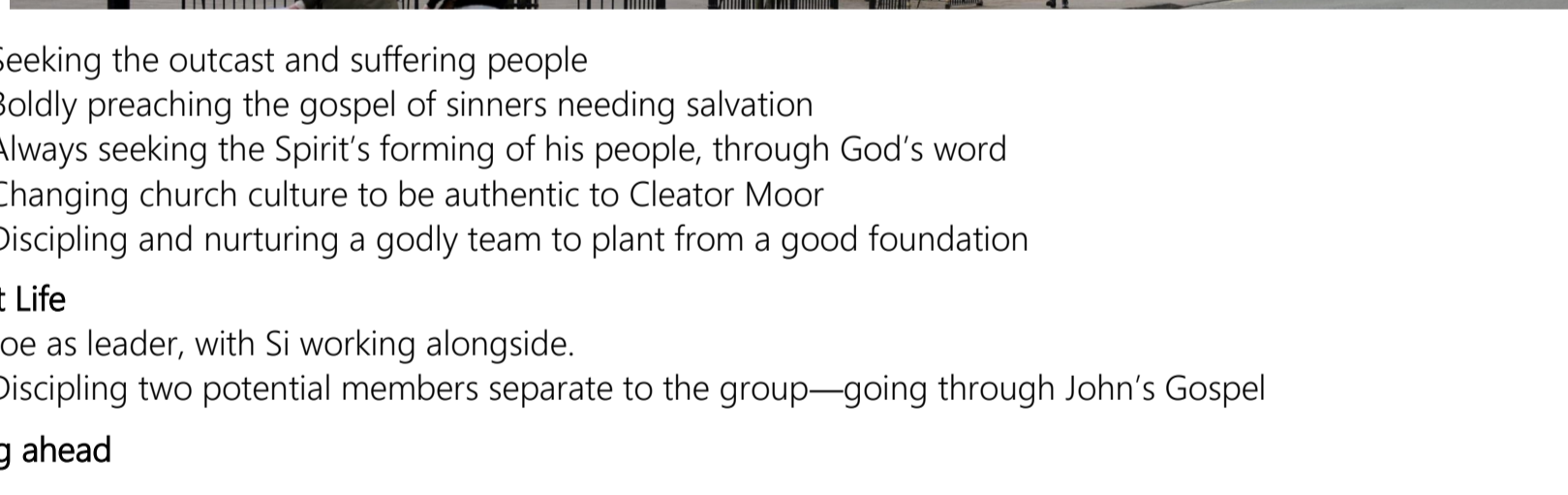
We are working towards establishing a church plant in Cleator Moor.

Mission Statement

To plant a people-centred church that preaches salvation through Jesus to the people of Cleator Moor.

Values on which we're building

- Jesus being the unifying element of church life
- Holding to biblical truth
- Reaching unchurched people
- Being part of the community
- Loving one another as Jesus loves us
- Living sacrificial lives for Jesus, to reach the lost
- Showing how religion can be replaced by relationship with Jesus



- Seeking the outcast and suffering people
- Boldly preaching the Gospel of sinners needing salvation
- Always seeking the Spirit's forming of his people, through God's word
- Changing church culture to be authentic to Cleator Moor
- Discipling and nurturing a godly team to plant from a good foundation

Current Life

- Joe as leader, with Si working alongside.
- Discipling two potential members separate to the group—going through John's Gospel

Looking ahead

- Plan to do Christianity Explored or Essentials-type course in Cleator Moor—early 2020
- Thinking about potential locations: school, industrial estate—but not church building
- Meet with Nicki Pennington and Becky Gibbs (Cleator Moor Anglican clergy) to discuss working in the same town
- Aim to launch perhaps in September 2021

Speak to Joe for more information.

Joe Pearson

Baptisms

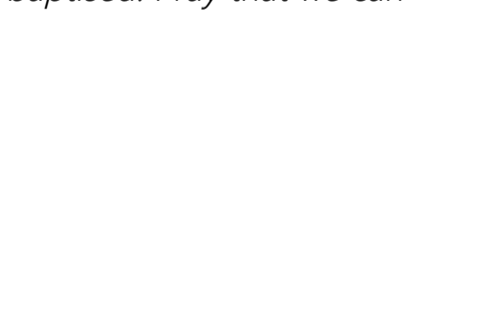
I'm repeating here what I say each year! I continue to do most of the infant baptisms, visiting each family twice and asking them to read Mark's Gospel in between my visits.

Baptisms are my primary opportunity for evangelism and I take them very seriously. What could be better than being invited into someone's home, at a special time in their lives, to speak about Christ and to encourage them to turn to him in repentance and faith?

I am conscious that more could be done to encourage these baptism families to get to know Christians at St John's, but I'm not sure how this could happen. Please pray for some light on this, as well as for the families themselves.

Fergus Pearson

[At the moment there are at least three adults/teenagers who want to be baptised. Pray that we can manage to do this soon even with the current restrictions in place]



Children and Young People Midweek

Tiny Tots

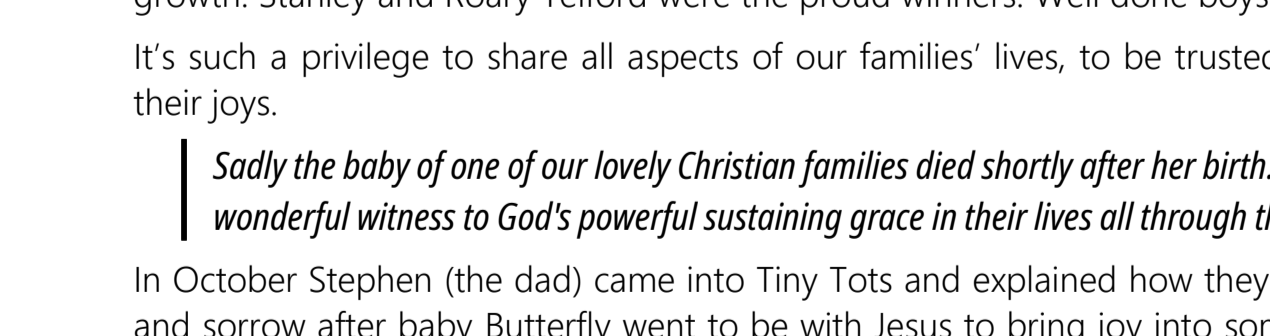
Tuesdays and Wednesdays in the mornings

Until the outbreak of Coronavirus intensified and our group closed, new people were applying to join nearly every week and our faithful families were coming week by week. We would appreciate your prayers for the leaders team comprising Linda Ashworth, Susan Baxter, Sue Pearson, Ann Walkingshaw and Eileen Henry. We are very thankful to those who have helped us on special occasions over the year and also those who help us week by week setting up, clearing away and serving refreshments, and especially those who undergird us to the group. We thank God for Ben Naylor the Ministry Apprentice who has been a very valuable asset to the group and who is very much loved by the children.

It is the team's aim and vision to introduce Tiny Tots families to the Christian faith and to help them gain more knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

In May 2019 our Sponsored Toddle and Fun day was a huge success and we were delighted to send a cheque for £1800 to Crawford House—the Sick Children's Trust, a charity dear to our hearts. Thank you for all your help.

At the end of each term Tiny Tots has a Praise & Party Time. In July we toddled into church to sing songs and make a joyful noise with our 'orchestra'. We felt sad when we gave out medals to our leavers, but very enthusiastic when we acted out a bible story with Simon, Isabel & Charlie Walker.



Lots of families came along to our summer picnic and fun session at Billy Bear's Fun House, and we appreciated the opportunity to just relax and chat.

Since September 'Thankfulness' has been the theme for our sessions: thanking God for creation, food, water, those who help us, farmers, nurses, friends, Jesus.

At Harvest time we had fun with a 'growing peas competition' thanking God for farmers and the Roar of Growth. Stanley and Roary Telford are the proud winners. Well done boys.

It's such a privilege to share all aspects of our families' lives, to be trusted with their sorrows as well as their joys.

Sadly the baby of one of our lovely Christian families died shortly after her birth. The whole family were such a wonderful witness to the God's powerful sustaining grace and their lives all through that traumatic time.

In October Stephen (the dad) came into Tiny Tots and explained how they were moved to use their pain and sorrow after baby Butterfly went to be with Jesus to bring joy into some children's lives in Botswana by having an adventure playground erected with bible verses on the apparatus. It was a time of learning for us all.

As we thanked God for Jesus in our Tots Christmas Service lots of our parents and children took part using glove puppets, or waving angels they had just made, as Ben told them the nativity story. We had a party in the hall afterwards and from the feed-back it was evident everyone had enjoyed and valued the whole morning. On Christmas Eve it was very encouraging to see so many of our families in the Crib Service, and again we had an opportunity to chat with them over refreshments.

On Shrove Tuesday as we munched our pancakes we chatted about giving more time to reading the Bible and it was heart-warming when a mum asked for a children's bible to read to her little ones.

Again this year each child has received a Bible story-book on their birthday, and books were given as gifts at Christmas. Because it's so important to help promote more Christian literature into our Tiny Tots homes Caroline from the Cornerstone Bookshop was invited to bring a Christmas stall and an Easter stall into our sessions. Please pray that God's word will sink deep into the hearts of both readers and listeners, and as they hear of God's love for them they will open their hearts and lives to him.

So faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God. Romans 10:17

Eileen Henry

[Eileen has just recently stepped down from her work in leading Tiny Tots (and Sunday crèche) after many many years. Pray for Eileen as she continues to serve the Lord in other ways, and pray that the seed sown through the years by her in Tiny Tots will bear much fruit.]

Explorers

7-11 year olds meeting on Tuesday evenings

It is a joy to serve at Explorers and see God bring the children along. Our team work really well together, using different gifts. Jon, for example, has been able to focus on running the games, which the children love.

The teaching is a resource from 1993 by New Tribes Mission. You might see that and think it sounds dated! But in reality some of these older resources are excellent, getting the young people to engage with spiritual truths. Because it is a systematic Bible overview it ensures we look at the full counsel of God and not just at popular stories.

An evening looks something like this:

- 6.15pm Greeting and catching up
- 6.20pm Teaching from the front with interaction and often acting, which goes down well!
- 6.40pm Table-time going through a worksheet
- 6.55pm Snack
- 7.00pm Game

We have 16–20 children come each evening and there is now a very good rapport among the children and with the leaders. One boy told us he became a Christian recently, which was partly due to input from Moresby church as well and his Grandma's encouragement. We feel that there is a cohort of children that it will be exciting to see develop as they, hopefully, move through the groups. It feels like some of the



friendships are now in the group. This is key for them in feeling they can keep going as Christians.

It is encouraging that St John's is playing its part in the local area, because at least a quarter of the children attend other churches on a Sunday. One parent remarked recently that Explorers was a blessing and it was a relief that she knew she could always say yes to her child because it is free. At least one child has no other connection with any church.

All of the children are excited about Football School this year, and there is a real buzz now that it is getting near. Football School definitely helps bring new kids to the group and makes relationships stronger. [As you'll know, Football School had to be cancelled]

As for needs, we do have a need for another female leader, but we trust God for this at the right time. We are so grateful to God for all that he is doing.

Si Walker, Dawyn Sawyer, Paul Cartmell, Stan Marsland & Jon Lucas

Pathfinders

11–15 year olds meeting on Tuesdays

This year we had 8–10 regularly coming along to Pathfinders each week.

The majority of the young people come consistently each week which is great because it means that we can build relationships with them.

We have had a couple of young people from Grace Church begin to come along. They heard about Pathfinders through Chelsea who was their leader at Camp this year.

In the talks this year we have looked at King David ups and downs and how God used him. In the summer we looked at the 'I ams' of Jesus in the gospels. At the start of the school year we looked at prayer—at why we pray and who we pray to. Then leading up to Christmas we looked at the different subjects Jesus brought up on the Sermon on the Mount. After Christmas we dived into Romans, looking at the challenging Gospel truths there. Currently on the lead up to Easter we are following the same subject as the home groups and looking at the Easter story through the Psalms.

In the summer, many of the Pathfinders attended CCYC again. It was great once again to see one of our Pathfinders giving their life to Christ. CCYC is a great tool to have for Pathfinders. After a whole year of teaching the young people at Pathfinders it is great they are able to have this week of teaching during the summer.

Again, some of the Pathfinders joined up with the CYFA group to go on a Retreat at Rydal Hall Youth Centre. We had a weekend full of wide games, walking around the lake (some ending up in the lake!) and bonfire.

In the talks we looked at Matthew 7, at the two ways that we can live our lives—one leading to destruction and one leading to eternal life.

It was great to be able to get into small groups and look at the subjects in the talk, and have more in-depth conversations than we would normally be able to on a Tuesday evening

This year, for leaders, has been a mixture of hellos and goodbyes again. We said goodbye to Jenny Kurzyk in the summer. It was great to have her working with us last year, both with the talks and games and with getting alongside the young people. We were delighted to welcome Caitlin Holburt and Ben Naylor to the team and they have both fitted in really well with the young people and get on well with them. It is also great to have Rachel Horder helping us the weeks in which Caitlin is on shifts.

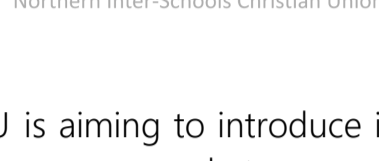
Thanks for all your prayers and support.

Dave Baxter, Jonathan Blyth, Caitlin Holburt & Ben Naylor

Work in Schools

Partnership in the Gospel: Links between the local schools and the church

St John's Church has continued its support for NISCU (Northern-Inter Schools Christian Union) who have been working in the local schools for over 30 years. Ben Naylor has been involved specifically in the work in Lunchtime Clubs in also provide support the puppet teams) as that NISCU can work is one of their specific their local area.



People from St John's in these schools, going in as volunteers (e.g. with well as being part of the staff. It is encouraging alongside people from the local churches (which aims), providing support to the young people in their local area.

One of the projects NISCU is aiming to introduce in the schools is providing a 'Listening Service' where people are available for the young people to go and talk to.

We would ask you to continue to pray for the work and links with the schools, and how we, as a church or as individuals, can be involved and partnership with this. There are a number of different ways this can be done, for example, as governors, teachers, teaching assistants, praying for a local school, getting involved with the local NISCU support group.

Neil Baxter (NISCU Support Team)

Overseas Mission

Ann Christian and Serving in Mission

2019 continued the theme of heightened security across our country and loss of team members for a variety of reasons. We praise God that, so far, no one has been told to leave by the authorities.

We rejoice in the appointment of a new country director who began the role in August. He has ten years of experience as a university lecturer and speaks the local language very well.

My role has continued to meet the needs of my SIM team in Asia by supporting the leadership in Personnel, Member Care and Mobilisation. I find that I am kept very busy in this role—and that it is one which uses many of my skills and much of my experience. During 2019 I made three long-haul trips for work—to Thailand (twice) and to Kenya for the bi-annual personnel training workshop. My work does involve much travel and many hours in airports or aeroplanes!

I was blessed to be able to spend a few days in May with the St John's family, speaking at a Thursday night prayer meeting as well as at two Sunday services—and an evening service at St Andrew's Mirehouse.

2019 was the year for my 'home assignment'—three months when I can spend time with my sending church in Worthing as well as with supporters around the country. It is always a very worthwhile time as I am able to share more openly than I can through email or in a public meeting.

I have regular weekly meetings (video conferencing) with other members of the leadership team. Video conferencing makes communication easier and keeps me connected with my team—even though we are eight time zones apart! Being located in the SIM UK office on three days each week has been wonderful as I am an extrovert and need to be with people.

The SIM UK office moved location from Wetheringsett to Cambridge in December 2019. I did not move with them and I now share a small office on a business park with four other SIM workers in the small town of Needham Market. It is a highly convenient move for me—being located closer to my home, with high speed internet and 21st century heating (unlike the Victorian manor house that was Wetheringsett Manor!)

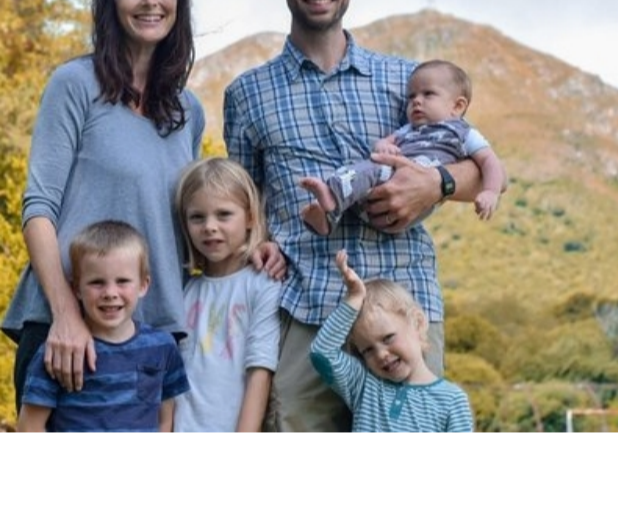
My future plans are to continue in my current role for the next two or three years, as God leads. I reach state pension age in May 2022 so that will be the time for a review of future ministry options and a decision as to whether I carry on for longer or take retirement. Do missionaries ever retire.....?!

Please continue to pray for:

- new recruits who can 'think outside the box' when it comes to mission, for their support-raising, and for positive placements for them
- teams who face challenges as they reach those who have never heard the gospel—pray Matthew 16:18b—that Jesus would build his church in spite of the difficulties. They need encouragement!
- continued good communication across time zones and languages
- the coronavirus epidemic which has meant evacuation of our team to their passport nations—when is the right time for them to return?

Ann Christian

The Walkers in Argentina



Andrew, Bethanie and family moved (just before lockdown) to Mendoza from Buenos Aires and are trying to settle into their new surroundings and new church, and looking at ways they can reach out into the community with the gospel.

You can see their latest letter on the [Crosslinks website](#).

Occasional Outreach

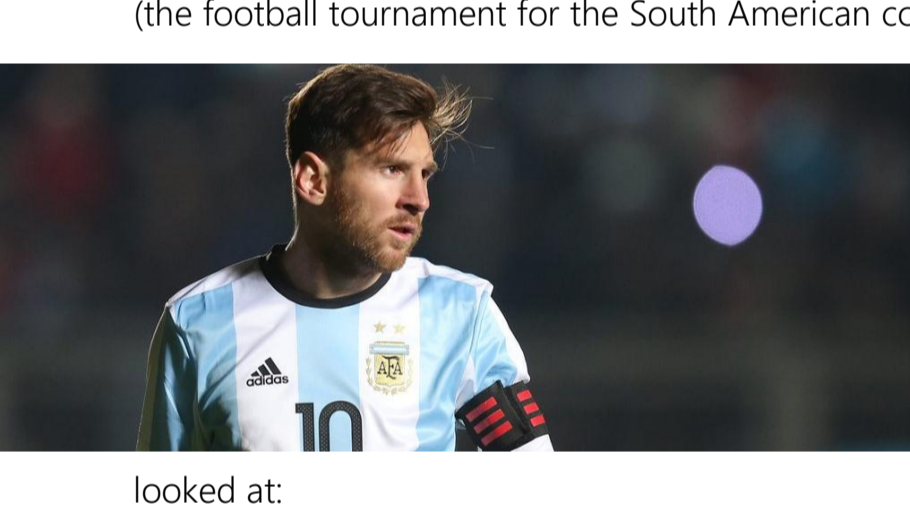
Football School

7–11 year olds during the Easter holidays 2019

God has been so faithful to this mission that we have been doing now for the last 6 years. Last year for the first time, we had the worry that we were going to have to turn people away. Even during the week we had people wanting to sign up. God was gracious in that we were able to Yes to all the people that applied, and we concluded it was all part of his plan. For example, one child could only make Tuesday and Wednesday and another only Thursday and Friday, so that it meant that the second child could take the place on the first child for the second part of the week. Jo and I had many stories like that. It was sometimes an administrative nightmare!

The worry of too many turning up wasn't a bad thing. We took it as a huge blessing that we were able to preach God's message to all these children. In the end around 60–70 young people came through the gates during the week, for which we praise God.

This year we had a South American theme to Football School with the Copa America being held that year (the football tournament for the South American countries). The Football we used for the final was an Argentina ball that was gifted to us by our mission partners the Walker Family in Argentina. Each of the teams this year was named after a South American country.



After a very similar theme for the talks over the previous years, we changed the theme last year. This time we concentrated on Jesus's life and compared him to Lionel Messi (perhaps the world's best footballer, who plays for Argentina). We

looked at:

- Jesus's baptism:* how both Messi and Jesus were special from the start
- Jesus's control of nature:* compared to Messi's control over opponents
- Jesus could cure the sick:* compared to Messi rescuing teams with no hope
- Jesus saviour of the world:* whereas Messi is just a footballer.

We want to finish by telling you a great story about what happened on the last day. A girl had not been able to make Football School all week, but Joyce had met her dad at Spar on the first day of Football School. The night before the final day we got a call to ask if she could come on the final day. See turned up on the final day, and listened to Jon Wong talking about Jesus' Resurrection. After the talk she was talking to Hannah and she gave her life to God that day!

It is incredible how God can work in people's lives; how she had heard the message over a number of Football Schools and then on that one day she turned up last year, decided to give her life to God.

Jo Wong and Dave Baxter

Christmas Unwrapped

This is an outreach to our community. On the 7th December we had a wonderful afternoon of fun, embracing the Christmas spirit. People enjoyed doing crafts, eating all different foods—the tea corner being busy all afternoon—games, bouncy castle, Christmas cake decorating and a great show from the NISCU puppets.

Ben Naylor gave a good talk about the true meaning of Christmas. It was wonderful to see how many people came from the community to join in within the day's activities.

A huge thank you to all who helped, from handing out leaflets to donating food and craft items, and to all those who helped out on the day. It was a wonderful example of Christians working together. We have booked 5th December for the next Christmas Unwrapped.

Mel Turner



Men's Events

We have had two men's meetings through the year. In September 2019 we had a breakfast and James Devenish (minister at Lake Road Church, Keswick) was the speaker. In March 2020 we had a lunch together and Tony Ford, a vicar in Barrow and chaplain to Barrow Raiders, was the speaker. Both events were well attended.

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BUILD UP

The second of our three aims: We are trying to disciple everyone who turns to

follow Jesus. A bare 'commitment' to Christ could end up being the second or third kind of soil in Jesus's parable of the sowers (Mark 4).

Growing as disciples is vital: we cannot claim to be Christians unless we "pursue righteousness, godliness, faith..." (1 Timothy 6:11)

Week-by-Week Ministry

Home Groups

Around 80 people now meet each week in Home Groups. In addition to the new group set up by Joe Pearson last year (which is planned to develop into the proposed Cleator Moor church plant), there is another new group in Harrington—which means we now have 9 home groups in total. As usual, we have used a variety of materials to study the Bible and enjoy discussion together—sometimes studying a book of the Bible, sometimes a topic, and sometimes using other material—for example we have just finished a very good Bible overview course produced by the Bible Society.



Home Groups are small groups where we meet in order to learn (by asking questions), study the Bible, look after each other—as we come to get to know each other better, in a way that is impossible if we just meet each other at church)—and pray with and for each other.

Our Home group leaders do a great job facilitating our groups, and in the past 12 months Fergus and Si put together some training sessions to help support our leaders in their role. Thanks to both our leaders and our hosts for all they do to ensure home groups run smoothly.

Our home groups are open to everyone, and I would encourage anyone who is part of the church family at St Johns to consider getting involved in a Home Group if you have not yet tried one out!

Heather Naylor

Women's Bible Study

The group meets at 10.00am on the second Monday in the month, in the church hall.

Over the last year we have studied the First Epistle of John which encourages us to live in fellowship with God and with his Son Jesus Christ, and warns against false teaching.

In preparation for Christmas we looked at the first two chapters of St Luke's Gospel and what it really says about the birth of two babies—John the Baptist and Jesus Christ.

This year we have begun a "Life Builder" study booked called "Moses—calling and character". So far we have read and discussed "Hearing God's call", "Standing Firm" and "Meeting with God". These are challenges and emotions we ourselves meet today in our own lives living in God's world.

After each study we have a time of prayer and enjoy refreshments and a chat.

James 1:22 says, "Do not merely listen to the word and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says".

Val Tyson

The Handicraft Group

The Handicraft Group is a joyful bunch of crafters of mixed abilities from beginners to advanced who immensely enjoy one another's company whilst working on our favourite hobby. We mostly bring our own craft, be it knitting, sewing, crochet, tapestry, embroidery, quilting, card making—in fact whatever makes us happy.

Throughout this year we have knitted lovely cot blankets, tiny hats and little cardigans for the Premature Baby Unit for which they have been very grateful. Again we purchased decorated flat-pac shoeboxes for Samaritan's Purse Operation Christmas Child and members have knitted many articles to help fill them. They also knitted lovely items to sell in the Tiny Tots group to help towards the transportation of the shoeboxes. If you contributed in any way to help get these gifts of love to many needy children throughout the world, THANKYOU.

Fundamentally though, our fulfilment is not just about projects, but about people and sharing, be it skills, materials, patterns, recipes, books, concerns, joys, sorrows, faith. It's about encouragement, Christian love and fellowship.

Each week we are served tea and coffee and cake or biscuits by two willing, lovely smiling ladies, Mary and Jean. But as you can imagine we push the boat out when it's someone's birthday. Since our last report we have celebrated three ninetieth birthdays: Barbara Coe, Meg Young and Mary Shaw. Without exception they are ladies who inspire us to labour on and care for one another whatever our age.

Simon Walker occasionally joins us, but lately he popped in when we were celebrating Jean Hurley's birthday and read from the book of Acts (ch 17) and prayed with us. That was the last time we met before we closed the group because of the Coronavirus. Today, as I write this, members are ringing each other and praying for each other, their families, the country and the world and encouraging one another in the Lord.

Thank you for reading this report and if you would like to join us when we resume meeting again, you would be made very welcome.

"My command is this: love one another as I have loved you." John 15:12

Eileen Henry

Chinese Fellowship

We continue to meet on a bi-weekly basis. We finished the study of Luke, James and Colossians and star-

ted on Hosea at the end of February 2020. We also had meetings where we watched talk/testimony videos about (1) the conversion of a Buddhist woman, (2) the conversion of a Hong Kong celebrity (3) the 2019 riots and conflicts in Hong Kong from a biblical perspective. We also had a Bible Quiz which was very popular.

Mrs Christine Chan from Newcastle Chinese Church continues to pay us regular visits and nurture us with valuable messages from the Bible. We had seven meetings with Christine during the past year.

Four of our Chinese friends were baptised on Sunday, 23 June 2019 at St John's church, followed by a bring-and-share lunch.

We are pleased that we have raised enough funds to purchase a baptistry and other accessories for the church.

This means that from now on there will be no more hassles borrowing from other churches and organisations.

We joined St John's Carol singing in the Hensingham area on the evening of the 18th December 2019. The weather was wet and wild but it did not dampen our spirits or enthusiasm. We all enjoyed the mission and then went to the Vicarage for hot chocolate and mince pies afterwards. We felt very well rewarded.

Our Fellowship also went Carol singing with guitar & violin music and distributed gospel tracts to passers-by, pedestrians and shopkeepers and even a policeman on two other days: Saturday afternoon, 21st December, at the Whitehaven market square and in front of some shops; Monday evening, 23rd December, we visited some takeaway shops (especially Chinese ones), stood in front of Wetherspoons and even went into a karaoke bar.

We thoroughly enjoyed the experience and generally felt very welcomed by people.

The Chinese New Year Celebration Event went well on Tuesday, 4th February 2020. About 50 people came along and we were delighted to see both old and new faces.

Although the attendance was lower than usual due to people's fear of the spread of coronavirus, it did not dampen our spirits or our enthusiasm for God as we know he is still in control of every situation.

A little talk with the gospel message was delivered by Mrs Christine Chan. The Walker children entertained us by singing a Mandarin song with words from John 3:16. We played some games and riddles which were thoroughly enjoyed by the participants. We pray that the gospel seed sown will sprout one day. We are grateful to brothers and sisters of St John's Church who have kindly and generously donated gifts year after year to make the event a very exciting and enjoyable one.

Sadly, we lost our dear sister and a long-standing member of our Fellowship, Mrs Diane Ng, who had a terminal illness. She was baptised at St John's on 5th May 2002. Her funeral was held at St John's on Tuesday, 11 February 2020 with heart-warming tributes given both by family members and friends.

Jema Chan

The Discipleship Course

[This article was written in October 2020]

The Discipleship Course is led by Fergus Pearson and Nigel Gillson, running on Tuesday evenings from January to December. It is for those who want to delve a little deeper into what it means to be a Christian.

There are three strands which we work on through the year: Bible, doctrine, and practice.

In the Bible strand we study various parts of the Bible so that we read it with more sensitivity to the God who wrote it. In the doctrine strand we work through foundational Christian doctrines. Mostly these two strands are taught by the leaders, with plenty of discussion along the way.

aged to work on something.

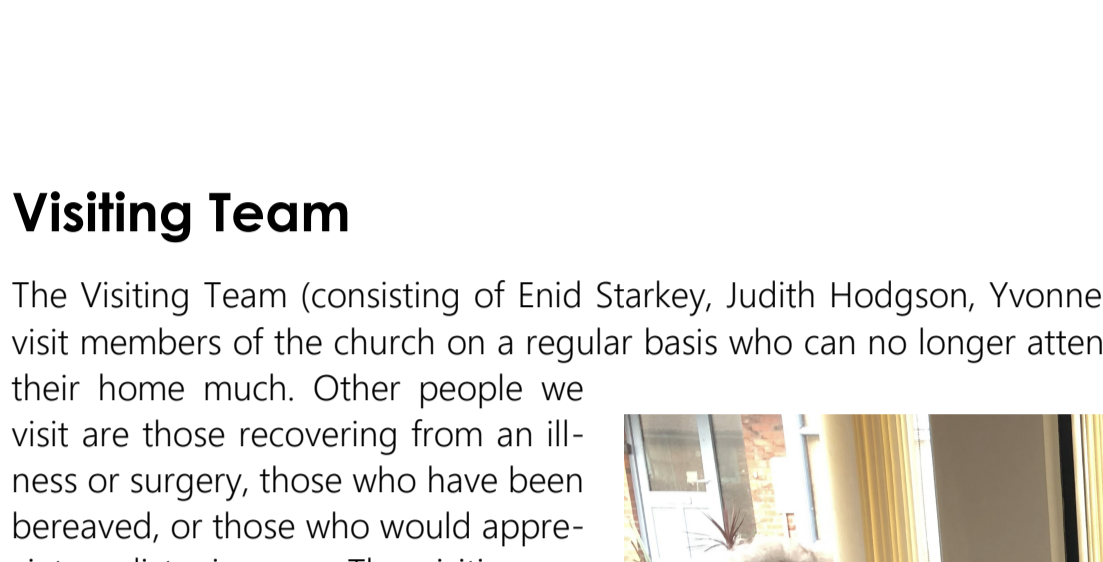
Whitehaven CAP Debt Centre is a project that began its practical life from discussions within the Discipleship Course. But not every project needs to be so ambitious! Each member is encouraged to pursue something, small or big. It needn't be connected to St John's, but it will challenge them to serve Christ.

The overall aim of the course is to equip Christians to serve their Lord in a deliberate, heartfelt and thankful way.

Not long after we had started and were beginning to gel as a group the lockdown meant we had to shift to Zoom. This has not been ideal, but it has allowed us to continue the course meaningfully. The practical strand of the course has been the biggest casualty of not being able to meet in person.

If you are wondering about joining the course for 2021, please have a word with Fergus or Nigel, or speak to someone who is doing the course this year or who has done it in the past.

Fergus Pearson



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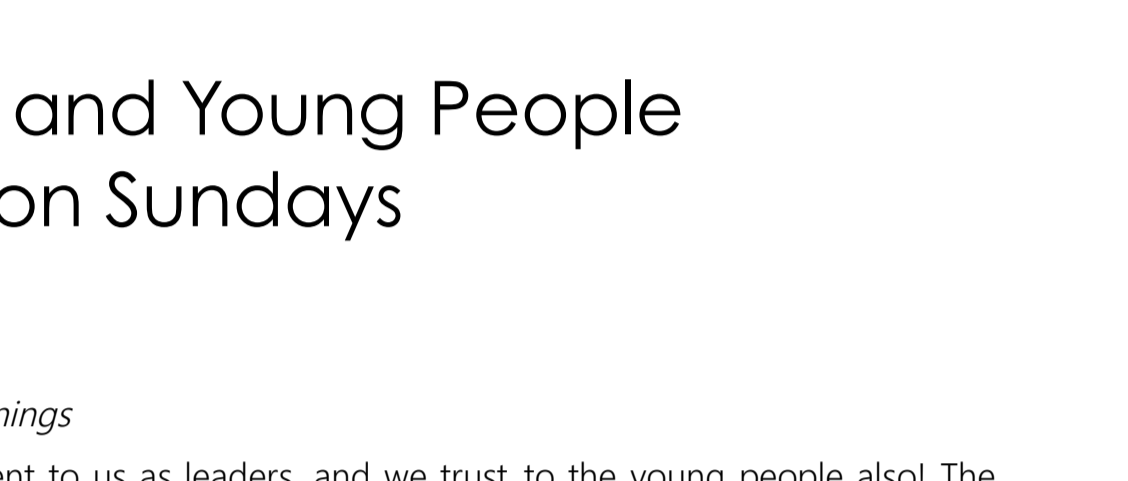
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Fergus Pearson

Visiting Team

The Visiting Team (consisting of Enid Starkey, Judith Hodgson, Yvonne Owen, Kay Cartmell and myself) visit members of the church on a regular basis who can no longer attend the services or don't get out of their home much. Other people we visit are those recovering from an illness or surgery, those who have been bereaved, or those who would appreciate a listening ear. The visiting we carry out complements that carried out by the clergy as well as other members of the congregation.

Once a month, one or two of the team accompanies Fergus or Si to Walkmill Court, Johnson House and, new since the last report, The Gables.



If you know of anyone from the church who would like a visit do let us know.

Susan Baxter

Children and Young People on Sundays

CYFA

14-18 year olds meeting on Sunday evenings

CYFA continues to be an encouragement to us as leaders, and we trust to the young people also! The maturity of some of the young people continues to make it all worthwhile. Only God is able to secure the future, but we feel that there are future leaders in the group who may be able to encourage others. We pray for future ministers, missionaries (at home and abroad) and of course faithful disciples.

It makes a massive difference having younger leaders who are able to model the Christian life to the young people, and who are Biblical and fired up. Please thank God with me for this. However, it would also be good to have older people volunteer as they are able to share their wisdom. We were blessed by members of the church opening their homes from our recent Safari Supper—which we now realise is a summer activity... but we survived the rain!

CYFA has a core of only 9 or 10 young people, but it has to be said that most are very committed, which makes the group workable. Thank you to parents for committing to bring them along regularly as it makes all the difference in the group being able to work. We aren't concerned about attracting big numbers, but consistent numbers is a huge help!

Recently we have studied Philipians, looking at standing firm in the Christian life by holding out the gospel, uniting, suffering well, praying at all times, and several other great truths. We have also had a series called 'A toolkit for the Christian life' where we have looked at such things as how to study the Bible for yourself, giving financially to the gospel (never too early to teach these things for the future), studying in a godly way, being a good friend and many other topics.

We praise God that some of our young people already say they want to stay in the local area. Please pray that they would do this for the sake of Jesus and the gospel in Cumbria.

This last week Chelsea has finished after four years as a leader, to get ready to have her baby. Thank you to Chelsea and all she has brought in being dedicated to CYFA.

If you want to know more about what we do, just ask!

Si Walker and the team

(John Stoker, Amy Turner, Chelsea Pearson & Ben Naylor)

HPs

7-14 year olds meeting in the vestry during the 11.00am service on Sundays

We have around 15–20 children who come each week. We are based in the vestry which can be tight sometimes but we have learnt to adapt to the surroundings.

It is good to be able to spend time with the children and young people, exploring what the Bible teaches, and also thinking through the challenges in our walk with God.

One change we have made this year is to start to use the 'Click' series rather than following the text or themes used in the 11am service.

The topics we have covered are:

- Luke's account leading up to Easter
- Following on from, the Early Church as captured in the book of Acts
- First introduction of the Click series entitled 'Who is Jesus', working through John's gospel, specifically looking at the 'I AM' statements of Jesus
- 'Click' series focusing on Exodus and Joshua, looking at 'God the Provider' in relation to the rescue from Egypt and the journey in the wilderness to the Promised Land.

We have a good team of leaders who are ably supported by a number of others who help the children with the various activities and studies. A few more would help take the load off those who are already on a number of rotas at the 11.00am service. Ruth Henry helped lead throughout the period and I would like to thank her for providing this. Ben Naylor has joined the team which enables each of the leaders to cover one week a month.

Phil Bodman is providing administration support in the background, pulling together the rotas and ensuring the required data protection forms are in place.

We are thankful for their support and commitment to the work. The team works extremely well together, using their varying gifts and talents, supporting each other throughout the year.

We ask for your continued prayers as we prepare each week that we would be true to God's Word and challenging to the children about who Jesus is.

Neil Baxter

Scramblers and Climbers

3-7 year olds meeting in the hall during the 11.00am service on Sundays

We have many children on our register, and between 15 and 20 attend on an average week. Our children move on to HPs when they enter school year 3. We meet together most weeks in the hall during the 11.00am service, depending very much on the children's parents to bring them along each week and follow up the teaching for the day at home.

We have many and varied activities, and each of our leaders and helpers brings something unique to the group. Our activities include running games, treasure hunts, biscuit-making, cutting and sticking, colouring, drawing and listening, and taking part in Bible stories. We grow as the year goes on—when a child turns three they start the group. We had quite a lot of three year olds join us in September, but it didn't take them long to settle in. Our aim remains to teach these little ones how much Jesus loves each one of us, and what our response should be.

It's always a sad time when we have to say goodbye to our children who have been with us for many years as they move up to HPs and Explorers. We have enjoyed having them as part of our group, and we pray that they would grow in their knowledge of Jesus and trust in him as their friend and saviour.

During the year we said goodbye to Amy Turner who was leading in CYFA. We are truly grateful for Amy's help and commitment over her time with us and we wish her well leading in CYFA. She hasn't completely left and is going to help us out if we are short of helpers. We are currently looking for a new helper to start with us in September. If this is something you would like to do please let us know.

We are so thankful to all leaders and helpers for their hard work each Sunday. We work on a rota basis so that everyone can attend church as well as help with the little ones.

As ever, leadership in the group changes throughout the year. Currently we have a fabulous group of leaders and helpers; Jean Gilson, John Hodgson, Brian Swinburn, Diane Jackson, Val Curran, Audrey Moore, Naomi Cartmell, Mildred Linstead, Charlotte Chan, Gillian Buchan, Ruth Buchan, Josh Auldson, Ben Gilson and Jacob Swinburn.

Our Summer trip was a little different this year. After church we went to St Bees and had a picnic together. Everyone brought their own picnic but some thought they were feeding everyone, so there was lots to share around! After we had all eaten it was time for races. We have some very fast children and everyone won a prize (of course). We finished off our day with a sand castle competition. It turned out that some of our Leaders and parents are experts and weren't competitive at all! We were very blessed by weather and had an amazing time together.

After our Christmas party was such a success last year we decided to have it on a Sunday once again. Many more children were able to attend and a great time was had by all.

Our prayer requests haven't changed this year—please continue to pray for us:

- Pray for all our children that they will come to know the Lord and continue to trust him as their Lord and saviour; and give thanks for each and every one of them
- We need one new helper: please pray that we would find someone quickly
- Give thanks for our current leaders and helpers

Thank you all for your support and prayers over the last year.

John, Brian, Jean, and Diane

[John has now stepped down from Scramblers & Climbers after a number of years of faithful teaching and caring]

Occasional Ministry

Ladies' Afternoon Tea

We have had two successful afternoon teas for ladies' fellowship. At the first one Alison Bragg gave us the message. About seventy ladies attended and everyone seemed to enjoy themselves.

Later in the year, we had the second afternoon tea when Mim Walker gave us the message and about eighty ladies attended. We had very positive feedback from both days. It was so encouraging to see



many visitors attending with ladies from church.

We do have a tentative day booked for June for another afternoon tea, but we will have to wait to see if it will be possible. Many ladies helped by donating cakes and helping on the day. Many thanks to you all.

Mel Turner

Newcomers' Lunches

Three lunch events were held for newcomers at the Chans' home on the following dates:

- 12 May 2019
- 22 September 2019
- 19 January 2020

Altogether, there were 19 adults and 7 children who attended. They all enjoyed the informal get-together and were very grateful for the hospitality extended to them.

Jema Chan

The third of our three objectives:
We want to enable every disciple to bear fruit in their lives
—fruit that brings glory to God.

We want to provide opportunities and training to encourage each person to serve the Lord both in the church and especially in the world so that people may see

Christians in action "and glorify our Father in heaven" (Matthew 5:16) by turning to put their trust in him.

Church Ministry Apprentice

Ben Naylor was our Ministry Apprentice in 2019–2020

So far the apprenticeship has been great.

It has been an opportunity to try many different things within the church as well as opportunities to see how everything works behind the scenes.

Day to day I am involved in many of the weekly ministries of the church. Tiny Tots, Pathfinders, CYFA, HPs, Living Room, school assemblies, communion in care homes and the Cleator Moor home group. Also there are some less regular things such as occasional opportunities to preach and lead services. I have also had the opportunity to get involved with a couple of things with NISCU—the weekly QM club at Whitehaven school as well as going into West Lakes Academy on occasions to run RE lessons. On top of this there have been several one-off events that I've been involved with such as planning the upcoming mission community family morning, and Christmas unwrapped. Certainly enough to keep me busy!

I have been surprised by the opportunities to see behind the scenes, both in terms of how church operates day to day but also on a bigger scale. At the start of September I was able to go along with Si and a few others to the *ReNew* conference in Leeds, a conference for conservative evangelical Anglicans across England. An eye-opening and encouraging time.

I also have plenty of study time. One of the highlights has been the Northwest Partnership training course in Leyland every Thursday. It has been a great opportunity to get teaching on how to handle the Bible well to teach it better to others, but also just to be taught myself. The highlight has been a series called Gospel Dynamics, helping us to think through how the Gospel should shape and change our everyday lives. Si also has me reading various books which we then discuss.

One of the most enjoyable aspects of the year so far has been working with the CYFA group. The team of leaders is great, and the young people are both a good laugh and keen to hear from the word.

It has been amazing seeing the CYFA young people grow and seeing that God's word really does make a difference in people's lives.

As a part of this I've been meeting one-to-one with Eli Demetriou to read the Bible, one of the most encouraging things I've been given the opportunity to do so far.

All in all, it has been a good year so far. Of course, the joys are mixed with plenty of discouragements—such is the nature of ministry. But it has been a great opportunity to experience what ministry is really like.

Ben Naylor

East Whitehaven Mission Community

We are in a formal partnership with St Andrew's Mirehouse and St Bridget's, Moresby

I feel a deep sadness that Peter Verburgh has stepped down from his ministry at St Andrew's. To me, his ministry promised so much and it is not easy to fathom the Lord's mind on this. But we can trust our gracious God that he does all things well.

Pray for Peter, and his wife Dianne and daughter Evelyn, as they settle back in the Netherlands; and pray for St Andrew's that the Lord would richly bless them in the coming days.

Our three churches are united in having the same gospel heart and vision, and we are very grateful for Paul Kerry, rector of St Bridget's, as he gives a lead to our Mission Community.

Fergus Pearson

Union School of Theology

We achieved a successful first year as a Learning Community of Union School of Theology.

Learning Communities host and provide Lead Mentors for Union students who live locally. Our students—currently James Fitch and Joe Pearson—study for a two-year Graduate Diploma in Theological Studies awarded by the Open University.

Lectures from the faculty at Union, in south Wales, are delivered each Thursday by video link to the church lounge. Si or I, watch these with the students and then lead discussion on questions set by the lecturers. The lectures and discussions are very stimulating and often relate to church life and to our own Christian lives. The students have to study at home for another day a week, and are examined at the end of each semester through essays or by exams they take in Liverpool.

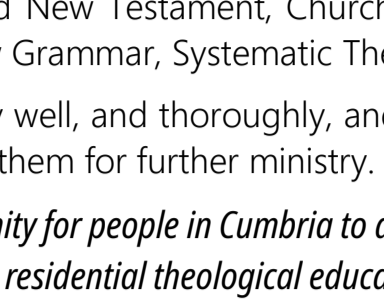
In 2019–2020 James and Joe studied Old and New Testament, Church History, and Preaching and Pastoral Theology. In 2020–2021 it will be Hebrew Grammar, Systematic Theology, and Church and Mission.

Pray for James and Joe: for discipline to study well, and thoroughly, and that what they learn would draw them to follow Jesus more closely, and equip them for further ministry.

This course is a unique and excellent opportunity for people in Cumbria to do serious theological study at a fraction of the cost, but with all of the quality, of a residential theological education.

Please pray also for at least two new students to commit to enrol for September 2021.

Fergus Pearson



Safeguarding

Parish Safeguarding Officers: Ian Ulyett and Kay Cartmell

This parish supports the following groups working with children, young people and adults who may be vulnerable: Crèche, Tiny Tots, Scramblers & Climbers, Explorers, HPs, Pathfinders, CYFA, CAP volunteers, Church visitors, and Bell ringers.

Safer Recruitment and Training

There are 88 individuals who have been DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service) checked, and 62 of these people are still active in their roles.

60 of these are up to date with their DBS (the requirement is to be rechecked every 5 years), one person is currently undergoing the rechecking process, and one is being recruited.

The recruitment process includes the drawing up of a role outline, the completion of a church volunteer registration form, completion of a confidential self-declaration form, interviews and the checking of references and, if appropriate, undergoing a DBS check. All of those appointed within the last 7 years to lead or help in groups involving children, young people or adults who may be vulnerable have completed this process. Currently, only those CAP workers who attend St John's and two from another church have been through the 'safer recruitment' process.

The Church of England has drawn up its own Safeguarding training courses and recommendations of which courses various volunteers and paid workers should complete. This training is to be refreshed every 3 years. The Basic Awareness (for anyone and everyone) and Foundation level (for group helpers) courses are online self-learning modules. The Leadership course for group leaders, clergy and Safeguarding officers is a face-to-face course. Further "specialist" level courses are to be made available in the future.

62 people are currently up to date with their training but 3 have yet to complete all the necessary modules. Including these 3, there are 21 individuals due to refresh or complete their safeguarding training before the end of 2020. In addition, there is also one person just commencing the recruitment process.

Church Policy and Guidance

The PCC has adopted the House of Bishops "Promoting a Safer Church; Safeguarding and policy statement" and the Church of England's safeguarding policy and guidance. Copies can be found on the Safeguarding noticeboard in the church hall and on St John's website.

Ian Ulyett

Supporting Ministries

Bellingring: Hensingham Tower

Welcome to the latest Hensingham Ringers' Report winging its way to you from a dazzlingly white ringing chamber. Yes, if you haven't been up the stairs near the organ for a few months, you're in for a surprise, because a dedicated team—OK, a team of willing (?) volunteers/conscripts spent a few scattered days in May, August and January stripping off the old, flaky paint, cleaning out corners we never knew existed, sending spiders migrating to pastures new, repainting the walls in bright white and re-arranging all the notices, etc. into a coherent order: even the tower steps have been hoovered—twice! Grateful thanks must be recorded to Donny for all his help and advice, including the impressive-looking scaffolding.



Apart from the DIY antics, ringing activities have continued week by week and progress has been made in some areas. The home band of Gordon, Soo, Rebecca, Stuart, Alan, Keith, Rosalind, Sam, Ben, Josh and Donald are regularly joined by honorary ringers from other towers, namely Tony from Whitehaven (also a Sunday stalwart), Whitehaven's captain Richard, his sons James and Matthew when they're available/home from university and Eleanor from Irton. Heather, Tim and Alison are there when we need them, while Richard's

wife, another Alison, is a staunch supporter.

There has only been one wedding this year and no recorded visitors from outside the area, but the "Cumbrian Codgers" rang here during their December outing. We also had one Tuesday practice when we invited the Moresby ringers (who had previously invited us to one of their practices) to try their hand on heavier bells. And, as usual, St John's was the venue for the annual Training Day in February when groups of learners from across the diocese had the opportunity to ring our beautiful bells with their ball-bearing mounts.

It is always good—and a challenge—to push on into new territory and burst through blockading boundaries. "I can't do that!" and "We've never done it before" are cries that should never be heard in a bell tower, because more often than not, we can do that and a "first" can become a tradition. Among the progresses made are relatively recent ringers Soo and Stuart tackling methods (bell tunes) and touches (variations on the basic method) that remain an enigma to the writer of this report, who had her first lesson when Harold Wilson was Prime Minister! Soo and Stuart have also started to call (tell people what to do), as have Josh and Ben. Well done them!

Congratulations are also due to Rebecca, who rang her first quarter peal (45 minutes non-stop) in the summer and Gordon, whose first full peal (nearly three hours non-stop) was achieved at Moresby in January.

Two things never, or possibly rarely, done before were the chiming of the tenor bell for the Hensingham cenotaph service on Remembrance Sunday and the chiming of the carillon for the crib service on Christmas Eve. In the latter instance, the carillon was used because not enough ringers were available to ring "live". Gordon has been teaching a few more people the intricacies of our art and we hope that they will persevere and be able to join the band before the next report is due. Sadly, some Tuesday practices and even the occasional Sunday's ringing have had to be cancelled because ringers, busy people that they are, have been on holiday or running marathons or attending meetings or taking services or undertaking family responsibilities, or even, occasionally, ill.

Ringling is a stimulating, brain-challenging, exercise-generating, social hobby: but over and above all that, it is a service, a service which calls congregations to worship and lets a whole area know that the Church is in its midst and that its presence cannot be ignored.

Rosalind Amey

St John's Handbells

We began the year by ringing at the Easter Service. The piece included a narration which we hadn't tried before. We were then invited to give a short concert in Emmaus House, Moresby Parks. We had to devise an hour's worth of music and make it not too Christmassy because it was only the first of December! It was very well received by residents and guests alike and the group enjoyed themselves too.

Practice for the Christmas season had begun late, again; and as extra Monday practice sessions proved difficult to arrange we began meeting on Saturdays for two hours. Johnson House and Walkmill Gardens invited us to share in their Carol Services. We had hoped to ring at the Gables, but timings didn't allow this.

We were, again, able to ring at the Seniors' Afternoon Tea and the Church Carol Service and we also rang a piece in the service between Christmas and New Year which was an extra feature we hadn't tried before.

We continue to be grateful to Mark Cubey for the use of his bells and are looking forward to another successful year. We are always keen to see new members to our group.

Soo Gray

Website

Andy Higgins developed our website and has quietly and efficiently maintained it for many years. We want to express our thanks to him for such committed and unseen service now that he has stepped down from the role.

We are working on a new online management system for St John's, which will bring with it a new website. Pray that we will manage it well and it will prove to be a blessing not only for church members but for anyone who expresses interest in St John's or who wants to find out more about Jesus through our online presence.

**St John's Church
hensingham**

Fergus Pearson

Facebook Page

Tommy Choy has recently started looking after our [Facebook page](#). Please contact him if you have anything you'd like to share on it.

There hasn't really been that much since Feb 19th. We have made 13 posts since then and the most recent post Jo made for Football school has reached 2.4k people so that was fab. However most posts have only reached around 100 to 150 people on average. The post regarding the CD from *Eden Restored* has reached 308 people which is higher than other posts.

Church of England Statutory Meetings

Electoral Roll and Parochial Church Council

The number on the church electoral roll is 193 (126 in the parish and 67 outside it).

There have been five regular meetings of the PCC during the year and 1 standing committee meeting.

As well as the regular standing reports some of the items agreed or discussed were as follows:

- Roll out of the vision document "Gospel DNA."
- A request to CAP Partner churches which resulted in a positive response to the CAP funding crisis giving a reprieve to enable further funding applications to be pursued.
- Approval for various group outings, retreats and events such as the football school, the Christmas Unwrapped and CAP client events.
- Discussions around how we can give support and care to newcomers to enable them to integrate into church life.
- Approval to install secure password-protected wifi which can be used on the Union School of Theology Course.
- Approval for the installation of a camera at the front of the church and a pool and water heater for full immersion baptisms.
- Approval of membership of the Coalfields Regeneration Trust to support CAP funding applications.
- Approval of the Safeguarding Policy: Promoting a Safer Church.
- Approval of ongoing commitment to an apprentice for 2020/2021, a Discipleship course for January 2020 and sharing provision of communion services to The Gables Care home with other churches in the Mission Community.
- Approval for ongoing maintenance work such as replacement of windows in the hall, kitchen, toilet and tower.

The PCC has complied with the duty under section 5 of the Safeguarding and Clergy Discipline Measure 2016 (duty to have regard to the House of Bishops' guidance on safeguarding children and vulnerable adults).

Phil Sisson (PCC Secretary)

Extracts from Last Year's Annual Meetings

The Annual Vestry Meeting and the Annual Parochial Church Meeting were held on the 1st April 2019.

There were forty people present. Andy Walkingshaw and Joyce Hewer were elected as churchwardens.

There were no appointments made to the Deanery Synod. Paul Smith and Helen Stoker remain as our representatives having been voted onto the Synod in 2017 along with Nigel Gilson who transferred from PCC member to Deanery Synod member in 2018. There were 10 PCC members appointed with Stephen Jackson as ex officio in his role as Reader. Thelma Toman was appointed auditor of the accounts for 2019.

The number on the electoral roll was 186, down from 216 in 2018.

Tim Naylor our treasurer presented the accounts for the year ending 31st December 2018 and answered questions. He said the donations and legacies position was similar to last year. Regular giving reduces as people leave the church and so there is a need to encourage new people to give.

The church parish offer had been increased by 2.5%. Overall expenditure was increased due to the purchase of the lights and the improvement to the seating and welcoming. There was also an overlap in the salaries within CAP as Julian Berkeley handed over the Centre Manager role to Jonathan Berry. The Associate Vicar Fund trend is one of a year-on-year overall deficit reducing the legacy money. The negative figure in the general fund is due to the fact that there was not enough money from the Gift Day to pay for the lights and repairs to the boiler. The aim is to reduce this deficit over time. A building fund has been set up with £500 per month transferred into it from the general fund to enable it to grow and cover adhoc maintenance expenses throughout the year.

An amount of £750 from the local hardship fund has been transferred into the CAP funds to help CAP clients. 10% of giving is to be put into the Mission Allocation. A priority for 2019 is to encourage an increase in giving.

Further CAP funding is being sourced as the final Francis C. Scott Trust funding comes to an end. However many of the grant-making bodies spoken to at local funding fayres do not give to churches and prefer capital or start-up initiatives.

Fergus thanked Tim and said he was always on top of the work and did a brilliant job, and it was clear he has a heart for mission and the gospel.

Si gave a presentation on "Our Gospel DNA" and explained our aim to grow from seed another 2 groups by 2022 in addition to our Cleator Moor plant, to have another 3 home groups by 2023, and to have 5 people in some form of ministry training by 2025.

Churchwardens' Report

There are so many things that 'just happen' at St John's that we can often take for granted. The grounds are always looking neat and tidy, the bells ring as we arrive, the clock chimes on time. Someone is there to welcome us, the toilets are clean, the church is warm. The music group play beautifully, the microphones are switched on, words appear on the screens as we need them, there's a hot cuppa to enjoy afterwards and we don't even have to wash our own cup. And many of these things are done not just for one service each week, but for the various activities happening almost every day of the week.

So, to everyone who contributes physically or in administration to the ministry, many facets of church life, and to those faithfully praying, we would like to pass on our heartfelt thanks. Your true reward will be from your heavenly Father, who sees what is done in secret.



There have not been too many building projects completed this year but the rotting windows in the toilets and kitchen have been replaced. A project group has met several times to work on plans to remove the unused choir pews in the chancel in order to make space for small group meetings. As is often the case, what seems initially like a simple thing turns out to have many complexities! The group is therefore working through various ideas carefully and will present plans to the whole church when they are well formed.

As usual, we'd also like to say that the silver and ornaments are intact, the inventory and terriers are up to date and the building is secure.

Joyce Hewer and Andy Walkingshaw