



**THE PARISH OF THE ASCENSION  
CAMBRIDGE**

**ANNUAL REPORT OF THE PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL**

**FOR THE YEAR 2014-2015**

*[www.churchatcastle.org](http://www.churchatcastle.org)*

**The Parish of the Ascension**  
**Church at Castle ecumenical partnership**  
**[www.churchatcastle.org](http://www.churchatcastle.org)**

Address: Parish of the Ascension Office,  
St. Giles' Church, Castle Street, Cambridge, CB3 0AQ

## GENERAL INFORMATION

The umbrella name of 'ChurchatCastle' is used to describe the ecumenical character and activities of the churches in the parish and is reflected in the website, [www.churchatcastle.org](http://www.churchatcastle.org)

As people of different denominations we believe that all Christians should work together to share in the outworking of God's love in the world. We believe that we should challenge divisiveness within and without the church, speak out against the injustices which affect all people, regardless of their faith position, and in ordinary and extraordinary ways make God known.

The Parish of the Ascension Cambridge covers a considerable part of the northwest corner of the City of Cambridge, incorporating the City Council Castle Ward and including parts of the Arbury, Newnham and West Chesterton wards. Within the parish are 10 colleges of the University of Cambridge (Churchill, Clare Hall, Fitzwilliam, Lucy Cavendish, Magdalene, Murray Edwards (New Hall), Robinson, Selwyn, St Edmund's, St John's); one secondary school, Chesterton Community College and 2 primary schools, Mayfield Primary and St Luke's (VA) Primary.

Accurate population estimates for the parish are difficult to obtain as these statistics are compiled only on a ward basis and are difficult in areas with high student populations. Cambridge is also a rapidly expanding city with estimates that the population rose 8.4% from 2001-2009.

*With these constraints in mind, an estimate of the population of the parish in 2011 is approx. 17,266 (using data from Census 2011), rising to 22,399 in 2016.*

The social profile of the parish's population is diverse, from academics and health professionals employed by the Universities and Addenbrooke's Hospital and those in high technology and IT industries to those living in social housing, those on benefits and those with multiple social needs (Cambridge City Council, Mapping Poverty 2013, <https://www.cambridge.gov.uk/mapping-poverty>

The area in the parish with most deprivation indicators is that immediately adjacent to St Luke's which also houses a racially diverse population including a Bangladeshi community. The new housing developments, especially the University site, will add even more diversity with many more international students, scholars and their families coming to live in the parish.

## REPRESENTATION

### PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL

#### TERMS OF REFERENCE

The PCC is the legally constituted body for the area with ultimate responsibility for all the activities of the churches locally. It may delegate some of its responsibilities to the Ecumenical Church Council (ECC), District Church Councils (DCCs) and to the Resources and Joint Outreach Committees as it sees fit.

It also assumes particular responsibility for the Parish's contractual obligations in respect of the Parish Room and the Burial Ground, and in respect of the Parish Administrator and any other person that may be employed by or contracted to it.

It will as a result draw up and agree a budget annually reflecting these responsibilities. It will also determine the level of financial support provided to the different churches in respect of their responsibilities for meeting some of the central administrative costs and parish share.

The PCC will act as the final authority in respect of any dispute between the churches in the Parish, whether these are of a financial or other nature and in so far as it is within their jurisdiction.

Members of the PCC will be elected annually by members listed on the Electoral Roll. The Chairs of the Resources and Joint Outreach Committees are to be *ex officio* members of the PCC.

All licensed members of the Ministry team are *ex officio* members of the PCC

St Luke's Ecumenical Church Council is a partnership between the United Reformed Church and the Church of England. Authority is delegated to this body within a sharing agreement between the PCC of the Parish of the Ascension and the congregational meeting of the United Reformed Church in all matters pertaining to the management of St Luke's Church.

The (ECC) meets monthly on the first Tuesday of the month, except in August. Anyone in the congregation may ask for an item to be put on the agenda. Membership of the ECC consists of twelve lay members who are each elected for a period of three years, the URC minister and the Rector.

Congregational Meetings take place bi-monthly after the morning service; they are the forum for debate and open to everyone in the congregation (although only those on the Common Roll may vote)

The Annual General Meeting of the ECC takes place in March/April, when reports from the various organisations and activities are presented and elections are held.

## **ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION**

**Parish of the Ascension, St. Giles' Church, Castle Street, Cambridge, CB3 0AQ**

Official correspondence to the Parish Administrator's Office at the above address.

**Bankers:** Barclays Bank plc, Chesterton Road, Cambridge.

**Legal advisers:** Diocesan Registrar; Barr Ellison, 39 Parkside, Cambridge, CB1 1PN

**Independent Examiner:** Waller, Wilson & Co., The Forge Cottage, 2 High Street, Mildenhall, Bury St Edmunds, IP28 7EJ

**Architect:** Bland, Brown & Cole, 33a Bridge Street, Cambridge CB2 1UW

**Book-keeper:** Michelle Webb

**Parish Administrator:** Sheila Rozeik

## OBJECTIVES

We aim to be an inclusive community proclaiming Christ's Gospel of love.

We endeavour to make our churches places where anyone can explore the possibility of faith.

We are committed to Ecumenical partnership.

We strive to make our church and community spaces accessible and safe places for members of the community to own and use, regardless of their faith position.

We are committed to celebrating the rich liturgical resources within our ecumenical partnership.

We are committed to offering pastoral care to anyone who asks for it and most especially to those who live within our parish boundary.

We are committed to following statutory health and safety advice in maintaining our church buildings, we have policies in place to ensure this.

There are separate Parish Policies covering: Child Protection, Vulnerable Adults, Equal Opportunities, Environmental and Health and Safety. Copies of these policies are available from the Parish Office.

## REPORT ON PCC ACTIVITIES APRIL 2014-2015

The PCC approved two new noticeboards at the Parish's Burial Ground, one board sited at the Huntingdon Road end of the drive on the left hand side, immediately before the lay-by and the second board at the burial ground gates displaying information about activities, events and working parties. Both boards were funded by grants from the City Council. The Friends of the Burial Ground were thanked for their continuing efforts on behalf of the Parish with the on-going maintenance and promotion of this historical resource, including a World War One Commemoration event in September 2014.

The Rev Lindsay Llewellyn-Macduff, the then Chaplain of HMP Littlehey was asked to speak to the PCC about what churches can do to welcome ex-offenders. As a result of that discussion, and thanks to the efforts of PCC member Patricia McGuire, each church now holds a list of local and national sources of help for ex-offenders and others; the churches will add to and maintain these lists as necessary.

The PCC was kept up to date throughout the year about improvements to the church buildings (details in Reports from the Churches), the Parish Room, new housing developments in the parish, the St Luke's Review, St Peter's and the overall parish finance and resource situation; the latter with the assistance of the Resources Committee.

The PCC voted to close a number of St Giles' old funds as the Charity Commission had requested. The funds from the Anne Markham and William Dodds charities (approx. £17,000 in total) were donated to the Edward Storey Foundation as these charities had similar charitable aims to the Foundation. The other small amounts were donated to the Cambridge Food Bank. The PCC expressed grateful thanks to Michelle Webb for her hard work on this issue.

There was discussion of the Diocesan Strategy and many PCC members attended an open meeting of the North Cambridge Deanery at St Augustine's where the Archdeacon of Cambridge hosted a presentation on the Strategy.

Members of the PCC and the parish helped again at the Castle Hill Open Day in September which raised some funds for the parish but most importantly welcomed many new visitors to St Giles' and St Peter's. The PCC also saw the plans for the redevelopment of Kettle's Yard which will be closed for 2 years from June 2015.

## PARISH ACTIVITIES

### **1. Worship and Ecumenical partnership**

Common Worship liturgy is used in services at St Augustine's and St Giles' Churches. St Luke's Church uses an ecumenical liturgy, combining Church of England and URC liturgies, and is endorsed by the 'Joint Council' (the governing body of the ecumenical partnership.) In addition we share in services from the Methodist tradition with Castle Street Methodist Church. We have provided a space for the Romanian Orthodox Church to celebrate its liturgy on a weekly basis. A formal arrangement of sharing has been negotiated between the Romanian Orthodox community and the St Giles's DCC

### **2. The provision of sacred space for personal prayer and contemplation**

Each of our church centres is used on a daily basis by members of the public for groups and activities. The sanctuary area in St Augustine's, the Lady Chapel in St Giles' and the church space at St Luke's are all accessible areas for people to find space. In partnership with the Churches Conservation Trust, St Peter's Church is open daily for members of the public to use.

### **3. Pastoral work including visiting the sick and bereaved**

The church wardens and elders of the churches are encouraged to work alongside the ministry team to identify those in particular need within our congregation and community. Visits to these people are assigned at the weekly ministry team meeting. In addition to this, a formal pastoral visiting scheme operates at St Luke's Church. The lay members of St Giles's and St Augustine's are diligent in their care. Our licensed lay ministers take an active role in identifying and supporting those in need. Each of the ministry team conducts visits to those who are ill at home or in hospital. We have been fortunate to have Deborah McVey, our URC minister, on site at Addenbrooke's Hospital in her capacity as Hospital Chaplain.

#### *Residential homes*

Ministers have continued the links with several residential homes/day centres/sheltered housing projects within the parish. Team members regularly visit residents at Primrose Croft, Cambridge Manor Care Home, Victoria Homes, Storey's House and Edward House. Afternoon teas to which members of residential homes throughout the parish are especially invited have taken place occasionally at St Giles's and in St Luke's.

#### *Funerals and bereavement*

We willingly conduct funeral services and offer pastoral care and support for any person who has lived within our parish boundary; occasionally we take services for people who have had contact with the parish but now live elsewhere. As ministers we view the help we offer at

death and in bereavement as one of the greatest privileges of our ministry. We attempt to support churchgoers and non-churchgoers alike according to their need. This can be challenging in such a large parish. We respect the faith position and protect the privacy of the individuals and families with whom we work. The ministry team took 16 funeral services in the crematorium, 5 in church/chapel and there were 4 burials of ashes in the burial ground.

#### *Baptisms*

During the last year (April 2014- April 2015) there have been 8 baptisms of children in our churches. The Team Vicar attended a training day on the new Church of England 'Beginnings and Endings' Project which looks at good practice concerning christenings and funerals in the church, following on from the successful 'Your Church Wedding' Project <http://www.yourchurchwedding.org>

#### *Weddings*

During the last year the ministry team have conducted 2 marriage services.

#### **4. Teaching of Christianity through sermons, courses and small groups.**

Our sermons are usually based on the Common Lectionary.

In addition to lay and ordained preachers we are privileged to be a training base for students from the Cambridge Theological Federation of colleges. This year we have welcomed students from Westcott House, Ridley College, Westminster College and Wesley College. The students are assigned to members of the ministry team who are responsible for regular formal and informal supervision. Our church members are confident in giving positive feedback to students and it is invaluable to have a fresh perspective on the parish from our ordinands! As an ecumenical partnership we offer a diverse range of study groups, seasonal and otherwise, led by lay and ordained members, throughout the year.

#### **5. Schools**

There are strong links with St Luke's (VA) Primary School where clergy take an assembly every Thursday afternoon. This year Rev'd Ank Rigelsford and Rev'd DrvGeoff Dumbreck have been members of the governing body. A prayer group which meets at the school for parents, staff and friends has been led by our clergy team. The clergy team are also involved in supporting members of the school within the community, meeting with the head teacher and various staff members to discuss issues of inclusion and support and are present and assist at PTA events.

Mayfield School invite a member of the ministry team to come to the school and talk to them about Christianity and classes of children have visited both St Giles's and St Luke's as part of their religious studies curriculum.

Castle School have come to St Giles's Church three times in the past year, for their Easter, Harvest and Christmas services, which are led jointly by the head teacher and a member of the clergy team. These are always very joyful occasions, with much singing and acting; they are appreciated by all who attend them. We also visit Castle school when invited to contribute to RE projects.

## **6. Promotion of Christianity through the staging of events and meetings and use of our community spaces and community involvement.**

The ethos of the parish's community involvement is that of active and pro-active engagement with all parishioners, whether they are involved in church activities or not. Open and generous hospitality is practiced wherever and whenever it is needed and we strive to manage our buildings, financial and human resources to promote community understanding and cohesion. We work in partnership with community groups. Our meeting rooms are all available for the use of the general public and are widely used.

## **7. Charitable giving**

Charitable giving in our churches covers international, national and local schemes; at a local level congregational members are involved in the selection of charities.

St Augustine's: supports the Spitalfields Crypt Trust in London which helps people recovering from addiction; Cambridge Foodbank

St Luke's: supports different national and local charities which change on a quarterly basis.

Charities in 2014 receiving donations have been Magpas, Helimedix, Alzheimer's Research UK, Medecins sans Frontieres and Silveira House, Zimbabwe.

There are growing links with Lyn's House in De Freville Avenue, a community of young people inspired by the work of the worldwide L'Arche Movement founded by Jean Vanier.

St Giles': supports the Prison Fellowship's Angel Tree Project; the Cambridge Foodbank and Namuncha schools in Kenya

## **8. Communication**

*Website, leaflets and magazine:* Communication continues to be enhanced by our Parish Administrator and her work in the upkeep of our parish website. Sheila also edits our monthly magazine 'Ascension News'. Contact with the whole geographic community of our parish occurs with the commercial distribution of seasonal leaflets outlining Advent, Christmas, Lent and Easter services and activities to each home within our parish boundary.

*Social Media:* ChurchatCastle has a Twitter account, @churchatcastle and St Giles' has a Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/saintgileschurch>

The Parish's <http://www.achurchnearyou.com>

pages continue to provide information and contact details to a wide audience and allows people to check via their postcode whether they live in the parish.

## **9. Community Involvement**

The ethos of the parish's community involvement is that of active and pro-active engagement with all those who live in our parish, whether they are involved in church activities or not.

Open and generous hospitality is practised wherever and whenever it is needed and we strive to manage our buildings, financial and human resources to promote community understanding and cohesion.

All four churches in the parish are well used by their communities and there are low rental rates for community and charity groups.

**St Luke's** is a popular venue for community activities and has undergone regular renovation to continually improve its community facilities. The offices of COPE (Cambridgeshire Older People's Enterprise) are situated at St Luke's.

It is the venue for numerous children's activities including beaver, cubs and scouts and the ArC (Arbury Children's Centre) Chattertots under 5's group.

On alternate Mondays evenings during term-time, Live Wires meets in the church. Live Wires is a group run by church volunteers for children of Primary School age (c.25 children) with activities such as art and craft work, cooking, games and stories.

On Friday mornings throughout the year, Little Acorns meets, a group for carers with babies and toddlers (birth to 3 years). Everyone with young children is welcome to come along and there is no charge. The current group consists of 25+ carers and their children.

Children's holiday clubs (1-3 days) are also run by the parish at St Luke's during Christmas and Easter holidays.

A monthly community soup lunch at St Luke's provides the elderly and socially isolated living in the local community with a hot meal and social interaction.

**St Augustine's** is currently used by 20+ different community activities such as Brownies, Guides, toddler groups, Korean school, chess club and residents groups.

The church sits in a relatively affluent part of the city but there is a need for community space and a need to address social isolation, both of which are being provided by St Augustine's.

Every month a Community Lunch is served in the church by volunteers to c.20 mainly elderly and isolated people. Regular musical events and talks are offered free and have proved extremely popular with the local community.

There are strong links with the local PCSOs and the church has been used for community safety events. It is hoped to run a community café in the newly redeveloped and updated church building. Initial links have been made with residents on the Kings Court development (off Huntingdon Road) who suffer from a lack of facilities and social isolation. A Kings Court Coffee Morning has been arranged for April 2015 using a resident's flat as there are no local community facilities.

**St Giles'** is a popular location for student musicians and orchestras.

Residents of local care homes and their carers are invited to seasonal (Easter, Christmas and Summer) tea parties at St Giles'. St Giles' has been part of the Castle Hill Open Day since its inception; this is a free event which highlights the considerable history of the Castle Hill area.

St Giles' holds an annual Christmas Tree Festival where local schools, children's groups and businesses are invited to decorate the trees. The Parish Office which is staffed by a part-time administrator (who also administers the parish website) is based at St Giles' and the church is open to visitors most mornings.

The church building is shared with the Romanian Orthodox Church and has been used for the Cambridge Churches Homelessness Project, to which the whole parish and Church at Castle contributes volunteers.

The Team Vicar continues to attend the University's NW Cambridge Community Group, the Local Authorities' NW Quadrant Sub-Group and the Diocesan New Housing Group. She is also a member of a group which includes the Archdeacon, representatives from Westcott, Great St Mary's and Girton Parish and is looking at faith provision on the University site.

## CHURCH REPORTS

### St Augustine's

Sunday Service attendance remains strong, with 35 adults and 10 children attending regularly (Sunday School for children, thanks to Helen Cunnington and Jane Menzies). On Easter Day 2014, numbers rose to nearly 60, and 80 attended the pre-Christmas Carol Service.

This year has been dominated by our refurbishment and extension Project. Work has already been completed as follows:

Phase 1: (Back Kitchen, Toilets, Corridor, Upper Vestry Staircase), May-Sept 2014. Cost £80k

Phase 2: (Front Entrance, Main Kitchen, Disabled WC), July-Oct 2014. Cost £150k

For Phases 1 and 2, we received Grants of £50k from AmeyCESPA and £100k from Cambridge City Council, the balance being funded by St Augustine's and by loans from the PCC, plus so far over £7k from our own Buy A Brick appeal to the congregation and local residents.

The final Phase 3 (Side Extension) is estimated to cost £150k-£160k, of which £75k will be met by a further grant from Cambridge City Council. This leaves £80k as the target for our current fundraising campaign among commercial enterprises and a number of grant-awarding funds.

We hope to be able to complete the bulk of this work by the end of Summer 2015.

We note with gratitude the generous grant support we have received, a testimony to the crucial role which St Augustine's plays as a community facility in this quarter of Cambridge; the contributions made by concerts and other musical events; the offer of matched contributions from at least one local commercial enterprise, TTL plc, to a value of £20k; and, not least, the cohort of church members, residents and other volunteers who have given their support in so many ways.

Our premises are now used by about 30 groups and organizations, plus the local Residents' Associations, the monthly Community Lunches, and the Viennese Coffee House on New Year's Day (150 guests in 2015), plus numerous private parties. To improve communications, the DCC is considering appointing a liaison member of the Congregation for each group.

There are numerous activities to engage the focus of the local Community on what St Augustine's has to offer:

- Friday night talks (autumn/winter) on a huge range of topics, audience 50-70.
- Concerts held regularly during autumn/winter months, thanks to Philip Mead's numerous professional contacts (audience often 70+).
- St Augustine's Chamber Choir, performing widely round Cambridge and the Community Choir, supporting some of our services.
- New Front Hall: the 'café' treatment, and appropriate new furniture will be a significant amenity for regular Services and meetings and we are also considering an independent limited-hours Café, open to all.
- Workers' Breakfasts at St Giles', on summer Mondays, largely staffed by St Augustine's, bringing the Church to the 'commuting pedestrian' community.
- Darwin Green: we have established contact with some residents at King's Court (the first part of this big development), with the possibility of regular social events, starting with the coffee morning held on 14 April.

Traidcraft: The fortnightly stall in church has been thriving. It delivers £200+ annual profit donated to the Food Bank supplemented by the steady stream of gifts in kind collected in church.

Our support for the Spitalfield Crypt Trust in East London) continues but the collaboration with Christian Aid on their Peru Project ended during the year at the decision of CA. We are now looking for an alternative charity, probably supporting persecuted Christians.

We tried during the year to work up a twinning arrangement with West Walton (Wisbech Lynn Marshland Deanery); but it proved to be one thing too many when we were so heavily focussed on the buildings project. We will revisit it after the summer.

### **St Giles'**

This has been an extremely exciting and eventful year for St Giles'. Two developments are of particular significance: the launch of a Saturday evening service, and the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding between the Anglican and Romanian Orthodox congregations.

Saturday Nights at Saint Giles' is a Vigil Eucharist; it uses the prayers and readings for Sunday but is held at 6 pm the evening before. All are welcome, but it has been developed with two groups in mind: those who want to learn more about Christianity, and those who struggle to get to church on Sunday morning. The first service was held at the end of January, and we enjoyed an excellent sermon on 'becoming a Christian' by Fr Robert Mackley.

Since then, we have attracted a core group who come most weeks, and a much wider group who come on occasion (for instance, when they cannot get to the service they usually attend on Sunday). For the first time in years, St Giles' is offering weekly children's activities through Saturday Kids' Club, led by the Rev'd Ank Rigelsford. There is a committed serving team, and a group of cantors who lead the music under the supervision of our regular organist, Calum Zuckert.

Feedback about the service has been very positive, helped no doubt by the superb refreshments that have been prepared by members of St Giles'. Following a recent visit, the Director of Mission of Ely Diocese praised the 'creative and interactive nature' of the service. We hope that it will continue to grow in the weeks and months ahead. We are grateful to the Diocese's Local Mission Projects Fund for their financial support, and to the clergy and parishioners of St Mary the Less for helping to promote this new venture.

This time last year, we expressed our hope that the Romanian Orthodox Parish of St John the Evangelist would be able to commence weekly services at St Giles'. We are delighted that this has now happened, and on Sunday 4th January 2015 we signed an agreement for the year ahead. As well as identifying some specific targets, we committed ourselves to sharing together in the ministry of Christ to the world, to exploring opportunities to share in worship and mission, to fostering greater mutual understanding of our traditions, and to caring for the church building and its surroundings.

The Romanian Orthodox liturgy takes place after the Sunday Sung Eucharist, which continues to attract a hugely faithful congregation. The numbers on the electoral roll have grown this year as we have welcomed several new worshippers. Nonetheless, we were sorry to say

goodbye to two families who have left the area. Two of our long-standing servers, Richard Pick and John Jarvis, have retired from regular duties; we are glad that several others have joined the serving team. Peter Harland has been appointed Director of Music, leading our dedicated choir, with Michael Sharman continuing to play the organ once a month.

Attendance at weekday services has also been encouraging over the past twelve months. The Thursday morning Eucharist regularly attracts 9 or 10 people. During Lent, this was followed by a short Bible Study session, looking at the readings for the following Sunday. If there is sufficient interest, we will look at continuing this throughout the year. We have also begun to hold lunchtime Eucharists on major feast days, and for the first three days of Holy Week. We were pleased to welcome Fr Eric Simmons CR and Fr Raymond Tomkinson to lead Quiet Days, both of which were hugely stimulating and thought-provoking.

St Giles' is a popular place for the community to celebrate Advent, Christmas and Easter. The Christmas Tree festival attracted over 700 people in 2014, drawing large crowds for the opening, Advent carol service and Christingle service. It was our biggest ever, with 30 trees decorated by local businesses and organisations. Although this is very much a team effort, special thanks must go to Sylvia Pick, who has worked tirelessly as festival co-ordinator. More recently, over 130 people came to the Easter Monday Egg Hunt, which included craft activities and cake decorating. Every child was offered a colouring book with scenes from the Easter story.

Most of the preparation for the growing round of services and events takes place on Saturday morning, with members of the church helping to clean the church, tidy the garden, practice music, and set out service books. The number of people who come every week reflects the love that the members of St Giles' have for their church building. We have also held two special 'work days', which have enabled us to do more extensive gardening, especially along the path to the parish office.

Under the careful leadership of our churchwardens, Arthur Hibble and Christine Schmaus, great effort has been made to find funding for repairs and improvements. The guttering needs to be relined, and we are working on a permanent solution to drain the basement, which stands under 6"-12" of water all year round. We also need to replace our sound system, which is no longer fit for purpose. Work on the electrics is happily now complete, and new bicycle racks have been installed by the porch.

Although our primary focus must always be the worship of God and care for his people, we are not unaware of the financial challenges that affect the church. We are grateful to Roy Papworth for his continued diligence and hard work as treasurer. Our partnership with the Romanian Orthodox has helped us to increase our contribution towards the parish share, and we are looking to re-establish the Friends of St Giles' - both to raise money and to strengthen our links with the many people who use our building. We have appointed Sheila Rozeik as Bookings Co-ordinator, and are looking to increase revenue from hire of the church.

As we turn to the future, we hope and pray that St Giles' will continue to grow in strength. We are fortunate to have such a beautiful building in such a prominent location, and we look forward to welcoming many people through our doors in the coming year.

## **St Luke's United Reformed and Anglican Local Ecumenical Partnership (LEP)**

### **Area Partnership - URC**

URC Area Partnerships are groups of congregations geographically linked, providing a bridge between the individual congregations and Synod, holding meetings on issues of common interest during the year. The Partnerships are steered by a team of three Area Partnership Advocates, each appointed for a fixed term; on the departure of Lance Stone, Deborah McVey has become one of our Area Advocates.

With the imminent retirement of our URC Minister Deborah McVey from St Luke's and the current vacancy at Emmanuel URC in Trumpington Street, the current discussion within the URC in England concerning deployment of Ministers is of great relevance. Recent discussion has allocated quotas for each region. Eastern Region comes out badly on this score as currently having more Ministers caring for churches than will be available in the near future. In an area which approximates to Cambridgeshire (with 19 churches) there needs to be a reduction of 1.75 posts. How and where to lose Ministers? This is the dilemma.

As part of the process of determining where churches are to lose whole or part-time Ministers, St Luke's (along with all other regional URC churches) was asked in August to provide a 100 word description of St Luke's and its work. This proved to be a challenge, but also a unique bonding experience as a small group of us strove to do St Luke's justice. Two meetings of Area Partnership representatives from churches within our Region then met to suggest where posts might be lost or new pairing of churches developed.

A meeting was held in St Luke's Rectory on 25th November 2014, consisting mainly of ECC members, and Sunday School leaders. The sole topic discussed was a consideration of six possible scenarios for the retention of the URC presence at St Luke's originating from Eastern Moderator Revd Paul Whittle. The outcome of this was that Revd Canon Philipa King would prefer to work with a single dedicated URC Minister, and not a URC team. The meeting was assured that there would be consultation between the churches i.e. URC and Church of England whatever linkage was determined and that St Luke's as a whole would have a say in whom was appointed. Philipa King stressed that the presence of the URC would not be lost in St Luke's LEP as long as she was in post.

In Cambridge City there are two large URC churches within half a mile of each other but with entirely different 'flavours'. St Columba's Church in Downing Street is a URC Church from a Presbyterian, Church of Scotland background and Emmanuel Church in Trumpington Street comes from a Congregationalist background. Also situated to the south of the city is Fulbourn URC church which has for many years shared a Minister with one or another church of the City Churches, and is currently linked with St Columba's Church.

The present state of play (February 21, 2015) is that the Eastern Synod Moderator, the Minister of St Columba's and Interim Moderator at Emmanuel Church, along with one elder from each, are to meet and discuss how to 'arrange a useful and structured conversation' between the two churches. It is hoped to do this before Easter and then move quickly 'to said conversation, which may prove to be a one-off or may need to be a number of meetings'. Further moves will depend on this outcome.

### **Christian Aid 2014**

The House to House Collection for Christian Aid in 2014 collected £ 1,711.81, a slight increase on last year. About 25 people were involved in distributing and collecting the envelopes in the

35 streets allocated to St Luke's and then later counting the money. A collector from Emmanuel Church helped us once again this year. We are very grateful for his continued help with our collection. As in previous years we collected in teams in many streets. This is popular with our volunteers and an efficient use of time and resources.

There was a Street Collection in Cambridge City West area from a base at St Giles' Church on May 14, 16 and 17th 2014. Several people from St Luke's took part in this either collecting or looking after the base in St Giles. The Street Collection raised £668.87 and there was also an additional special donation of £500 in memory of a former collector.

In November 2014 there was a Special Collection in St Luke's for the Christian Aid Emergency Collection (Ebola) which raised £230.20. Thank you to all of you who have helped and donated time, energy and money

### **Church Secretaries' - URC**

#### *Statistics - comings and goings*

The URC Church Returns for 2014 showed a total membership of 50 (a decrease on the previous year), the majority of whom are Joint URC/Anglican members. In addition, there are 8 regular attendees who are not registered as members plus 2 regular dogs. The average attendance on Sunday mornings, including children, is now 38. Several of the more elderly in the congregation no longer find it possible to attend church regularly and their presence is greatly missed.

We were deeply saddened by the deaths of four of our members, Phyll Halls on 28th March, Alan Carlton-Smith on 1st April, Violet Gillett on 14 October and Sheila Allen on 3rd January. Phyll had been part of Victoria Road Congregational Church (later St Luke's URC) since Childhood and with her positive, cheerful and uncomplaining outlook and underlying sense of humour, continued her loyal support of St Luke's until ill-health made it difficult for her to attend on Sundays. Alan had joined St Luke's when he retired as a non-stipendiary priest (his second career); he was a great friend of John Baker and a dedicated participant at the Wednesday Eucharists as well as the Sunday Services. He was an erudite and colourful character, who suffered from failing eyesight, but this did not prevent him attending church. Sadly Vi had not been physically fit for many years, but never grumbled. She retained a close connection with St Luke's, supporting fund-raising efforts, and valuing the pastoral care of Eric Page, Ank and Margaret Cooper, who in turn gained much from their visits and from Vi's "bright and breezy" welcome. Sheila was a long-standing member of Victoria Road Congregational Church and later the united congregation, being an elder for some years and an assiduous pastoral visitor as well as playing the piano for church services and on numerous other occasions. Latterly, when driving into Cambridge became too much of a challenge, she returned to her local Congregational church in Litlington where she'd grown up and was later married. Her outward looking personality and concern for others in spite of her own increasing health problems made Sheila a joy to visit.

On a more cheerful note, the end of September saw Deborah McVey officiating at the wedding in St Luke's of Kerrie and Peter Kirkwood, students who had been attending our church for some time, even taking part in the big church clean before the Anniversary Service! Some months previously, there had been a marriage blessing for a couple known to Deborah from many years ago. During the year there were a couple of baptisms, although not of St Luke's families. A particularly joyful occasion was the confirmation of Eleanor Gibbs and her reception into full church membership on St Andrew's Day 30 November, the culmination of a short 'Exploring Faith' course which had been led by Deborah. As always it was good to

welcome old friends back to St Luke's, including Seiko Muramoto from Tokyo, on her regular visits to Cambridge. At the service on 10th August we had a visit from an old friend and former minister of Victoria Road URC Brian Sturtridge and his wife Pam. Happy news from former member Gordon Rouse was of his wedding to Gillian in Edinburgh on 25 October. Sadly for St Luke's, Sally Stone's husband Lance has left Emmanuel URC and taken up a post as Minister of the English Reformed Church in the centre of Amsterdam. Sally still works in Cambridge but spends the majority of weekends in the Netherlands and so is unable to be around on Sundays. However, she does still help out with Livewires and continues with her church secretary duties. We were sorry to say farewell to our theological students David Vyvyan from Westcott, and Mo Wills from Wesley House who left to take up a charge in Southend. We are delighted that John Summers continues to worship with us on Sundays accompanied by his daughter Audrey, and that a number of residents from Lyn's House in De Freville Avenue, a community of young people inspired by the work of the worldwide L'Arche Movement founded by Jean Vanier, attend on a regular basis.

### *Special services*

Our usual pattern of services continues on Sunday mornings with 10.30am family communion including Sunday School, apart from first Sunday of the month which is all-age and non-Eucharistic. An Iona-style service is held at 7pm on the first and third Sundays, and midweek at 9.30am there is a Eucharistic Service on Wednesdays and usually Morning Prayer on first Tuesdays. We continue to appreciate the variety of preaching provided by the ministry team, visiting ministers, and students training for the ministry in the various Cambridge theological colleges. This year Rev. Dr Ian Randall, an eminent British Baptist church historian was our guest speaker at the Anniversary Service on 14th September and preached on the subject of forgiveness; a buffet lunch was enjoyed afterwards. As usual, following the harvest service on 5th October, baskets were distributed to the sick or housebound and perishable items to Winter Comfort, which were much appreciated. Non-perishable food was delivered to the Cambridge City Foodbank in November, when it was very gratefully received after the surplus stocks donated by other Harvest Thanksgivings had begun to run out. The harvest decorations were particularly beautiful thanks to the arrangements made by Lyn Mason and the students who had taken part in her 'floral masterclass'. The same afternoon COPE and St. Luke's jointly hosted a Silver Sunday tea party which was a most enjoyable occasion. At the Advent Time-to-Remember Service on 29th November it was good to have contact again with some families who had been recently bereaved. Some weeks earlier St. Luke's had hosted the annual Road Peace service. A change to our regular pattern of services has been the increased frequency of URC style communion to once a month on the third Sunday rather than only on the fifth Sunday of the month as previously. We continue to engage ecumenically with the other churches of 'Church at Castle', particularly in joint services held three or four times a year, and in 2014 with a Pentecost picnic in St Giles' garden, joined by members of the Romanian Orthodox congregation. December was a busy time at the church with a lively and participatory nativity service, community carols and Christmas services at midnight and on Christmas morning, followed on 28th December by the united service for Church at Castle. The All-age service on 1 March, led jointly by Deborah McVey and David Vyvyan, focused entirely on Lyn's House, the local L'Arche community which is our chosen charity for this quarter. Several St Luke's people are regular guests at Lyn's house and they, with members of the community, gave us a great insight into the life and work which goes on there, inspired by the principles of Jean Vanier, their founder.

### *Church governance*

St Luke's Ecumenical Church Council (ECC) continues to meet on the first Tuesday of the month, except in August. Anyone in the congregation may ask for an item to be put on the agenda, but please do this in advance of the meeting. Membership of the ECC consists of the ministers, plus twelve members who are each elected for a period of three years. At the 2014 AGM Judith Crowe, Marie Lucchetta and Sue Mudie were elected and Sally Stone was co-opted to the ECC. Only those whose names are listed on the St Luke's Common Roll may nominate and vote for members of ECC, or stand for ECC membership. It is proposed that the Common Roll should be updated annually, in advance of ECC nominations.

Congregational Meetings take place bi-monthly after the morning service; they are the forum for information, discussion and certain decision-making, open to everyone in the congregation (although only those on the Common Roll may vote) and it is hoped that more people will attend and voice their opinions. The Annual General Meeting takes place in March/April, when reports from the various organisations and activities are presented and elections are held.

As last year, matters concerning the Church Centre have dominated much of the ECC deliberations. Special thanks are due to Frances Klein who as Church Warden has shouldered an immense burden of work during the past year - and to her husband Roger who has undertaken much of the practical work involved.

January's ECC meeting was set aside to discuss the role of elders and this is to be followed up at an 'Awayday' at St. Luke's for ECC members. Another issue of major importance this year for discussion at ECC and raised briefly at Church Meeting, has been a URC questionnaire, accompanied by a booklet "One plus One", sent to all the congregations for their response to the question of whether the United Reformed Church should grant permission for same-sex marriages to be offered in their church buildings, and by their ministers, should the individual minister and congregation so wish. On a point of interest, Rev. John Proctor is the new General Secretary of the United Reformed Church.

### *St Luke's Directory.*

The names and contact details of those who regularly attend St Luke's are included, with their consent, in the Directory, together with the name of their allocated Pastoral Visitor - a named individual from within the congregation who "keeps an eye out" for those on their list, particularly in times of illness. A Pastoral Visitors' meeting was held on 28 October, to update the Directory and begin to re-allocate pastoral visiting lists. The process of re-allocation is still ongoing as the number of visitors has fallen, often due to infirmity. The Directory is available to St Luke's members on request by email, with paper copies kept to a minimum.

### *Legacies and gifts*

These provide an important and welcome financial boost to St Luke's, often enabling enhancements to the worship area which would not otherwise be possible out of our day-to-day income. Since the AGM in 2014 we have received two legacies from former members who had died during the year. In recent years the glass screens, the hymnbook trolleys and the new amplification system have been made possible, along with other church fundraising efforts. Much-needed funds have also been raised through a summer cream-tea at May and Bill Block's and through our series of winter travel talks and themed suppers.

### *Looking outwards*

Individual members of Church at Castle, including St Luke's, have once again become involved

in the Night Haven Project for homeless people in Cambridge. This is an initiative from the churches to provide overflow accommodation for Jimmy's Night Shelter customers when the weather becomes too cold for people to survive the night on the streets. It is carefully organized, volunteer helpers are trained and Jimmy's staff give support. Individual churches offer their premises for a particular night along with a rota of volunteers to provide an evening meal and companionship. Castle Street Methodist church is the agreed premises on Wednesday nights for Church at Castle, and the project this winter will be running until the end of March. Hospitality closer to home includes a simple soup lunch in St Luke's on the fourth Wednesday of the month, provided mainly by members of the Ministry Team.

#### *URC vestry*

The Churches Conservation Trust are still in residence in the temporary office space which was found for them in the URC (South) Vestry, initially for one year. Deborah continues to use the substitute space provided by Philipa in the rectory, for which we are grateful. The CCT are good tenants, and boost St Luke's income. On Deborah's retirement in June and depending on what future arrangements are made, this situation may need to be revisited.

#### *Communication*

Communication within Church at Castle is channeled through various routes including the parish website, the monthly Newsletter, Ascension News, and the weekly church bulletins, all of which are edited and produced by the Parish Administrator Sheila Rozeik. News of St Luke's Church Family is sent monthly from ECC, so please do let them know if you have some special news which should be included. Each month Alistair McHarg posts out Newsletters to former members and friends who still wish to keep in touch with St Luke's and this year many recipients have been receiving their copy electronically by email.

#### *Review of St Luke's Local Ecumenical Partnership and of the Constitution*

Leading on from the Review of the LEP in 2013, a small group comprising Alison Taylor, May Block, Paul Gibbs, Philipa King and Deborah McVey was set up to peruse the current Constitution and to bring suggestions for its revision to ECC. After months of work on this, progress has stalled due to a pro-forma being received for Local Ecumenical Partnerships, which does not fit the St Luke's situation and will need amending by a small group including Deborah, Philipa and May Block, consulting with the County Ecumenical Officer. Connected with this, May had undertaken to produce a Standing Orders document which clarifies the actual procedures used on a daily basis in St Luke's - these had never been written at the time of the original Constitution. A huge amount of work has been involved, and a preliminary document has now been prepared for checking.

#### *Future scenarios.*

The 'elephant in the room' is the imminent retirement of Deborah McVey as our URC minister, and the question of provision of URC ministry at St Luke's after her retirement in June 2014. It seems no time at all since we were compiling the Pastorate Profile in our new ecumenical partnership, and then welcoming Deborah as our new URC minister, with 50% scoping. We have come a long way in our growing together in these eight years, due in no small part to Deborah's enthusiasm for ecumenism, combined with the strong support of Philipa for URC traditions. Deployment of ministers within the URC, and in Eastern Synod in particular, is an issue of major and pressing concern. Meantime, a new Pastorate Profile will be

prepared by a small group, and we now await guidance from the URC Eastern Synod Moderator on our way forward. Not to end on a note of gloom, we plan to celebrate Deborah's ministry with us by sharing a buffet lunch together after her final service as our minister on 14th June.

### *Churchwarden*

The pattern of worship has remained the same as last year with an All Age Service of the Word on the first Sunday of the month and Family Eucharists with Creche and Sunday School on other Sundays. Communion is distributed according to the URC tradition every third Sunday and Prayers of Healing are offered on the fourth Sunday. Iona Services are held in the evening on the second and fourth Sundays and the Eucharist is celebrated weekly on Wednesday mornings. There is a small Music Group which enhances services and a band of loyal helpers who provide beautiful floral displays and keep the church and ornaments clean. Thank you to all who have helped this year.

During 2014 there have been several visitors to the War Memorial in the Lady Chapel. The Memorial commemorates the many local men who died in the two World Wars of the 20th Century.

### *Fabric, Goods and Ornaments*

Following the Quinquennial Inspection in 2013, a continuous programme of work has been undertaken to address the urgent and some of the highly recommended works on the fabric, which were outlined in the Inspection Report. The NICEIC electrical inspection was carried out and all necessary electrical remedial work completed. The Emergency Lighting was upgraded along with the installation of new smoke and heat alarms and a new Fire Board. The annual Lightning Conductor test took place in December 2014. A safety lock was added to the Lift to prevent unauthorised use. The new central heating boiler, installed in January 2013, produced intermittent loud noises which persisted for many months and disturbed many in the neighbourhood. After prolonged investigations by Munro, our maintenance engineers, the faults in the boilers were eventually corrected by the manufacturers. Subsequently, problems with the pressure control, timing and lack of heat in the Upper Floor were rectified by the installation of a new pressure control unit, four new time clocks and a new pump and thermostat. Some plumbing repairs have been undertaken and small water heaters replaced. In a very brief but fierce storm in February 2015 a lot of water came in through the leaded window and between the double glazed panels at the West end of the church. Remedial action will be taken during the year if funds allow. A new Amplification System was purchased with a welcome grant from the Cambridge City Council (£2,000) and money raised by our Travel Talk Series in Spring 2014. Learning to use the new system has taken a little time but, correctly used, it is a great improvement on the old one. Unfortunately the Hearing Loop does not seem to function. The problem is being investigated and hopefully will be remedied very soon. A housing for the amplification system is planned. The organists reported that the organ manual was very heavy to play. The Organ Builders stripped the organ and reported that it was very dry. The organ is regularly tuned twice a year and the source of the dryness is a mystery. The piano in the church requires some repairs which will be dealt with during the year. Meanwhile, the piano is not moved without proper supervision. A number of church chairs have been repaired and some fitted with arms to the delight of several members of the congregation. The chairs receive a great deal of use and are moved around frequently. The glass doors between the Ramsey Hall and the Church were engraved by Geoff Thwaites with the names of the

donors, Margaret Mason and Kathleen Willson, who made possible the construction of the beautiful screen. A Faculty was obtained for this work. The churchyard is well looked after and the area at the west end of the building much used by the Montessori Nursery children. The noticeboards are, currently, in need of attention.

The insurers of the building inspected in December 2014 and were satisfied with the measures in place for the security and safety of the fabric of the building and the safe housing of the goods and ornaments, which were checked in summer 2014. Successful applications have been made to the AmeyCespa Community Fund (£15,540) and the Cambridge City Council S106 Community Development Capital (£30,000) for grants to help fund further Quinquennial work, including repairs to the exterior stonework and secondary glazing in some of the rooms on the ground floor and other improvements to the facilities, particularly storage. Faculties have been granted, where necessary. Some of the work will commence in 2015. Thanks are due to Alison Taylor for her considerable efforts to obtain these grants on behalf of St. Luke's. Community Centre. There are three major tenants, Smith's Children (a thriving Montessori Nursery), COPE (Cambridgeshire Older People's Enterprise) and the Churches Conservation Trust. Our regular users include The ArC Children's Centre, Scout, Cubs, Beavers, Yoga, Pilates, Poetry Group, Al Anon and AA, Sunflower Nursery and St. Luke's School events, Little Acorns, Livewires, Soup Lunches, Supper and Travel Talks, and a Knitting Group. There are musical events, some specifically for children, orchestral and folk concerts, country dancing rehearsals, orchestral and choral rehearsals as well as private functions and birthday parties. A 'Silver Sunday Afternoon Tea and Sing-along' for some 65 elderly people, which was a joint project with COPE, took place in October 2014 and a similar event is planned for April 2015. The church is used as a Polling Station for elections and for Community Consultations by local councillors. Other groups use the centre for meetings, seminars, workshops and training sessions. During the year we hosted in the Car Park the community art project 'Cabinet of Curiosities' which interacted with nearly all our regular users, and in the Church building a Ride and Stride Open Day in September for the Cambridgeshire Historic Churches Trust, and the Community Carol Service in December. In April 2014 we employed Heather Taplin as a part-time Booking Clerk. In September her hours were extended and her job expanded to include Centre Supervisor as well as Booking Clerk. This has enabled much better communication with our tenants and community users and greatly improved supervision of the building and the car park. In December Caroline Russell took over the cleaning duties and some new cleaning equipment was purchased. The father of one of the Beaver Scouts, Fletcher Brock, kindly volunteered to clean the carpet in the Ramsey Hall on a regular (three monthly) basis with his industrial cleaner. These changes have made an immense difference to the cleanliness and general attractiveness of the building. The ECC and the Churchwarden are very grateful for their efficient and dedicated work, behind the scenes.

### *Commitment for life*

Commitment for Life is the world development programme of the United Reformed Church. It encourages participating churches to take action, pray and give for people across the world but especially in our four partner countries of Bangladesh, Central America, Israel and the occupied Palestinian territory and Zimbabwe. Commitment for Life works in partnership with Christian Aid and the World Development Movement raising over half a million pounds a year from contributing churches to help alleviate the root causes of poverty. At St Luke's our Commitment for Life focus continues to be the country of Zimbabwe and over the years we have developed a particular concern for the work of Silveira House, a

Development Education Centre 20 kilometres east of the capital Harare. The centre recently celebrated 50 years of work in civics education, social justice, vocational skills training, peace building, advocacy and lobbying and leadership training. The organisation's vision is to help disadvantaged people to develop their potential so that they can become engaged in the struggle to improve their own lives and help their communities. It now has a Facebook page where you can see pictures and read first-hand information about the work they are doing. Commitment for Life also supports the work of the Dabane Trust which works with rural communities to develop simple and appropriate water abstraction systems. Since the beginning of the year the trust has introduced solar pumps to 18 irrigation schemes, helping farmers cultivate more land and expand their market gardens.

As this report is being written Robert Mugabe celebrates his 91st birthday with yet another lavish party - elephant and lion are rumoured to be on the menu! The EU has recently ended its 12 year sanctions in response to Zimbabwe's new progressive constitution and is making a financial commitment to the country. The money will go towards boosting production in agriculture and improving health services as well as assisting with governance and institution-building over the next six years. While the projects will be jointly discussed by the EU and government, they will still be implemented by agencies such as the UN Development Programme and World Bank. But if Zimbabwe meets conditions relating to good governance and the rule of law, it could eventually lead to resumption of direct budget support. Let us continue to keep ourselves informed about the situation in Zimbabwe so that we can offer prayers and financial support to the work of Silveira House and other projects which faithfully seek a prosperous, free and peaceful Zimbabwe.

### *Cracking Easter*

Cracking Easter ran for three mornings at the beginning of Holy Week. Fourteen children attended over the three days. Two aspects of the Easter story were told at each session interspersed with a variety of craft, cooking and games activities related to the Easter theme. The children were keen to participate and enjoyed the opportunity to carry out activities in the churchyard. The only drawback was the lack of a regular team of helpers.

### *Flower Ministry*

In spite of initiating the idea for sponsoring and of giving two lessons on arranging last year, the uptake was poor with only five donations and no extra people added to the rota. As a result of the lessons, we had plenty of help at Easter. Harvest, 5th October was also well supported but at Christmas, I was alone and unable to complete more than 2 arrangements due to ill health. I am happy to give two more lessons this year if it would be welcomed, but feel I must point out that none of the current arrangers are getting any younger and if more people do not come forward we shall soon find ourselves without flowers for some weeks in the year. I wonder if this is a matter of inclination, money and/or time. Oasis foam and tape and bowls/vases can be provided. Any suggestions would be welcomed. Lynette Mason

### *Iona Worship Group*

Since May 2014 the Iona-style services have moved to the 1st and 3rd Sundays in the month. This has allowed some of our Methodist friends from Castle Street to join us, which has proved a boost to our numbers. We have several loyal supporters who very rarely miss a service and thanks must go to Beryl who provides drinks afterwards. Usually we follow the services provided in the green Iona Worship Book, but occasionally use services prepared by our own

group in previous years or downloaded from the Iona website. The music we use comes from Common Ground or the various Wild Goose publications which feature songs by John Bell and Graham Maule.

### *Joint Church Council*

This group is formed of representatives from the two partners of St Luke's Local Ecumenical Partnership (LEP). In 2014 the United Reformed Church Eastern Moderator Revd Paul Whittle was in the Chair. The Church of England was represented by Archdeacon Ven. Hugh McCurdy who was standing in temporarily until the new Archdeacon Revd Dr Alex Hughes was in post. The discussion centred around four topics. Following the Declaration of Intent Review the constitution needed to be updated, as the original constitution no longer reflected the life of the Church at St Luke's. This is currently in progress.

It was suggested that Paul Whittle, Hugh McCurdy and Priscilla Barlow (Ecumenical Church officer) get together to explore a way to bring about shared finances at St Luke's.

An air of uncertainty hangs over St Luke's with Revd Deborah McVey due to retire in June. Currently the URC are undergoing a comprehensive review of deployment with Ministerial posts being lost, but Revd Paul Whittle did indicate that there would be a continuing URC Ministry at St Luke's in some form or another.

Revd Canon Philipa King raised the issue that within the Ecumenical Church Council (ECC) the role of the Church Warden was clearly defined, but not that of 'Elders' with respect to the fabric of the Church. This is to be a subject of discussion at an away-day for members of the ECC in March 2015.

Other Members present, May Block, Margaret Cooper, Judith Crowe, Paul Custerson, Paul Gibbs, Revd Canon Philipa King, Frances Kline, Alistair McHarg, Revd Deborah McVey, Alison Taylor, Revd Canon Prof David Thompson and Priscilla Barlow (by invitation).. May Block, Sec to JCC.

### *Little Acorns*

Little Acorns has had a successful eighth year with the largest numbers of babies and toddlers attending during the twelve month period. Over 116, together with their parents, relatives or carers, have come and enjoyed the facilities provided. Fortunately not all attend each week!! Several of the toddlers are bilingual with families coming from all over the world. Their parents enjoy the opportunity to meet with and chat to others in their own language. Old families have returned with new babies bringing news of older siblings now at nursery, pre school or in full time education. A number of the parents have donated baby seats, toys etc. to the group enabling replacement of equipment that has seen many years of service. These gifts are much appreciated. Once again the parents assisted the children in preparing decorations for the St. Giles' Christmas tree festival. This has become an annual activity for the group. The speech therapist continues to visit regularly and her attendance is welcomed by the parents as they are able to chat with her in an informal setting to discuss any perceived problems with their child's speech and language development.

## Minister's reflection at Annual Meeting of Church and Congregation March 2015

The ministers share, together with the ECC members, elders, pastoral visitors and others, in the **regular leading of worship** and **the pastoral care** of the congregation and any of those in the wider community who come within our orbit. Whilst the preparation and leading of worship is upfront and more obvious, the work of pastoral care is often unseen. A regular Tuesday morning meeting of the **ministry core team** takes place following prayers at 9.30am, which all can attend. The Methodist minister Alison Walker attends when she can. Once a month this is a wider team meeting, including lay ministers. Rotas and decisions on visiting and other church life matters for all the churches are talked through. There will need to be wider **lay URC representation** from June onwards, certainly through the time of Vacancy.

### Worship

When St Luke's **Worship Review** Group met last June we gathered up church members' thoughts on how worship could be enhanced. As a result Margaret Cooper led a session on **leading prayers of intercession**. We should encourage new people to lead and offer a helping hand at the start. The new **sound system** has made a huge difference, for those leading and for those in the congregation.

After a very full spring 2014 attendance, we now have noticeably **fewer children**, and have not made the opportunity for their involvement in leading prayers and making their own unique contribution to worship. This will be an ongoing concern.

**Music** is vital to vibrant worship, and we thank Paul and Marie for this ministry, it is so valued when the music group gets together to play. We should build on this and prioritise the learning of new songs and hymns to complement traditional ones. It is good to sing a new song in place of the theme intro. We have yet to progress with new service folders, using the shape of the liturgy as now, but with possibility of including alternative prayers of confession, words of forgiveness, Thanksgiving Prayer and post-communion prayers. Whilst this needs the oversight of the ministers, more help is needed to complete this task.

We have now raised money for a digital projector: this would enhance worship and enable the possibility of using photos, images and less paper!!

### Highlights:

- Songs of Praise - 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday of September,
- 9<sup>th</sup> Anniversary service preacher Revd Dr Ian Randall. And lunch!
- Visit of Revd Anna Banda from Zimbabwe in October
- The glorious rhyming Nativity in December.
- Lyn's House service in March . . .Janette and Julie with the microphone!

First Sunday services have continued to be prepared by a group, despite the absence of Sally.

- The Confirmation of Eleanor Gibbs on Advent Sunday. This followed an Exploring Faith course in which Jack Wood, Maddy and Eleanor Gibbs met regularly through the autumn. Jack is still hoping for Confirmation.
- I baptised one baby, Tyler in November. There have been others. I have set myself the task of updating the Cradle Roll before June. This has not been done for 10 years!

### **Pastoral liturgies:**

- 'RoadPeace' led by myself and Brendan Murrill a senior nurse from A&E at Addenbrooke's
- 'Time to Remember' for those recently bereaved was held in Advent rather than All Saints tide, both services supported well with hospitality of tea, refreshments; as have been several of the Funerals held here, Dorothy Pettitt, Phyll Halls, and the lunch before Sheila Allen's service at Litlington Chapel.
- Prayers with family from London who came to honour a great uncle 100 years after his death in the first weeks of the First World War.
- The wedding blessing for Wei and Fing, a Chinese couple in July.
- The marriage of Kerrie Taylor and Peter Kirkwood in September; this was conducted by K's college chaplain, I did the marriage preparation, meeting several times over the summer.
- Prayers are often offered at the Memory Cabinet or the Prayer Table with candle lighting on anniversaries and birthdays

**Pastoral care involves care for Students:** Mo Wills from Wesley House ended her placement in June with a good send off and is now at Southend in ministry, having appreciated her time with us. John Summers continues and Dan Trott has joined him from Westcott, these two supervised by Philipa. No student was forthcoming from Westminster College so I have not had to supervise.

Home visits have continued to those who need it, although I have none now who ask for home communion regularly. Pastoral care is given more often to those on the edge of church life, as well as to those when planning funerals and weddings, we are aware of that.

**Pastoral Visitors** do most of the care and contact with church members. There were two PV meetings, one in October to update the Directory, one recently to look specifically at how we fulfil this role.

I attended Ministers Spring School, a time combining **retreat, study** and companionship at Ditchingham with URC ministers last May, after which I stood down from Convening the Planning Group, only to be asked to consider replacing Lance Stone as an **APPA**. My name went to Synod, I was appointed in October. I now have a cluster of churches to care for including one, St Luke's.

In May I also attended the URC's Preparation for Retirement. It was suggested those close to retirement named a date to work towards, so mid June came into mind, so as to be free to have one more student from Westminster. This didn't transpire! The Moderator agreed to this date. It has been a privilege to wind down slowly, savouring a last St Luke's Harvest, last Christmas, and on. Now we are two and a half months from the date, I know it will be a wrench but know that 'rules is rules' and I have passed the URC required retirement age for paid ministers! I will still pop up I have no doubt of that!! I shall keep faith with Lyn's House once a month at least, and see Janette and Julie at that special place.

### **The impact of Deployment**

Ongoing URC ministry has been assured, but it will be different as ministry is likely to be shared with another church, that's nothing new and should not be feared, the ministry team here model inter-changeability! We are waiting for Emmanuel and St Columba's to give a clear lead as to their future way of collaborating, then we will be brought into the

picture. We should have the Pastorate Profile ready for that moment, so that progress can be made. St Luke's have given a clear steer to the Moderator of their hopes for St Luke's and I will keep on praying for a creative outcome and the right person to fill Rodney and my shoes. We must prize the witness to the wider church and those achievements of ecumenism at St Luke's and work and pray that this never be lost.

I have left till last one of the best things I feel I have done here, the idea of the **Knitting Group** which started in February, hasn't surprised me as I know it is the simplest things which catch on. But it has been a delight. I initiated it for a reason, knowing this works in other settings, it is a Fresh Expression!! The first meeting there were five of us, the second seven and the third there would have been nine if two had not been on holiday. Our first collaborative effort has been a comfort shawl which we will gift to Ernie Norman this week, Holy Week. This is a pastoral group without doubt, there is already a ministry of companionship and care for one another, plus the bonus of pastoral outreach as we gift items to people and places. Now I have picked up this skill once again after at least 30 years, I have got the bug! I will be glad to keep coming as a participant!!

The **Simple Soup Lunches** which I started at the beginning of ministry here have continued; Ank has been my constant colleague in this work, with back up from the other ministers and Sue. We need to have others on board with this as time goes by. It is another pastoral offer of companionship, hospitality and prayer for those who attend, including many from COPE. We give a small donation to the quarterly charity, it is a good boost to these funds.

Addenbrooke's Chaplaincy ministry, leading the Bereavement Care follow-up service, will continue for me for a season, so I don't grind to a total full stop in one go. I hope I can continue to be a link person when anyone here, or anyone in your wider world, has to attend Addenbrooke's, to make a difference to the experience.

It is good after hearing all the reports, to give thanks for the breadth and depth of life in St Luke's and beyond. This is the opportunity at least once a year to say thank you to all those who work tirelessly for God's kingdom to come both within this church and out into the neighbourhood and world. May we never cease to give thanks to God for one another and for those ways in which we can express the life of the kingdom. *Deborah McVey*

## **Proposed points of action for the forthcoming year**

- To engage fully and courageously with the needs of our communities, locally and globally
- To establish St Peter's Church as a community project, ensuring the building is kept as the quiet, spiritual space that so many value in the heart of the city
- To continue to use our church spaces as resources for the community.
- To continue to support the work of local, national and international charities
- To continue to strengthen links to and support of the pupils, parents and staff of our church school, St Luke's.
- To continue to work for good community facilities and relationships on new housing developments and to make links between existing and new residents in our parish
- To grow God's church by finding disciples and nurturing leaders
  - Seekers course at St Luke's
  - Pilgrim course at St Augustine's
  - Support those who are preparing for ordination and nurture those with a sense of calling
- To reach out to those using our church spaces
- 10% increased growth in parish share over the lifetime of Diocesan Strategy (Ely 2025)
- To deepen our commitment to God through word, worship and prayer
  - Saturday Vigil Service at St Giles' - new service for the dechurched and the only Anglican vigil service in city
  - Compline at St Peter's
  - Establish links with residents and worshipping communities on new housing developments in parish

## **Electoral Rolls**

In accordance with the Church Representation Rules ('CRR'), an updated roll has been prepared in advance of the annual parochial church meeting. Thanks are due to Caroline Wilson, Sylvia Pick, Sally Stone and Frances Klein at the three churches for their help in bringing the roll up to date.

During the last year four people have left the roll, having moved away, and one person has died. With the addition of new applicants during the last year, the new roll now includes 138 members, which is an increase of 10 on last year's roll.

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April 2015

*Philipa King, Janet Bunker*

*This report has been prepared following the guidelines laid down in The Charities Act 1993 and advice from the Charity Commission and the national church.*