

ANNUAL REPORTS FOR 2016

Parish Priest Report for 2016

As I begin this report I want to offer my thanks for all the support you have given me over the past year. Being Priest in Charge of St Michael's and St Luke's is the post I felt called to for some time and it is good to be among you all.

2016 has been a rollercoaster of a ride for us, with highs and lows during the year. We have had some wonderful moments which included; the parish celebration and lunch in July, marking 50 years of St Luke's in October and opening up our buildings for many events. It has been good to welcome Bishop Martin, Bishop Mike and Archdeacon Ian during the course of the year.

We have faced huge financial challenges head on and dealt with how we manage and spend our money. The major blow for us came at the year end when we sadly saw Carrie Darnell and Lindsay Blankley end their time as staff team members following redundancy from the Diocesan Board of Finance. There is so much we give thanks for what both Carrie and Lindsay have done for the parish over the last twelve years. Each in their own role has made connections and helped to build community. Some of the reports in this booklet are testament to their commitment while in post.

In November, we also shared the news that Philip Miller has a new appointment and we pray for Phil and Natalie as they begin their new ministry in the neighbouring benefice of Hundred River and Wainford. Phil has served the parish as; Reader, Curate and for a short time Associate Priest. Carrie, Lindsay and Phil have all made huge contributions to the parish of Beccles over the years and we thank God for each of them and pray for His blessing on their futures.

Just after I arrived we had a change of all four wardens and we thank Phil Filer, Doreen Page, Pippa Bridges and Roger Tuthill for all they contributed to the role and for the smooth hand over to the new wardens. I am extremely grateful to Ian Hollingsworth, Christopher Sparrow, Fran Tuck and Roger Bennett for standing as churchwardens. Over a difficult period, their combined support and wisdom and vision has been invaluable.

Jayne Hollingsworth has what I often describe as the 'most difficult church job' in that of Treasurer. To this area, Jayne brings, professionalism, accuracy and focus. We ended the year in a stronger position than where we began and paid more in Centenary share than we have for some time. Thank you to Jayne and those who assist with the finance and banking; Roger Bennett, Doreen Page, Margaret Page and Terri Gotts.

One boost to our finances came from the hard work of the fundraising group who, planned and delivered some great events. Generous giving also made such a difference to us meeting the financial demands. Thank you to all who have given in terms of time and money.

Thank you to all who have served on the PCC, Standing Committee, Deanery Synod, Diocesan Synod and various committees during the past year, we have faced some tough decisions prayerfully together. Thank you to Kate Cracknell our PCC Secretary for taking minutes and circulating documents.

We have this last year addressed how we communicate, with more content on the website, the introduction of Facebook and Twitter and a refreshed look to our printed material. Thanks to Phil Perry for overseeing the website, to Carrie Darnell, Margaret Spratt and Gill Ley who have proof read, printed and folded everything we have produced.

As a parish, we have looked at what we offer Sunday by Sunday in terms of worship. We made adjustments to the service pattern, introduced Feast at St Michael's and refreshed Café Church at St Luke's. Church Next Door continues to meet monthly at St Luke's and offers great way for families to plug into church. We are indebted to our ministry team of Clergy, Readers, Elders and retired Clergy who plan and deliver our worship week by week.

Sunday worship happens because of the commitment and hard work of a vast number of people. Thank you to welcomers, assistant wardens, readers, intercessors, prayer team, bell ringers, flower arrangers, cleaners, choir, musicians, those who work with children, tea and coffee and breakfast makers, those who organise the various rotas and furniture movers.

During the year, there have been plenty of opportunities to connect with others beyond the everyday life of the church through the occasional officers. These are some of the most significant ways in which the Church meets the people of the parish where they are. The Church in community and its identity are crucial to the mission and ministry of any parish.

We are also blessed with a good pastoral team who support those who are unable to be in church for whatever reason. Home Communion and visits are done by a good number of people and we have teams going to Wainford House, St George's and the White House every month.

Our buildings demand both time and money and I am grateful to all who maintain, repair and oversee what goes on in each church. Thank you to the buildings group at St Michael's and all who maintain the building at St Luke's. Thank you also to those who unlock and lock the churches on a regular basis and welcome visitors. The Friends of St Michael's continue to work hard in fundraising for the church building and I offer thanks on behalf of all of us for this work which makes a huge difference to the fabric and also to the community of people who gather for coffee and events throughout the year.

Growing in God has been used to help us shape our aims and priorities and I am pleased to say that we are making a difference in all the areas each church highlighted, as we seek to grow in depth, in number, in influence and grow younger.

One area where we have invested time and energy is through corporate prayer and gathering in Small Groups. There are regular times for morning prayer during the week that get a steady number, as well as the regular first Saturday prayers. Our network of Small Groups has expanded this year and I hope will continue to do so. Thanks to all who host and lead these regular times of fellowship, prayer and study.

Link Lunch Club, Monday Fellowship, Games nights and other activities all provide opportunities for fellowship and friendship. I hope that in 2017 we can do more things together socially.

Mission Focus keeps us outward looking in our mission, as we support projects both nationally and internationally. I offer thanks to Keith Wragg for his oversight of Mission Focus and those who lead on different areas of world mission. There is always a welcome for others to join in, pray and be informed in our faith through these gatherings.

As we begin 2017 we are in a very different place to where we began in 2016, we recognise that the changes have been painful and costly. We remain committed to Growing Younger and Growing in Number and while we ended the year not quite knowing how we would deliver things, I am pleased to say that people have stepped up and are working hard to ensure we have a ministry to and amongst children, young people and families. We have a new parish office set up in St Luke's staffed by volunteers to whom I am grateful.

There is much that we as a church have to give thanks for and many ways in which we live out our Christian faith. We are all called to play our part in the growth of God's Kingdom and that may be in a more visible role or it may be just as importantly a 'behind the scenes' role; both are equally valid and vital for a healthy church. It would be helpful to remind ourselves of Paul's words to the church in Corinth – *'...there should be no division in the body, but that its parts should have equal concern for each other.'* (1 Corinthians 12:25). We are in this together!

One of the exciting things about being a Christian is that our God is a God of surprises as well as being faithful and just. Just when all things appear to be calm God offers His church opportunities for service in ways that we haven't even thought about. The excitement in that is joining in God's mission even if that feels scary – because we can be assured He will equip us through His Holy Spirit. ***"Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it."*** (1 Corinthians 12:27) I thank God for the life we share together, for the often tough and brave decisions we have faced. But most especially this year, I want to say **Thank You to all of you** who support and encourage me in ministry as your Parish Priest.

God Bless you all.
Revd Rich Henderson
Priest in Charge

Treasurers Report 2016

2016 has been a challenging year, and we have overcome many obstacles along the way; however it has been a year where giving has increased and this is thanks to the tremendous support of you all.

Income - Regular giving has increased substantially this year to £80,278.98 - compared with just over £66,000 during 2015.

We have also been very lucky to receive some substantial donations *in addition to the above*, which total almost a further £30,000. Although these parishioners wish to remain anonymous, I would like to say a big thank you, your generosity is appreciated by us all.

The tremendous response to the Annual Gift Day appeal saw a further £7451.93 being donated.

My grateful thanks goes to those who have given in any way big or small to the parish over 2016 to support both St Michael's and St Luke's.

Rental income has increased slightly on 2015 to £14,627. This is a wonderful achievement. It shows that by utilising the facilities we have, we can generate a good income.

We have also received from HMRC a total of £38,691.33 in respect of Gift Aid Rebates - 2014/2015 (£20,048.97) and 2015/2016 (£18,642.36).

St Michael's was also in receipt of a tremendous legacy of just under £14,000, a very generous legacy.

Expenditure was down slightly on 2015. We have tried to cut expenditure in many areas, and hopefully we can continue this trend during 2017.

Despite pressures faced by so many, funds continue to be raised to help maintain both St Michael's and St Luke's. We must all be very grateful to those who raise funds for the parish in any way or form.

The Parish Share for 2016 requested by the Diocese was £114,043 of which we were able to pay £92,500. This left a shortfall of £21,543 but was a significant decrease on 2015, when our shortfall was £37,520

Our quota for 2017 is £64,179.

My thanks are due to all the team of people who help administer parish finances, they are in particular -

Roger Bennett who accounts for and banks monies received at St Luke's and in the Parish Office.

Doreen Page who accounts for and banks monies received at St Michael's.

Rich Henderson for his tremendous support to me.

We all know we face further challenges in 2017, but with the results that we have achieved in 2016, and with your generous financial support and substantial help, I am sure we can achieve what we need to.

Jayne Hollingsworth PCC Treasure)

Church Wardens' Annual Report St Michael's 2016

A great many individuals and groups have ensured once again that St Michael's continues as a focus for God's work in Beccles. Sincere thanks are extended to all involved including the Assistant Wardens, Welcomers (previously sidespeople), tea and coffee providers, the Monday cleaning team, the Flower Guild and the church Welcoming group. The Friends also continue to support many aspects of the church which is much appreciated.

The major buildings related work during the year was the extensive repairs to the north and south porches, related repairs to some of the south porch masonry and the south porch stairwell. The work was completed by Medieval Masonry on budget and on time and was overseen by our Buildings Project Officer Phil Filer.

Progress is being made towards gaining approval for the toilets in the north west corner of the church. It is anticipated that the Faculty for this work will be granted before the APCM. Prices will then be obtained for the work and funding will have to be raised. Consideration is being given to removing seven rows of pews at the west end of the church to create a large unified space. The architect for the "Loos and Pews" project is drawing up detailed plans for the PCC to consider.

The Terrace has been out of commission for almost two years. The PCC has now let a contract for it to be reinstated on a safe and temporary basis. The work is due to be completed by March 24th in time for Easter and the 'wedding season'.

The Quinquennial inspection of the building was carried out by the church's architect in August and his report was received in November. A number of matters need to be addressed over the next five years and the PCC is considering the report. The Archdeacon's Visitation took place in October - the Terrier and Inventory were signed at the time of the Visit.

There have been two working parties to tidy up the churchyard and good progress has been made. The Vestry has also been de-cluttered. There will be spring cleaning activities both inside the church and in the churchyard in due course.

Health and Safety at St Michael's

Andy House resigned as our Health and Safety Officer and we are currently without anyone formally in that role.

The required safety checks on the gas boiler in the Undercroft and the fire extinguishers have been carried out. All portable electrical items have been PAT tested and the electrical installation will be checked in the near future. The contract for this work has been let. It is now almost seven years since the last check which our insurers recommend should be undertaken every five years. An automatic light has been installed on the stairs. There have been no accidents recorded this last year.

Christopher Sparrow and Ian Hollingsworth

St Luke's Churchwardens Report 2016

It has been a steep learning curve for us as virgin churchwardens, and, although we were up for a challenge, had we known what the year ahead held, we might have thought twice about standing. However, with lots of prayer, encouragement and support we have come through the year feeling really happy at what has been accomplished.

The main event of the year was the arrival of Rich and his family in February to take up the leadership of the church and end our year of interregnum.

In October we had our 50th anniversary celebration, which included a Service of Rededication for the Church Elders, an open day with information and photographs of many of the activities, clubs and groups which take place in St Luke's, and a Celebration Service at which Rev'd Phil Miller was Licensed as Associate Priest to the Parish of Beccles. These were well supported by both churches and the local community, and there were well written, supportive articles in the local press.

With the realization that we could no longer afford to keep the Parish office in a separate building, plans were made to move the office into the former blue room in St Luke's, and with the help of some hardy volunteers from both churches and a very keen vicar, the room was redecorated and re-carpeted by the first week of January, as was the green room downstairs. The light on the cross on top of the church roof has been replaced, so it now works on a dusk to dawn basis, thus restoring the Light on the Hill. Various minor repairs have been carried out throughout the year for which we thank John Beedham and Ron Tuck, and the many others who have helped in any way.

Our thanks to all who have offered their help in covering some of the work left by the redundancies of Carrie and Lindsay. Without those who offer their help in so many ways we would be unable to function as we do, reaching out to so many in the community.

Fran Tuck and Roger Bennett

Mission Focus

The Mission Focus group meets on the third Thursday every other month at 7.30pm in the Undercroft at St Michael's. Our most important contribution to the life of our church family is to make us more aware of the wider Christian community outside Beccles. In each of our meetings we focus on our links with one of the groups or organisations that we have long supported as a church:

January – The Children's Society

March – The Diocese of Kagera, Tanzania

May – Christian Aid

July – Church Mission Society

September – Rukungiri Orphan Partnership

November – Bible Society

We are especially privileged to support the work of Catherine Lee in Taiwan, Rachel Ullmer in Pakistan and Margaret Birch in Mozambique. This year I am very grateful to Jayne Hollingsworth who has made it possible to give an early feedback to the congregation of how much money we have raised for each of these organisations. In this context, the highlight of the year was the special Harvest Appeal to support the installation of an irrigation system on the Rukungiri Farmland. Thanks to everyone's great generosity we were able to send off a cheque for £3240.25. We continue to emphasise the overriding importance of prayer by producing the quarterly Prayer Diary.

Keith Wragg

Bellringers' Report 2016

This year we have maintained Sunday service ringing, only failing to ring on one occasion when holidays and sickness took their toll. The number of weddings this year was unusually low and we rang for only 2 (though members of the band have helped out ringing for weddings at other towers). We were thrilled to have a new recruit aged 13, a complete beginner, very ably taught by Chrissie Pickup, and proving to be a very promising ringer, but once he'd completed his Duke of Edinburgh award, he ceased ringing. We hope he'll return in the future! We have been saddened by the death of Chris Plummer. Although a Worlingham ringer, he attended our practices regularly with Sarah, and we appreciated his good humour and advice. His thanksgiving service was at St Michael's and we were pleased to ring for the occasion.

We rang a quarter peal of Bob Doubles in October to consolidate method ringing for Ruth Lindsley and it was a first quarter (on the tenor) for Dominic Parkes. Congratulations to them both! We also entered a team for the district striking competition (the first time for many years) and were delighted to come 3rd out of 6 entries for call changes.

Faith Darch

Friends of St Michael's Church Annual Report

We have welcomed back Mrs Jan Kendrick as chairman this year and elected a new treasurer, Mrs Rachel Card, following the resignations of Mr Hugh Taylor and Mrs Pam Bontoft and our thanks go to them for all the work they have done.

This year the Friends have continued with Friday coffee, now an established and popular meeting place for more than church members alone and several new people have joined the pool of volunteers.

There have also been lunchtime concerts, organised with the help of Ian Hollingsworth, and stalls at the Christmas Fair and in the Market. Christmas cards have again been printed and sold, as well as notecards which will be available throughout the year at Friday coffee. Easter cards, featuring our East window Easter scenes, will be for sale during Lent. The Suffolk Historic Churches Trust has promised a grant towards the conservation work on the South Porch, payable once the work is done.

During 2016 much work was done on the South Porch, including repairs to the stairwell, and the pinnacle was reinstated. The Friends contributed £26,000 towards the cost of this work and have £28,000 in hand towards the target of £75,000 (excluding VAT) for the conservation work on the exterior. We look forward to another successful year with your support.

Faith Darch (Secretary)

Music at St Michael's

2016 has been another busy year for music at St Michael's. Our Choir, currently numbering some 28 members, have worked hard throughout the year singing music which spans some 7 centuries. We are one of an ever declining number of churches who still have a large, four-part, robed choir. We are very fortunate to be able to maintain all four singing voices – Soprano, Alto, Tenor and Bass.

Our year started with the arrival of our new Priest in Charge Revd. Rich Henderson. I, like some others at St Michael's knew Rich from his Curacy days at St Michael's and have been very pleased to welcome Rich back as Priest in Charge.

The choir have sung for the main Festivals during the year, as well as the Diocesan Choirs Festival sung at St Peter and St Paul in Eye; singing for several Weddings –two Funerals; a Summer Lunch-Time Concert and other events.

The Summer Lunch-Time concerts were again a success. We were pleased to welcome David Price from Thailand who gave an excellent recital. David was assistant organist at the Roman Catholic Cathedral in Norwich. We were also pleased to welcome two young groups of singers who gave concerts. One a local group trained by Mary Nicholson and the other a mixed group of graduates and under-graduates from Bristol University.

We are reaching a point where the Organ will have to undergo some restoration work, and we hope some modernization. The organ was last cleaned and overhauled in 1937 and has now reached the stage where it is becoming somewhat unreliable due to materials wearing out. Some working parts will have to be replaced or rebuilt and we hope to be able to incorporate a new Console, from which the organ will be played. The new Console would be situated in the main part of the church, enabling the organist to be part of the congregation during the services.

My thanks must go to all members of the Choir who give their time so generously and to Graham Smith who helps with the planning, preparation and presentation of all that we do.

Ian Hollingsworth

CHILDREN'S WORK

Pop In and Play

The pop-in-and-play group meets in the undercroft at St Michael's church every Thursday morning during term time. The group is lead by Penny Filer and the team consists of Sue Son, Diane Molineaux, Margaret Spratt, Cecile Radford and Sue Bailey.

The team has decided to hold a celebratory event called Pop-in-and-Eat, every school half-term, on Thursday from 2.00pm to 4.00pm. This is for both past and present Pop-in-and-Play adults and children. Sandwiches and cupcakes will be provided and crafts and games for older children. Invitations for the "Feast" service will be available and invitations will be circulated through our network of adults - There are 14 adults on the books including mothers, grandmothers, childminders and fathers and 23 children ranging from small babies to pre-school toddlers. Attendance varies from week to week; a lack of space will prevent us from any significant expansion. The feedback from adults is very positive and they say that they enjoy both the venue and the companionship; tea, coffee, biscuits, soft drinks and bread-sticks (for the children) are provided. The team believes that it is offering a very important service to the community including the opportunity to provide a listening, non-judgemental ear to people with often difficult family circumstances.

Penny Filer

St Luke's Parent and Toddler Group

The Toddler group continues to be a busy and lively group with plenty of activity. At the start of the year numbers remained high with around 25 adults and 35 children attending each week. However, a large group of children moved on to pre-school and school in the autumn and there has been a slight drop in attendance to around 20 adults and 30 children during this term. The session is a mix of free play, craft, and lots of chatter ending with song time.

Early in the year we were successful in bidding for some funding from the EDP Community chest. This was to purchase some large but light weight carpets for use at Toddlers. Three mats were purchased and have made setting up and clearing away a much less arduous task.

We managed to re-establish a link with the Children's Centre this term and one of their staff, Vanessa Rumsby-Finch attends the group on a fortnightly basis to support our work.

This year our annual Christmas party was attended by 30 adults and lots of children. Thank you to Father Christmas for his marathon of present giving at the party.

Kay March continues to be on the staff for Toddlers and this year has gradually taken on the leadership role which she will continue once I move on. Thank you to our volunteers, Fran Tuck, Janet Fisher, Lynn Rutter and Becky Woods for all their hard work in the kitchen and in tidying the building afterwards.

Get a Life Gang

At Get a Life Gang we have had a busy year with our numbers remaining high. We have a regular attendance of around 35 children and 8 leaders.

During the spring term we had a series on 'Teaching in the Gospel of Matthew' which included sessions on the Beatitudes, the Lord's Prayer and forgiveness.

During the Summer Term we used the Olympic and Paralympic values as a basis for the programme linking them with Bible stories. The theme of friendship included the stories of David and Jonathan, Peter and Jesus, and Ruth and Naomi. We used the illustration of the 'body of Christ' to look at equality and the stories of David and Goliath and Daniel and the Lions to think about courage.

Towards the end of the term the group held a 'Parents' session where they performed the story of David and Goliath and some songs. They also served their parents tea and cakes. At the end of the session Rich presented our 9 Year 6 leavers with their Bibles to remind them of their time with us. Thank you to everyone who contributed to the cost of purchasing these which was met in full.

Get a Life visited Ringsfield Hall the week before the end of term for a session of outdoor fun. This included den building, playing games and making fires (under close supervision!). It was a wonderful session and so good to see the children enjoying playing outside.

We ended the summer term with a party including a 'sit down' tea together.

In the autumn term we welcomed some new and younger children. They have proved to be enthusiastic and loyal members of Get a Life so far. During the autumn term we explored the story of Joseph and then later in the term began to look at some Christmas stories including Elizabeth and Zachariah, The Angel Gabriel, the Magi and the Inn keeper. We held an autumn session with the usual fun of apple bobbing, conker games, crafts and cooking.

In November we held our, now annual, Christingle evening with lots of crafts and games, and we heard about the work of the Children's society. This year the children all made Christingles and Rich lead us in a short, but very magical, Christingle service in a dark St Luke's!

At our Christmas craft session the children made Christmas decorations to give to folk at Monday fellowship, as well as making various crafts to take home. The end of term was celebrated with

our annual Christmas disco and party. Thank you to our young leaders and especially Liam for organising the music and some games for this.

The children have continued to enjoy many baking activities with June and Michelle and have made Pizzas, biscuits and buns. Molly and Steph have headed up the crafts and all things messy. Roger and Josh have been leading groups of children in playing various games including bingo and cards!

In November Steph organised our entry for the Hungate Christmas Tree festival. The group made a 'Golden Tree' to celebrate 50 years of St Luke's. Many thanks to Steph for helping the children to make the decorations and for setting up the tree for us.

We have continued to keep in touch with Rachel Ulmer who is currently working with CMS in Pakistan. We remember her in our prayers.

Thank you to the members of the team for their continued support, Roger Tuthill, June Grieve, Steph Harvey, Michelle Prior, Molly Martin and Josh Clouting. Thanks also go to Lynn Rutter, Rosie Tuthill, Vicky Ingram and Kay March for being willing to stand in when we have needed them. Thank you also to our young leaders, Liam Prior, Lewis Pigney, Maria Hill and Elena Wilson for all their enthusiasm and hard work.

Play Schemes

The Get a life team held two play schemes in 2016. The first had a 'Secret Agent' theme and explored the Easter themes of forgiveness and resurrection. In the summer we went on an 'Adventure Cruise'. This told the story of Jonah, there was lots of fun and laughter. Both play schemes were fully booked, with just over 60 children at each, and unfortunately we had to turn a number of children away. Thank you to the great team of people who helped with these events. Once again, a large number of young leaders played a vital role in leading and preparing for these events. A feature of this year was also our team of leaders who worked with children with particular needs, sometimes on a one to one basis, to enable them to join us for the week. This was an enormous blessing to everyone and a very big thank you to Hayley Henderson for her skill in this task. Thank you also to Doreen Page and Jenny Harrison for supporting individual children as needed.

J.A.F.F.A. Plus – at St Luke's (School years 5 – 8)

JAFFA plus continued to meet twice a month at St Luke's on a Thursday evening until July 2016. During the spring and summer terms term we focused on Mark's gospel looking at the 'Good news' he had to tell. We studied many stories including the healing of a blind man, Peter's confession and the Easter story. We have had a mix of sessions including; A celebration of the Queen's 90th birthday, cooking and craft sessions and a beach theme party.

During recent years the numbers for JAFFA have declined, mainly because there are no longer groups in Schools to feed into JAFFA Plus. During this year, most of the children still attending were either aged above the upper age limit or soon to be so! This, combined with the difficulty for leaders to fit this in meant that a decision was made to close this group. The remaining

children were all invited to join AWE and many of them have done so. The JAFFA team leaders enjoyed a vintage tea together at the Tally Ho at the end of the summer term.

Thank you to the JAFFA team, Jenny Harrison, Duncan Shearing, Kay March and Lindsay Blankley led by Wendy Shearing for their work with Jaffa. Thank you also to our two JAFFA plus young leaders, Sarah and Courtney for all their hard work.

A.W.E.

AWE has a wonderful group of young people who are a delight to work with. This year the group has grown in number again with 18 members on the register and a regular attendance of 15. The young people are part of the amazing team of young leaders that help at play schemes each year. Many of them have also helped out at the St Luke's celebration weekend and the Christmas Fayre.

The sessions are a mixture of social evenings and Bible focused sessions but always with something good to eat. From January to July we continued using the Christianity Explored materials which guided us through the gospel of Mark. These were very interesting and thought provoking sessions which included the themes of; Why Jesus came? What does Grace mean? Why did Jesus die? What does it mean to me?

Since September we have been following a course called 'Hanging out with Jesus'. This has included sessions on Martha and Mary, Kneeling with Jesus and Climbing down to Jesus.

There have been many social sessions this year including crafts, cooking, quizzes and a movie night. The young people held a coffee evening in July to raise money for their trip to the Diocesan Youth Event, 'Gather'. They planned and organised the event themselves including a quiz, raffle and games to entertain their guests. Thank you to all those who attended, or supported, the event. Over £200 was raised towards the cost of transport to Bury St Edmunds.

On Saturday 29th October 14 young people and 5 adults attended the first 'Gather' event at the Cathedral in Bury St Edmunds, the largest group from any church in the Diocese! There was a variety of activities on offer including prayer stations, drama, dance, cupcake decorating, bead crafts and card making, caged football and much more! The Youth for Christ band 'The Sense' were performing along with their dance group. Bishop Mike was the speaker for the event. A great time was had by all and future Gather events are planned over the coming years. I hope that we are able to support this initiative again.

Thank you to our team of AWE leaders, Serena Emberley, David Elliott, and Felicity Tate.

Sunday Club and crèche – St Luke's

During the year Fran, Sally and I have been available to lead any children who attend during the 10.30 service. Families continue to attend Café and Church Next Door most regularly with just a few other families attending on 'normal' Sundays. Small groups of children have met on many occasions throughout the year. Thank you to Fran and Sally for their commitment and to Hayley for her help when she has been at home. However, if this group is to grow in future, it needs support from other leaders who are prepared to help organise it on a more permanent basis.

Schools' Liaison

Easter Workshops

These took place at St Luke's for the ninth year running in the last week of the spring term. This year the workshop focused on the telling the story from Good Friday to Easter Sunday ending with a DVD clip from the Miracle maker. The workshop included Godly play, craft activities, and moving through stations to explore the different stories of the resurrection. There were 11 sessions with over 300 Year 3 and 4 children attending from St Benet's, Beccles Primary Academy, Albert Pye, Barnby and North Cove, Ringsfield, Brampton and Gillingham Primary schools. A wonderful team of people helped to make this possible.

Advent Journey

During the first week in Advent we offered Key stage 1 classes the chance to join us in an 'Advent journey'. This year the workshop was offered to our parish schools and Gillingham. All of our schools accepted the invitation to the workshop and we visited, Albert Pye, Beccles Primary Academy, St Benet's, Ravensmere and Gillingham Schools for 10 sessions in total.

The Journey began with the 'Story of God's Enormous Present' (Creation) and the story of 'The Three Roads'. The children were then divided into groups to explore the story. The activities included

1. Hearing how Isaiah told people that someone special was coming and how he pointed the way to Bethlehem.
2. Finding out how Jesus got his name and what his name means.
3. Dressing up as shepherds and hearing the shepherd's story.
4. Exploring the presents that the Kings took and thinking about why Christians give presents at Christmas.
5. Looking at various crib sets and identifying the people in them, exploring who is the most important and why
6. Making a 'present' box that became a crib to place baby Jesus in.

The session ended with a final story 'The mystery of Christmas' including the lighting of the Advent candles.

Once again, thank you to a great team of people who made this possible and to all the schools for making us so welcome.

School Services and Assemblies

We continue to have good links with our local schools. I have been leading Assemblies at Beccles Primary Academy, Ravensmere and Gillingham once a month throughout the year. Beccles Primary Academy also held their Harvest and Christmas services at St Luke's. Albert Pye and Ravensmere held a joint Christmas service at St Michael's on the last day of term. I have also been leading assemblies at Worlingham Primary and Barnby and North Cove primary once a month whilst these parishes continue to be 'in vacancy'.

Open the book

The Open the book team have continued to lead assemblies fortnightly in 4 local schools using the Lion story teller Bible and large props. The ecumenical team includes members from St Michael's and St Luke's, Salvation Army, Baptist Church and New Life Fellowship. We continue to be welcomed by our local schools. We are always looking for new members to help with this work.

Two new teams were established to work at Worlingham Primary and Barnby and North Cove whilst these parishes continue to be 'in vacancy'.

Training

RE Curriculum

During the year I attended two further residential Teachers' courses at Belsey Bridge organised by Helen Matter. These courses continued the project to write RE curriculum material that I have been involved with for several years. The units take a theological approach, helping children and teachers look at key concepts and beliefs of faith.

In October I went to a trial 'Belonging day' at the Cathedral based on some work that I had done for Helen Matter some years back. Helen Woodroffe is working on this to develop some workshops for churches to use on Baptism with schools.

I attended a course on 'Children and Bereavement' at the Cathedral in October.

First Aid

In November Steph Harvey attended Emergency first Aid training at Quiet Waters. Thank you to her for being prepared to do this.

Safeguarding

In February Jackie Ball and I attended safeguarding training in Ipswich so that we could become Diocesan Safeguarding trainers. Working together we have delivered 3 training sessions for the Diocese at Beccles.

Church Next Door

Church Next Door continues to be a wonderful blessing to St Luke's. It is full of life, fun, faith, laughter and cake! We have a group of around 20 families regularly attending with around 20-25 children and 20 adults at each service. Each session is a mix of worship, Bible stories and themes, crafts and activities, a prayer corner, and tea and cake. Church Next Door has a relaxed style where we explore our faith together.

This year Church next door has welcomed 3 children to Baptism which was celebrated with all the St Luke's church family.

Ron Tuck and Molly Martin have taken the ministerial leadership of this service over the last year working alongside myself.

Church Next Door sees itself as part of the St Luke's family and it has been a joy to welcome many of these families at Play schemes, and at Harvest, Mothering Sunday, and Christmas services where the children have played an important part in leading worship. Many of the children from

Church Next door attended the Crib service at St Michael's on Christmas Eve with several of them taking part.

Thanks also to our young helpers, particularly to Liam, Jordan and Lauren for their technical help.

Other Activities

During 2016 I have been a part of the new all age worship teams for Café at St Luke's and Feast at St Michael's. I have also helped to organise the Crib service at Michael's.

I was invited to go to tell a story at Sunbeams preschool in May. This was on the theme of growing and I told them the story of Farmer Tom waiting for his seeds to grow.

In October I presented the Godly play style story of Artaban, the other wise man, to Monday Fellowship.

I was a member of the Core team organising the Diocesan Youth Event 'Gather' that was held in October.

Lindsay Blankley Parish Children's Worker until December 2016

Thirst Youth Cafe Report for 2016

Young people on the roll at the end of 2016 were 68 female, 81 male. There were 30 indoor sessions and 5 outdoor sessions. The club shut on several occasions due to staff sickness. 1370 young people attended the club with many being regular attendees. This figure excluded those who took part in the Summer activities at Darby Park in Beccles.

The year was another busy year for the Thirst Team. We had some staff changes as we said goodbye to Gloria who we thank for her great work with Thirst. Gloria's curry was second to none and the young people enjoyed cooking this with her.

The first part of the year saw the young people take part in the usual celebration of A.A. Milne's birthday with Winnie the Pooh activities. During this time Andy assisted the club so it could remain open due to staff shortages. As we approached Mother's day the young people decorated ceramic pots. With the decorations completed soil was purchased along with violets to put in the pots.

Lauren spent many hours teaching origami making various Pokemon characters. The chasing of Pokemon around the building and out in the community was a favourite activity of many of the young people. The staff provided many safety messages to ensure young people were informed of their online safety as well as reminding them about crossing road while engrossed with their phones. While on the topic of online safety the computers always have the thinkuknow website as the home page to remind young people of who to contact or gain additional information on online safety. Lauren supported several young people with dyslexia and school work for which she has a particular skill that has benefited the club.

As the summer came we moved the young people down to Darby Park for fun and games. Football, rugby ball, circus skills, hoops, hoppers, sacks, beanbags were all part of the activities offered to young people. A mini Olympics was held with sack races, hopper races and bean bag

throwing. Goggles that mimic the effects of drinking too much alcohol were purchased and the young people spent time trying to get bean bags into hoops with little success. This generated a variety of conversations about the effects of alcohol and some of the potential dangers.

To add to this activity a discussion took place on what is a Unit and the confusion on different alcohols. Jo continued to be our cookery expert and assisted the young people with lots of different recipes and some old favourites. As the evenings got darker the young people took part in a variety of cooking from buns to pizza making. Pizzas require the young people to make their own pizza dough. Kneading is a new experience for many as is using yeast.

Dreamworx a Lowestoft Youth Project attended the club to support a group of young people to take part in a Young Leaders Course. We thank Emma from Dreamworx and Nicholas from Thirst for their hard work with the group. Two young leaders went on to run their own cookery session making Oreo Truffles which were a great success and very tasty.

Nicholas left the team nearer the end of the year heading for pastures new and we wish him well. The staff team lost two wonderful members of staff in Gloria Ward and Nicholas Ball. The staff team now consists of Carl Curtis, Lauren Lurkins, Jo Fulcher and Jackie Ball and we thank them for all their dedication to the young people who are fantastic.

The Management Committee works behind the scenes of Thirst and requires additional active new members for 2017. The Committee of 2016 was Rev Phil Millar, Andy Gowers, Richard Stubbings, Caroline Topping, Hugh Taylor and the members of staff. Thank you for the support you have given throughout the year. The role of the Committee is to gain funding to keep Thirst open, attend sessions to gain knowledge of the how Thirst operates and support staff to provide the best service possible to the young people of the area.

Jackie Ball (Senior Youth Worker)

Monday Fellowship

This fellowship group for St Michael's and St Luke's continues to meet weekly during term time. We still maintain a very good membership with an average of about 30 plus each week. It is good to have welcomed some new members during the year - but very sad to have said goodbye to others. In particular we were very shocked to learn of the sudden illness and passing of our former leader Barbara Read.

We have had some very good meetings covering a wide variety of topics and situations. We have shared in some very meaningful services, led by our own Ministry team, or visitors from nearby such as the recent visit of Katie Jackson from Harleston, who told us about her call to ministry in the Methodist Church.

During the Summer we had an outing to Cherry Lane for Cream Teas and in July to the little cinema at Sparrows Nest in Lowestoft. In the Spring we celebrated our Birthday with a Meal at St Luke's and then in October we were pleased to share in the 50 year celebrations of the Church, finding photographs of the early days of the group, but also showing what we do now with part of a display on favourite Scripture Promises. We still enjoy a number of 'Members Own' meetings. It's amazing what a wealth of experiences and Christian Testimony there is amongst so many quiet people!! We continue with our weekly bric a brac stall, which encourages us all to de-clutter, whilst providing regular pocket money for the groups outings etc.

Thanks as always to my committee of helpers. Brenda has slipped seamlessly and efficiently into the role of Treasurer and Anne continues to arrange transport to meetings, run the stall and collect monies for outings and Roger who helps me contact our speakers. Dianna is always there, helping behind the scenes, and Elaine types out the programmes and tea rotas. Also thank you to the programme printers, the coffee makers and to all who encourage and make this such a friendly and welcoming group. Do come and join us Mondays in term time at St Luke's at 2pm- you will be very welcome!!

Molly Martin

Link Lunch Club Report 2016

We have continued to meet weekly at St Luke's throughout the year, apart from a week off at Easter and Christmas and two weeks off in the summer. We have 61 members on our register this year, although our average weekly attendance is between 45 and 55. Unfortunately some of our older members have died, and three no longer come as they have moved into residential care, but eight new members have been made very welcome.

This year we had to reluctantly increase our charges, still providing a nutritious, home cooked, two course meal, tea or coffee, and the offer of a raffle ticket for £4. Door to door transport is provided for an extra £1. We were very grateful to receive a grant of £500 towards a new freezer from the EDP Treasure Chest Appeal, £250 from the Town Council, £300 from Rotary Club, and £277 from donations at the funeral of one of our members, Bernard Troth. We were also grateful to have a reduction in the amount of charges we pay each month from £250 to £200.

Our team of kitchen volunteers has increased, with three new helpers, plus three who can be called in an emergency. Without this great team of vegetable preparers, coffee makers, custard stirrers, gravy tasters, potato mashers, washers up, putters away, drivers, escorts, and, of course, Duncan, we would be unable to offer this happy social time each week to the church and community.

Fran Tuck



*You are the body of Christ!
Each one of you is a part of it.*