

ST COLUMBA, CROSSPOOL

A Review of 2018 in the Life of Our Church



Reports for the Annual Parish Church Meeting
28th April 2019

VICAR'S REPORT

I would like to start by saying a few thankyou's. The biggest one going to Wendy and Arthur who have been looking after and caring for our church for over 30 years and making it a beautiful environment to worship, socialise and work in. As well as this Wendy and Arthur have been a superb link to the Crosspool community as they seem to know everyone, and it is one of the reasons why St. Columba has been so well integrated into our local community. They have been wonderful characters to have around and will be greatly missed, but fortunately they will still be active members of the community.

I would also like to thank our church workers Tara Osborne and Michelle Foulkes who are great colleagues to work with and go above and beyond what is expected of them. They are both wonderfully proactive and help so many initiatives progress more quickly than expected.

Finally, I would like to thank all the volunteers who work so hard to make our church the lively and vibrant community it is. It will be hard to mention everybody as so many help in a myriad of ways but I would like to mention a few folk in particular: our churchwardens Richard Wales and Brenda Nelson together with George Wild their assistant warden for all their hard work – Richard has been particularly busy and done a fantastic job project managing the refurbishment of our upstairs and downstairs rooms, making the church building more user friendly and flexible; Steve Ellis, our reader who has put in a lot of work around staff appraisals, insurance terms and conditions, and keys, not to mention a variety of other important unsung tasks; Eddie Sherwood and Jacky Hodgson for the care and time they put in to look after our finances; and all the other members of the PCC for their valuable contribution to our ministry and for keeping the church running.

A look forward to 2019

A lot of progress has been made in 2018 in developing various areas of church life, not least our partnership with Stephen Hill, our children's work and our services. I feel this has laid the foundation for us to look outwards in 2019, with the aim of increasing our engagement with the community, including schools and attracting more people to our church. Like most churches, we face the challenge of a declining and ageing congregation, and in order to be sustainable in the future we need to attract younger people. To do this I believe we need to maintain and strive to improve traditional aspects of church which I believe we do well. This includes warm welcomes, attractive services, challenging and relevant preaching, a strong and sensitive music ministry, and attractive building, which is used by the community, good preparation and follow up for Baptisms and Funerals. However, alongside this I believe we also need to be creative and **reimagine** aspects of church for the future, (an example of this might be starting a new service or group to meet the needs of a particular set of people.) Whatever it is, I believe we need to embed our new initiatives in **listening prayer** so that we **'drink from our own well,'** (i.e. seek God's vision for our own unique context rather than copying what is done elsewhere) and that we are led and empowered by the Spirit, who is *'able to do immeasurably more than all we ask.'*

Although we need to prayerfully discern the details of what we will engage in during 2019 the following are areas, which are aligned to our value statement, which I believe we should focus on:

- To provide services which are engaging, accessible and inspiring for people who don't regularly go to church.

- To continue to develop and grow our children's, young families and young people's work with an aim to attract young people to church.
- To increase lay participation and encourage and support people in their gifts and calling.
- To increase engagement with the community through increased use of the building and involvement outside the community.
- To work on being known as an inclusive church which welcomes and celebrates diversity, providing a safe place for people to just be and to explore their faith.
- Continue to be an advocate for social justice.

Revd. Iain Lothian

WARDEN'S REPORT

Welcome to our Wardens report for 2019. Over the last year we have continued to keep the church and all its fixtures and fittings in working order. The Care in Crosspool office has had a re-vamp as has the upstairs office.

Iain continues his hard work with true commitment and dedication for both St. Columba and Stephen Hill churches and the local community. We also continue our relationship with St. Luke's Church, Lodge Moor, where Iain is curate. The SacREd space service held monthly, on a Sunday evening, continues to increase in numbers. This quiet meditational service has a continued place in our stressful busy lives.

We continue to forge strong relationships with Stephen Hill Church and have increased our shared services to twice monthly, also setting up a leadership team between the two churches so the team can meet regularly enabling strong relationships to develop and plan for social, pastoral and worship events. We look forward to building our churches together.

Wendy and Arthur stood down as caretakers earlier this year after 30 years of faithful service. This was celebrated with a party in January after a joint service with the Church family and members of Stephen Hill Church. We are pleased that Wendy with the help of Heidi and their team will continue to arrange the lovely flowers, and we thank all who contribute.

Tara Osborne our Children's Worker has worked hard to increase numbers of children and families joining Messy Church, which continues to go from strength to strength. She continues to welcome new people to Stepping Stones, which is run monthly, and she is committed to the young people within our church. We are very lucky to have her in the team.

We continue to be blessed by Steve Ellis, our lay reader. Steve has been invaluable over the last year due to his experience and continued commitment to the church as well as his thoughtfulness and continued support to us all.

Linda Furbey has retired from her official post as assistant priest but still continues her pastoral work within Lunch Club as well as running a bit of fund raising on the side! She conducts the Tuesday Communion Service before Lunch Club and still finds time to take Sunday services to assist Iain.

A big Thank you to Deputy Warden George, who is such a blessing to us. We also wish to thank Eddie Sherwood, Treasurer, for his continued commitment to our financial running of the Church as he tries to make our set budgets balance, and generally running our daily expenditure and also to Jackie Hodgson, Gift Aid secretary, over the past year they have adopted on-line banking.

We would also like to say we would also like to thank Briony Broome for her commitment to her role as Pastoral leader. She continues to contact and care for many of our congregation when they are in need.

Thank you to the Music group who works tirelessly; we are blessed to have so such talented musicians and singers.

Lunch Club is now every fortnight and we thank Liz Wales and Maggie Farrah who organise the meals and of course the team of enthusiastic helpers, washer uppers, bus drivers and Sue Turton who assists the drivers on the bus. Lunch Club has enjoyed outings to various places including the local café over the last year.

We would also like to thank Dora Dean for her years of service as PCC secretary who will be standing down at the 2019 APCM. She is planning to commit to social activities within the church. Also to Bill Hornby for his dedication to Mission and Outreach.

We thank all PCC members for their commitment throughout the year and for their contribution each individual makes to discussion and decision-making.

We continue to be grateful to the many people who give so generously of their time to serve on Sundays and throughout the week. Much of what is done is unseen but you are a real blessing to the church and to those you serve. Without your tremendous support, practical help and good humour, St.Columba Church would not be what it is such a loving community of people. We encourage more people to become involved.

We move forward into another Church year with faith and hope.

Brenda and Richard.

PCC REPORT

Our partnership with Stephen Hill continues to grow and flourish. Following The Beacon's decision to split back into its constituent churches, Stephen Hill has now formed its own church council and as well has decided members of the joint partnership team, which meets every two months. Members from St Columba's are Revd. Iain Lothian, Brenda Nelson/Richard Wales, Eddie Sherwood, Steve Ellis and Dora Deane.

Another priority over the last year has been to standardise hall fees and booking arrangements. This has led to an increase in hall bookings, particularly regular bookings, helping us to balance our books, which continues to be a focus and challenge for the PCC. This

has been in conjunction with improving some of our meeting rooms and buying new furniture for the welcome area.

Dora Deane

TREASURER

2018 was year three of the PCC's five year plan to balance our expenditure with our income. We continue to reduce the difference between our income and expenditure each year, so that we only use our legacy income to fund agreed mission priorities and to meet our common fund obligations.

In 2018 we were able to increase our day to day income in a few areas, but we also increased our day to day expenditure by £3,451 (when the costs of the windows project are excluded).

In 2018 we received a legacy gift of £50,000 from Joan Chibnall's will.

Overall, we were therefore able to achieve a surplus on unrestricted funds in 2018 of £34,034 and £620 on restricted funds.

Income.....Ups and Downs.

Our total income in 2018 was £154,419.

If we compare like for like, our 2018 income was £3,578 more than in 2017. Included in the 2018 income was a very generous individual donation from a church member.

There was a slight decrease of £90 in our planned giving and cash collections, and a significant drop of £2,473 income from the hire of the hall.

Source of income	Compared to 2017	Comments
Planned giving, cash collections and tax recoverable income	Down by £784	For 2019 promised giving is £53,886 which is £1,566 up on promised giving for 2018.
Church Hall Lettings	Down by £2,473.	The budget plan of 2019 assumes we will significantly increase this income.
Fees from funerals, weddings etc.	Up by £999	This is largely beyond our control
Total Income	Up by £42,020	As a result of Joan Chibnall's legacy, and a church member donation. There was an increase of £11,042 in 2017 and drops of £4,700 in 2016, and £9,500 in 2015.

Expenditure.....like for like expenditure increased over 2017.

Our total expenditure in 2018 was £119,765. This compares with an expenditure of £160,025 in 2017. This amounts to a decrease of £40,260. However, in 2017 we incurred significant and planned expenditure with the windows project. When we remove this cost, we can see our day to day expenditure has increased by £3,451 compared to 2017.

Source of expenditure	Compared to 2017	Comments
Staff costs	£2,831 more	Annual increases and additional hours. Some reductions planned for 2019 with retirement of caretaker.
Parish Share	£1,646 more	We gave a total of £62,626 in 2018.
Gas, electric, water	£1,555 more	Costs are likely to increase further in 2019
flat	£800 less	No major work was needed in 2018.
Printing, postage, stationary, Telephones, Wifi	£1,292 more	IT systems and software upgraded.
Equipment, repairs & maintenance	£2,717 less	We did buy new chairs and tables in the narthex.
Total Like for Like (excl windows project)	£3,451 more	This is an increase of 2.9% compared to a 2.4% saving in 2017.

Balance between income and expenditure..... *getting better.*

1. In 2018 we transferred £35,000 (£62,000 in 2017 and £49,000 in 2016) from our legacy investments into our bank account. This was to pay for agreed mission priority expenditure, and to provide for sufficient cash flow (so we don't go overdrawn!) The full details of how we have spent £35,000 of our legacy investments are detailed in the separate Statement of Financial Accounts.
2. We spent £34,654 less than our income in 2017. This compares to spending £47,626 more than our income in 2017.
3. If we remove the one-off £50,000 legacy received, we actually spent £15,346 more than our income, compared to £34,654 more in 2017. We are therefore going in the right direction!

Investments.....*would have been going down.*

Thanks to Joan Chibnall's legacy our investments have increased in 2018.

In 2018 we have the following investments, totalling £445,723.

- a. Money invested with the Church of England Funds totalling £90,741.
- b. A flat at Moorbank Rd, as part of the Margaret Yates' Legacy and valued at £160,000. It provided us with a net income of £4,216 in 2018 compared to £3,818 in 2017.
- c. Shares and cash managed on our behalf by Finn and Co, Stockbrokers. This was also from Margaret Yates' legacy. At 31/12/18 this was valued at £194,982 compared to £208,000 in 2017. This is a reduction of £13,018 and compares to a reduction of £44,456 in the previous year.

Our overall Balance in 2018

1. When we take account of accountancy items such as cash in bank, realised and unrealised share losses and gains, creditors and debtors at the year-end; the final balance amount being carried forward from 2018 into 2019 was £478,697. This compares to the carry forward figure from 2017 into 2018 of £445,172.
2. This means an overall increase in all our funds of £33,525 compared to a reduction of £39,367 in the previous year.

Eddie Sherwood

ELECTORAL ROLL REPORT

Over the twelve months since the last APCM, the addition of new members has balanced those removed from the roll, such that it remains at 113.

Peter Brown

FINANCE AND FABRIC COMMITTEE

The Finance & Fabric Committee is responsible to the Parochial Church Council (PCC) for the generation, stewardship and management of a revenue budget, the use of the capital investment funds, and for the flat at Moorbank Road which the PCC owns.

The Committee met on six occasions during the year and, in addition to receiving reports from the Treasurer, the members also received reports from the Gift Aid Secretary. The other matters considered by the committee during the year included the £50,000 bequeath from the Late Joan Chibnall, the planning of the annual stewardship giving review, the review of remuneration and expenses payments, and the management of our legacy investments. This included consideration of the written reports received and the Treasurer's discussions with Mr Alan Fleming from J M Finn and Co, our financial advisor who oversees our portfolio of shares (the Margaret Yates Legacy).

The meetings also considered a variety of issues relating to the fabric of the building, and these are outlined by the Wardens in their Annual Report.

Eddie Sherwood

SANCTUARY

In preparation for the services of the church, much work has to be done. The communion vessels are cleaned and polished, the linen washed and ironed, the candles trimmed, the brass and silver cleaned and polished. Occasionally, vessels have to be taken away for repair and materials have to be mended. This work is currently done mostly by the servers.

Servers play a useful role in the services of Holy Communion which take place here on the first, second and fifth Sundays in each month and on alternate Tuesday mornings. The servers are Jan Rose, John Norman and Peter Brown. Steve Ellis and Bill Hornby continue to act as eucharistic ministers, assisting with the chalice.

Many church jobs, once taken on, can seem to be a long-term commitment. Those who help in the sanctuary are pleased to do the work, for it is a privilege to serve in worship. Nevertheless, new blood would be most welcome.

John Norman

MISSION AND OUTREACH COMMITTEE

Our support for mission partners in Thailand and Uganda based on financial donations, prayer and regular e-mail contacts has continued throughout the past year. Our support for Jason and Tracy Day, our Church Mission Society (CMS) partners and their children, Ruby and Libby, began in 2007 before they moved to Thailand from Tansen Nursing School in Nepal. Some 5 years later Jason was offered a post with OMS (Overseas Mission Fellowship), a partner organisation of CMS, using his extensive experience in human resource management to provide support for Christian mission workers in many parts of East Asia. This has been a major challenge as many of the workers are in areas where Christian evangelism is discouraged and they may be in danger of persecution for their work. Tracy has worked in various volunteer roles as well as prioritising caring for their two children but has also recently taken on an extra responsibility as Child Protection Officer for OMF. Pressures on Christian groups in parts of the area for which Jason is responsible have increased in recent years while Jason and Tracy's financial situation has also become more difficult, largely because of changes in the value of sterling relative to the Thai baht. They repeatedly express their thanks to St. Columba's for the support they receive from both the Church as a whole and from individual members. Any individuals wishing to support them online in future can do so via churchmissionsociety.org/day

Our current Mission Aviation Fellowship (MAF) partners in East Africa, Geoff and Celia Linkleter and their daughter, Mim, began in 2015 following a long and fruitful partnership with Ian Sinkinson before Ian retired. Geoff continues his work as a maintenance engineer at Kajjansi, near Kampala in Uganda while Celia works in both the Junior and Senior School libraries nearby. Geoff's skill and commitment is particularly crucial to the work carried out by MAF and related charitable organisations such as UNESCO in serving the desperate needs of people in Uganda's massive refugee camps that provide help for thousands of refugees from oppression in the neighbouring states of South Sudan and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. His maintenance skills have also resulted in him spending time in Chad and other neighbouring countries in the recent past helping to maintain MAF services there.

David and Helen Smithers, whom we had been supporting in their work with Interserve in Birmingham, where they were seeking to establish improved relations between Christians and Muslims moved to Pakistan in 2017 with SIM (Serving in Mission) as their funding organisation. They and their children have recently returned to the UK, having spent about 2 years trying to improve their language skills and knowledge of Pakistani society. We look forward to hearing

more from them about their future efforts to use what they have learned now they are back in the UK.

More locally, our link with the Fir Vale Food Bank has continued and been markedly extended through our link with Stephen Hill Church. Our special Harvest collection was shared between the Food Bank and the Cathedral Archer Project and a pattern of regular donations to the bank from St. Columba's and Stephen Hill Churches is continuing.

As in previous years, the Committee made recommendations to PCC concerning the distribution of the 10% of our annual church income that is given to a mix of local, national and international charities that it is our policy to support each year. Details of charities helped in this way are given below. In addition, donations in response to specific appeals have been made during the year, e.g. to Christian Aid, the Disasters Emergency Committee and the Children's Society. Many thanks to all those who have given time or money to help with any of these efforts during the past year.

Bill Hornby

DONATIONS TO CHARITIES FROM ST. COLUMBA'S CHURCH

Church Mission Society (Mission Partners)	£1500
Mission Aviation Fellowship (Mission Partners)	£1000
Christian Aid	£1000
Serving in Mission (Mission Partners)	£600
The Bible Society	£400
Church Pastoral Aid Society	£200
Sheffield Churches Council for Community Care	£600
Sheffield Cathedral Archer Project	£100
Church Army	£400
Sheffield Schools Christian Worker Trust	£100
Tear Fund	£200
Practical Action	£300
Assist	£400
Sheffield Down Syndrome Support Group	£150
Alzheimer's Society	£300
St. Cuthbert's PCC (Food Bank)	£100
Care in Crosspool	£100
Sheffield Central Deaf Club	£100
St. Luke's Hospice	£300
Family Action	£100
Open Doors	£300
Montgomery Arts and Christian Centre	£300
Taste	£150
Bible Reading Fellowship (for Messy Church)	£100
St. Andrew's Church (Project Buzz)	£200
Save the Children (Rohingya Appeal)	£200
Spectrum Theatre	£100
Freedom from Torture	£200

Art Refuge UK	£100
Mary's Meals	£200
UK Sepsis Trust Ltd.	£100
Macmillan Cancer Support	£100

PASTORAL TEAM

The pastoral work at St. Columba continues to work organically as networks of friends and house groups look after one another. However, Briony Broome, our pastoral worker has helped ensure nobody 'falls through the gaps,' whilst being sensitive to the natural pastoral care which occurs already. Briony has also developed links with a number of voluntary organisations and community groups and is closely connected to Care in Crosspool, a wonderful community resource which operates from our church. Steve Ellis continues to support residents and staff at the Cairn Home by offering a regular Communion service and activities such as the quiz night.

In 2019 we hope to develop a group who have suffered loss, either recently or in the past who will meet monthly.

Briony Broome

HOME GROUPS

We have four house groups, one of which meets during the day and the other three during the evening, which meet monthly. They provide a strong sense of fellowship and care for one another and consist of Bible study, sharing thoughts in the light of people's own experience and understanding, prayer, light hearted and humorous conversation, occasional meals, summer BBQ's and last but not least tea and biscuits.

Topics studied this year have included: Paul's epistle to the Ephesians and James' epistle; the readings designated for services on the Sundays, including Old Testament readings (e.g. from Isaiah and Jeremiah) which often provide interesting contrasts with those from the New Testament; the feelings of fear in the stories of Jesus calming the storm and healing the possessed man; the beatitudes as recorded in Matthew Ch.5; A run through Mark's Gospel; Parables and Possessions, using the parables to explore life in our materialistic society; and Following Jesus, a Lifebuilder study helping to understand some of the implications of being a Christian in the modern world. A big thank you to Bill Hornby, George Wild, Les Outwin and Peter Brown for providing such a rich, diverse and fascinating set of topics.

New members are always welcome, and regular attendance optional!

Revd. Iain Lotian

DEVELOPMENT OF CHILDREN'S WORK

Our children's work has been one of the real successes this year, thanks to the leadership and energy of our children's worker Tara Osborne and a fantastic team of volunteers. Tara has developed our monthly All Age Worship service, a Sunday School called Blast Kids, Messy Church, Messy Extra, Open the book and helps Fiona Burton, who leads our pre-school children at Stepping Stones

1. **Blast Kids** meets twice a month on the second and fourth and Fifth Sunday of each month. Blast stands for **B**elieve, **L**earn **and** **S**eek **T**ruth and follows the new Christian Union books called SPLASH. Each session involves: Welcome with open conversation on the day's topic; games; a Bible story with a healthy snack; crafts; action songs; different kinds of interactive prayers. At present there are on average about 6 children who regularly attend.
2. **Messy Church** occurs monthly on the last Friday of every month and has been on the theme of the Fruits of the Spirit. Numbers have been high with the first one attracting 27 children and 35 adults, and the following ones attracting around 18 children and 17 adults. The sessions start with action songs followed by Bible teaching and a prayer. Then the children go through to do a variety of crafts and games in the hall. After this everybody goes back into church to share what the children have done and sing songs and finish with the grace. Finally, the children and guardians all come together to share in a meal.
3. **Stepping Stones** is a group for pre-school children, many of whom were baptised at St. Columba, and their guardians, who meet fortnightly on a Friday afternoon. Our thanks to Fiona Burton, (with the help of Tara Osborne, Marjorie Hill and Joan Telford), who runs it in such a sensitive way, providing a very relaxed, non-threatening space for parents and children to support one another and explore faith issues. On average there are about 8 children and 6 adults who regularly come. They are a very close-knit group who offer great support to one another.
4. **Messy Extra** is a new group that meets on the second Friday of every month. We watch a family movie and have a tuck shop and at the end of the film we give out a film for thought sheet which as a little bit of information on about the film and how it ties into one the bible stories. It then has three questions on it and gives families the chance to take the sheet home, open the bible together to read the story and answer the questions. When we first started this in October 2018, we had over 40 attend. This has been run by Tara Osborne and June Shaw but volunteers would be welcome.
5. **Open the book** involves re-enacting bible stories for the pupils of year 3 and 4 at Lydgate Junior School. We finish with an optional prayer. We have a group of people that come from different church backgrounds who are involved.
6. **Godly Play** is being developed by Tara and a team so that St. Columba becomes a **Godly Play Resource Centre** in 2019.
7. **Young people:** we have a small group of young people who meet up on occasions and have a lot of fun during games evenings, ten pin bowling and cycling to name a few of the activities we've done together. This group have helped the church: by raising funds for the windows with a bike ride around the Howden and Derwent reservoirs, with an optional swim in the river at Slippery Stones for the brave and foolhardy; by preparing the Christingle oranges – a long and arduous task; and helping during the services. We have still not come up with a name for this group but watch this space! We hope to develop these opportunities for young people to meet, have fun and be supported in their life and faith.

Rev. Iain Lothian

CHURCHES TOGETHER IN HALLAM

This is a group which meets two or three times a year, comprising members from the six local churches:

- St Francis
- The Beacon at Stephen Hill and Nether Green
- Tapton Congregational Church
- St John's Ranmoor
- St Luke's
- St Columba's

Usually, each church is represented by a clergy member and a lay person.

The group acts as a forum for review of events in individual churches, both events which have already taken place and events which are planned. Several events have been joint – pulpit swaps, a “prayer bookmark”, joint services, work with schools. A pilgrimage is scheduled for Good Friday, starting from St Luke's, finishing at St Columba's and stopping at St Francis on the way.

I think it is good that such a body meets regularly and seems to work.

John Norman

DEVELOPMENT OF PARTNERSHIP

The partnership between St. Columba has developed significantly. Stephen Hill has made the decision to leave the Beacon structure, where it was linked with Nether Green and Broomhill Methodist churches, in order to facilitate a strengthening of their partnership with St. Columba. The Methodist Circuit has made it clear that they will not appoint a new minister to Stephen Hill and the Diocese of Sheffield have said that the stipend awarded to the present Priest-in-Charge will go down to a half stipend. So, the plan is that the two churches will combine to fund a minister between the two churches. It is hoped that an advert for either an Anglican Priest or a Methodist Minister would be able to occur, but work needs to be done on this due to the different employment processes in the two churches.

One of the key decisions made has been to form a joint leadership team to prayerfully discern strategic ways forward for the partnership to develop and to encourage mission, growth and discipleship so that the two churches will be sustainable long into the future. The team will comprise of Will Fletcher, Mark Goodhand, Mary Parker, Bob Townrow, Lin Wilson and Neil Craig (Stephen Hill) and Iain Lothian, Steve Ellis, Dora Deane, Eddie Sherwood, Richard Wales and Brenda Nelson (St. Columba). The team will feed back to the existing structures of the two churches, eg. The PCC and Church Council.

At the heart of developing a vision and strategic way forward will be the joint values that we drew up at the joint partnership day on Saturday 14th October 2017, which are:

We are a community that endeavours:

- *To respond to God's love through worship, prayer and service*
- *To be friendly, inclusive and welcoming; celebrating human diversity in all its richness*
- *To create space for people to ask questions and grow in their faith through openness, struggle, prayer, laughter and worship*
- *To engage with our local area, city and world; committed to promoting justice, peace and solidarity.*

This year we have developed a joint pastoral prayer group led by Maureen Owen (Stephen Hill) and George Wild (St. Columba), which prays for people in need but also the partnership as a whole. We also continue to do a joint newsletter. We had well-attended Lent study groups, which were run jointly with Stephen Hill and Tipton Congregational Chapel and included many from St. Luke's, looking at the series 'Broken' about the life of a Catholic Priest in a poor urban parish. It was a challenging but profoundly thought-provoking course and there was very positive feedback on these sessions.

We have also valued the support, encouragement and partnership with St. Luke's, Lodge Moor and hope this continues to develop. Recently members of St. Columba and Stephen Hill met together with Chris Stebbing and the wardens and trustees of St. Luke's to increase partnership links. It was agreed that this would be a partnership of a 'lighter touch,' than the partnership between St. Columba's and Stephen Hill. However, we agreed on 8 areas where we thought increased working together could be developed:

1. Prayer with and for each other.
2. Tara (St. Columba children & Families worker) to meet with Altitude (St. Luke's Youth team) to help the fertilisation of ideas.
3. Increase pulpit swap between the churches to at least 3 times a year.
4. Develop strategies for growing the church younger (as ageing congregations were creating issues of future sustainability for all 3 churches).
5. Shared courses (Lent study groups etc.)
6. Possibility of certain posts being held across partnerships e.g. Safeguarding, Health & Safety Officer, I.T. specialist.
7. Organising of a few social events together.
8. Above all for us to be 'Friends up the road' or 'Friends down the road,' to offer one another advice, expertise and support when needed.

Rev. Iain Lothian

SACRED SPACE

Our reflective, creative and experimental service once a month designed to develop spirituality among churchgoers, but also to be accessible to those who do not usually attend church, has gone from strength to strength. There are about 50 people who attend overall with about 25 - 30 at each service, attracting people from a variety of church backgrounds including Church Army, Quaker, Roman Catholic, Free Church and Anglican traditions, as well as non-church goers. Recently we have been invited to other churches to model the service and again it has been well received.

The evenings don't follow an exact format, but often include times of quiet, a meditation to still minds, a ritual that people are invited to partake in (there is no obligation to participate), poems & writings, and a one-minute sermon, all interspersed with lots of silence. From conversations, there is a need to provide people with quiet, contemplative, communal space to just be; a time for people to let go of their 'to do' lists, and allow them to rest in the silence, music and stillness that is provided. I like to see it as a strategic retreat from the world for an hour so that people can RE-engage with their lives more fully and intentionally. My thanks go to Adrian Scott, Anesia Cook and Monica Sutton who help plan the evenings.

Revd. Iain Lothian

SIGNING

Over the year I have been meeting with Hazel at her flat once a week for a signing lesson. I feel I am slowly getting a grip on the general conversations we have been learning. I hope to progress in the months to come and start signing to worship music and encouraging signing at Blast kids. Hazel has been an amazing support and a very good teacher. She is such a blessing to me and allows me to learn at my own pace.

Tara Osborne

SOUP RUN

Our contribution to the Churches' soup run continues to be appreciated by the people who come down for soup, sandwich, snacks, clothing, and bedding. Some engage in conversation with us more than others; whilst others chat and occasionally argue amongst themselves!

We have a great team of volunteers some of whom make the sandwiches, and others come down to distribute and chat with the customers. This is truly a 'Crosspool' team with non-churchgoers alongside members of St Columba's, Stephen Hill and Tapton Congregational Churches.

Our thanks to everyone at St Columba for their continuing support with prayers, donations and volunteering.

Eddie Sherwood

FOOD BANK

The links with the Firvale foodbank have become stronger. Stephen Hill has combined with us so that we jointly take items to St. Cuthbert's church. Monica Sutton, the Priest at St. Cuthberts, has come to preach and talk to us about what happens and also spoke very movingly about the food bank at a SacREd Space service. As well as providing food there is also a Citizens Advice Bureau, English Language classes and free haircuts available.

Revd. Iain Lothian

LUNCH CLUB

This year has seen major changes at Lunch Club. In March Gill Wright announced she would be retiring from her duties as cook and administrator after the Easter break we were sad to see her go but we duly said goodbye and thanked for her many years devoted service.

For the Summer Term we continued on a weekly basis with Liz and Maggie doubling up their cooking duties, ably assisted by two regular teams of helpers. Meanwhile Linda and Pauline covered the administration duties on a fortnightly basis. We finished the year with two Summer Special events which included games, a sing song and a picnic lunch.

During this time we looked for possible ways to work in conjunction with the Lunch club at Stephen Hill Methodist Church. Unfortunately this was not possible because their club runs on funding from Sheffield Council and with a different system of volunteers.

At the end of the Summer Term Bill and Pauline Hornby also retired from the Lunch Club after very many years of commitment and care for the members. They were presented with gifts and our thanks for all their hard work. We will miss them

We also said goodbye and thanks to Richard Wales, who was our very first bus driver at the club. Richard is still in the background helping at the club in many ways.

After much discussion and searching for extra cooks it was decided that in order for the Lunch Club to continue, we would have to return to a fortnightly basis and combine the two groups of diners.

So in the autumn of 2018 the new Lunch Club was launched with Liz, Maggie and their team in the kitchen and Linda taking over the administration duties.

We now have 38 people on our lists and several people on our waiting list. It's good to see the hall full and people seem to have enjoyed getting together as one group.

At the end of December, 45 people went to The Crosspool Tavern for a Festive Meal .It was a happy occasion and Lunch Club was able to subsidise the cost from our weekly takings.

The Lunch Club continues to thrive because of our team, who regularly give their time on a voluntary basis.

So a BIG THANKS to;

- Liz and Maggie who shop for and produce delicious meals
- Sue Turton , Richard Roberts ,Tony Hurrell and Eddie Sherwood who look after our bus passengers
- George and John Norman who cope with endless amounts of washing up so cheerfully
- Dot, Ann, June, Sally, Jenny and Kate who help in so many ways to make the club run smoothly.

Revd. Linda Furbey

MUSIC

In the previous year there have been few alterations to the general format of the worship, which is not necessarily a bad thing if everyone is happy with things as they are, but often good to introduce some change to prevent falling into mere “routines” which could detract from the higher purpose of bringing worship to God.

Some analysis as follows:

- Music group practice for half an hour before each service, standard procedure.
- Fourth Sunday of the month no music required due to joint service at Stephen Hill, although JC and Mike have joined in with organist there on one occasion so far.
- Second Sunday of the month joint service with Stephen Hill at St. Columba, music group accompanied by members of Stephen Hill congregation.
- Organ not used during year although always possibility of including, but piano is more practical and versatile.
- AHON used for majority of songs/ hymns. Not much scope left for introduction of new songs from this book. A few new songs introduced by Tara: - where this is the case they work better if music group have access to the sheet music rather than video clips being used to lead the congregation.
- Two recent services incorporated worship songs being “merged” together to give a seamless transition. This is something that has a lot more scope to be developed as many of the songs in AHON could be mixed/ matched in a variety of ways.
- Informal services in the church hall have been a new addition and cause no additional difficulties from perspective of music as piano is easy to relocate.
- Plans made (but so far not implemented) to introduce new sanctuses as only really 3 alternatives currently for the Gloria/ Holy Holy sections. Barriers to this are existing examples are often not written for instruments, (rather “a Capella”) but may be possible to adapt some with time to work on. Iain to supply Iona music book to potentially source from.
- Plans to introduce new and more appropriate children’s action songs have been mentioned. Supplied “Junior Praise” as potential source of material with large selection of perfectly suited songs. Yet to use one of these in a service; this would be good to initiate soon as lots of great possibilities.
- JC potentially capable of adapting/ producing music for new songs from video clips (where sheet music cannot be obtained) if given time to work on them. This is another potential option for sourcing new songs for the future.

As always, happy to try and work with any suggestions and feedback received.

Jonathan Carr

OPEN DOORS

Little had changed since last year's report. The group is still meeting on the first Tuesday of every month either at George's or Vivien's for prayers and also sending cards of encouragement to our persecuted brothers and sisters.

Unfortunately the overhaul report from Open Doors is that the persecution has become much worse, some governments have now declared their wish to remove Christianity from their respective countries. So we are very much in need of extra prayer for traumatic situations of our brothers and sisters. Sadly the support from the churches in the British Isles is not all that it could be. If anyone would like to receive the weekly e-mail prayer alert from Open Doors please contact us so we can include you on our circulation list or we can also provide a hard copy for your prayer time.

Life can be very tough especially for those living in the urban areas in Africa, South East Asia Malaysia, Indonesia, Vietnam Cambodia and Laos where many families are severely treated and cast out from society.

The good news is however many hundreds are giving their lives to Christ regardless of the persecution from family, friends and leaders of other religions.

Gill and Peter Wright

DEVELOPMENT OF OUR WORSHIP

We continue to worship together with Stephen Hill four times a month. On the second and fourth Sunday we have a joint main communion service together, and on the first and third Sunday of each month we have our early morning communions together.

This Christmas we made a concerted effort to encourage non-church goers to church and involve the community and this proved successful with a significant increase in numbers from people outside our regular congregation attending. A number of new initiatives were started over Christmas including: a café style church service; a labyrinth with interactive stations around, where the church was open for 10 days over Advent for people to have some space; a Christingle service; a nativity play with puppets, where the church was full to capacity; two carol services – one contemporary and one traditional, both well attended; and a Christmas card competition involving the local schools and uniform groups who use the church. For the carol service we invited Tapton Brass Band to play and had readers from the local schools and community. The feedback for these was good with a couple of visitors saying that they felt more comfortable in a café style service than a 'normal' service in church, and the following quote came from a visitor to our carol service:

'Thank you for asking me to come to your carol service. My friend and I really enjoyed it. It was a lovely service and I'm so glad I was part of it. That service is definitely going to become part of our Christmas routine from now on.'

As Priest-in-charge I am very grateful for the willingness of the congregation to try new styles of worship that aim to engage more people. I think is vital that we make our services attractive, accessible and we reach a place where we are both comfortable and excited about bringing

visitors to, without losing the challenge and life that the Gospel calls us. I think we have a great basis to work from with a great music group where our keyboard player Jonathan Carr, saxophonist Michael Nelson and our singers enliven our worship every week. I am also very thankful to John Norman, Jan Rose and Peter Brown who look after the sanctuary duties, and prepare for services with such care and close attention to detail.

Revd. Iain Lothian

DEVELOPMENT OF I.T

The upgrade of our computer system has certainly increased the ability of the office staff to work efficiently, effectively and in a flexible way. There were several aims of the upgrade:

1. To speed up broadband speed and ensure suitable hardware is in place for Office staff.
2. Integrate computer system within the office.
3. To centralise data so that important information is not stored on home computers.
4. To increase security of data, in line with new data protection laws.
5. To increase lay involvement and participation by providing remote access to more congregation members.
6. To help develop the various teams at St. Columba and enhance communication of people within teams.

On reflection the upgrade has certainly facilitated 1-4. However, there is still work to do on 5-6, which is to increase lay involvement and increase communication between teams. It is hoped that ESP will come and do some training in 2019 to help us move forward with these two aims. But overall there is no doubt it has successfully helped us to facilitate the mission and aims of St. Columba, centralise data and make us more secure.

One of the benefits of the new computer system has been the centralised booking system of the hall, kitchen and church, which Michelle Foulkes has created, leading to an increase in hall bookings.

Revd. Iain Lothian

And Finally...

As a community we endeavour to:

- Be an inclusive church which celebrates human diversity and welcomes all.
- Create a space where people can grow in their faith, can question and discover the sacred in life through openness, struggle, laughter, prayer and worship.
- Support one another through mutual care and hospitality.
- Be alert to the needs of our local community and the wider world, having a commitment to be in solidarity with those who are marginalised and isolated.
- Celebrate life in all its fullness and cherish creation.

We don't manage it all the time, so when we stumble and fall, we pick ourselves up, dust ourselves off, and try again.