

# Tas Valley Team Ministry

## Review of the year 2014



**WHO CARES?**



Bishop Graham blessing the new bells at Saxlingham Nethergate, Easter Gardens at Newton Flotman School, Who Cares? Logo, Swainsthorpe Cafe Church, Prayer Board at Shotesham St Mary, Alpha Group in Tharston, Live Nativity in Tasburgh, our new Team Vicar Rev Dawn Davidson

# Our Benefice Family - What We Do Together

## WORSHIP AND PRAYER (Benefice Wide)

**A Rhythm of Prayer** Worship and prayer needs to be at the heart of all we do as a benefice. There is a daily rhythm of prayer at 9.30am around the benefice:

Monday - St Mary's, Newton Flotman  
Tuesday - St Mary's Saxlingham Nethergate  
Wednesday - St Mary's Tasburgh  
Thursday - In Schools before Open the Book Assemblies  
Friday - St Mary's Newton Flotman

**Benefice Services** We came together for the following services in 2014

- Rev Adrian Miller's leaving service at Tasburgh in January
- Monthly Evening Praise, held mainly at St Peter's Swainsthorpe, from Oct2013
- Commissioning of Jessie Walrond as Rural Evangelist in Feb
- Ash Wednesday Service of Wholeness and Healing
- Special Services in Holy Week
- Welcome/commissioning of Rev Jenny Cooper on Pentecost Sunday at Tasburgh
- Martin Hartley's first communion after ordination at Tasburgh in July
- Licensing and Installation of Rev Dawn Davidson as Team Vicar at Saxlingham Nethergate in July
- Remembering Loved Ones at Newton Flotman in November
- Benefice Communion for Sunday after Christmas at Swainsthorpe

## OUR CHURCH FAMILY (Benefice Wide)

**First Thursday Meal** - A New Venture: On the first Thursday of each month at 7pm there will be a 'bring and share' meal at the Rectory at Newton Flotman, for all who would like to come. This would be an opportunity to get to know others from across the 6 parishes better and to hear what is going on in . This will be followed each month by a short meeting that has a special focus for groups of people with a particular ministry in our benefice.

**Communications Update** -With so much going on in the Team Ministry, much had to be greatly abbreviated in the old monthly newsletter which then made it less useful. From August regular services were omitted from the new monthly news sheet which instead now focuses on 2 or 3 new events or issues relevant to everyone. Each church designates a person or people to receive this and arrange for it to be printed off each month and distributed in their church/cell only. Information about more regular events can be found on our website [www.tasvalley.org](http://www.tasvalley.org) and the wardens will display details of other regular events on the church notice board. including the Benefice Worship Rota.

**Pastoral Leadership Team & Authorised Worship Assistants (AWAs)** - There have been a lot of comings and goings in the staff of the benefice this year. We said a sad goodbye to Adrian Miller as Team Vicar in January. Rev'd Dawn Davidson became the new Team Vicar in July and has already become a much loved and appreciated member of our team. Particular thanks to Jenny Cooper, Sally Gaze, Martin Hartley, David Lancaster and David Sochon who worked so hard to provide for worship and lead the parishes in the interregnum. Jessie Walrond also served as Rural Evangelist in Swainsthorpe from Jan- September. Rev'd Mark Morgan who has supported us so well for so many years has had to cut back on the services he takes due to pressure of work.

Outside the Benefice, Sally continues works quarter time for the diocese helping others to start Fresh Expressions of Church to reach those not being reached by more conventional church. She is also chairperson of the national Fresh Expressions Rural Round Table. Jenny has an important voluntary role with the Fishergate Centre supporting Local Houses of Prayer across the county. A special highlight of the year was the ordination of Martin to the priesthood in July. Another was welcoming Dawn, Tim and Joel Davidson to our benefice family.

The Pastoral Leadership Team exists to -

- seek to understand the "big picture" in the Tas Valley Team by listening to each other and God
- prayerfully seek practical ways in which the Tas Valley churches may "grow in God's love", where appropriate this may include making proposals and communicating them to PCCs

- support each other in ministry and the exploration of their call from God including vocation to authorised ministry within the Church of England.
- help members to identify, enable, support and train other people to minister in the benefice

In 2014, the staff team slightly reconfigured the Pastoral Leadership Team during 2014 to give more emphasis to the support of prospective Authorised Worship Assistants. The members of the team in 2014 were William Ball, Dawn Davidson, Sally Gaze, Martin Hartley David Sochon, David Lancaster, Jenny Cooper, Kirsten Remer, David Hamilton and John Torbitt. (Jim England and Jessie Walrond also served for part of the year) Kate Cakebread and Andy Cox have also joined in 2015 as a potential Authorised Worship Assistant and Community Outreach Worker respectively. Rev David Sochon will sadly be moving house in 2015 and will retire from his ministry in the Tas Valley. Please keep all the Pastoral Leadership Team in your prayers.

**Wardens and Representatives of the Cell Church Trustees**- Thank you to all our church wardens who work so hard and make so much difference in the ministry and mission of our churches and care of our buildings. The wardens and other church reps had 3 meetings in 2014 to pray and plan. They represent the PCCs/cell leaders in making decisions with the clergy, which affect the whole benefice such as Parish Share and the Worship Plan. We enjoy spending time together especially at the superb Christmas meal, hosted by Adrian and Sarah Miller.

**Benefice Account** - This account is mainly a way of collecting from the churches their contribution towards clergy expenses. Other benefice expenses such as gifts for newly ordained clergy, benefice holiday club and the benefice website also go through here. The accounts for 2014 will be attached to this report. Within the account there is a Mission Training Fund - the money in this fund comes from the royalties of Sally's book, "Mission-shaped and Rural" together with any ministry gifts received from speaking engagements. It is available for anyone who wants to undertake training for mission. . Anyone who wants to apply for funding should speak to Sally.

## MISSION AND SERVICE (Team Wide)

**Jungle Jamboree Holiday Club** -Nearly 70 children and 30 adults were involved in 4 days of fabulous fun at the Jungle Jamboree Holiday Club, held at Preston Primary School, Tasburgh from 29 July- 1st Aug. Games, drama, messy forfeits, crafts and songs were all enjoyed by our tigers, elephants, monkeys and crocodiles (5-11s) while Little Parrots (preschool) had their own programme with their parents and carers. The week finished with a fabulous carnival parade and barbeque. The teenaged Explorers sold a newsletter documenting the week which was also sold in aid of our charity Christian Aid which does lots of work with people living in poverty in rainforest areas. Overall we had a great time and raised £200 for Christian Aid. Many thanks to all our helpers who worked so hard to make the week possible.



**Safeguarding:** We reviewed our Safeguarding Policies both for Children and Vulnerable Adults in the light of current best practice in Spring 2014. Particular thanks to Wayne Doman who undertook much of the work. Grateful thanks David Lancaster who has served for many years as our Child Protection Officer retired in 2014 was replaced by Leanne Groves new Safeguarding Officer to work across the Team, ably assisted by Wayne Doman. Many thanks to them both.

**Benefice Charity Support** - In 2014 we have been promoting Fair Trade through the purchase of coffee and other items - both for individual use and refreshments for church meetings. Many thanks to all involved in the splendid Benefice effort in sending over 200 shoeboxes for needy children via Samaritan's Purse in 2013 and to David Lancaster for coordinating our efforts. Thanks to all who contribute to Food Bank in each church and the cooperation between the churches in delivering goods.

**Racheal Mutesi** - Racheal, from World Shine Ministries in Uganda, came to stay with the Cox family from Summer 2013 - Summer 2014. She worked with Norwich Youth for Christ as well as ministering in our Church family with JAM, Sat Nav and assisting with worship and preaching.

**WHO CARES?** was a key initiative across Norfolk in 2014, starting with local churches, listening to the deepest hurts of our local communities, by a simple one question survey 'What hurts the most?' (or put another way, what is the one thing in your life which you find hardest to handle?) Sadly, we did not have enough volunteers to enable us to survey the whole benefice but did do a significant amount of visiting. The top answers to the question "What hurts the most?" were categorised as follows

DEATH (14%)

RELATIONSHIP PROBLEMS (11%)

LONELINESS (10%)

OTHER FAMILY CHALLENGES (8.5%)

These results give us guidance for prayer and pastoral care activities. We want to answer the question "Who Cares?" With the answer that God Cares and because of his love, the Church cares too and is strengthened to respond to people's needs.

**Alpha** - Three alpha courses were held in 2014 - a youth Alpha course and two adult alpha courses held in the spring in Tasburgh and the autumn in Tharston. These were much appreciated by those who attended. For Alice Rae, Hollie Ireson, Sophie King and Lara Cakebread, this was key to their decision to become confirmed in 2015. (Please come to support them on 26th April, Tasburgh Church at 6.30pm)

## **Saint Mary's Church, Newton Flotman**

### **GROWING FOR THE FUTURE**

On three Sundays during the month of March, we met to develop a vision for the future of our Church, looking at such areas as witness and community service, worship and care; refining our picture of what God is asking us to do in these areas. These three meetings on Sunday mornings, followed by a further meeting in May at which the ideas could be considered in depth, resulted in a renewed plan to fulfil a shared vision for the church and how we can serve in the village. These ideas have impacted on each of the headings that follow in this report and have over-arched our thinking and prayer throughout the year. We are please also that our congregation size seems to be growing with more children and younger adults coming along each week.



### **WORSHIP AND PRAYER**

**Prayer:** A local House of Prayer took place at the school each month, led by Andy and Lesley Cox. Lectio Divina took place during Lent. The church is open for Morning Prayer each Monday at 9:00. A prayer chain, coordinated by Julia Higby, was trialled and introduced involving clergy and folk from Newton Flotman and Swainsthorpe

**Sunday Worship:** First Sunday services continue to be well attended and in 2014 collections from this service were sent to Prospects. A new projector was bought to enable these services to be conducted using a screen, rather than books and service sheets. Family Communion on the second Sunday has the young people going out for a short period of activities. Holy Communion on the third Sunday has a more traditional feel and children join the congregation for Communion. We are very grateful to all those who have supported our services with music - Evelyn, Andy and band members. During the year, William Ball led "Morning Light" on the fourth Sunday of the month while Kirsten Remer continued to develop her ministry.

**Special Agents (SPAG),** our children's church, was led by Kathryn Critchell during the year, and runs for the sermon slot in the second Sunday Family Communion service. SPAG runs on all other Sundays, aside from First Sunday, in the Church Room for a simple service and activities, joining the main congregation towards the end of the main service. Other members of the congregation are on a rota to lead SPAG on the fourth Sunday. A number of new children have been coming along. Many thanks to the Critchells and Gazes for picking up children who cannot be brought by parents. SPAG also ably led the whole service in church with help from FROG members on Advent Sunday.

**FROG** for teens takes place on the third Sunday, led by Chris Gaze.

**Special Services** Special Services this year included: Passion Sunday, when we held a "Messy Easter" service at the school with crafts, stories, singing and food; a service to commemorate the beginning of WW1 on 17<sup>th</sup> August, at which we were joined by ex-servicemen with their standards;

“Remembering Loved Ones” on 16<sup>th</sup> November. Advent began with a great service led by Special Agents; Christingle at the Village School on 7<sup>th</sup> December and the candlelit Carol Service on 14<sup>th</sup> December, where Ros Lancaster once again led our Christmas choir; possibly for the last time.

## **OUR CHURCH FAMILY (NEWTON FLOTMAN)**

**Social Events:** In July, we held a Strawberry Feast get-together for all those involved in our “Friends of Newton Flotman Church” initiative. In September we organised, baked and served refreshments at the Village Fete and held a Harvest Lunch at the school, at which we donated tins and packet food to Foodbank and auctioned fresh produce. This event was shared with the family of one of our congregation, whose granddaughter was baptised that day. In November we hosted a concert performance at Church held by ARTS, our local theatre school.

**Exhibitions:** Over the weekend of 14-16 August, we held a WW1 exhibition in line with national centenary commemorations. Sharon Poyser, along with Mike Wilkinson, Moyra Parker and Jill Helmont, researched local connections and put on a display of artefacts and informations. A grant of £250 was received from SNDC to help with staging and publicity.

**Church premises and churchyard:** During the year we applied for grants to improve the interior of the Church tower and held a churchyard tidy up morning in July. Major improvements to the interior of the Church were considered as part of the Growing for the Future programme and this process continues. The plans which have been used and modified in the consultation process in the village and among heritage bodies are available for viewing. Our church room has been used by the Parish Council for planning meetings.

**Finance:** Our Church remains financially sound and we continue to provide prudent stewardship of our resources. We continued a stewardship appeal, following the substantially increased parish share, and paid our Parish Share in full. A “Friends of St Mary’s” is now established to help with raising funds for the church fabric and looks forward to be involved in the planned repairs and development of the church building.

## **MISSION AND SERVICE**

**Church Mice** - continues to meet every other Thursday morning in the church room and attracts a good numbers of carers and their children. Singing, playing and craft activities are enjoyed at each session. Many thanks to Dawn, Vicky and Clair with their regular helpers, Val and Mary.

**Charity support** - Thanks go to Richard Smith for coordinating our team of Christian Aid collectors who collected a total of £667. There have been special collections for Samaritan’s Purse and the Royal British Legion. The Christingle Service collection was donated to the Children’s Society and Carol Service to Tearfund.. Foodbank collections are received at Church throughout the year with a special collection at Christmas. We contributed through individuals and the PCC to support the visit of Rachael Mutesi to the UK from Uganda. A small collection was taken to support “We are N” and their work with persecuted Christians in Arab countries. A village charity “Newton Flotman Charities” exists to support residents struggling financially. Our church has assisted in raising the profile of this charity to enable people to both give and to apply for assistance.

**Carol singing** in the village this year took the form of singing on the village green around a Christmas tree donated by the Remer family, who also provided refreshments for the good number of villagers and church members, several of whom had gathered earlier at Olive House as a “Christmas Choir”.

**Coffee Stop** - Continued thanks are due to Amy, Sheila and their team of supporters, who provide refreshments and cakes every Saturday morning. Attendance remains good and fund raising for the Tower Fund and other initiatives are most welcome. Local traders, including Phoenix Cards, attend from time to time and local produce and eggs are offered for sale. A “Hints & Tips” book, as a sequel to the Cook Book, was available to purchase throughout the year.

**Partnership** - our Parish magazine, covers Newton Flotman and Swainsthorpe and the editor, Caroline Wolfe, has continued to improve the content and presentation.

**Pastoral care** - Our church was involved in the Norfolk Churches’ “Who Cares?” initiative with local people being asked about issues of concern to them. The outcomes were used later in the year for a sermon series and also formed the basis for an Alpha course in September. The readers and clergy are involved in taking communion to the housebound and in taking a monthly service at Olive House residential home.

**Prospects** - we supported the mission of Prospects by hosting a Skills Development Day at the school, helping with some practical tasks.

**School Links**- The school has three foundation governors - Sally Gaze, Geoff Billings and Kathryn Critchell who are very active in supporting the school and are part of the "Open the Book" Team which leads collective worship. The school holds end of term services at St. Mary's and Sally and Kathryn lead seasonal workshops in the school (picture on cover - children with Easter gardens). "Open the Book" continues as a regular feature of school life. The "Film Fun Night" has continued on the last Friday of each month and is well supported. Several services have been held at the school, led by Sally and volunteers, and "Special Me", led by Wayne & Teresa Doman, takes place in the school fortnightly on Saturday afternoons.

## Saint Peter's Church, Swainsthorpe

### WORSHIP AND PRAYER

Sunday services - During 2014 we established a regular pattern of services; Holy Communion on the 1st and 3rd Sundays, with Evening Praise (a Benefice service) on the 2nd Sunday of the month and Breakfast Cafe service on the 4th Sunday. We have continued to enjoy making the most of our community space in the church and have hosted several benefice services such as: the Ash Wednesday service, the monthly Evening Praise service and a Christmas Cafe on 28th December. We also hosted a brilliant Maundy Meal which was very well attended. In September, our church was again beautifully decorated for our Harvest festival and a delicious supper was enjoyed by all. Once again, there was a wonderful atmosphere at our Carol service, thanks to the beautiful singing led by the Newton Flotman Christmas Choir (Thanks to Ros Lancaster).



### OUR CHURCH FAMILY

**Welcoming building and finance** - We have continued to use the large welcoming space more creatively for our services. Our finances improved considerably during 2014. We managed to pay all of our Parish Share for the first time in 12 years. Andy Haggith, our Treasurer, has done an excellent job, in finding local villagers to contribute to the church and increase our monthly income. More than £200 has been donated to other charities during the year - such as Help for Heroes.

### MISSION AND SERVICE

**Churchyard Conservation Scheme** - conservation work continues in the churchyard by a small group of volunteers led by Andy Haggith.

**Community Facility Project** - Two years on; our Community Facility is being used regularly by the church and the Community. David Chapman applied for an extension to the Faculty issued by the Diocese, for the temporary facilities of the kitchen and the outside toilet. The extension has been granted until 2022. David Chapman and the Charity trust worked tirelessly together on Phase 2 which has seen the addition of a beautiful pathway from the road up to the church porch. The cost of £7428; was raised entirely from grants from South Norfolk District Council and by donations from The Charity Trust, the Parish Council and the PCC. Light sensors were also added inside and outside the church to improve safety and security.

**Social Events** - At Easter we held a coffee morning; with craft activities for the children and an egg hunt on the village green. At Christmas we held a coffee morning with crafts for children, plus a sweet stall, Phoenix Cards and a raffle. In June, we held our first Swainsthorpe **Bake Off**, which was very successful. The cakes were amazing and everyone enjoyed sampling the cakes during the afternoon. We raised £132 of which half was sent to EACH. We plan to make this an annual event. PIG'S (Project Ideas Group) have continued to raise funds for the Community Trust; more than 12 residents are members of this group. During 2014, the PIG's organised: the village fete, an Art Exhibition & Flower Festival, Bingo nights, an evening with Keith Skipper, a quiz night and Carols around the Tree on the village green on Christmas Eve.

**Rural Evangelist: Jessie Walrond**, was a real asset to the village. She threw herself into organising the Maundy Meal, the What Hurts...? campaign, the Bake Off event and setting up Church Mice. Sadly, Jessie left in December, to return to the West Country to pursue her career as a Speech & Language Therapist.

**Our Church Mice group** celebrated their first anniversary in December. This group is organised by a small group of village Mums and was supported by Jessie through its early months.. Church Mice takes place fortnightly on a Thursday morning.

# St Mary's, Tasburgh

## WORSHIP AND PRAYER

We continue to keep our Church open daily for quiet prayer and meditation. People from near and far have signed the Visitor's book confirming how much they enjoy having easy access to the building. A regular Morning Prayer service takes place at 9.30a.m. On Wednesdays offering prayers for the whole benefice. Members of the congregation lead intercessions and read lessons at our weekly services.



Our Sunday services followed a regular pattern. On the first Sunday of the Month, there was a Matins or a modern service of the word (From Dec 2015 this was replaced by with BCP Morning Prayer and Freedom Café, which is usually held at the school), Family Communion with Children's church on the 2nd Sunday, All Age Service 3rd Sunday and .people as possible. With occasional Evensong our thanks go to Andrea and all the helpers for their work with the children. We would also like to give a big thank you to the choir under the direction of Sarah Norman for their continued contribution to our services.

We have had some special services in 2014 -. Christmas was a busy time starting with our Carol Service, followed by a Crib Service and Midnight Communion, with a family service on Christmas morning? Remembrance Sunday was well attended and it was great to have the Cubs and Scouts join us on this occasion. Good Friday and Easter Sunday were marked by special services. With regular Compline services throughout Lent.

## OUR CHURCH FAMILY

**Growing for the future** St Mary's has been implementing ideas in 2015 which were suggested in the Growing for the future consultation that took place in 2014. This has looked at youth and children's church, worship and pastoral care. We have now developed an informal cafe style church (Freedom Café), and have formed a pastoral care team.



**PCC & Church Wardens** - Our PCC continues to work together well as a team. The Church Wardens very much appreciate the help and support they receive from everybody, without this help we would never achieve our goals.

**Church Buildings** - Our church building is a peaceful and beautiful place to worship in and is much appreciated by many people. There is always work to be planned or carried out, this year electrical work to the porch and bell tower as well as essential repairs to masonry. The Yew Trees that run alongside the path that leads to the entrance of the church have had a long awaited prune. We thank Jim England for his contribution as fabric officer in organizing these projects and more.

**Finance** - We should meet our parish share in full, the envelope scheme has now ceased and Grahame our treasurer has been encouraging people to switch to direct debit. This continues to be a testing time with our Parish share increasing again this year. We would like to thank Grahame for his hard work as treasurer.

## MISSION AND SERVICE

**Prayer-walking:** Andrea, Jenny and Martin have been 'prayer walking' and this has been warmly received by the wider community. 'Coffee Pot' continues to meet each Wednesday in the church room - many thanks to Shirley and her team. Andrea and Mart

**Social Events** - This year we held a church fete. Other events included the annual Church Bike Ride; the Harvest Lunch at the beginning of October in the village hall was very well supported. A fun Christmas day Community Lunch was organized by Rach Hartley. There was also an Evening of Entertainment and food to mark the centenary of World War I, which was a resounding success, this was held at the Village Hall and was a joint fund raiser with money being shared with the village hall and our church. In March an antiques table top sale was organized to raise money for Christian Aid.

**Links with Preston Primary School** continue - the 'Open the Book' team visits weekly in term time by taking a dramatic version of bible stories into school, in which the children are enthusiastic participants. The foundation governors are Sarah Norman and Julia Orpin, who attend meetings and are regularly in school at assemblies and other events. During the summer holidays, a week long holiday club was held at the school and enthusiastically attended by children from across the benefice. We would like to thank the small army of volunteers who made this possible. A fantastic live nativity was held in December attended by all children of the school.

**Giving** - Special Collections from services have been given to the Royal British Legion, the Salvation Army, Christian Aid, the Children's Society, and the Norwich Food Bank.

We would like to thank ladies of St. Mary's Guild for their tremendous effort in fundraising through coffee mornings and other events. Their efforts have allowed the church to undertake essential work to the church.

Thanks also to all those who endeavour to fill our rotas, cleaning, flowers, coffee, church opening, and worship rotas. This silent majority ensure our church runs and we wish to extend our heart felt thanks

## St Mary, Tharston

### WORSHIP AND PRAYER

Our regular services are our popular early morning BCP and an 11.00am family service. We are trying to keep these services to a regular Sunday in the month, the 11.00 am may alter on special Sunday's such as Mothering Sunday or if we have a christening. Our most popular service is the 8.00 am BCP we find it suits those who prefer a more traditional worship.

Our Carols by candlelight was again a wonderful start to Christmas with Tasburgh choir leading the singing in a packed church.



### CHURCH FAMILY

Although our core helpers remain the 'faithful few' we do enjoy the help of many in the village on such occasions as the fete and other village activities.

We are so grateful to The Friends of Tharston Church who make such generous contributions to our finances which enables us to pay our parish share in full and keep minor repairs up to date.

### Fabric.

Cracks in the chancel plaster work have been repaired, with the hope that this will help us monitor any movement in the building. We are in the initial stages of investigating some possible reordering, this has come about as the wooden floor is giving serious cause for concern.

The church yard has again been kept beautifully tidy under the watchful eye of Michael Duffield.

### MISSION AND SERVICE

The fete being our main fund raising event was again held at Picton Farm, this raises over £1000 which just covers our insurance bill. We continue to be able to keep the church open on a daily basis thanks to a rota of volunteers. This enables us to be able to continue to support the Norwich food bank.

## St Mary, Saxlingham

### PRAYER AND WORSHIP

On the 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Sundays at 9.30am Holy Communion is celebrated, supported by a small formal choir. On the 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday is an 11am Matins with 'Finders Seekers' children's activities in the church room at the same time while on the 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday an 8am short Communion takes place, followed at 11am with an 'All Age' Family service. Refreshments are served before the Family Service and following the services at other times. Additionally there is usually a service on the 5<sup>th</sup> Sunday, including an annual service, dependent on the weather, held on



the site of the ruins of St Mary Magdalene, to the south of the present church.

In addition to the normal services at Saxlingham, we hosted special services for whole benefice, including the Good Friday service at 3pm held in the church and the Rev'd Dawn Davidson's commissioning in July. There was an annual High Mass celebrated with Rev Mark Morgan taking the service.

## OUR CHURCH FAMILY

Following the Annual Meeting in April, Geoff Blyth and Lynn Roberts stood down as Churchwardens, although Geoff has remained as Fabric Officer but not a member of the PCC. This committee met several extra times during the inter-regnum when Rev'd Adrian Miller left in January and Rev'd Davidson started in July. We were greatly helped by extra input and support from Rev'd Sally Gaze during the uncertainty of having a team rector living in the village. Cindy Brookes became the one Churchwarden and Alec Stevenson remains as Deputy. The congregation is in good heart and we have 30 members on the Electoral Roll.

The church is blessed with a constant stream of volunteers from the bell ringers, the cleaners, the flower arrangers, sidesmen and readers and those who make sure the church is open to the public seven days of the week. There are also rotas for serving refreshments and cleaning the church and the church room.

**Licensed Ministers:** Regular Services have been maintained during the year by Rev'd Sally Gaze with the much appreciated support of our Rural Dean David Sochon, Lay-Reader David Lancaster and the arrival of Rev'd Davidson. As usual, it has been an exciting and busy year, bringing with it a number of challenges both in the practical and spiritual side of Church life. The village and church has benefited from Rev'd Davidson living in the parish.

**Treasurers Report:** The combined income generated from regular covenants, collections and a number of extra fund raising events, has almost been adequate this year to meet the normal expenses, including the eventual full payment of the quota. As with last year's accounts, there is concern over the decline of general 'giving' to the church and it will be difficult to meet the ongoing increasing maintenance costs.

**Fabric:** There are various items of maintenance work listed in the quinquennial report which need to be completed within the next three years. It continues to be difficult to raise additional income which is inevitably needed to pay for the rising costs of general maintenance and to develop and improve church facilities.

## MISSION AND SERVICE

**The Monday Mardles** are weekly and have continued very successfully in this, their tenth year. These gatherings in the church room allow a diverse group of people able to get together socially and transport is arranged for anyone requiring it. Additional outings have also been arranged which are much appreciated by everyone.

**Extra Pastoral Care** work continues in and around the village such as providing a Bereavement counselling service and special work with the village school children. The school also holds its own special services such as a Carol Service at the Church. The joint Remembrance Service with the local Scout and Guide Group is very successful, with over 100 children present. A Communion Service has been regularly provided by Lay-Readers at the Saxlingham Nursing Home, also including some home visits.

**Social events**, encompassing fund raising, have been successful including the annual quiz and fete. As usual, the Norfolk Churches Bike Ride is taken up by a few parishioners and there is a rota for sitting in the church and offering light refreshments. Events through the year included a Harvest Lunch. Once again there was a special children's Christmas party held in the Scout headquarters, which was very successful.

The church is pleased to be involved with collecting items to be taken to the Norwich Food Bank.

**Bells, Church and Churchyard:** The major project for the past two years has been the bells project and all that this has entailed. The eight new bells are now in place and sound superb and the tower has been strengthened.

In addition to this, a major part of our service has been the usual maintenance of the church building and grounds. A lot of hard work ensured that the appearance of the churchyard, the church and the car park area. The new church room is also ten years old and it is hard to remember how we managed without its facilities. The support we receive from the parishioners at the annual church fete reflects the high regard for the church held by so many living in the village.

**Contact** (The Parish Magazine) is initially funded by the Church. The Trade Directory on the back of it ultimately covers the cost and it also together with individuals' and Parish Council sponsorship raises funds for the Church. Quite a collaboration through the village considering Contact is the only method of reaching every single household in Saxlingham. It is produced by a whole team in the village, starting with the individuals who provide the articles, Teresa Stevens collating, preparing and typing it, Roger and Vicky Stocks photocopying it, Alex Watson collating and delivering it to a group of approx. 13 individuals who put it through each and every letterbox! Thanks to all involved!

## All Saints Shotesham and Shotesham St Mary

### WORSHIP AND PRAYER

The following pattern of services has been maintained where possible. 1st Sunday 11.00 Holy Communion, 2nd Sunday 9.30 "My Church" at St Mary's. 3rd Sunday 11.00 Morning Worship, 4th Sunday 9.30 Holy Communion at All Saints.

During the last year two new services were introduced: The first was "My Church" led by John Torbitt, a short service particularly family friendly when Food Bank offerings are blessed. The other is called "Debatable Sermons" led by David Hamilton when there is an opportunity to debate questions arising from the sermon.

The festival services were well attended; Easter Day featured a Sunrise Service and Holy Communion at St Mary's as well as the morning service and Holy Communion at All Saints. Several families joined the usual congregation for the Christingle service and all enjoyed creating the Christingles. The carol service at St Mary's and the Christmas morning service at All Saints brought an increase in numbers this year. The Christmas Eve community carol singing round the tree outside was again hosted by the Village Association and resulted in a packed All Saints for the second part. We were delighted to hold a Dedication Service of the beautiful new kneelers with Bishop Alan in October. Remembrance Day was commemorated with the help of the Parish Council at the War memorial ceremony before the Service in church.

A new hymnal machine was purchased which can be plugged into the sound system in either church. This is invaluable on the occasions when we have no organist.

### OUR CHURCH FAMILY

2014 has been overall a successful year with the PCC working well together and passing most resolutions unanimously. We were sad to lose Adrian at the beginning of the year; he left with our thanks and best wishes to move to his new post in Mulbarton. Sally guided the PCC as we sought to keep the momentum going following earlier discussions about how we could encourage larger numbers into our congregation.

Our new team vicar Dawn Davidson arrived with husband Tim and son Joel during the summer. We are delighted to have them with us and settling in so well with our church community. We are grateful for the continuity Adrian provided in our church life being carried forward in Dawn's capable hands.

Our thanks go to the many members of the community who keep our churches in good order by cleaning, flower arranging and opening both churches daily and also help us to deliver our newsletter 'Contact'.

Both churches offer coffee after the services making the most of the improved facilities at each. Visitors for weddings and funeral are particularly appreciative that we can provide toilet facilities at both churches now.

**Bell Ringers** - Bell ringing practice is on Monday evenings and we are pleased to hear the bells regularly throughout the year before services. Visiting teams can also make use of our Norfolk five bell ring.



**Fabric Report** - Robert Jackson has continued to keep the churchyard at All Saints looking very trim and has also been engaged to keep paths mown at St Mary's. We aim to achieve a balance between tidiness and conservation with a wealth of wild flowers in St Mary's churchyard. Martin Leighton decorated the porch at All Saints which has made the entrance to church much more welcoming. He also worked on the notice board at the gate to facilitate ease of use. Our thanks to Robert & Martin.

John Torbitt sought and obtained permission from Jimmy Hazel to provide an improved parking area outside St Mary's. We extend grateful thanks to Jimmy for granting us a 99 year lease. This enabled the work to be done to provide a neat, graveled parking area much improving safety and appearance. In addition John sourced and had made matching tiles to replace the broken ones in the nave at St Mary's. The church was closed for a while to allow this work to be carried out. Our thanks to John for all the other work he has done at St Mary's. We now have a church with good facilities and in good order.

## MISSION AND SERVICE

Our donations to charity this year reached a total of £1,124 and were to Help for Heroes and British Legion (Remembrance Sunday), The Children's Society (Christingle), EACH and Nelson's Journey (Christmas). Our Harvest Appeal was again for the Norwich Foodbank. The boxes are now a permanent feature in both churches and people have become accustomed to leaving contributions throughout the year. The congregation is being encouraged to contribute in particular to the Foodbank as a part of the My Church Service. All Saints and St Mary's participated in the Norfolk Churches Trust Annual Cycle Ride and walk.

**The Conservation group** continues to carry out work at St. Mary's, St Botolph's and St Martin's sites.

The Maisie Benson room at All Saints has been used by the village for various functions. A big undertaking this year was a village referendum concerning future use of All Saints if pew removal were to be carried out. A good percentage of the community responded to give us much food for thought in considering our way forward.

Informal meetings have been held with the Village Association to look at whether the church could be more useful for certain village events. Events for children this year were well supported. The first was run by the Village Association at Easter, the hunting and decoration of eggs. Our Flying competition when model airplanes are launched from the church tower took place in July. We were pleased to welcome newly arrived Dawn and Tim to this event on a lovely summer's day. Competitors and spectators enjoyed tea and cakes afterwards.

Both churches are open every day of the year thanks to the continued help of approximately 30 local residents prepared to take turns on the two rotas. The Visitors' books have comments left by overseas visitors as well as more local ones, pleased to find the churches open, clean and in good order.

## Tas Valley Cell Church

The purpose of the Tas Valley Cell Church is to enable people that conventional parish churches can't reach, to connect with God and become disciples of Jesus - but many people who love parish church, love to do Cell church alongside too. It is a "church without walls" composed of cells which are small groups (Up to 12 members in each), meeting mostly in people's homes during the week. We seek to live by 5 values (right)



## WORSHIP AND PRAYER

Worship at a typical cell meeting is quite different from Sunday church - more informal and often quite meditative using candles and quiet music. Because we are meeting in a small group we are able to pray for individuals in a more intimate way and often see quite dramatic answers to prayer. Each cell aims to have communion together about once a term. At most cell meetings, we read the bible, often looking again at the teaching given in Church on Sunday. We use discussions and activities to help us understand a passage or a subject better. We pray for each other in our desire to put the bible's teaching into practice in our lives as well as for people's needs.

**The Gathering** is a larger teaching and worship event, run by the cell church for anyone to come.

We have an hour long time of teaching or a workshop followed by contemporary worship, led by the band. This was largely replaced by the monthly Benefice Praise Service in 2014. However, we will be looking for new ways to gather about three times a year specifically as cell church.

**Houses of Prayer** Local houses of prayer launched in January 2013 as an associated ministry of the Cell Church. A local house of prayer is an effective prayer-based missional community. It could be a cell with a special focus on prayer. It's purpose is for God's Kingdom to come in the area for which it prays. God's Kingdom simply means what happens when God is in charge - blessings such as good relationships, joy, peace, economic stability, health, growth, refreshment, love.... This movement has been growing across the Benefice. In Tasburgh there are two LHOPs to pray specifically for God to bless the village, while in Saxlingham and Newton Flotman the local house of prayer ideas have become part of the cells meeting there. Jenny Cooper is the minister responsible to help and support these local houses of prayer. Please contact her to find out more

**The God Lab** - One of the cells in Tasburgh ran a course called the God Lab - This was for people who wanted to experiment with prayer and was based on the beatitudes.

## OUR CHURCH FAMILY

The name "Cell" comes from the idea that the Church is the Body of Christ and that all living bodies have cells which multiply - the ever-changing units of life. Members come from across the entire benefice. In 2013 there were about 50 adults and about 25 young people involved in the Tas Valley Cell Church on a regular basis.

Cell church places a high value on Creating Community. We have fun together and support each other. Many cell members are also very active members of their parish churches and find that cell life supports them in this. Others would not be part of a church at all if it were not for cells. Cells enable those who cannot get to a Sunday Service to be fully involved in the life of the local church. They are based on networks - people inviting friends, rather than the geography of a single parish. The cells complement the other forms of church in the benefice so that everyone can grow in God's love. Because there is a mix of parishes represented in each cell group, the presence of the cells within the benefice helps the churches in the benefice to grow closer together as a church family. We work together with the benefice and pay our own allocation of Parish Share. Cells support benefice initiatives and sometimes take on particular responsibilities to help in parishes See below!

Thanks to all the cell leaders' who are real pastors to their cell members. Cells do the essential things that other churches do expressed in their values - All Involved; Becoming Disciples; Creating Community; Doing Evangelism; Encountering God.

**Trustees** In 2013, the Cell Church becomes a Charitable Incorporated Organisation. This is a kind of charity which is able to operate very much like a PCC but without a building. Instead of a PCC we have Trustees who manage the affairs of the Cell Church

Importantly, we are now able to claim tax back on donations. Please could any donors who are taxpayers fill in a declaration form to enable us to reclaim tax on donations made since this date.

The Cell Church also has a Bishop's Mission Order. This means that the Cell Church is recognised by the Bishop and diocese as a new Christian community, equivalent in some ways to a parish church within the life of the Tas Valley Team. The Cell Church is now officially involved in decision-making which affects the Team Ministry, for example, the appointment of our new Team Vicar. Bishop Alan is the official "Visitor" of the Cell Church and works with Sally to help the Cell Church grow in a way that complements the mission of the other churches in the Team. Rev's Dawn Davidson will be joining the Trustees and taking on a leadership role within the Cell Church as part of her work as Team Vicar.

## MISSION AND SERVICE

The value which we call "Doing Evangelism" is about being good news in peoples' lives. Cells try to put faith to work in practical service and have a lot of fun - Most cells have a event every 4-6 weeks to which they invite friends and neighbours who don't normally come to church. We are also beginning to learn that the mission of its cell is its heart so cell groups whose mission purpose has been fulfilled often finish in their current form and members go to serve and reach out in new cells in different ways.

**Rural Evangelism Project:** The Tas Valley Cell Church set up the Rural Evangelism Project in Partnership with the Fountain Network and employed Jessie Walrond as a Rural Evangelist from Jan-Sept. Her activities included:-

- Facilitation and support of church projects which serve identified needs in the local community, especially. In Swainsthorpe, where she is based.
- Training workshops given to churches of different denominations across Norfolk, on sharing faith, how to answer difficult questions of faith and creative mission in a rural setting. These will be appropriate for both clergy and laity, and will be flexible and context specific.
- Creating a support network for people in their 20's and 30's in rural churches across Norfolk. This will result in meetings where people gather together to encourage one another, share examples of good practice and inspire and challenge one another.

In the Autumn the project was reevaluated and funds reapplied for. Happily the work will continue in 2015 with Andy Cox, working as a local outreach worker in Newton Flotman and Swainsthorpe and Adam Jackson working across Norfolk with young adults.

**Sunday Cell** (Older teens) Martin Hartley has continued to lead this cell, who seek to reach out to their own contemporaries

**JAM** (3 Youth cells meeting on Mon) We have enjoyed finishing working through the New Testament and doing the youth alpha course.. The leaders for the year were Chris Gaze, Clair Amerigo, Emily Poyser, Emma Bond, Rachael Mutesi and Richard Bond. Once a month we do a social to reach out to our friends and have fun. This year this has included games nights, swimming and outdoor laser (like paintball but less painful).

**Men's Cell** met for bible study and prayer most weeks in the early part of the year - began monthly outreach in a pub through "TableTalk". Even though they no longer meet weekly they still get together occasionally to reach out to local men. The cell multiplied to help start Alpha Cell, the new Wednesday cell and a new Thursday LHop cell

**The God Lab** - Met for a season ably hosted by Kate Cakebread. As well as learning to pray through the beatitudes, its members were very involved with the summer holiday club.

**Alpha Cell** - The Alpha group meeting in Thurston continued to meet as a cell and is now supporting another Alpha course.

**Drama Cell** - Also met for a season led by Emily Poyser. It was highly creative exploring the bible using drama and art.

**Wed eve cells** - - The cell, meeting in **Tasburgh**, ran Alpha in early 2014 and is ably led by Rach Hartley.

The cell meeting in **Saxlingham** has been seeking to support individuals with whom they are in contact, particularly the elderly. They have been learning about missional prayer and are forming the backbone of the 2015 Alpha Course

A new cell started in Newton Flotman in the Autumn. Their outreach has included prayer support for work with toddlers and their parents and we are looking for new waist reach out in 2015.

**Messy Cell** - In January 2013 a Mum's Alpha course became a cell whose outreach was to run Messy Church in the school and which invites all who participate in the Messy Church event to become part of the team. The cell was about supporting parents in helping whole families to explore faith together. Unfortunately, due to family circumstances, the cell was not able to continue to meet after the summer of 2013 but the experience has helped the Pastoral Leadership Team in 2014 to recognise the potential to do something which will be really appreciated by school families and has fed into the starting of cafe church in 2015.

**Thurs eve cells** Two cells meet on Thursdays in Newton Flotman, each helping the community in various ways especially in the school community.

**"Special Me"** is a cell for adults with special educational needs. It started as a Diocesan group for youth with SEN. Their family, friends and carers are welcome too. It was supported by Prospects. The leadership team started out as one of the Tas Valley cells and the group retains close association with the Cell Church. About 20 people met from 1.30-3.30pm on the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Saturdays of each month, at Newton Flotman Primary School. Special Me started for people who would like to find out more

about God and Jesus but may feel a bit shy about going to church for the first time with a programme that lasted for 15 sessions. After running the programme several times, the group found that those who came identified the group as an important part of church for them and wanted to move on to explore other parts of faith. They decided to run as a large cell and to rejoin the cell church. At each session there is Bible study and various activities. These include drama, craft, music, singing, puppets and worship. They are developing new leaders among those who attend, including people with special needs. It is hoped that cells may be started among those who have completed the Special Me programme to help them to grow in faith and outreach. Contact Wayne and Teresa Doman for more details.

**Connect Cell** - In 2015 a new cell is beginning in Shotesham, led by Robert and Becky Taylor. This cell will be a partnership between the Tas Valley and St Thomas' Church in Norwich

## In Conclusion

As Team Rector, I would like to warmly thank on your behalf, Martin Hartley, David Lancaster, David Sochon, Mark Morgan, Jenny Cooper, Dawn Davidson and all the Pastoral Leadership Team for their pastoral care, servant-hearted leadership, teaching and worship leading. We have been truly blessed to have such a great team and I am sorely missing David Sochon's ministry in 2015! Special thanks also to the church wardens and cell church trustees who do so much for little recognition and have been a great personal support to the clergy as well. Much gratitude also to Vicky Ball our wonderful voluntary Benefice Administrator.

In 2012 & 13, the Tas Valley churches been focussed on praying for BLESSING - God's desire to bless us, to bless his world and for us to learn to both speak his blessings and to be a blessing to his world. We have begun to learn about what that means - the joys and the cost. In 2014 we had the opportunity to learn to bring God's blessing in a new way through a Norfolk-wide project called "WHO CARES?" finding out what hurts the most in our communities.

This year, we are called to keep on blessing - and to seek to let God's Holy Spirit work through us. I particularly encourage you to join in our week of 24/7 prayer, planned from 21st-28th May, over Pentecost. The Theme is "Come Holy Spirit" and there will be lots of creative resources to help you to pray for God's blessing on our local area and local people. You can book a slot on Sundays or on the Tas Valley website: [www.tasvalley.org](http://www.tasvalley.org).

May God's Holy Spirit fill our hearts with his love as we serve him in 2015

Sally Gaze  
Team Rector, April 2015

