



**A Celebration of St John's
in 2017
Annual Report**



The Parish Church of
St John the Baptist
Ermine Lincoln

Annual Vestry Meeting – Sunday April 15th 2018 at 11:30am

1. Opening prayers and apologies
2. Election of two churchwardens

Annual Parochial Church Meeting – Sunday April 15th 2018 at 11:35am

1. Apologies
2. Minutes of the previous annual meeting
3. Vicar's address
4. Reports
The reports are not individually listed in the agenda, but will follow the alphabetical order in which they appear in the body of the annual report.
5. Election of members for the PCC
6. Election of treasurer
7. Election of sides-persons
8. Election of deanery synod representatives
9. Appointment of external examiner for the accounts
10. Matters arising from the previous annual meeting minutes
11. Date of the APCM in 2017 (*Suggestion: 24 March 2019*)
12. Any other business

Please note that the PCC secretary is to be informed 3 days (by April 12th 2018) before the date of the meeting if you intend to raise any issues under this heading.

13. The grace

Fr Stephen writes....

The challenge for us now is to move forward in the light of the gospel, to examine our own callings and to listen to the voice of God urging us to follow him.

These were words that concluded my first report for the annual meeting some 18 years ago. Looking back over those years, it is remarkable how fresh and vital they still appear because they lie at the very centre of what it is for us to be a worshipping community placed in the heart of the Ermine estate. The gospel of Christ, our own sense of vocation and our prayer have all inspired what we have been able to achieve together for God, for his church and for the local community.

In his episcopal visitation report in 2017, the Bishop of Grantham noted:

This is a church for the people and of the people – one of the nearest that I have encountered in the Lincoln Diocese to having a ‘liberation theology’ sense of community.

This observation should make us feel very proud. It recognises that within who we are lies the essence of Jesus’s teaching about setting people free to be themselves, seeking to raise expectations and possibilities and seeking new horizons, not just for ourselves, but for all of God’s people wherever they are. And this happens because we are faithful in all aspects of what we seek to be. Mother Teresa once noted:

We are called to be faithful, not successful.



This does not suggest that we have not been successful (there are many things we do and have done really well!) but it does point us to the fact that success in the Christian life is not measured in numbers, or praise, or recognition, but in being faithful – faithful to the gospel, faithful to our calling, faithful in our prayer.

The Bishop's observation suggests that we have indeed been faithful in all these aspects over many years, and this is something to celebrate indeed!

Part of the outworking of this has been the very deep relationships that we have forged over many years in and with the local community. One good example of this has been the ministry that Fr Ruben has been able to exercise within Lincoln Castle Academy. Because we already had a very good relationship with the school, we were able to suggest the idea of chaplaincy to the headteacher, who embraced the idea enthusiastically, to the extent that we are now looking at extending this role into the future in joint discussions with the Bishop of Grantham.

But we also see those relationships working on a more personal level. Just witness the number of people who return year after year for our Christingle service or for the All Souls service, who turn out to support the Christmas Fair, who bring their children to the family fun day or to JJs Messy Church events, who attend the lunch club, who turn to the church for support, for comfort and for hope. This shows a church working in and with a community at many levels, not existing for its own sake, but for the sake of the gospel and the priorities that God sets us and asks us to get on with!



Change is of course very much part of this process. We see change around us on the estate, with the biggest building programme in the area for over 50 years as new housing emerges on the land at the back of Waitrose, on the old garage sites on Ingleby Crescent and the former Infant School site. This will

bring new energy into the community and requires the church to respond accordingly! Sadly, the Neighbourhood Management teams have now been disbanded by the City Council but the local board is currently looking at how the energy of the work might be carried forward into the future to ensure that the estate still has a voice in determining its own future. It is important that St John's continues to be part of that conversation.

None of this can however be achieved without the people of God locally, not just the clergy, but the whole congregation taking their calling seriously and offering what is possible for them. The Bishop of Grantham noted in his report:

There is a genuine welcome experienced by many people at St John's – this is a properly inclusive church... the sense of teamwork which has been built in the congregation and among the ministers is highly valued.

Into our team, we welcomed Fr Ruben in February last year, who quickly became very much part of the fabric of the church and whose ministry within Lincoln Castle Academy has been not only much welcomed by staff and students but has also borne much fruit. His presence also helped to fill the gap left when Philippa was on maternity leave, and it was a joy to be able to celebrate Gregory's birth with her and Ed but also to welcome her back in the autumn! Elsewhere in this report, you will be able to read about the range of individual projects and initiatives that people are involved in here at St John's – each in their own way touching so many lives locally and showing a church that cares about people, about community and about service.

Our churchwardens remain very active. IN 2017, David Fleshbourne came to the end of his time as churchwarden. We are all very grateful to him for a number of years' service (combining this with the equally demanding role as treasurer) and to Phil Betts who has very ably stepped into this role. We also need to thank Rachel for all the work she does as our parish administrator. There have been particular building issues over the past year, with the renewal of the electrical system taking rather longer than we had anticipated (!) and discussions about the possibility of a new heating system. It seems that (except in the extremely cold weather) our heating is adequate at the moment, but we may need to look at this again in the future.

It was a joy to celebrate the marriage of Jessica and Tom Bayston in July. Jessica has been part of St John's all her life, and Tom has also become very much part of our church life, so it was an



extra special celebration from every point of view! Another pleasure was to celebrate Joy, Ann and Helen's confirmation which took place in November at Grantham St John's.

Other special events during the year included the Civic Service at St John's to which we welcomed the Mayor of Lincoln, the civic party and all the local councillors and dignitaries. This was another wonderful example of teamwork at St John's, with everyone working so hard to make sure that the service was memorable and much enjoyed. The Mayor was delighted! We also held our annual Holocaust Memorial Day service in partnership with the Council for Christians and Jews and the Lincoln Independent Minyan, again a touching and thought provoking event. St John's was also the venue for the Women's World Day of Prayer service in March bringing together all the local churches for this celebration prepared by the women of the Philippines.

Of course, our daily regular ministry carries on with visits to the schools, involvement with school governing bodies, our ministry in the residential homes and with housebound people, baptisms, funerals, weddings, pastoral visits, community larder, welcoming visitors to the church, maintaining the church website and on line presence and simply being there when we are needed. All of



this is faithful ministry in action and is essential to the life of our parish church. I am deeply grateful to everyone who helps to make this possible.

As you will be aware, 2018 will

bring considerable change to St John's. After 20 years ministry here, Sheila and I will be leaving in September and we would both like to thank everyone for their prayer and support over the years, in both the joyful and in the challenging circumstances that we have been asked to engage with. I particularly want to thank Jackie Howell, our reader, who has always been here and has been a constant and faithful support and colleague throughout this time. It is likely that



both Fr Ruben and Philippa will also move on in 2018, and so we are doing a lot of work to prepare for the interregnum, to ensure that the energy, the welcome, and the joy of St John's is carried on into the future.

Please pray for your churchwardens as they lead the church during this time and for the priest who currently does not know that God is calling them to be the next incumbent here at St John's!

The vision that God has for St John's is beautifully captured in the mission statement that we developed some years ago and which has stood the test of time. As Sheila and I

move on, I pray that you will continue to hold this vision of God's love for this community and this church and that you will have the courage to continue to dream dreams of his glory.

Together we have aimed to be a church that:

- **reflects God's love in and with the community**
by the way we welcome people, by the openness and warmth of our relationships, and by the sharing of our time and our resources
- **is open to the Holy Spirit working through us and our community**
in our worship, in our prayer, and by the example of ordinary people living out their faith in and with the community
- **is faithful to the Gospel**
in the fellowship we offer, in our relationships with other organisations and churches, in the daily lives of our members, in the teaching we share and in our openness to the whole community
- **helps people to grow in faith and in prayer**
by providing different ways for people to learn more, by offering opportunities for individuals to develop their knowledge of and trust in Jesus, and by encouraging regular commitment to prayer

- **is there for everyone at all stages of life**

through our teaching for children and young people, our support for young families, our care for elderly people, our healing for those who suffer, and our fellowship for those who are seeking.

In this, please remember the words of the Bishop of Grantham reflecting on his visit to the church:

This is a church for the people and of the people.

The challenge for you now is to move forward in the light of the gospel, to examine your own callings and to listen to the voice of God urging you to follow him.

Thank you and may God bless you into the pilgrimage of your love.

F. Stephen



Altar Servers

The Altar Servers help the clergy during the Eucharist and some other services such as Benediction. In doing so we have the privilege of serving God. Our role involves helping before, during and after services. Tasks include carrying the processional cross, candles and Gospel as well as a variety of other duties.



Paul Barrett

As a team we meet occasionally to reflect on our role and consider how we might best serve God through our server ministry

We would be very pleased to welcome any new servers. We would provide the necessary training and support. If you are interested in finding out more about server ministry please feel free to speak to any one of us

Authorised Lay Ministers / Parish Visitors

Our team of parish visitors work throughout the year taking home communion to people who are housebound, assisting with our services in the residential homes and they form part of the ministry team here at St John's Their ministry is shaped by our guidelines on home visiting and home communions and by an annually reviewed working agreement. The group meets regularly with Fr Stephen for supervision and to provide support and companionship to one another in this important ministry in the church. All the parish visitors are Authorised Lay Ministers and will be helping out significantly in the interregnum later this year. The ministry they offer is much appreciated by the people they visit and we are grateful to them for all they do.

Fr Stephen

Bible study



The Authorised Lay Ministers continue to meet together, generally monthly, to spend time studying the Bible together. We are continuing in our journey through the book of Acts, enjoying reading the stories of the early Church and making connections

between the early Church and our own experience. The Bible study took a break during my maternity leave, but we have now returned and are beginning to look at the stories about Paul in the second half of Acts.

If you would like to join us, you would be very welcome. We meet in the Mary and Martha room at 10.30 on the 4th Wednesday of the month.

Philippa

Bingo Afternoon

Once a month on a Thursday afternoon two members of our Mothers Union hold a bingo and coffee afternoon, this is attended by some of our church members as well as the community, We start by playing a couple of games of bingo, which is then followed by a cup of tea or coffee and a biscuit. Everyone partakes in conversation whilst enjoying their refreshments. We also hold a raffle which usually means that some of us take home sweets, biscuits, fruit or other treats to enjoy that evening. Any one is welcome to join us, just turn up and I assure you that you will have a fun afternoon.

Olive Musson, Sue Fleshbourne

Children's Society

St. John's faithful donors collected a total of £204.90 in the year 2016-17, and the Children's Society is very grateful to them. Others in the congregation give by direct debit, and a generous sum was raised in memory of Jean Burton. The Christingle collection also goes to the same charity.

Many of our generous donors are no longer with us, and it would be marvellous if more members of the congregation would agree to take a box and put in their spare change (or notes!) to raise the total from this parish. There is sadly a great need for the work of the Children's Society.

Rosalind Millward

Christian Aid

Working once again with the people at Ermine URC, we had another very successful Christian Aid week, raising £337.90 from church collections and the coffee morning at St John's. Fr Stephen and Sheila's sponsored walk over Humber Bridge raised a further £249, bringing our total fundraising to £586.90, a terrific total all round. We are now looking for someone to be the contact for Christian Aid Week at St John's, so if you think this might be you, please do ask for more information!

Sheila Hoy

Church Hall report

The hall has once again had a busy year especially with one off bookings which are mainly for children's parties. Unfortunately the toddler group did not restart as the couple found it impossible to continue with having the responsibility of their new baby.



As ever, Janet Ashton School of Dance was still our main hall user. Ballroom dancing is taught on a couple by couple basis by Andrew Pigg, who runs Premier Dance. In addition, there were sequence dances, yoga classes, brownies and guides, lunch club and bingo, a martial arts group, CAODS, CATS and a private class for teaching children Indian dance. The community larder also opened on a Wednesday morning and ran an extra session a week during the summer holiday. The NHS still use the hall to run Spotlight on Diabetes sessions.

The hall committee hold regular meetings during the year to give both church and hall users the chance to ensure our facilities are kept up to an acceptable standard. The committee consists of Alison Seddon, Andrew Pigg and Paul Richardson, who represent the hall users. Paul Musson, Father Stephen, Phil Betts and I represent the church. We meet three or four times a year to discuss the state of the hall, terms of hire and hear users concerns.

I would like to take this opportunity to express my thanks to our hall manager Paul Musson and to our hall cleaner, Olive Musson, for all they have done over the past year to keep the hall in good repair. They continued to provide us with a hall we can be proud of and often given praise by both regular and one off hall users. I have every confidence that the hall facilities will continue to be a resource we can be proud of.

Having a specific phone number for hall bookings (which is 07954 035865) and a dedicated email address of hall@stjohnthebaptistparishchurch.org.uk has improved communication over the past year. It has also meant that phone messages, texts and emails can be passed over with the hall diary whilst I am away. I would like to give my thanks to Rachel who has monitored these for me, meaning I can go on holiday without worrying that users are being let down.

A huge thank you is due to Danny for all the work he has done on preparing the new look website which ensures that we are able to provide an online calendar along with all the forms and information hall users require. Going forward, they are looking into taking payment electronically by Paypal to reduce the amount of cash handling for the one-off hall bookings.

There is still scope for the hall to be used during the daytime, particularly on a Thursday, so if anyone knows of any suitable groups looking for either a regular or one-off meeting place please could you point them to the Church website or ask them to contact me.

Liz Straw
Hall Booking Secretary

Church Wardens

This has been a fairly busy year with a lot of work being carried out in respect of the fabric of the church. This has run alongside the normal Sunday duties of the Church Wardens.



The long standing electrical work has been completed; the church electrical system now complies with modern standards. The work has taken some time; however, it has been carried out without alteration to the way the church looks. As part of the electrical work some of the heaters have been replaced. This means that the church can now at least be heated such that it is usable in the winter, although, the congregation is not going to experience Caribbean temperatures during the coldest months. In the long term, it will probably be necessary to upgrade the church heating, this will, however, be at a substantial cost and will require some dedicated planning and fundraising.

Given that the church is over 50 years old, it was not surprising to discover that parts of the church and the hall contained asbestos. A contractor was engaged to remove and control all of the offending material from both the church and hall. You may notice some asbestos stickers around the buildings, there is no need for alarm; these are purely to ensure that the church complies with its legal obligations.

There have been a number of repairs carried out in both the church and the hall, these have, for the most part, been in response to the normal wear and tear that would be expected in an older building. Where possible in-house expertise has been used, that said on occasion contractors have had to be paid to address some jobs.

All in all, the church and hall are in a good state of repair given their age and amount of use they get. The next large expenditure will, in all likelihood, be the replacement of the church hall external doors.

If anyone has any questions about any work carried out, or notices any repairs that need addressing please speak to one of the Church Wardens or a member of the PCC.

One of the “challenges” facing the Church Wardens has been ensuring that all the roles that are required on a Sunday are filled when there are unavoidable last-minute changes to rosters. Luckily, for the most part, people have been fairly good in letting someone know when they have been unable to be at church. Thanks are extended to all those people who have stepped in at that last moment to help out. Naturally, it is not always possible for both Church wardens to be in church every Sunday and to that end we would like to extend our thanks to the people who have stepped in to fill in when we have not been available.

We would both like to wish the PCC and the congregation well for the forthcoming year and again thank everyone for their support.

Phil Betts and David Rudeforth

Community Larder

Over one year after the Community Larder opened in the church hall, it continues to be well used. A faithful group of volunteers man the Larder each week, but are also available to open it in case of emergency. During the summer months, the Larder opened for an additional weekly session to provide food for families who would normally qualify for free school meals. During this time 53 people were served. We receive generous donations of food from churches, from the One Stop shop on Woodhall Drive and from local scout groups as well as regular donations from people at St John's. We are very grateful to our volunteers for running this project in partnership with the Community Larder (more volunteers always needed!) which is clearly meeting an important local need.

Fr Stephen



Revd Philippa White: Curate

After six months of maternity leave, I returned to St John's and to the Cathedral in September 2017. It was wonderful to have all your support while I was off (and thank you all again so much!) and equally wonderful to be welcomed back so warmly. Since September, I have been doing most of the things which I did before my leave: working with the Bible study group; visiting Ruckland Court and Ermine House for Songs of Praise and Eucharist; co-ordinating JJs; taking assemblies at Ermine Primary Academy and St Francis School; and welcoming visitors into church... alongside, of course, leading the community in worship and preaching, alongside Frs Stephen and Ruben. I look forward to continuing to be a part of the community of St John's into 2018; and, as I begin to look towards moving on, I know I will miss you all very much and be shaped by much that you have taught me during my time here.

Philippa

There were 2 meetings which we attended, 1 in June at St. Nicholas's and 1 in October at St. John's. Both were well attended. At the first we all introduced each other, saying which church we came from.

Among the topics we discussed were:

- the Joy Foundation, a Christian charity which provides worship in Lincoln schools. The speaker encouraged us to support their application for funds.
- the rural dean's vision for the New Triennium, in which suggestions such as poverty relief & social action, engaging with local government and ministry based in schools were made as ways in which members of the Christian churches in Lincoln could demonstrate being the Body of Christ and sharing in God's mission.
- The Advent sleepout at St. Nicholas' to draw attention to the plight of the homeless
- The Christianity deanery collective worship project which aims to provide high quality collective worship in schools and to train clergy & laity in the Deanery to provide this

It was a delight to meet with Anglicans in Lincoln from other traditions to our own and to celebrate our common faith.

Tim Wright



Ecumenical links

We maintain excellent working relationships with our friends at Ermine URC and we work together particularly each year to support Christian Aid Week as well as sharing Palm Sunday and Good Friday services. Although there has been no formal Ermine Churches Together group for some years, our link with the URC does help to keep the legacy of that group alive. However, the parish clergy are also involved in the uphill churches fraternal group that brings together priest and ministers from all the uphill churches for fellowship, prayer and mutual support.

Fr Stephen

Electoral Roll

As at 31 December 2017, there were 54 names on the electoral roll, 29 of whom live outside the parish boundaries. No names have been added or removed.

Sheila Hoy

Ermine Music

Ermine Music had a successful year in 2017, which included three brilliant concerts and a trip to Essex. The Easter and Christmas concerts saw over one hundred and fifty audience members come and support Ermine Voices Choir, St. Giles Primary Academy and Ermine Primary Academy in St. John's Church. The summer concert was held at Castle Academy and brought another big audience, with Ermine Voices singing a range of well-known songs and hosting a guest choir from Essex, led by Mac Crawford; the first director of the Ermine choir. Both of the schools involved in the outreach programme also took part in the concert, performing brilliantly as always and all music was accompanied by a live band. This is something they will be looking to do again this year. Ermine Voices also travelled to Essex to perform alongside Mac Crawford's choir and had a wonderful time on the road, performing in a new venue to a new audience. We have great plans for 2018, which will be our fifth anniversary, and we hope to set up a Lincoln North Children's Choir and a dementia singing group as well as continuing our commitment to providing music in residential care settings and developing Ermine Voices.

Wil Jones Music Director

Hospitality and Fundraising

Our hospitality and fund raising group have been active in our regular events again this year, We are a small group who arrange small events for our community.

We also catered for our Sunday lunches such as our AGM meal, the Harvest lunch and our Christmas lunch, which seemed to be enjoyed by all who attended. We held a fun day during the summer season which was very well attended by our local community and everyone seemed to enjoy the day. We also held a few coffee mornings in church this year again, and we would like to say a big thank you to all who supported these and a special thank you to those of you who made those wonderful cakes. Our Christmas fair and raffle was very well supported again this year by both the community and church. We would like to say a big thank you to all who helped and supported this. We are very grateful for every ones support as this is a very important part of our fundraising. If anyone has any ideas or would like to join our group you are very welcome to join us at our meetings.

Sue Fleshbourne

Fr Ruben Angelici: Curate

It has been a year, now, since I have joined you in worship with my family here at St John. I am thankful for how, over the past year, you have welcomed all of us,



opened your arms to us, and made us feel a part of you. I have had the joy to break the Bread of Life with all of you, sharing in prayer and in worship together, taking part in the various ministries that take place in the parish, and learning together to follow Christ and his message in our everyday life. Over the past year, I have also had the opportunity to consolidate our good relationships with our local schools, setting up a regular chaplaincy programme linked to our parish at Lincoln Castle Academy, first, and then also at Ermine Primary School. The senior leadership teams in each school have extended their welcome to us and have been instrumental in allowing this 'spiritual voice' from our parish. In spite of the occasional, initial suspicion by some staff members, the chaplaincy is now a very

welcome addition to school life, and it is fully established in such a way that clergy from our parish carry 'the pastoral, spiritual brief' with regards to pupils' welfare

provision. This has offered – and continues to offer – us an unprecedented opportunity for mission and transformation in our community, as we spread the seeds of the grace of Christ in building new relationships of care, trust, and hope with young people around us. For example, because of this ministry, through the past year I was able to lead a whole-school response and reflection in the aftermath of the Manchester attack, which affected two pupils at LCA. Also, together with the rest of the ministry team, we were able to offer close pastoral care to students, families, and staff, following the recent, tragic death of one of the school's pupils. I pray that through this ministry – which belongs to all of us at St John – the transformative grace of Christ will continue to impact positively the life of our community and will bear good fruit to God at the appropriate time in his hands.

Sadly, curacies do not last forever, and my curacy period will also come to an end. I pray that the love that we have matured for each other and the friendships that we have made here at St John will endure and continue to support us, as we go on journeying together towards our hope in the Resurrection of Christ.

Fr Ruben



JJs: St John's Juniors@the Pringle Church

First, enormous thanks go to the whole JJs team, and in particular to Jackie and Sheila who co-ordinated JJs and kept it going while I was on maternity leave. JJs is a team effort and calls on a lot of resources: money, planning and preparing, and lots of helpers' time on the day. The team has gone from strength to strength, adding Phil Betts and Peter Wise to the list of those who help on the day, with continued support from Jackie, Sheila, Liz and Odette on the day and in preparing craft materials. Again, particular thanks go to Hazel as she continues to provide wonderful food for an ever-changing number of attendees, and to Sue Young for her donations and for playing the organ in the celebration.

In the last year, JJs has continued to meet on a Wednesday morning during each school holiday, from 11.00 am to 1.00 pm; with an hour of craft activities on a theme which we then explore in a time of celebration worship together; and the morning concludes with a shared lunch.

We have maintained contact with a large number of families and our JJs meetings have been very successful. Most recently, our Christmas party on December 20th 2017 welcomed nearly 80 people (43 children and 33 adults from nearly 20 families), including some from our church family, several who have begun coming regularly over the last year, and several new families – some who had seen posters and flyers, some who had found out about it through our Christmas fair, and some who had been brought by their friends.

I am very excited about JJs: in less than three years it has gone from a handful of families coming occasionally to a large number of families coming regularly, and enjoying it so much that they bring their friends! While clearly God is at work in the response of those who come and we give thanks to God for the ministry we have been able to offer, we can be very proud of the welcome we have given, and encouraged by the way that those who come to JJs have responded to it. It is fantastic to be able to give these families a warm welcome and a positive experience of church – in particular, a positive experience of the wonderful people who make up St John's, and I hope a positive experience of the difference God's love can make.

Philippa

Lunch club

This year our lunch club has been busy, we have had two new members join us as well as some of the residents from Ermine House who enjoy sitting and having a meal with everyone. In July we said goodbye to three of St Francis students and in September we welcomed another three to help prepare the Wednesday lunches. The students always enjoy making sponge puddings and fruit crumbles, they also help prepare potatoes, vegetables and meat dishes. At our Christmas lunch we always welcome the primary Academy school choir who come along and sing Christmas carols to us which is enjoyed tremendously by everyone. On behalf of our Lunch club members I would like to say a very big thank you to Ermine Primary Academy for giving up some of their lunch break to come along and sing to us. We also had an inspection in November by Environmental Health, we were very pleased that we were awarded five stars again. I would like to say thank you to everyone who helps out at the lunch club it is very much appreciated.

Sue Fleshbourne

Mothers Union

2017 has been a very interesting year for our branch again, we were very pleased to welcome two more new members. We gather together on the second Wednesday morning once a month and we begin our meetings with prayers, One of our speakers who came to give a talk this year was from the Baby Basket project, we were very inspired by her work so we decided to take on the project ourselves; we would like to say a very big thank you to everyone who donates baby items in the Moses Basket they are most gratefully received, and very much needed. In July we held a Eucharist and strawberry tea with our other cluster members. We also joined our Cluster members in October at Pennells Garden Centre for our annual meal, which was a very special treat, everyone really



enjoyed themselves. We would like to say a big thank you to all who supported our sponsored walk again this year and also supported our coffee morning in Church, the money we raised has gone towards funding our projects in the community. This year we also donated Easter Eggs and Selection Boxes to the children at the Women's Refuge. Our Theme for 2018 is *In Mary Summers' Footsteps*.

Faith has lain at the heart of the Mothers Union since its founding by Mary Sumner in 1876 so this year we will take every opportunity to live out our faith through action to serve God and his world and our community.

Sue Fleshbourne

Songs of Praise

The Ruckland Court community have benefited this year from more diversity in leadership with all the clergy currently alternating in the Songs of Praise services we lead. With the musical support of Sue and Ian Young, we visit monthly to share with the residents in the life of the Church. Recently, the residents have been requesting that we celebrate festivals and mark solemn days closer to the time: Fr Ruben led them in an Act of Remembrance at 11 am on Armistice Day, and we held both an Advent Songs of Praise on the second Sunday of Advent and a Christmas carol service the day before Christmas Eve.

The community of residents and some staff who meet for worship at Ruckland Court are always very glad to have visitors – especially extra people from St John's, so please do feel free to come along to Songs of Praise to sing some favourite hymns and spend time with the residents. They are a diverse group with a number of different challenges, but they are lively and welcoming and a real joy to lead in worship.

Philippa

Staff Group

The staff group consists of Fr Stephen, Philippa, Fr Ruben and Jackie. We meet regularly to we share our experiences of ministry, think about how we work together, discuss diocesan developments and plan together for particular events or courses at St John's such as Lent courses, special services, etc. This is an important way for us to communicate effectively with one another as we share our ministry here at St John's. I would like to thank my colleagues for their consistent and generous support, prayer and encouragements.

Fr Stephen

St. John's Church Choir

The choir has had another steady year with 7 regular members. We have been pleased to increase our repertoire with anthems as well as leading the congregational singing, and we have sung 2 evensongs during the year, when other friends have come to help. As ever, we are very grateful to Sue, our organist and we have also welcomed a varied selection of players in the quartet, including Fr Ruben! Anyone who would like to join the choir would be very welcome

Terry Millward

St. John's Singers

We have had a good year singing to our hearts content. At the Carol Service in December we sang "Were you there" – a Christmas story. Owing to a few members missing on that date we were augmented by Ian and Amy, and were joined by a friend of mine, Barbara Cronin, who has decided to join us permanently. We meet on the fourth Monday of each month from 7.30-8.30 pm. New members are very welcome, including gentlemen. Please do have a word with me – we work hard, have great fun and a lot of laughter. I look forward to speaking to you.

Sue Young



Stewardship

We started 2017 with 19 regular envelope givers and ended the year with 18, although the person who dropped out still continues to give on an occasional basis. Of these 18 givers, 11 people are able to gift aid their donations. We also have 10 people who give through monthly direct debits. All of these people are gift aiders. In total, we had 28 regular givers and of these 21 are able to gift aid their donations.

What did we receive?

From the 11 envelope gift aiders we received a total of £4879.81 and from the other givers we received £964.88 making a total from weekly givers of £5844.69. We also received some 'one-off' donations amounting to £185 on which we were able to claim gift aid. The weekly average from the plate giving is £115.95. The income received from the people giving by direct debit was £5367.96, a weekly average of £103.23. The total amount donated therefore was £11397.65. This amount won't cover our Parish Share.

Since 2014, our giving has decreased from £15656.74. There is some good news though. As we are able to claim gift aid from HMRC, this increases the amount of some donations. If you are a tax payer we are able to claim an additional 25% on those donations. In 2017, we were able to claim gift aid of £3295.14. It's always nice to get something back from the taxman!

On a serious note, it is really important that we receive as much income as possible so if anyone isn't already giving regularly and would like to please see me. Similarly, if you do pay Income Tax and aren't already gift aiding please have a word with me.

Jackie Howell

Website

In the last year the website has undergone a long overdue, major, change. It is now built on top of a highly customisable Content Management System, the same one as I use for several other websites, so keeping things up-to-date is now much easier. The site is now mobile friendly, meaning that you can now view it more easily on a mobile phone or tablet; the old site was quite difficult to use on these devices. In moving it over to the new system I had to remove some pages from the old site since I didn't have time to move it all, it is my intention to move these things over in the coming year; but if you have any requests please let me know.

You can now donate to St John's via PayPal and the website. This is because we have started to use this service to allow payments to be made for the hall. You can now pay for the hall using cards (speak to Liz) or by PayPal when invoiced by Liz.

Danny Holt



Women's World Day of Prayer 2017

St John's church was the host for this year's service which had been prepared for us by the women of the Philippines on the theme of *Am I being unfair to you?* This is an ecumenical service, and this was reflected by the involvement of members from Our Lady of Lincoln Church and members of both Ermine and Trinity United Reformed Churches. The service was inspiring and deeply moving, especially as we all came together at the end joining our hands to form a circle round the church singing the song *Come and Join the Circle* which had been written especially for the service.

2018 will be the last service I will be involved in planning. I have found it a privilege to be part of the global wave of prayer celebrated locally here on the Ermine estate and hope and pray that someone from St John's will take my place to work with our neighbouring churches and to keep the rhythm of this annual service going.

Sheila Hoy



22nd Lincoln Brownies

It has been another busy year for the 22nd Lincoln Brownies. At the time of writing this report we have eleven Brownies in the pack, and three Leaders.

In January/February 2017 the Brownies worked on the 'Disability Awareness Badge'. It was interesting learning about the different disabilities that people have.

We invited Sue and Ian Young to Brownies to give a talk, and the girls really enjoyed this – so thank you Sue and Ian! It was also Shrove Tuesday, so we all enjoyed pancakes!

Several Brownies took part in a District Thinking Day event on Saturday 25 February. Everybody enjoyed the morning, and each unit was asked to sing a song, and we sang an old favourite, Auntie Monica! We also had our own Thinking Day event, and we had a Singapore Evening. Six Brownies attended St George's Day Service/Parade on Sunday 23 April at Lincoln Cathedral. This also involved marching around the Bailgate area. Luckily the weather was very sunny!



The Brownies have been working on the 'Designer Badge'. I think we have got some designers of the future in our Brownie Pack. This included a design on a fabric bag, outfit out of bin bags, posters, masks, garden in a bowl, Fathers Day bags, 100th Birthday card, and talked about a famous designer. The Brownies and Guides had a stall at the Family Fun Day on Saturday 3 June, and this was a successful fundraising event.

The Brownies enjoyed an indoor 'Games Evening' on Tuesday 27 June – we tested their skills with different sports challenges. We even had Brownies v Leaders (the Brownies won!). On the last night of the summer term we had a 'Chip Supper' for the Brownies – they all seemed to enjoy this!

Poacher 2017 (International Scout and Guide Camp) was held on Lincolnshire Showground from Saturday 29 July to Saturday 5 August. We were able to take five Brownies to a 'Junior Poacher Day' on Wednesday 2 August. The day involved a lot of crafts; games (including a huge plastic bubble to walk in); plenty of walking on the Lincolnshire Showground; and we also found the 3rd Lincoln Guides camp to have our lunch! We all had a good day.

Brownies started the Autumn Term on Tuesday 5 September. One of our badges for this term would be the 'Artist' Badge. This involved learning about the Primary Colours, and how to mix them to make other colours. We also created a textured collage using different items such as string, wool, material, feathers, buttons etc.

On Tuesday 19 September, we had an evening with the Guides, and we invited 'Derek Tindall Birds of Prey' to come to the Church Hall. Derek brought a variety of birds i.e. falcon, owls, vulture. Some of us put on a protective glove, and we had a chance of the birds flying onto our arm! Everyone enjoyed the evening.

In late September we also started working on the 'Healthy Heart' badge. This involved learning about healthy eating/exercise. The Brownies also made up a play about 'No Smoking'. On Tuesday 17 October LIVES came to do a CPR session with the Brownies. This was a useful session, and everyone had a go with the Resusci Anne equipment. The Brownies asked lots of questions.

In early November, Judy facilitated a session on the 'Trefoil' which the Brownies all enjoyed. On Tuesday 14 November we invited Liz Pearson to come into Brownies to do some Glassmaking. The Brownies made Christmas decorations, and very professional they looked too!

We started the 'Hostess Badge' in November by making a Christmas cracker invitation/table decorations for the Carol Service Evening. We have still got some work to do this on this badge, so we hopefully finish this in the New Year.

On Sunday 2 December at a Guiding Event, Caroline Pratt, Assistant Leader, received her 10 Year Service Award. Congratulations to Caroline! The Brownies and Guides Carol Service took place on Tuesday 5 December at St John's Church, and we sang 'Once in Royal David's City'. We invited Parents and Carers back to the Church Hall for refreshments, and we also had a successful fundraising evening.

On Tuesday 12 December we had a Christmas Party with the Guides. We played lots of traditional party games, and had a lovely buffet. Thank you to all the parents/carers for supporting us; and also to the members of St John's Church,

especially Father Stephen, Sheila, Philippa, Father Ruben, Liz and Olive. Thank you to the girls for attending each week; and to the Leader Team.

If you or your daughter/ward would like to know more about joining guiding please visit: www.girlguiding.org.uk/interested

Louise Thompson - Brown Owl

3rd Lincoln Guides



2017 has been another action packed year for 3rd Lincoln Guides. It was very exciting as this year we took part in the International Camp 'Poacher 2017', held on the Lincolnshire showground. This camp is only held every 4 or 5 years so the girls would only get one opportunity to attend it during their time as a guide.

In January the guides worked towards gaining the 'Traditions of Guiding' badge. They had to learn how to present our unit flag and march forming a traditional horseshoe formation. They had to use semaphore to read and send a simple message. They demonstrated how to tie a reef knot and packers knot and they had to use this knot to tie up a parcel or bedding roll. They also had to lay a table for a three course meal. Finally they had to learn and sing two verses of The National Anthem. These are all useful life skills and they all enjoyed the

challenge.

We joined the 2nd Lincoln Scouts one evening at 'Scoutlands', their HQ, where we tried our hand at making Para cord bracelets using our knotting skills. They looked very impressive.

In February we had our 'World Thinking Day' celebrations. This is when we celebrate the joint birthdays of our founders of the Scout and Guide movement, 'Lord and Lady Baden Powell'. The girls took part in various games, activities and a candle ceremony to remember our fellow guides throughout the world. We also joined other guides, brownies and rainbows in our district for a larger celebration

held at Lincoln Minster Prep school. On Shrove Tuesday we made pancakes and the guides had a great time tossing them whilst having a race.

In March we were very fortunate to receive a cheque for £200 from C.O.L.A (Children of Lincoln Association). We were very grateful for this as we were in the process of organising some fundraising events to enable us to purchase camping equipment needed for our international camp which we were attending in the summer. During this month the guides made beautiful cards and owl key fobs as Mothers day gifts.

At Easter time we played our usual 'Easter bingo' with Easter eggs as prizes. A much loved unit tradition. I just can't think why!!! For the fourth consecutive year we helped at a 'Dog Agility' event held on the Lincolnshire Showground. The money we earned we put towards our 'Poacher Camp' fund. In April, we also attended the St Georges Day service and parade held at Lincoln Cathedral with many other guides, brownies, scouts, cubs and beavers from our region. Once again the weather was kind to us.



At the end of the month we received a cheque for £134 from 'One Stop', a shop on the Ermine Estate. They had kindly raised the money for us to put into our ongoing Poacher fund . We are extremely appreciative of this. In May, for the very first time ever we enrolled some new guides outside the West Front of Lincoln Cathedral. It was a lovely evening and I'm sure the guides who were enrolled here will never forget that moment. As a tasty treat we called in at a local chip shop for our supper.

During May and June the girls worked to gain a 'Go for It' challenge badge called

'Experiment'. They enjoyed conducting various experiments which included invisible writing, constructing towers to test their strength, made from spaghetti and marshmallows!! Also making rockets from balloons and racing them along lengths of string. The girls had endless fun whilst gaining a badge. At the beginning of June we also had a stall at the Community Fair held at St John's. We raised £53.25 which we divided equally between our unit funds and the Poacher Camp fund. As a final effort in fundraising for Poacher camp we had a raffle and sold quiz sheets which brought in a total of £136 towards our much-needed camping equipment. We were now able to buy a metal topped cooking table, a cast iron double burner stove and a hot water boiler with all the money we had collected.

In July we joined with Bailgate guides to follow the 'Knights Trail' which was set around the Bailgate and city centre areas in Lincoln. These hand painted knight statues were wonderful. Each one was individual and beautifully designed. After a two-hour trail we headed back to Bailgate guides church hall for much needed refreshments. For our final meeting of the term we enjoyed a 'spooky' evening when we took part in the Lincoln Ghost Walk.

With just one week to go the girls who were going to the 'Poacher 2017' camp were getting excited. They were making preparations by practicing putting up and taking down their tents, making fancy dress costumes and packing their kits ready for the big adventure. Well finally it came, July 29th, the start of our week long Poacher camp. This Poacher camp was extra special as this year marked the 40th year since Poacher began. I am very lucky to say that I have attended every Poacher camp apart from one as unfortunately I was in Australia which was a bit too far to commute!

We joined forces with Bailgate guides, 2nd and 7th Lincoln scouts to set up our camp on the Lincolnshire Showground. It was certainly a sight to see. The whole of the show ground was a sea of tents and marquees. There were over 5,500 scouts and guides attending the camp from 24 different countries. Over 113,00 activity tickets had been printed so you can imagine the opportunity they had to take part in activities such as climbing, abseiling, high ropes, archery, sailing, swimming, horse riding and kayaking to name but a few. There were opportunities to go on bus trips to local attractions. You may have spotted guides and scouts all over the county throughout the week. In the evenings they could attend discos, campfires, the cinema, coffee bars or just hang out with their new friends.

The camp kicked off with a fantastic opening ceremony. There were many visitors to the camp throughout the week but the highlight had to be a visit from the Chief Scout 'Bear Grylls' who dropped in on us from his helicopter! For the closing

ceremony we were entertained by the brilliant dance group 'Diversity'. We finished off the evening with a spectacular firework display. The girls thoroughly enjoyed the week and I'm sure they'll be talking about it for many years to come. As an added bonus all the girls who attended the camp received their camper badge.

When we returned to guides in September we joined with the brownies for the evening and invited Derek Tindall and his birds of prey for an informative talk and to fly and handle some of his birds. This had been such a success the previous year so we were delighted that he could come again.

During September and October the guides worked towards gaining the 'First aid' badge. A first aid responder came to our unit to demonstrate how to perform CPR on a casualty. The girls were able to practice this on a manikin and then they practiced putting each other into the recovery position. These are very useful skills to know. They also gained the 'Active Response' badge. In November we invited a lady from 'Glass Fusion' to our guide meeting. She held a workshop and the girls made wonderful glass Christmas tree shaped decorations. After completion she took them away to fire them in a kiln. She returned them just in time for us to put them on our Christmas trees. In the past Sue, Ian and some helpers from their bell ringing group came to our unit to teach the girls the skill of hand bell ringing. They really enjoyed this so when asked if we would like to do it again we jumped at the chance. We practiced 'Jingle Bells' ready for our performance at the guides and brownies carol service. The carol service and coffee evening was a great success. Our hand bell ringing performance went very well. We would like to take this opportunity to thank Sue, Ian and their helpers for their patience and hard work of which paid off and helped to make it a very enjoyable evening. We raised £56.40 for each of our units. Thank you to all the people who supported us on this evening. At the beginning of December we also had a bric-a-brac stall at St. John's Christmas Fair to raise money for St John's church.

For our final guide night in December we had a joint Christmas party with the brownies. We played traditional party games and had 'secret Santa'. A fun time was had by all. Well it wasn't quite the end of term for the guides because way back in the summer when the girls were having such a good time together at Poacher, I had this mad idea that it would be great fun to have a Christmas camp the weekend before Christmas! Sure enough that's what we did. Only this time the guides slept indoors at 'Scout land', the HQ of 2nd Lincoln scouts. A few of the scout leaders braved the cold frosty weather to sleep in a tent! We had a full range of activities both indoors and out. Crafts, campfire, wide games and outdoor

cooking. The guides completed the 'Outdoor Cook' badge. We also had a movie night, a disco and of course a full Christmas dinner!...a fitting end to such an action packed year.

As usual we are already looking forward to the year ahead. This is an extra special year for 3rd Lincoln guides. We will be 100 years old! We plan to have a big celebration to mark the occasion as we will be the longest running guide unit in Lincoln!

At the moment we have 9 guides in our unit, 2 leaders and a unit helper. We have plenty of spaces for new girls. If you would like to find more out about guides then please visit our guiding website and register your interest at

www.girlguiding.org.uk/interested

Vanessa Nicholson –Guide Guider



In Numbers

6138

People attended a church service throughout the year

Average attendance at a Sunday service

42

2028

or 80%

Received communion on a Sunday

735

Revived communion on weekday or at home

1112

Attended a baptism, wedding or a funeral

14

Baptisms

3

Confirmation candidates

7

People attend each weekday service

19 Funerals

4 in Church,
15 at the Crematorium

3

Weddings

74 School visits

Ermine Primary Academy

26

St Francis School

23

Lincoln Castle Academy

5

34 Residential home services

Ermine House

12

Ruckland Court

22