



ST JOHN THE DIVINE

ELMSWELL, SUFFOLK

[www.stjohnselmswell.org.uk](http://www.stjohnselmswell.org.uk)

# Parish Review 2014

Our goal is to  
**Know Christ and make Him Known**

As a church family, we aim to:

- Demonstrate God's love to the world
- Declare the good news of Jesus Christ
- Depend on God as part of his family

## **1. The Parochial Church Council**

The Parochial Church Council (PCC) can be thought of as the executive committee of St John's. It is legally responsible for the financial affairs of the church parish and the maintenance of our assets. However, the main purpose of the PCC is to work with the Rector in "promoting in the parish the whole mission of the Church."

In 2014, the PCC met 6 times to discuss the mission, financial, fabric, social and legal affairs of St John's. Names and photographs of PCC members are on the noticeboard at the back of church.

We also have a Standing Committee (composed of the Rector, Churchwardens, Jean Folkard, Derek Folkard and Derek Jones) that meets as and when necessary if some aspect of PCC business cannot wait until the next meeting.

Peter Goodridge

## **2. Worship**

### **a. General**

My own experience teaches me that worship in Church can easily stagnate and becoming repetitive or boring, thereby leading congregations to switch off from engaging with and honouring God. I was pleased, therefore, that our worship during 2014 included a variety of worship styles. I trust such diversity in worship enhances rather than hinders our praise and engagement with God.

Our main services are designed to cater for the wide range of people we have in our congregation. There is, therefore, a noticeable mix of traditional and contemporary music and a mix of the formal and informal.

2014 saw a number of special services too. As well as special occasions such as Mothering Sunday, Easter, Harvest, Remembrance Sunday and our Nativity service, we have had mission-focus Sundays (CPAS and CMS) and special services at other times. The Christingle and "I can't wait till Christmas" services were very popular with families, the latter bringing in over 120 people. The Ash Wednesday with ashing and Maundy Thursday services turned out to be very powerful times of more traditional liturgical worship, where one felt the Spirit of God was very much present. We also introduced occasion Healing Services, which proved to be a great blessing to those who received prayer and the anointing with oil. I was also delighted that St John's was able to host the Deanery Confirmation Service in May, when 6 of our regular worshippers were confirmed. The Time to Remember service on All Saints Day was also valued as a time to remember with thanks loved ones no longer with us.

I would like to thank all who work so hard in enabling us to have such a wide range of worship at St John's and I pray this continues to be a blessing to us all as part of God's wonderfully diverse family.

Peter Goodridge

## **b. 9:30am All Age Service**

The All Age Service takes place at 9:30am on the first week of each month and is aimed to be inclusive of all ages in the church, but is specifically geared to be children friendly.

The service lasts for about 45 minutes, with songs, readings, prayer, activities and a short talk.

The All Age Worship team is made up of a number of willing volunteers who offer their time in a variety of ways, playing in the band, reading from the Bible, leading prayers, speaking or acting as welcomers.

My role is one of co-ordinating the rota of speakers, themes, etc. But the hard work is done by those who organise the songs, prepare talks and prayers, play in the band, etc. and I want to say to them – THANK YOU!

We are always looking for people who would like to help at the All Age Service, whether infrequently or more regularly – just speak to Peter, myself or someone at the front!

Gavin Payne

## **c. Music Groups**

As well as the organ, St John's benefits from two music groups that lead worship on Sunday mornings. The first plays on the first Sunday of every month at the 9.30am All Age service. It meets during the month, where possible, for practice and consists of a mix of adults and children who enjoy playing their various instruments as a group during a fun, lively and shortened service for families.

The second leads worship on all other Sunday morning services, for songs that are more appropriate to a band than organ. At the moment, the group is small in size – a couple of pianists that alternate and those playing instruments to lead melody or harmonise. Certain services need a bigger group, so more instrumentalists join us with a mid-week practice and cup of tea! Let us know if you are a musician – we'd love to hear from you!

Angela Blay

## **d. Choir and Organ**

At the end of 2014, there were fifteen members of St. John's choir. Our choir practice takes place twice monthly and we endeavour to learn traditional and modern hymns in order to lead the congregation. Amongst this small, friendly community within our church, views are freely expressed on the music that has been chosen, but hopefully we all realise that we are there to serve God and to cater for the varying ages of the church family.

Apart from participating in the main service every Sunday, the choir was asked to sing at several weddings and funerals last year and we are fortunate to have members of our congregation who are willing to join us for special occasions in order to swell the numbers. In November, we took part in a concert organised by Alastair Blay and we enjoyed the

challenge of singing a variety of music. We are always looking for new members and I hope that in 2015, there will be an increase in our numbers.

For some years, the main organists have been David Joughin and myself, but during 2014, we have been very pleased to welcome Alastair and Angela to the organ stool. It is reassuring to know that some of our younger talented musicians can be persuaded to move into this role.

I will conclude by thanking all the choir members for their dedication and say a special thank you to David for being a support to me and providing superb and sensitive music on the organ; this makes such a difference to our regular worship.

Jean Turner

#### **e. Ministry Strategy Team**

The Ministry Strategy Team meets about 10 times a year mainly to review and pray through our worship at St John's – asking questions such as how recent services have gone, what areas can be improved etc. We look ahead to what will be happening in the near and more distant future. We discuss the children's work and sometimes brainstorm other aspects of the church's life which affects our lives of worship and take any appropriate thoughts to the PCC for more formal discussion when required.

Team members have been Peter Goodridge, John Richards, Caroline Long, Pam Millyard, Richard Webb and Tim Taylor.

Peter Goodridge

### **3. Youth & Children's Work**

#### **a. Crèche**

The Crèche at St John's has been providing a fun, welcoming and friendly space for babies and children under 5 years old and their families. With the help of several willing volunteers, we now have toys and books available in the back room at each of the morning services and (apart from during Family Service) we always have a member of the church family "on hand" to chat to visitors and help them to feel welcome. This facility has been much appreciated by all and has really come into its own at Baptisms!

The Crèche provides an opportunity to cherish and nurture our littlest ones and also can give wonderful opportunities to get to know parents better and share our faith.

Thanks to all those who have been on the rota and helped out in any way – we are always on the lookout for anyone else who might like to get involved!

Hannah Taylor

## **b. Explorers**

Explorers is for children aged 4 to 9, averages between 4 to 6 attendees each Sunday morning and the leaders team includes Caroline Long, Celia Richards, Lorna Scott, Brenda Begg, Tina Chapman, supported by Stephanie Lester, Ruth Whymark and occasionally CYFA members.

Using material from Scripture Union, we learn using a bible story each week and in 2014 these included monthly series from Acts, "Travelling in Faith", Luke, "Following Jesus", Joshua, Judges, 1 Samuel and Mark, "Jesus the healer".

We have lots of fun together, we play games, make crafts, role play stories, use creative prayer methods, sing songs and allow for sharing time together. Each week, we try and give the youngsters something to take away from the session that helps them to grow in faith and love for the Lord during the week ahead.

This group has had as many as 16 children in years gone by and it would be wonderful to fill our small room again with children in this age group.

Caroline Long

## **c. Pathfinders**

Pathfinders is aimed at children in Year 5 to 8, and uses the Scripture Union Grid teaching materials. At St John's, we usually have between 4 and 8 members attending on a Sunday morning for a mixture of games, Bible study and discussion. As we explore our faith together, the group are encouraged to ask questions, and as a group, we try to find answers together.

This great work though can only happen through the hard work and dedication of a small number of leaders and helpers, without whom, the group would not meet; and to whom I am always grateful.

Currently we now have two regular leaders with a couple of others being able to help on a less frequent basis, and a slightly larger number of helpers. Ideally each leader and helper will lead once a month, so that they can attend worship on other Sundays, but this is becoming more of a struggle.

If you are interested in helping, or leading a session or more frequently, then please speak to either Peter, Caroline Long, or myself. Without this help, then this fantastic opportunity will be lost.

Gavin Payne

#### d. CYFA

CYFA is for young people in year 9 and upwards.

We meet throughout the year during term time to enjoy great times together having fun, food and finding out from the Bible how Jesus is really relevant in our lives. All are welcome and regular attenders are also encouraged to bring along their friends as well.

Members are encouraged to join the rest of the church family at Sunday services and often take part in them through the All Age service music group, reading the lesson or helping with the younger children's groups on other Sundays. They have also played a prominent role in helping with drama presentations particularly at Christmas time.



CYFA is presently hosted by Celia & John Richards at 2 Little Green or, if they are not available, at The Rectory.

We are delighted to say that three of our members were 'confirmed' at a service held at St John's in May 2014 and our numbers increased to seven regular attenders when the new school year commenced in September.

Toward the end of the summer term many students joined together to spend time at High Ropes at Ipswich when great fun was enjoyed by all and at our first meeting in the new school year we also invited year 8 students to come along to a BBQ together with other potential members for next year when amongst other things teams competed to see who could best design a bridal gown from bin bags.

The format also changed in September to include teachers drawn from our church family who took turns to come along to lead the studies and we are grateful to them all for giving up their time to spread their expertise and knowledge as well as adding to the variety of our evenings.

Since introducing the new style we've studied the Ten Commandments and have just completed a study of some of the Psalms.

John Richards

#### **e. Slam Jam**

Slam Jam is a youth choir who meet together to sing and have fun. Slam Jam stands for 'Serving the Lord And Making a Joyful noise with Jesus And Me'.

We meet on average once a month and sing a range of sacred and secular music accompanied by both accompanist and CD backing tracks. In addition to this we play rhythm games and sing a wide variety of vocal warm ups.

In 2014 we performed on several occasions including the Summer and the Christmas Fayre, a fundraising concert in November and several key Sunday services at St Johns including Remembrance, Christingle and Christmas.

The recent addition of the stage in the church has given our choir a wonderful area in which to perform. We are looking forward to learning and performing new songs in 2015.

Sue Wright

#### **f. Light Party**

The Light Party was a fantastic event! Organised by our "Mum's The Word" group, it was held on 31st October in St John's church, with the aim of providing a haven of Jesus' love for Christian children and their families on Halloween night and also to act as a vital outreach opportunity to non-Christians in the local community. It was an all-age event which attracted 49 school-age children and over 100 people in total! We played games, had competitions and did craft activities all on the theme of "light"; Peter (Goodridge) shared a Bible message with everyone and we also had a treasure hunt, which took the children all over the church hunting for stars!

There was also a wonderful party tea of hot dogs, crisps, cakes and drinks served to everyone who came along! The children all went home with a party bag full of goodies, including a Christian track on the theme of Jesus being the Light of the World.

We had so much fun and it was absolutely brilliant to see the church full of children and families having a good time and learning more about the Lord Jesus! Once again, a huge thank you to all those who were involved!

Hannah Taylor

#### **g. Schools work**

In addition to "Open the Book" (see below), St John's are invited to be involved with some of the Elmswell Community Primary School assemblies. In 2014, I went into the school 2 or 3 times a term on Wednesdays to take assemblies, sometimes by myself and sometimes with Brenda Webb. The assembly includes teaching from a Bible Story with props (often puppets) and an action Song followed by a prayer.

The school also visited the church twice during 2014 – for their Harvest Festival and for the Poppy Festival. In December, we welcomed Little Elms for their annual Carol Service. All occasions were greatly appreciated by the children and staff.

Jesus said “Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them.” It is a great privilege to be involved in helping the children enjoy learning about the Lord Jesus and I find I leave in great spirits with a bounce in my step.

Peter Goodridge

#### **4. Being an Ordinand in Training**

My training for ordination began in August 2014, training with the ERM (Eastern Region Ministry Course), which includes ordinands from the dioceses of St Edmundsbury and Ipswich, St Albans, Ely and Europe. ERM is part of the Cambridge Theological Federation, which includes people from a diverse range of theological traditions which I believe is invaluable in informing and shaping my own future ministry.

The training includes a week-long summer school and six residential weekends each year for three years. These are times of intense study, worship and living in community with other ordinands as we journey together towards ordination.

Emphasis is placed on both theological study and formation for ministry; in addition to the modules undertaken at the residencies I attend weekly lectures (in an online, conference-call/skype type classroom!), and have begun, as you will be aware, to undertake other aspects of ministry, such as preaching and leading services, in St Johns. Some of these are assessed as part of the training, and the feedback I have received is always very helpful.

I am immensely grateful for the support and encouragement I have received from everyone at St John's. It has made what is often an exhausting and difficult schedule as I balance studies with family life, not only possible, but enjoyable and rewarding. I am blessed indeed to be an ordinand in this parish and thank everyone for your prayers and support for this part of my journey.

Miriam Fife

#### **5. Prayer Life**

##### **a. Fortnightly Church Prayer Meetings**

The main Church Prayer Meetings are held every other Saturday at 9am in the Gardener Chapel (or the Church Room when it's cold).

Prayer has been described as the powerhouse of the Church and is a reminder that we rest on God in and for everything. Psalm 127 verse 1 says: “Unless the Lord builds the house, the builders labour in vain.” It is, therefore, only appropriate that we meet with God to thank him for all he does for us, to ask for his guidance as we seek to do his will at St John's and to bring before the Lord the needs of the world, community and individuals.



Perhaps you have never joined us before. May I encourage you to do so – you do not have to pray out loud if you don't want to. These prayer times prove to be very encouraging and supportive times as we bring the world, the Church and ourselves before the Lord, in expectancy that he will do marvellous things.

Peter Goodridge

#### **b. Gardener Chapel Prayer Ministry**

This space is now set aside for prayer. On the third Sunday after the 10:30am service, there is a team of 2 people to pray with anyone who would like help in this way. However, if you would like prayer anytime, there would usually be someone on hand to help.

The Saturday 9am Parish Prayer Meeting is also held in the side chapel, a comfortable and special place.

Pam Millyard

#### **c. Prayer Chain**

“Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God.” Philippians 4 v6.

This was the verse that prompted starting the St Johns prayer chain. Anyone who is willing to pray for the needs of their church family is welcome to join the prayer chain. We currently have 30 people who receive our prayer requests and present them to the Lord. We pray about any situation that causes sadness, anxiety or distress, from illness to bereavement or family worries. Prayer requests are sent out via email, text or telephone.

Lisa Goodridge

### **6. Lending Library**

We now have a very good lending library at the back of the church, in the well of the staircase. There is no charge to borrow books, which range from Christian classics to up to date stories and biographies.

Borrow a book and enjoy a good read!

Pam Millyard

### **7. Home Groups**

Home groups provide an excellent environment where Christians can develop supportive Christian friendships and go deeper with God through Bible study and prayer.

We currently have five small groups (Monday afternoon, Tuesday evening, Wednesday afternoon, Wednesday evening and Mums the Word on Thursdays). The nature of each

group varies. Some meet weekly and some fortnightly. Some comprise members from only St John's, others include people who worship elsewhere.

Please do think about joining a small group, if you are not in one already. Belonging to a small group is key if we wish to enjoy the mutual support, encouragement and discipleship that is in line with the New Testament vision of church.

Peter Goodridge

### **Mums the Word**

Mums the Word is a group of mums who meet at the Rectory on Thursday mornings, during term time, for fellowship, Bible study and prayer. A crèche is provided and we are grateful to the volunteers who man this for us. We normally have up to 7 mums attending, from St John's as well as several other local churches.

Lisa Goodridge

## **8. Coffee Break**

Coffee Break began last February. We meet at the Rectory between 10.00am and 11.15am on Monday mornings, during term time, to enjoy a cup of coffee or tea with biscuits or, occasionally, cake. We always have a "Thought for the Day" based on a Christian theme or Bible verse, which lasts for 5 or 10 minutes. Coffee Break aims to provide fellowship for members of the church and a welcoming environment for others within the community to make Christian friends and begin to explore the Christian faith. We can have anything between 6 and 14 people on any Monday and people can come regularly or occasionally, as they wish.

Lisa Goodridge

## **9. Ladies Lunch**

The St John's Ladies Lunch meets in the Wesley Hall most months and was started in the church room seven years ago in January. The aim is to offer fellowship and friendship to about 35 ladies who attend. Homemade soup, bread, cheese, cake, fresh fruit, tea or coffee are served followed by a speaker on wide ranging subjects.

Since the last APCM the programme has continued to be interesting. In July the annual "Hats Celebration" took place when a buffet menu was served and all ladies wore a hat of various shapes and styles! A small display of WW1 memorabilia was displayed and Jean Turner kindly provided a CD of suitable music and songs to sing.

Forty nine folk enjoyed the Christmas party in December when a buffet lunch was served and James Hogg entertained with seasonal songs and carols on his guitar. Gentlemen were invited to join the celebrations. The ladies also supported the village carol service by singing a carol accompanied by Jean Turner on the piano.

A different charity is supported each year. Arthritis Care received a donation in 2114 of £50 and this year the Suffolk Accident Rescue Service is the chosen charity. The ladies also contributed £110 towards sponsoring Rachael Bull's visit to Tenerife to join a group of Christian volunteers caring for the physical, emotional and spiritual needs of that community

The Ladies Lunch is an important outreach of our church and a warm welcome is extended to all and encouragement given to attend other events at St John's.

Margaret Hitchins

## **10. Men's Breakfast**

During the year, six Men's Breakfasts have been held. Between sixteen and twenty-four men have sat down to a breakfast which could at best be referred to as "Traditional English" at worst "less said soonest mended."

At each one, a speaker has been invited and the various topics have ranged from a Pilgrimage to Santiago de Compostela in Spain to "A day in Prison in Highpoint" – not a sentence but a private visit. Others have been the work of Gideons International, how the Lever Brothers perfected soap (an illustration of how Christ cleanses us) and perhaps the most enlightening of all, the works of SARS (Suffolk Accident Rescue Service), enlightening because this life-saving service is provided entirely by volunteers – they even provide their own petrol, use their own vehicles, provide the specialist car and all its equipment – the NHS provides nothing.

We all chip in for our bacon and eggs etc and a donation is given to the charity which the speaker represents or designates.

Come along chaps and forget the calories for just once.

Tony Chaplin

## **11. Summer Fair**

2014 saw our summer fair held for the first time in the Wesley Centre. Having struggled with rainstorms and destructive gusts of wind in previous years, it was a relief not to have to worry about what the weather would throw at us. As it happened, we were blessed with enough sunshine on the day to enjoy the outside space as well as the hall, with the garden games as popular as ever, an area for children to play, seating for the cafe and barbecue, and the 'yard sale' and plant stalls at the front, which helped attract passers by to come in.

Inside, there was a lovely atmosphere as the fair got underway, aided by the performance from the Slam Jam choir and the chatter of happy customers in the cafe.



The stalls included the usual mix of items for sale, games and competitions. The introduction of a 'messy church' corner was a great success, offering children free craft activities with a Christian theme, an idea appreciated by children and parents alike.

The earlier than usual start and longer overall time meant that people could come and enjoy a lunch at the fair and still have time to browse the stalls and give the games a try, and the central location encouraged people from the village who don't come to St John's to come and join us for the day. It was a wonderful opportunity to welcome everyone and show them our hospitality. At the end of the afternoon prize winners were announced and Slam Jam sang for us again, rounding off a really enjoyable day. Oh, and we raised a fantastic £2,171 for church funds as well!

Miriam Fife

## **12. Christmas Fair**

Christmas Fair is about mission as we involve the wider community in church activities. We had a really good afternoon with lots of stalls, including books, tombola, cakes, tea and people to talk to. Father Christmas and SLAM JAM provided entertainment and funds were raised for the church.

2014 was the first year that we ran "Messy Church", with parents and children having a really good time and learning more about Jesus and the real Christmas story.

The teddy tombola was repeated, having been such a hit with the children in 2013. Ladies Lunch Club helped by collecting teddies for us. The children loved it and were asked to give their teddies a name and take very good care of them. Lots of parents and grandparents took part and children promised to see us next year.

It would simply not be possible to run this event without the faithful team of helpers who set up the hall, run the stalls, provide the stuff to sell or raffle and clear away afterwards. They are invaluable and not all are regular church goers – proving that the mission objective is delivering.

We are always looking for ways to improve the fair. If you have any ideas, and would like to offer your assistance, we would be delighted to hear from you.

Linda Barber

### 13. Summer Barbecue



The weather turned out to be just perfect for the Church Barbecue in July. It was a wonderful afternoon as all ages across the church family gathered at the Rectory to deepen friendships and enjoy a range of sausages, burgers, salads and ice cream.

Peter Goodridge

### 14. Autumn Concert

The Blays organised a wonderful evening of music in late November. Many people were given the opportunity to perform a range of music including solos, duets, poems, the Handbell Ringers, the choir and Slam Jam. Delicious refreshments were served during the interval and the concert raised over £1000.

Peter Goodridge

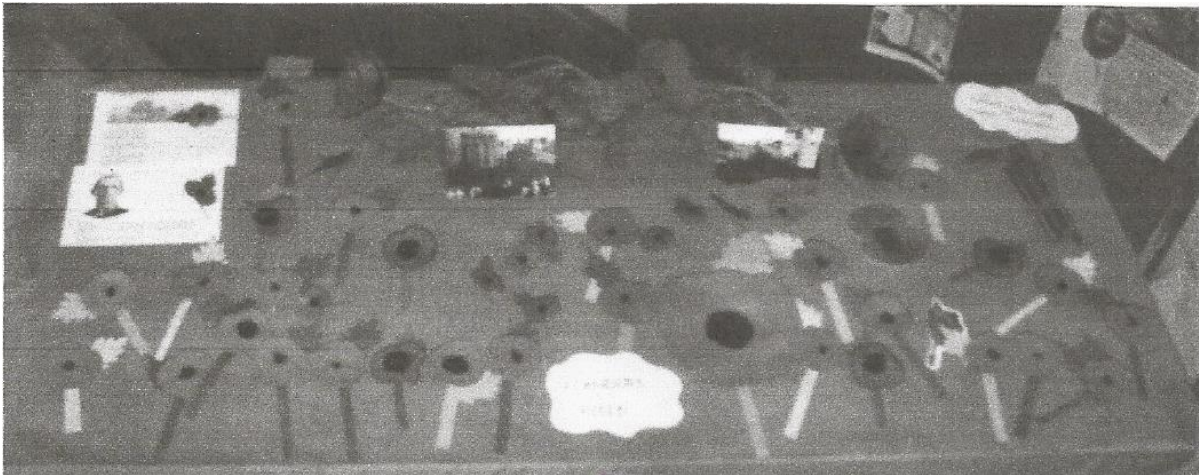
### 15. Poppy Festival (November 2014 at St John's Church)

As there was not going to be a Flower Festival in Church during 2013, I had a discussion with Linda Abbott and Derek Jones about an idea whereby we could combine a Festival in Church to coincide with the Centenary since WWI and present it during Armistice weekend based on the "Flanders Poppy". We approached the Rector who gave us permission to go ahead and proceeded to contact various village groups to see if they would be interested in offering a display of poppies in any medium whatsoever together with any memorabilia they had relating to The First World War.

There was a good response with stunning results and it proved to be an historical learning curve for the young and not so young visitors. The Festival was officially open after the annual Sunday Service of Remembrance, all day Monday when the older Primary School children visited in the morning to look at all the displays, make paper poppies, some to take home and some to "plant" in the "Flanders Field" and end their visit with squash and biscuits and singing wartime songs. The Festival continued the next day after the 11 am Service of Remembrance, it being Armistice Day.



The Poppy Festival of Remembrance was a very moving time for some, remembering those who had lost their lives serving their country but happiness for those who returned as in the case of my Father in Law, Albert John Begg.



Brenda Begg

## **16. Marriage By Design**

Weddings, being such happy occasions, are a very enjoyable part of my role at St John's. However, as the preface to the marriage service says, "No one should enter into marriage lightly or selfishly but reverently and responsibly in the sight of almighty God." Part of our responsibility is, therefore, to help couples prepare for their married life together and, so, we request couples getting married in the parish to attend a Marriage by Design day.

Every marriage has its ups and downs, but there are skills that can be learnt and habits that can be put in place that will help couples build strong foundations for their together. Marriage by Design provides an opportunity for couples to spend a day thinking through these skills and talking about their relationship by sharing their hopes, dreams and fears for the future.

We aim to give couples a day as enjoyable as the best date they could go on (we provide a delicious lunch and decorate the venue with balloons), as well as providing a time for helpful reflection.

Marriage by Design was developed by Care for the Family, a leading UK family charity. Each session is research based and has been developed to focus on the key areas that strengthen couple relationships. The feedback from couples is always very positive.

Peter Goodridge

## **17. The Friends of St John's Church**

The Friends of St John's was started in 1995 when the chancel roof was in urgent need of repair. Since our first Coffee Morning we have held Sausage Suppers, Garden Parties, Coffee Mornings, Beetle Drives, Concerts and Recitals, Harvest Horkeys, Just Desserts, Craft Exhibitions, Art Exhibitions, Flower Festivals, talks by invited guests and an Annual Service. In 2014 we added a Poems and Puddings evening to our list of events.

We are independent of the Church, being a registered charity with a Constitution and a Committee of Trustees. Our Annual Meeting is held in June each year.

The money raised may be used towards maintenance and repair of the fabric of the Church, also for Church insurance. Members pay an annual subscription and over the years we have raised more than £50,000 for the Fabric Fund and Insurance.

Our events are open to everyone and we are always pleased to welcome new members.

For more information please contact Jean Folkard (tel. no. 01359 242099)

Jean Folkard

## **18. Christians Together in Elmswell**

### **a. General Information**

Formerly known as the Elmswell Fellowship of Churches this ecumenical group has been in existence for more than forty years. The Village Carol Service has been organised by the group for all of that time, as well as United Services at Easter and Pentecost. Unfortunately there is no longer a Methodist Church in the village, but we do have a Methodist representative on the Committee as well as members of the Baptist and Anglican Church.

Jean Folkard

### **b. Holiday Club**

Christians Together in Elmswell once again organised a very successful Holiday Club at the Blackbourne in mid-August. Entitled "Wild at Heart," the stage used a wagon and trading post and desert backdrop.



The main up front leading was excellently handled by Ian and Elaine Coules, who captivated the children with their puppets, jokes, magic tricks and Bible stories. They pointed us to people from the Bible who were either in the wilderness or felt like they

were in the wilderness, but who discovered God had a perfect plan for them. When they chose to step into God's plan, life changed both for them and people around them. The same God has a plan for us too if we are willing to step into it.

Around 60 primary school children enjoyed a fun week with games, craft, songs, entertainment and Bible teaching. 16 older children, known as the "Fit Crew" were also involved in the week - helping out with the games, craft and leading us all in line dancing.

Parents joined us for a taster of "Wild At Heart" and a hot dog supper on the Thursday evening and a café for parents was available on Wednesday morning, where tea, coffee and lovely cakes were enjoyably consumed.



Thanks to the Coules, the Fit Crew and to the many volunteers who worked so hard to make it such an excellent week. Holiday Clubs are an excellent opportunity to both serve our community, whilst making Christ known.

Peter Goodridge

### **c. Open the Book**

There are ten people in our team. Seven from St John's and three from the Baptist Church who go into Elmswell Primary School on a Wednesday morning 12 times in a school year to enact stories from the Old and New Testaments for the children during their morning assembly at 10.15am.

We meet at 9am in the Staff room where we begin with a prayer, read through our designated story, choose the parts we are going to play then have a rehearsal or two or three. We also try to choose a song appropriate to the story, preferably an action song which we sing as the children enter the hall and as they depart.

The co-ordinator for the schools in this area lives in Thurston and he gives Caroline the sets of stories also he keeps various costumes and props relative to the stories at his home: John usually goes to collect these the day before. We are gradually increasing our own sets of costumes especially as we are most fortunate to be such a big group. Some schools may only have 1 person who might read the children a story from the Bible.

We try to have fun together when we deliver God's Word to the children and believe me you can hear a pin drop in the hall as they listen intently to the message we try to convey each time we visit.

Brenda Begg



## 19. International and Home Mission Committee

As usual, the committee has met twice during the last year to review our links with various home and overseas mission organisations and also to plan the calendar of special focus Sundays. At the meetings members give an update for their respective organisation and a review is made of recent special services and events.

At St Johns we have a good range of contacts with groups and individuals in various mission fields and these help us to pray with greater understanding for the needs of those working for the Gospel in many settings.

The reports we receive and the feedback on the special events we hold at St Johns can also help us to think and plan more effective mission activity here in Elmswell.

Catherine Joughin

## 20. CMS (formerly SAMS)

Thinking of Christians throughout the World we cannot be unaffected and it is natural to think to oneself, “there, but for the grace of God go I”. The 21martyrs.com video shown in church recently reminded us of the plight of Coptic Christians.

Jesus explained to us that we are the body of Christ, all connected. If we get hurt, it is natural to feel pain, and others around us in humanity feel it too. If you are hurt and do not feel it, it is often symptomatic of something much more serious (e.g. paralysis or leprosy).

Therefore it is important for us to be a mission community, reaching out the love of Jesus to those who suffer. Sharing the good news of the gospel in good times and bad. The Church Mission Society believes that every one of us has a part to play in the mission of God to restore and heal a broken world and broken people.

The practical application for us is to encourage each other, our mission partners, through prayer, through learning together, through generosity. Let us celebrate together CMS core values:

**Pioneering** - relying on God who says “I am making all things new” - new situations, new places.

**Evangelistic** – sharing Jesus, changing lives, a full on desire to bring God into our own life and others.

**Relational** – all about people, good mission partners to share Jesus and change lives, quality relationships

**Faithful** – being faithful in God’s mission, not least through times we’ve failed. But we won’t give up, we want the world to know Jesus.

Be encouraged, again in 2014 through your generosity we were able to send £320.47 towards Tim Curtis’ work in the Paraguayan Chaco, news of the full bible printing will be

available shortly. CMS Link Letter available to read on church notice board, or by email (ask me to send you a regular up-date)

Through prayer we can be a part of on-going mission support (prayer lines is a resource we looked at on CMS Sunday and cms-uk.org is a wonderful on-line resource.

So keep praying, keep learning, keep sharing Jesus, above all else

Scripture tells us: **Therefore** encourage one another **and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing.** 1 Thessalonians 5:11

Celia Richards

## 21. CPAS

The Church Pastoral Aid Society was founded in 1836 and for many years we at St John's have been privileged to help support their work of spreading the Gospel through local churches, youth camps, house parties and publication of resources for church evangelism and teaching in the Church of England.

Our support for the Society by prayer and giving has continued during the past year and the General Director of the Society, the Rev John Dunnett came to preach at St John's on 1st June 2014 for our CPAS Sunday. The collection that day totalled £92.75. A further £170 was paid as our donation to the Patronage Fund and the CPAS collection boxes raised £110. Anyone wishing to have a box to support the work please speak to Margaret Hitchins.

Margaret Hitchins

## 22. The Children's Society

There is a mistaken belief that as Suffolk is a mainly rural county it does not have many children who run away from home. Sadly this is not the case as over 1,100 Suffolk children run away from home every year. Who is there to help these vulnerable children?

The Children's Society supports children who run away when they feel they have no choice and who believe life is safer on the streets than in a violent or abusive home. The Society also works with disabled children who are in care and also supports young carers who, although they are still in full time education, have the responsibility of looking after sick parents.

Each year the Children's Society work with almost 50,000 of this country's most vulnerable children and they need financial support to help keep these children safe from harm and abuse.

St John's has supported the Society for a good number of years through box collections and more recently collections have been made at the Christingle service. In 2014 we donated £383 to their work including £261 from the box collections and I am grateful to all those existing supporters.

I would dearly like to see St John's provide more support for the vulnerable children in our society. If you are not already a box holder would you consider becoming one? If donors only put in 20 pence a week into the house collection box it would raise over £10 per year and think what extra help we could provide if we had twenty new box holders. I realise we all have our special charities to support but if you are not already helping a children's charity please consider supporting the Children's Society and let me know if you would like to become a box holder. To coin a phrase from another advertisement "every little helps".

Graham Newman (Local Co-ordinator )

## **23. Foodbank**

St John's started supporting Stowmarket Foodbank just before Christmas. The Foodbank supports individuals and families in crisis in Stowmarket, Needham Market and surrounding areas with basic food supplies. The help given is very much appreciated. In addition to supplying basic needs, the Foodbank was able to give Christmas food parcels to many people in need in December.

There is a box at the back of church for donations of food items with a list of most required items next to it. A volunteer from the Foodbank collects from the Rectory on a Tuesday morning, on request. The Foodbank are also happy to receive donations of money for specific emergency purchases.

Lisa Goodridge

## **24. Open Church**

In 2014 we reinstated the opening of the Church on Sunday afternoons during the Summer. We welcomed several visitors, some looking for family history, some searching for graves, others wishing to see the war memorial as well as those who are interested in Church history and architecture and in particular the important memorial to Sir Robert Gardener.

The Church tower is of particular importance because of all the symbols and emblems and is said to be one of the best mediaeval towers in Suffolk.

It is a great pleasure to be able to talk to visitors and explain the history of St John's and the church's place in the life of Elmswell.

Jean Folkard