

St Stephen's Annual Report 2019

Jan - Dec 2019



“The Loving Heart of West Bowling”

Donisthorpe St, West Bowling, Bradford BD5 7BH

St Stephen's Annual Report 2019

PCC Members

Vicar	Jimmy Hinton
Curate	Hannah Raitt
Church Warden	Sue Ingham (from April, previously David Thirkill)
Church Warden	Mike Rudd (from April, previously Steve Ingham)
Deanery Synod	Sam Thirkill
PCC Member	Lewis Usher (from April)
PCC Member	Sarah Hinton
PCC Member	Helen Loughlin
PCC Member	Adam Syrop
PCC Member	Ellie Clegg
PCC Member	Orphee Fausther
PCC Member	Louise Mann
SHINE Representative	Luke Owens

Facilities Team

Sarah Hinton, Luke Owens, Adam Syrop, Church Warden, Adam Syrop

Named Roles

Disability officer	Sam Thirkill
Secretary	Adam Syrop
Treasurer	Jimmy Hinton
Deanery Synod	Sue Ingham
Deanery Synod	Sam Thirkill
Safeguarding officer	Arlene Edgehill
Electoral Role Admin	Steven Ingham

Contents

Vicar's Report - Page 2

SHINE and buildings - Page 3

Childrens, Youth and Community - Page 6

Treasurer's Report - Page 9

The Vicar's Report

Although we are nearing the end of 2020 this report is a report on 2019. That seems like a long time ago; pre coronavirus, before lockdown, face masks, and social distancing were part of our everyday lives and language. So do we remember 2019 at all? To help us here are one or two reminders:

2019 – the year we got warm. Back in March 2019 we saw the spectacular arrival by crane of the biomass boiler hoisted over the trees into the churchyard. Much work in installing pumps and heaters followed and then began the work of laying a new insulated oak floor. Beautiful. A very long term dream realised, a space fit for purpose the whole year round by many diverse and varied groups. Much to rejoice and give thanks to God over.

2019 – the year we launched the Eden WB team. Having appointed Lewis as Eden Team leader in Autumn 2018 we watched the gradual growth of an Eden team being formed, drawn from those who live in our community and from those who have moved in to be part of it. The work of ‘gelling’ that team together began as well as listening to what God was calling them to. Although Covid restrictions have impacted on their engagement it has also given new opportunities that can be built on. We look forward to our continuing ‘partnership in the gospel’ (Philippians ch 1)



2019 - the year we grew in many ways. St Stephen's has been a growing church in many ways. Fourteen new names were added to the electoral roll (with ten moving on in different ways). We have grown in leadership with Hannah being ordained priest and growing in her role as curate, and PCC, I believe, has grown in its effectiveness and focus alternating between a vision focus and ‘business’ focus meeting.

We also grew in wider circles beyond WB: being awarded ‘Bronze Eco church’ status (the first urban church in the country to do so), being the ‘Parish Pixels’ regional winner for the North East, and sharing God's story here with churches and colleges across the country.

2019 – the year a virus emerged. Covid-19 is named because that was the year it emerged although its impact has not been felt until 2020. As I report our worship life and community life has changed beyond anything we could have imagined. This has been hard in so many ways. It has tested, and continues to test, us in new ways – testing our faith, our love and our fellowship. As with all testing we are learning of strengths and areas of weakness; but in the end we can come out stronger and purer and more equipped to share the Jesus who has accompanied us throughout – in the good times and in the dark ones.

2019 - a prayer: Thank you Father God for everything that 2019 gave us. In it all you were present. Through it all we trust that we have glorified you. From it all we want to step forward more like you.

“That is why we never give up. Though our bodies are dying, our spirits are being renewed every day. For our present troubles are small and won't last very long. Yet they produce for us a glory that vastly outweighs them and will last forever! So we don't look at the troubles we can see now; rather, we fix our gaze on things that cannot be seen. For the things we see now will soon be gone, but the things we cannot see will last forever”. Amen

-Rev Canon Jimmy Hinton

SHINE West Bowling

Our community work is mainly delivered through SHINE a charity that runs from St Stephen's church. 2019 will be one of those years where Shine will look back and wonder how we managed!

For 7 months we operated entirely from the hall, using the snooker table as an office table for us all and managing somehow to store what was needed and run groups from such a small space.



However in the midst:

- We secured some funding for three years from Henry Smith Charity
- We were joined by Seema who allowed language provision and much more
- Little Dots started and grew rapidly, becoming a key part of Shine
- Creative Threads worked on a sensory area for the churchyard– starting with a mosaic birdbath
- We joined with other women to launch Together We Can
- Well Words wrote beautiful poems and prose
- The nature area from Donisthorpe Street was developed
- English Chat created relationships as well as teaching English
- There were over 8,000 attendances at sessions during the year
- Tea on Tuesdays grew with church members and others from the community attending
- Many, many were helped with phone calls, form filling, finances, childrens clothes etc
- Lou Mann joined us as Operations Manager in November
- Parties were put on in the wonderful church building for all groups at Christmas
- Christmas Dinner was served for 50 (continued in buildings report)



Buildings

Building work during 2019 was dominated by the long awaited introduction of the biomass heating system and laying of the new oak floor.

The old rooms in the main part of the church were demolished in January and work rapidly began:





To God be the Glory.

Over £250 000 of equipment gifted to us and the building now able to be used for many different events and groups. The kitchen was also refloored and tiled, plus the office and font moved.

Alongside the boiler room the churchyard has developed to create a nature area and plants to encourage wildlife.

Thank you everyone who has helped to bring us to this point. - Sarah Hinton



Technology

With new flooring going down, we took advantage of laying cables. We have cables now in place for relay TV screens on the pillars, network connections and options for connecting cameras. We also tried to simplify the system as much as possible to make turning the PA on or off much simpler so we can train up new people. - Adam Syrop

Little Dots

Little Dots is a week group ran by SHINE where parents with pre-babies and pre school children learn action songs using nursery rhymes with different words and props. There is plenty of Christian content and song's about God's love with the hope of bringing a better relationship between parent and child and the family and God. We have been so pleased by how friendly all the volunteers and attendees are and how many different cultures come. We end each session with a time of play and chat with parents getting to know each other over homemade cake and coffee.

It has been extremely well attended. We are having upto 25 families at one time with queues to get in, so we are looking to move to the main church hall in 2020. - Sam Thirkill

Journey Makers

Journey Makers is for any 7-11 year old who attends St Stephen's primary school. It is both a club in school every Tuesday in term time and weekly visiting on Fridays to the homes of those who attend the club. Journey makers is a mixture of games, challenges and prizes, songs to praise and learn about God and a section of learning about Jesus and being a Christian themselves through a relevant, child friendly approach. It is led by Lou Mann, Sonia Bentley and Louise Foster.

We have had about 15-25 regular attendees over the year and those that come along, then faithfully return, so seem to enjoy it. We sometimes get school directing families to us if they think the children would benefit from the club and the connections we make with families through visiting. When the children leave in year 6 we try to direct them into something else appropriate. A number of Journey Makers also attended Treginnis camp in 2019 . - Lou Mann

Mighty Might

Mighty Might is the provision for .6yr olds and under during the church service.

In Mighty Might we had very few in the group this year, and very few helpers. We have still engaged the ones who attend to get them to know God. We do that through welcome, songs, games, craft and Bible stories. Parents would often come in with the babes in arms too.

I was amazed how the littles would take in the message and gets used to and enjoy the format - Sam Thirkill

Ignite

Ignite is a group for young people during the church service their ages are often 7-10yrs. Since the rooms in the main church have been taken we are meeting the basement each week.

Ignite regularly had 6 in a weekly group, from about 10 children that might attend in one week. Ignite is becoming quite established as a group that increasingly know each other whilst being good at welcoming others. We regularly have sessions where the young people were asking valuable questions, learning from each other and sharing encouraging stories about their relationships with God. As a leader, it was a joy to hear and be part of and I know each of us tried to facilitate as much as possible what the Spirit is stirring and doing in them.

Sarah Hinton, Lou Mann and Helen Syrop would plan the sessions using Energize material and Molly Kemp and Matt Flew join as the vital and enthusiastic second leaders for the group. - Lou Mann

Deeper

Deeper is a group for children in the service wanting to go deeper in their faith, the main attendees are children aged 10-14yrs.

Fraser has taken over the group and focused on improving individual prayer life. Deeper varies largely in attendees we have a core of 4 but as many as 12 can attend one session. The young people are happy to share their thoughts on faith and the core are gelling as a group. We now meet in the vicarage to allow more space, which makes for a more relaxed atmosphere. It's great to see the young people go deeper and be more confident in prayer. - Adam Syrop

Eden

Eden is the in-carnational team living in West Bowling to show Jesus' love by being part and serving the community. Partnered with St Stephens through the Message Trust Eden project.

In 2019 our focus was on serving the projects already happening, gardening, in sync, SHINE, church meal, and building friendships.

At the start of the year we spent a lot of time helping in the building work of taking down the offices and clearing the church in order for the heating and new floor installation. This was a great time to include those on the fringes and work alongside them as we served together.

We have been steadily increasing in team members, both those officially on team and those involved with Eden's work

Unfortunately we suffered a burglary from someone we knew, but as He so often does God turned it to good. This brought us closer with more community members and gave us a chance to show Jesus love and forgiveness to the perpetrator.

In March the Message ran a evangelist tour called HIGHER that we were able to join in with and help take young people to a fantastic gig in Leeds where they say hundreds of children attend and many give their lives to God that evening.

We realise we are in Spiritual battle so for Ramadan we had 4 weeks of prayer and ended it with a celebration of having the Message bus (With soft seats, slide, climbing wall and computer games) come and be enjoyed by the community. We hosted some mission teams including one from the Message interns and we got to know more of the community.

We also focused on litter picking and community cleaning up, this even got onto the local news!

We had our launch back in the church when the new flooring was complete.

For Christmas we did carolling which was really well received. We ended the year with a whopping 9 team members and supported one member who had to leave to return to India, but still continued on incarnational living there. - Lewis Usher

In Sync

In Sync is our joint youth group with St Matthew's church, for young people in school years 7-13. 2019 saw quite a few changes for In Sync as we became established as a youth group. Having started towards the end of 2018 as a 'Ripon reunion' for about 7 local young people who had been to Ripon Ventures camp with Hannah and Fraser, we grew in numbers to around 20 as young people invited their friends and we connected with others locally. The young people named the group 'In Sync' and it sums up nicely what we're about – being 'in sync' with each other as community, and 'in sync' with God – listening to Him and following Him.

From January to July, we met fortnightly on Sunday evenings in St Stephen's hall. We shared a hot meal, played games, did activities, prayed for one another, worshipped, and explored our faith through the theme 'Jesus is...', thinking about an attribute of Jesus each time. In the second term we looked at 'the power of prayer' and explored different ways of praying together. It was great to see some of the young people sharing testimonies, leading prayer times, and organising games, as well as the friendships that were growing between the young people, and seeing some new young people connect with a church group for the first time.

In the summer of 2019 we took 16 young people to Ripon Venture Camp. The young people joined with many others from across the country for a week of activities, games, worship and discovering more about Jesus. This was funded through grants, parent contributions, and through generous donations from members of St Matthew's congregation. When we got back, our young people wrote about their experiences. They loved the activities, particularly the theme park and gorge walking, they enjoyed making new friends, and also connecting with God. They described it as "unearthly", a "place just to be yourself", "a beautiful place where you can get closer to God", and a favourite quote – "I have personally learned a lot about the God I worship and this means I know a lot more about this caring, loving father of ours".

Later in the summer we had 18 young people take part in In Sync 'Impact Week', where we did a week of social action activities in the local area, planned by the young people themselves and funded by Bradford City Challenge Foundation. The young people did a sweets giveaway, took part in a community clean up in Bankfoot, did some work clearing woods in the Parkside area, and hosted a community BBQ in St Stephen's Church grounds. On the last day we took them to XScape where we did trampolining, tobogganing, and had lunch in Pizza Hut.

As In Sync was growing in numbers and young people were growing in their faith, we decided to begin meeting every week in church. Several new leaders joined us to make this possible. Each session we used a song from the charts to explore the Christian faith. We extended 'Impact Week' through the term and did some 'Impact Sundays' including baking and making welcome packs for Inn Churches. We used the newly organised garden space at St Stephen's for fire pit evenings, and the big screen for film nights. At the end of term the young people did an amazing job of leading St Matthew's carol service using chocolate to tell the Christmas story, and putting together a music group to sing a Christmas version of 'Hallelujah'. We rounded off the year with a Christmas party at St Matthew's Vicarage.

Of course, lots has happened since then! But you'll have to wait till the next APCM for the 2020 report...

-Hannah Raitt

Treasurer Report

The 2019 financial year saw a great deal of activity even compared to other recent 'busy' years. This was principally down to the amazing installation of both a state of the art biomass heating system and a new accompanying insulated oak floor. Once again we were able to rejoice at God's awesome provision. In summary we received £310k from N-Power including reclaimed VAT which went towards the £316k cost of the whole heating system – so virtually the whole cost! Meanwhile the monies raised during the Warm the Heart campaign went towards the cost of £94k for the new floor. We had to spend £19k of St Stephen's unreserved funds towards this and are grateful for the ability to do that. We now, finally, have an open, heated space usable all year round by the many who benefit and find support and love here at St Stephen's – a long way from a virtually closed church building!

Other outgoings of significance were setting aside our commitment of £10k per year towards EDEN and meeting in full our Parish share of £11k. These two outgoings are focussed on mission and ministry to which a further £2.5k were added enabling different works of outreach to take place. More down to earth (literally!) we had to commit over £2k to safely cut down and remove a very mature ash tree that had become dangerous and a risk to the public. Unfortunately, we could not use this wood to generate heat from the biomass heater and instead used £7k on pellets (reclaiming just over £1k from the government for this).

So a lot of expenditure! This would not have been possible if it wasn't for the amazing giving of the family of St Stephen's and other supporters. Regular giving in 2019 was over a third more than in 2018 and other donations/gifts of £14k were gratefully received. Rentals and lettings of our space and hall brought in much needed income (a fifth more than the previous year). Much thanks is due to those who make this possible.

After all of the above (and more regular and less 'exciting' ins and outs) St Stephen's had a deficit of £960 for the year. Considering how much was achieved in that year, truly amazing and worthy of praise.

- Jimmy Hinton