



**The Parish Church of
St John the Baptist
Egglecliffe**

**ANNUAL REPORT
2016**

**Incumbent
The Rev. Sylvia Wilson**

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LEADERSHIP

PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL (from Annual Parochial Church Meeting 2015)

Ex-officio :

Revd. Sylvia Wilson (Priest in Charge)
Brian Robinson (Church warden)
David Wright (Churchwarden)
Suzanne Fletcher (Deanery Synod)
Dawn Robinson (Deanery Synod)
Joanna Sellers (Deanery Synod) Resigned mid term
Frances Wood (General and Diocesan Synods)

Elected members :

Alan Lewis
Carol Ward
David Craig
Sharon Morley
Jane Weaver
Tom Daly
Steve Johnson
Steve Ashman
Andie Johnson
Dominic Johnson
Ian Collinson (resigned mid term)

The Council operates through two committees – a standing committee, which meets monthly, and as necessary, to take an overview of business, and is available to transact urgent business but subject to any parameters set by the Council; and a finance committee, which assists the Treasurer, especially at the time of preparing accounts and estimates for the forthcoming year.

The officers of the Council as elected in April 2014 were :

Mrs Dawn Robinson (Lay-chair)
Mrs Fran Wood (Hon Secretary)
Mr David Craig (Hon Treasurer)

REPORT FROM THE CHAIR

As I begin my third year at St John the Baptist there are very many reasons to be thankful to God. However we were and remain deeply saddened and diminished by the sudden and untimely death of Andy Thompson. Andy was a stalwart at St John's being involved in many areas of church life; as a server at the altar, a member of the magazine team and he was developing a wonderful gift in leading our All Age service. Our thoughts and prayers continue for Diane and Ben.

In my first year here we concentrated on children's ministry and work with families. This year has seen some changes in that we have stopped Families at Four and made the All Age service the focus for our Baptism families; this is proving to be very popular. In September our Sunday children's work was re-launched as 'Sparks' which brought in a different format, which is also very popular. We remain utterly committed to helping children to know how important they are to us here. With that in mind we developed the children's area under the bell tower. Grateful thanks go to Margaret Farr for using her wonderful gift in art, which tells the story from creation to Pentecost. We have families in church because of that beautiful art work and the welcome it represents.

We know from the news that amongst the senior members of our community loneliness is a significant issue so we launched our new monthly Friendship Lunch in the Parish Hall. We are regularly catering for twenty or so guests. There is a lovely atmosphere and we hope to attract more guests in the months to come.

We have been enormously blessed this year to have two Youth for Christ interns working with us. Delaney Allen has been a wonderful member of St John's this year. She is one of the most servant-hearted people I have met and quickly became a much loved and valued church family member. She has been involved in every aspect of church life here in Eggescliffe and has served Eggescliffe CE Primary School very well. Morgan Long is a wonderful role model and has worked with our youth ministry and is a very popular member of the Youth & Sparks teams. He has worked alongside Delaney in the weekly afterschool movie club, which was attracting up to fourteen children on a Wednesday afternoon.

There is simply no room to name everyone who keeps St John's church running and moving forward. I am personally grateful to every single person who gives of their time and talents. I am very thankful for everyone who comes to worship here week by week. My prayer for this coming year continues to be that:

'..the glorious Father, may give us the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, so that we may know him better. I pray that the eyes of our hearts may be enlightened in order that we may know the hope to which he has called us, the riches of his glorious inheritance in his holy people, and his incomparably great power for us who believe. (Ephesians 1: 17-19)

Sylvia Wilson

CHURCH WARDENS

No major work was carried out during the last twelve months and the Quinquennial report confirmed that the fabric of the building was of good order. Problems occurred with the floodlights resulting in the lights having to be disconnected. A temporary fix was provided to give some light whilst the Parish Council sought a solution. This should be rectified very shortly. Other Maintenance was ably provided by Alan Wilbert.

Many people continue to offer their time to help keep the church running smoothly, these are too numerous to mention but their efforts are greatly appreciated and applauded.

Four persons have been accepted by the PCC to enable them to assist with Communion and Brian / Dawn held a training session to go through the requirements of the role. This has enabled the 8am Service in particular to be better served.

Great assistance and support has been proved by Reverends John Greenwood and Terry McCarthy together with their wise advice. Reverend Sylvia Wilson has continued to strive to make St Johns a welcoming and inviting place for the community to worship.

Changes to Sunday groups and Baptisms have been introduced with favourable comments.

Brian Robinson and David Wright, Churchwardens

ADMINISTRATION

I have been the Parish Administrator for a period of almost 18 months, which seems to have flown by! I would say that my main responsibility is to liaise with couples who wish to be married at St John's. I tend to deal with the more 'practical' aspects of weddings, such as booking the bells, the choir and organists etc. I try to meet couples early on in their planning, to go over forms and fees and to (hopefully!) answer any general questions that they may have. I also assist with the planning relating to funerals, and am the first point of contact for a wide variety of enquiries, some of which I can answer and some of which I re-route (usually to Sylvia!). I print the weekly notice sheet (technology permitting!), and am responsible for various other administrative tasks such as photocopying, ordering stationery and church supplies, submitting meter readings, submitting information to the Parish Magazine and assisting with services such as Pips and Lighthouse when I am able. The best part of the job is that I get to know so many lovely people, all carrying out their different roles at St John's.

Emma Kensey

PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL (PCC)

Last April we saw the retirement of two very longstanding members of the PCC. Alan Wilbert finished his time as Churchwarden and David Bate resigned as Treasurer. David Wright was elected as Churchwarden and David Craig became Treasurer. Their contribution to St.John's over the years has been immeasurable. Fran Wood was elected as secretary to the PCC and newly elected members of the PCC are Steve Ashman, Andie Johnson, Dominic

Johnson, Sharon Morley, and Alan Wilbert. During the year Joanna Sellers has resigned from Deanery Synod and is therefore no longer a member of the PCC.

The PCC has met on 10 occasions since last April, and has duly dealt with all the financial and legal matters set before us.

Practical matters have been many and varied, from the installation of the new sound system to grappling with the complications of the problems with the floodlights. We have benefitted greatly from our gap year students from Youth for Christ, and we are currently nearly at the end of the first year of the Partnership for Missional Church “ - a 3 year programme. The pastoral scheme for the South and West Stockton area has been paused again as St. Peter’s, Yarm Rd, is now in a vacancy and needs time to think matters through.

We look forward to the coming year as a time of Joyful service to Christ and to our community.

Fran Wood, PCC Secretary

PARTNERSHIP FOR MISSIONAL CHURCH (PMC)/ SHARED MINISTRY DEVELOPMENT TEAM (SMDT)

October 2016 saw St John’s begin a 4-5 year journey with the PMC. We have a team of people committed to co-ordinating and delivering this initiative. It fits well with the SMDT remit and so we put the two teams together. We have had two ‘cluster’ meetings where all the churches in the diocese who are on this journey gather and prepare the next piece of work. So far we have had a listening activity in which 23 people were interviewed about their life at St John’s and their experiences of being part of the faith community here. We had the ‘Timeline’ event at a shared lunch where people showed on a timeline; a good time, a challenging time and an event that gave them hope for the future here. We left the timeline up in church for two weeks and are grateful for those who shared their experiences. We will be reporting the findings to church in the next few weeks. We are now preparing an corporate listening event which will help us to discern ‘God’s preferred and planned future’ for us as a church. Thank you to everyone who has helped and joined in this activity.

Sylvia Wilson

ELECTORAL ROLL

The number of those on the Church Electoral Roll remains the same at 128. 2 names have been removed and 2 added this year.

Fran Wood

DEANERY SYNOD REPORT

There has been much work over the last year in streamlining structures and governance in the Deanery. As our financial strictures bite and we have fewer clergy in post we are finding new ways of collaborating and removing barriers between parishes. There was great joy in north-west Stockton when the 3 parishes of St. James, St. John, and St. Chad formally joined together to become 1 parish, to be known as "Christchurch". They have been inspired by the process and have new vision for serving their community. The attempts to form a team in the south and west of Stockton, which includes the Country Parish; Longnewton and All Saints; Elton; St Peters; Holy Trinity; and ourselves, has got stuck again because of various factors over which we have no control; we will keep praying for guidance and wise leadership in these conundrums.

We have also been required by the Bishop to produce a Deanery Plan which sets our deanery in a social and environmental context, describes our people, ministries and resources and the ways we are interacting with the people around us eg; schools, charities, community organisations etc. This will then give us the facts and figures and identify areas for ministry, which will in turn lead to clear arguments for the number of priests we are allocated and how and where they will be deployed. This has been a huge piece of work which continually evolves as the deanery changes.

The deanery is not all about bureaucracy, it is also about community, friendship and serving Christ together in Stockton. One huge loss has been the retirement of Derek Rosamund who was a part time incumbent and part time community chaplain. I think he did more to enhance the reputation of the churches in Stockton than most of the rest of us put together, but the life of the Deanery will continue. Our next project is the planning of the Bishop's Prayer Walk around the Deanery 12-15th May. Lots of opportunities to join in, - meet and pray with the Bishop of Durham. Look out for the publicity.

Fran Wood

SAFEGUARDING

St John's takes this issue very seriously and it is now an item on every agenda of the PCC. We are pleased to report that there have been no major issues this year. By the nature of this issue it is always a pleasure to have very little to report other than continuing vigilance.

*Suzanne Fletcher & Brian Robinson
(Safeguarding Contacts at St John's for Children and Vulnerable Adults)*

PASTORAL CARE

Pastoral care is the privilege and responsibility of everyone in the church family and one of the strengths of St John's. However there are people with a particular pastoral gift of being tuned in to the feelings and needs of others. There are five members of the pastoral care team, we meet monthly to pray for all those at church with particular needs and to talk about ways in which we can take care for those who need/want it. We have had training in listening skills and in praying for people who would like us to do that.

Sylvia

WORSHIP

CHOIR

Although small in number, the choir continues to lead Sunday worship with enthusiasm and to enjoy Wednesday practices. We usually have some interesting anthems to work on, for Easter, the Patronal Festival in June, Harvest and of course for Christmas.

We also enjoyed the challenge of preparing Anglican chants for the psalm, Magnificat and Nunc Dimittis for the monthly service of Evensong. This has now been discontinued for the present.

Chris Purvis

WORSHIP BAND

'Sing and make music from your heart to the Lord.' Ephesians 5:19.

We have been truly privileged to have the help of wonderful keyboard players and singers both from within our own congregation and also friends and neighbours from elsewhere when needed. In addition thanks to the generosity of the church and some grant income we have been blessed with a fantastic sound system for which we are most grateful.

It has been a great year in which we have introduced 46 new songs in a number of settings including the All Age Service, Messy Church and "Encounter". We have particularly enjoyed playing for children coming to the front of church and also when we have shared music duties with organ and choir.

We hope the next year will see more of the same. We aim to introduce some more new songs, a number of which we are already working on. We'd also like to bring in some new personnel and instruments. We hope this will appeal to different age groups, worship styles and traditions. If you haven't already tried it then please do come to a service featuring the worship band sometime soon. If there are any songs anyone particularly wants please let us know. Alternately if you'd like to sing or play with us I hope to arrange some practice sessions soon. Please let me know if you'd like to come along. Many thanks again to all involved.

Rob Wilson

CHILDREN AND YOUTH

'Start children off on the way they should go, and even when they are old they will not turn from it.' Proverbs 22:6

SPARKS AT ST JOHN'S!

For a little while now the format of children's worship in St John's has been working in a different way to one that we had been working with for several years. Mums, dads, grandparents, friends and regular attenders along with Sparks leaders leave together and return together.

Our sessions include welcome and greeting, with song and actions as above, then we move onto gathering followed by a bible story which is based on specific bible passages which are current in the biblical year and have an aim for that week. To bring the bible passage to life and for the children we have a craft time where all manner of paper, card, paints, crayons, glue, glitter, decorating materials are used. We encourage discussion about the story of the day and it is amazing how they engage with and about the story.

We close our sessions with prayer and then make our way back to the Church aiming to be with the congregation in time for blessings and or communion. It is up to Sparks children whether a presentation is made to the congregation at the end of the service and your encouragement and warmth is very important to everyone in Sparks – Thank You!!

Dawn C Robinson

PIPs

Every Tuesday we gather together at 9am with our pre-school friends and their grown ups. We have fun worship and prayer. This is such a great opportunity to get to know our young families and build relationships with new ones. We begin with action songs then every child has an opportunity to say what they would like to pray for, we hear a story then our time finishes with lovely cakes and coffee. On the second Tuesday of each month we welcome the nursery class from Egglecliffe CE Primary school who are brilliant at joining in our activities. They usually have a colouring activity based on the story and enjoy their juice and biscuit and playing with the toys in church. Joanna Sellers stepped down from leading PIPs this year but she is still very much part of the PIPs family, helping out when necessary. We are very grateful to Joanna for all the years she gave to this ministry.

Sylvia Wilson

YOUTH

Morgan and I are loving the time we are having in St John's youth ministry. I believe we are building solid relationships with our group. Our Sunday morning devotional time is going really well. We took a step away from the book of Philippians and are thinking about going through the whole Bible, from Genesis to Revelation. We are trying to find ways to connect with the young people outside of the church. We are hoping for more exciting outings in the

future. Please continue to pray for our youth that they have a desire to have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ.

Delaney Allen

PUPPET MINISTRY

It is well recognized that whatever message you are trying to give the use of puppets is a very effective way of doing that. St John's has a core team of 3 puppeteers and some ad hoc team members who do skits, mini dramas and sing songs in a way that makes the gospel message accessible and enjoyable for people of every age. This ministry is loved at our all age services and at Messy Church. Whatever your age you are welcome on this team. Come and join the fun.

Sylvia Wilson

MESSY CHURCH

Because of the popularity of the All Age service with baptism families it became very clear to us towards the end of 2015 that Families at Four had run its course. We decided that we would stop families at four and concentrate the team effort on Messy Church. This will take place four times a year with the themes of Harvest, Christmas, Love Unlimited (Valentines day) and Pentecost. It is brilliant to work with such a creative and committed team. We have worship, crafts, puppets all followed by a finger buffet. This all takes place in church. Our Love Unlimited event was so much fun that we already have 26 people booked for our Pentecost event.

Sylvia Wilson

OOPS!

Despite a shortage of helpers 2015 has been a good year for OOPS! with the group, as ever, 'toddling' along at its own pace and we continue to receive very positive feedback from the families.

At the end of 2015, we had 16 families on the register, most of whom come along regularly. Of these, roughly half are grandparents which I feel tells us a lot about the times we live in today, as compared with how life was when I was a young Mum.

Average attendance over the year was 7 families; our lowest was 3 families and our highest, 11 families. Note – we have a few families with more than one child.

Whenever possible we continue to run the group during half terms and holidays, although with the shortage of helpers it has not been possible to do this as much this year.

Highlights during 2015 – well, every week is a fun week. We love having parties to celebrate the children's – and occasionally an adult's birthday. In the small hall we put out a variety of sitting down activities – the children love the craft activities that we do to celebrate

particular times of the year such as Mother's Day and Easter. They also love to paint and we have plenty of other things as well, such as playdough, jigsaws, books, building blocks, colouring and chalk boards. We regularly end the session with a sing-along.

The group are fortunate in having a small (and getting smaller) team of enthusiastic and supportive helpers who set out and tidy up the hall, make tea, watch out for the toddlers and help them with the crafts, etc; without them, the group would not run as effectively as it does. A massive 'Thank You' to all of them.

Marian Marshall

YOUTH FOR CHRIST

Youth for Christ is an international organisation, which encourages and supports young people in sharing their faith and serving God. Mike Taylor is the director of YFC in Stockton. Mike is gifted at bringing young Americans to serve in the Tees Valley. We have been blessed this year to have Delaney Allen and Morgan Long working with us in Egglecliffe. Delaney loves to work in school and has been involved in every aspect of church life at St John's. Delaney and Morgan have been joined by some other YFC members to provide our 'Lighthouse' after school club.

Sylvia Wilson

SCHOOL'S WORK

ENCOUNTER

One of the highlights of the year has been to welcome children from Egglecliffe CE Primary school to our 'Encounter' events. They love to come twice a half term in their key stage groups. We begin with lively worship and a story based on the theme being used in school that term. We have our 'zone' time. There are several zones; praise, worry, prayer, blessing and learning zones. The children are able to 'encounter' God for themselves as they visit each zone. They engage really well, especially in the prayer and worry zones where they write or draw what is on their mind at the time. The praise zone is always full of joyful noise, sometimes with the use of instruments from school. They finish by enjoying juice and a biscuit together. It is so good to be building great rapport with the children and we are so grateful to the fantastic team who delivers this key ministry in church. We really enjoyed, at the end of last summer term, welcoming the children from Durham Lane School to a one off 'Encounter' event.

Sylvia Wilson

ASSEMBLIES

It has been my privilege to be involved in assemblies at Egglecliffe CE Primary school, Durham Lane Primary and Egglecliffe Comprehensive school. I visit the comp. about twice a half term and talk to the y7-9 young people to give a Christian perspective on a current topic. I have been invited along with Kathryn Belmont – youth pastor of All Saints' Preston

on Tees to speak at the Christmas whole school assemblies for the last two years. In the first year we thought about the people who use food banks and 2015 saw us thinking about asylum seekers. I have also been invited to speak on one occasion at the Christian Union. Egglecliffe CE & Durham Lane have invited me to lead assemblies at Harvest, Christmas and Easter. It is good to be building fruitful relationships with the schools in our parish.

Sylvia Wilson

LIGHTHOUSE

Lighthouse Kids Club was an after school club that I started in November along with other youth workers around the Tees Valley. Since starting the club we have an average of 7-9 kids a week. Every week we have free hot dogs and juice and a tuck shop for the kids to buy their favourite sweets. Obviously, the tuck shop is the highlight of the club. We always have a board game going with the kids, the one they always choose is the game of life. One lad in the group loves to play X Factor with a panel of judges to critique and give praise for his performances. Needless to say, we have loads of fun with the kids. After Easter break I am planning on getting more leaflets printed to give to Egglecliffe School and other primary schools around the area. We would love for a few more kids to be apart of the club and join in all the fun.

Delaney Allen

HOSPITALITY

'Do not forget to show hospitality to strangers, for by doing so some people have shown hospitality to angels without knowing it.' Hebrews 13:2

COFFEE AT ST JOHN'S

We are very pleased to continue welcoming people to our coffee morning. We have regular guests as well as some people who call in as they pass by. We make the church look as welcoming as we can with lovely tablecloths, flowers and background music. It is so good that people get to have coffee and a chat and the team are very talented at welcoming and serving. We have used this weekly event to have occasional special events. Since January we have raised money for WaterAid and welcomed Arwa, a Palestinian lady who gave a very moving talk about the difficulties living in her home country, she also brought us a FairTrade breakfast which was enjoyed by all. The coffee morning team is very small and it would be lovely if we could add to it. If you can make coffee and provide a welcoming smile and conversation we would love to welcome you to the team.

Sylvia Wilson

FRIENDSHIP LUNCH

We were so pleased in September 2015 to begin the St John's Friendship lunch. We offer a simple two course lunch, usually soup and desert. We follow that with tea and coffee and some entertainment. We have had singers, a musical quiz, a slide show and various general quizzes. We have served up to twenty five guests and it is lovely to see people enjoying the company of people they know and new friends. A small and very dedicated team delivers this ministry but it is really hard work. The day begins at 8.30am and we leave usually around 3pm. We really would welcome anyone who can help for even part of the day. If you could come in the morning to help set up or at 1pm and help with washing up that would be a massive help to the team. Why not join us for lunch to see what it's like and even better bring someone with you who maybe doesn't get out so much. The food provided by our cooks is beautifully presented and excellent quality. Our Christmas special buffet was a highlight and enjoyed by everyone who was there.

Sylvia Wilson

EVENTS TEAM

The Events Team plan and organise many of the social and fundraising events connected with St John's. We meet as required, to discuss ideas, some of which have been suggested by members of the congregation. We then follow through on these suggestions where possible. The Christmas Fair in November is well established as an annual event, as is the BBQ at the Pot and Glass on our Patronal Festival Sunday in June. Last year other events included a Spring Fair, a Pampered Chef evening, Music for a Summer Evening Concert in church, serving teas at the Village Fair and helping with refreshments at an Organ Recital in church.

Future events already planned and booked include a Flower Demonstration evening on 3rd May, a Celebration Flower Festival weekend on 10th, 11th and 12th June and the Christmas Fair on 19th November. We look forward to your support.

Rosemary Douglas

CHURCH FLOWERS

Festival Flowers

At three major celebrations in the church year, Christmas, Easter and Harvest Festival the church is decorated with flowers. Each presents a different challenge to reflect the significance of the time of the year, both the religious and the floral seasons.

For Easter, there is the Passion, new beginnings and light. Therefore we try for spring flowers to represent new start to the year, lilies for the passion and Easter eggs for rebirth. However dependent on when Easter actually falls determines the most suitable flowers. Harvest festival, in October, the flowers try to reflect the colours of autumn and the arrangements often include fruit and other produce to give thanks for the harvest.

Christmas, Jesus' birth, here the flowers are bright and strong, red being the predominate colour with silver or gold and candles for celebration. Four weeks prior the Advent Wreath is decorated with Candles and greenery.

At St Johns we have a dedicated team to prepare arrangements for the five windows in the nave, the east window, the screen, the pillar and also in the porch. The font and the wreath around the Pascal candle are also linked into the overall theme.

Additionally to the main festivals, flowers are also arranged for the Patronal festival, palms for Palm Sunday and poppies for Remembrance Day and visits by the Bishop as well.

Flowers are bought locally either at local florists or floral wholesalers, but we are often constrained on prices due to the season and availability of suitable flowers and raid supermarkets as required. Hopefully everyone's efforts are appreciated and we do get positive comments on the arrangements.

Outside of the festivals, Altar flowers are provided by individuals on a rota basis as is the Memorial vase next to the pillar.

Margaret Farr

FAIRTRADE

We are a Fairtrade Parish. Our involvement in Fairtrade is an expression of how we follow our faith, as we make intentional choices about how we make our purchases, to play a part in bringing about change in the lives of people who work to produce our food and goods.

I represent the Parish on the Stockton Borough Fairtrade Partnership and the Diocesan working group. Our Parish took part in the ecumenical stall in Yarm High Street on their Gala Day selling some Fairtrade goods.

As well as refreshments provided after the 10am service, and the Wednesday coffee morning, we use Fairtrade biscuits for Encounter, as well as communion wine, toilet rolls and hand wash.

The stall on the 2nd Sunday was little used, so is no longer there, but there are catalogues in Church that can be borrowed (if returned!) and an order form filled in. I can arrange for delivery. The Church receives 5% of the price of purchases made, but importantly it is helping a producer work their way out of poverty, to make a living with a fair wage, and is a benefit to their community.

Suzanne Fletcher

MOTHER'S UNION

We have had another good year with some interesting speakers at our monthly meetings, we also enrolled another Member making a total of 26 members. Once more we held our Christmas Lunch at the Parkmore Hotel & it was enjoyed by everyone. Our Annual outing was to Benningborough Hall with good weather & a pleasant day, in June we attended a Festival Service in Durham Cathedral our Members really enjoyed it a really memorial day. We had our Strawberry Tea with our guests from Yarm Methodist Church, Yarm Parish

Church M.U. & Yarm Widows groups & of course our Coffee morning held in the Parish Hall all successful. We have been doing our knitting for the Special care Baby Unit & the Childrens ward much appreciated by the staff. This year it was our turn to hold the Lady Day service in our Church Rev. Sylvia conducted a lovely service & about 40 members from around the Stockton Deanery M.U. attended. We would welcome anyone who would like to come along to our meetings just to see if it suites them they are held the last Tuesday in the month at 1-45pm.

Pat Wilbert (Branch Leader).

COMMUNICATIONS

WEBSITE/A CHURCH NEAR YOU/SOCIAL MEDIA

St John's website continues to be a source of information for those searching the Internet for a church. It is not always easy to keep it right up to date but I endeavour to update it frequently. It is my hope and intention to make weekly entries. If you have IT skills and are interested in helping with this please let me know. We also have our closed Facebook page, which is very successful at keeping people up to date with events and activities at church. This is becoming popular with baptism families. You can join by searching for St John's Egglecliffe on FB. We also have a twitter account @SJEgglecliffe but this is less frequently used than the Facebook page. I regularly update the Church of England site 'A Church Near You' with information about activities at St John's. This is popular with people moving into a new area who want to find a church.

Sylvia Wilson

THE EGGLECLIFFE EYE

At present we are running a very small ship, David and Joyce being the only people putting the magazine together for the printers. They, more or less, take it in turns to produce the magazine which is a very heavy commitment. Linda is able to assist David and Jim always does the proof-reading.

However, we are managing to produce 10 copies a year – the circulation numbers drop a little each year but it is still a much appreciated magazine. We hope that the Eye will continue to be an interesting read – but this depends on the input we receive from the congregation.

If anyone can assist with the production in any way David and Joyce would love to hear from you.

David Bate

MISSION PARTNERS

YARM AND EAGLESCLIFFE ECUMENICAL GROUP

This group met five times. Very sadly Jim Wilson, I was joint rep with for many years, died. Tributes were paid to him from other Churches. Some others have left and new members welcomed. Events organised :

Week of Prayer for Christian Unity.

- Lent Services. it was decided to discontinue the long standing Lent Lunches and instead hold weekly evening service, rotating round Yarm and Eaglescliffe Churches. They were quite well attended.
- Good Friday- it was decided to discontinue the walk of witness, and have a joint service in Yarm by the Town Hall. We planned a dramatised reading of St Mark's Gospel, involving members of all the churches.
- Christian Aid Week- St. Mary Magdalene held the service in May . The Christian Aid Collection was very successful , higher than the previous year.
- The Advent Quiet Day at Holyrood House, Thirsk - the speaker was Reverend Canon Dr. Chris Collingwood from York Minster.
- Ecumenical Christmas cards- the same format was agreed, but it was decided that for 2015 we would have a new picture on the front of the card, drawn by a child from one of our local churches.

Other plans discussed by the group did not involve Eaglescliffe.

Anne Wake

EDDELAK

For about 10 years now we have been partners with the parish of Eddelak, near Hamburg in northern Germany. We have alternated visits on an annual basis and each parish has gained much by the association.

In September 2015 we were privileged to host 8 people from Germany for a very short 3 day visit. The theme of the visit was to share experiences of refugees and asylum seekers and so their first visit was to Stockton Parish Church to meet some of the Iranian refugees who worship there and hear from them first hand of their lives in exile.

The following day we spent in York visiting the Minster and sharing in worship there. I think we were all struck by the truly international feel of the city with its history, commerce and tourism. Our worship together on Sunday morning is always moving, this time with a powerful sermon from Reiner, the pastor, about God's generous hospitality and our failings, past and present, to live up to that. However there is always the hope that we can continue to reflect God's glory in how we currently welcome the stranger in our midst.

A small group are currently in the process of arranging a return visit in September 2015.

Fran Wood