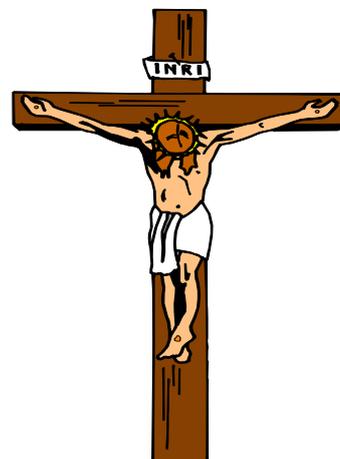
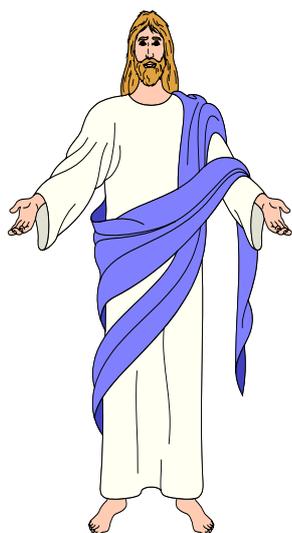


A YEAR IN THE LIFE OF THE PARISH

An Update on Church Activity for the Annual Parochial Church
Meeting
24 April 2005



2004/2005

St Thomas' Brampton
St Peter's Holymoorside

Contents

	Page
Foreword from the Church Wardens by Mark Hoare	3

Our Vision Statement and Core Values	4
<u>Update Reports from around the Parish</u>	
St Peter's, Holymoorside	5 - 6
Worship & Teaching Team - update report by David Mouncer	7 - 8
Children & Young People Team - update report by Mike Barnsley	9 - 11
Evangelism & Nurture Team - update report by David Sanderson, including Mission Accounts	12 - 14
Caring & Sharing Team - update report by David Holden	15 - 16
Finance & Fabric Team - update report by Graham Brown	17 - 18
Communication & Co-ordination Team - update report by Barbara Goodacre	19 - 21

**.FOREWORD
FROM THE CHURCHWARDENS.**

After the interregnum, this last year has been a slightly less hectic one, for me at least. I know others it has still been hectic and I am grateful and thankful for all the hard work that has been done, both in time and effort.



David is no longer the 'New Rector', Heather no longer the 'New Office Manager' and Karen and Gemma no longer the 'New Children's Work' and 'New Youth Work' Co-ordinators.

During the interregnum I wrote this in the May 2003 edition of the church magazine:

"I believe God wants David at St Thomas' and St Peter's. We must accept how David leads us, his ministry, style of worship, the changes he may make, the way he does things. We must not grumble, moan or cause division. We must accept David and his family with love.

Robin Dawson [in a sermon] talked about the example of the love that Jesus showed to his disciples. He washed their feet. So when David, Lisa, Benjamin, Elizabeth, Joshua and Samuel come let us 'wash their feet with our love'. If we don't happen to like or agree with something let us pause and think, "what would Jesus do?"

Looking back after David's 'honeymoon' period I would like to think that we did take this on board. The church family has accepted David, Lisa, Benjamin, Elizabeth, Joshua and Samuel with love. David has made changes, perhaps not everyone has agreed with all of them but I am sure people have paused and thought, "what would Jesus do" and accepted them. For this I give thanks.

Briefly looking back over the year the highlights for me have been Holiday Club, our Lent Course 'The Purpose Driven Life', some special times of worship and Petra's wedding.

There have been encouragements, many new people have joined us at St Thomas' and St Peter's and the number of children and young people attending has risen. There have been many church family events. There have been disappointments particularly the building project that seems to have been bogged down in bureaucracy. However let us not forget Jesus does tell us to wait patiently and be encouraged by what is happening at St John's Walton.

Looking forward to the coming year there is a lot to be encouraged about. The big event at St Thomas' will be our 'Year of Mission' starting at this year's Holiday Club and culminating at Holiday Club 2006. St Peter's are continuing to develop closer links with the other churches in Holymoorside.

I have a major concern though. Although new people are coming and our overall numbers are growing, at St Thomas' this is mainly at the 11am service. We need to look at encouraging grow at our 9am and 6.30pm services.

Finally as I stand down from being Warden at this Church meeting I would like to thank everyone who has supported me in fulfilling my role, both practically and personally. I would ask you to give my successor the same support.

Mark Hoare
Church Warden

A REMINDER OF OUR VISION STATEMENT

Share the love of Jesus

We aim to become more like Jesus every day as we respond to His love for us and as we share the good news of Him with others

We continue to bring our vision statement to life as we channel our energies and activities according to our core values:

- **The Love of God**

shown in the cross of Jesus, inspiring our wholehearted love for Him

- **Communion with God**

in praise, prayer and the breaking of bread, through the working of the Holy Spirit within us

- **The Family of God**

welcoming and including all as of equal importance regardless of age, gender and status, as we meet together and share our lives together

- **The Word of God**

which inspires and sustains our faith, guides our lives and encourages us to become more like Jesus

- **The Concerns of God**

for the poor and downtrodden, the lost and imprisoned, the suffering and those who mourn, the little children to whom His kingdom belongs; and for justice, mercy and peace for all

- **The Mission of God**

that all people may come to know Him by receiving Jesus and His love for them

**Update report from
St. Peter's, Holymoorside**

**A year in the life of St. Peter's
Holymoorside**



Services.

The atmosphere and worship at St Peters is very good. Attendances are probably slightly higher, the church looks almost full each Sunday Morning and attendance at BCP Evening Prayer is constant at about 14. However, we do not produce any statistics from our raw data so it is difficult to be exact. Children vary from 1 to 13 each Sunday but the Sunday Club copes very well. We are very grateful to those that teach the children. Another person has volunteered to for this rewarding work. We had a very successful children's nativity service this Christmas.

We are also trying to contact any past members of St Peters who cannot now get to church, this has resulted in 3 to 5 sick Holy Communions each month.

Buildings

The toilet is now suitable for wheelchair access and a path has been laid from Cotton Mill Hill at the back of Rose Cottage so that access is improved for wheelchairs and children. A new faculty for lighting this path and erecting a memorial cross above the chancel has been applied for.

Churches Together in Holymoorside

We have been participating fully in this work. Having joint services together for various festivals like Palm Sunday, Good Friday, Easter Day Evening. Remembrance Day and Carols round the tree at the village hall We had a fun day service in the Village Hall, this year there was a baptism by St Peters and the service was organised by the URC. In addition, this year we joined together on Sunday Morning for Holy Communion, once in each church to experience the flavour of the different services.

We have signed an informal covenant and may perhaps in 2005, make it an official Ecumenical Partnership.

There is an Ecumenical Bible Study each fortnight on a Wednesday at the Methodist Church and currently we are looking at the Emmaus Course.

In Lent there are two Bible Studies each Wednesday, one in the afternoon and one in the evening following a lent course.

Lent Lunches for charity are a regular feature, this year there is one in each of the three churches.

We send a Christmas Card with all the churches activities, to every house in Holymoorside. The design was created by having a competition for it at Holymoorside School. We will do something similar next year. Both Malcolm Chester, Methodist and David Legge, URC, go into the school to do assemblies each month. Malcolm is moving this year to Colwyn Bay and there probably will not be anyone available to replace him in doing this.

Currently discussion is going on with the possibility of having a Local Ecumenical Project in Holymoorside.

Other Activities

We are producing some Miracle Plays this year. Creation, The Fall, and Noah's Ark being among them.

The Annual Parish Arts and Crafts exhibition took place in St Peters in August and had a great many contributors and was well attended. The same is planned for this year.

We held another Men's Breakfast during the year which resulted in good fellowship and interesting discussions.

The church also had a coach outing to Llandudno which was excellent and enjoyed by all.

St Thomas' Mission & Ministry Teams

Update report for Worship & Teaching Team, by Reverend David Mouncer

I wish to use the vast majority of this report to deal with two specific areas of our worship and teaching within St.Thomas'. Firstly, to report back on our quest for a new hymn book. Secondly, to give you the findings of the worship audit which was undertaken earlier this year. Before I do that, I must express my deep gratitude to all those who have led and preached during the last year. We are very fortunate and extremely blessed in St.Thomas' to have so many readers and retired clergy who provide a quality and depth to our worship and teaching rarely found in other churches. I also wish to thank our dedicated team of musicians and singers who lead our worship week after week. Our worship remains accessible and of the highest quality. Our house groups continue to thrive and contribute much to the life of this church. I am grateful to the team of Open House Leaders who give so sacrificially in time and love so that their groups can grow. My thanks to Robin Balch for coordinating these groups and for organising a very successful Lent course based on Rick Warren's book, 'The Purpose Driven Life'.

New Hymn Book

Early in the new year a questionnaire was undertaken by the 9 o'clock congregation concerning the proposed new hymn book, 'Common Praise'. Opinions were mixed - as expected - but overall, the majority expressed the critique that the new hymn book did not offer enough material of sufficient breadth to warrant its adoption. The exercise was not however a complete waste of time. Many of you expressed a desire to have the melody line alongside the words in any new book. Other alternatives are now being considered and I propose that a similar exercise of congregational consultation will be undertaken before any new hymn book is adopted. Please pray for this process.

Worship Audit

The objective of the audit was to help us to assess our worship and to find out if there were any areas which needed improving. The questionnaire was undertaken in all services over two Sundays in January. The major points are summarised below ;-

Attendance;- The average number of services attended per person over the two week period was 2.12.

Age Structure;- We have a good mix of ages in St.Thomas'. Excluding children, over 30% of adults are aged 40 or less. As expected, the 9 o'clock service contains the more 'mature congregant', with the vast majority over 40 (excluding the Rector- until July!!!).

Years Attending St.Thomas';- Very encouraging news is that as a church we have both maturity and growth. Around 55% of the congregation have been attending the church for over 10 years or more. Yet alongside this cohort of people

mature in the faith, almost 11% of the questionnaire respondents had only been in St.Thomas' for less than a year. This is a fantastic indication of growth and change in St.Thomas', however, most of these new-comers were to be found in the 11 and 6.30 services.

Worship and Teaching - 80% of people said that they felt part of the worship and over 84% said that the service connected to their daily life. 56% said that they would like more times of silence within our worship, alongside 46% who requested more help in using these times of silence more effectively. Most people appreciated the form of intercessions used in the services. Some requested more time for personal prayer. 92% of you said that the sermon was both understandable and challenging. Some of you reported that occasionally the music was unfamiliar, but 9 out of 10 respondents stated that the music was well chosen and supported the theme of the service. Atmosphere on arrival - Over 62% of those attending the morning services found that the atmosphere on arrival was 'cheerful and chatty'. But, very interestingly, 42% of you expressed a desire that the atmosphere should be more quiet and prayerful ! Preparation is as important as participation when it comes to worship !

My thanks to David Holden and Ann in the office for all their hard work compiling the results from the questionnaire.

.....

In conclusion, let me finish some thoughts from Karl Barth concerning worship. I hope they inspire you.

"Christian worship is the most momentous, the most urgent, the most glorious action that can place in human life."

St Thomas' Mission & Ministry Teams

Update report for Children & Young People Team,

by Mike Barnsley

Since the last AGM at St. Thomas', I have taken on the role of overseeing the children's and youth work in our church. I can honestly say that it has been an exciting and encouraging experience.

Karen Herrick has been our Children's Work Co-ordinator since the beginning of 2004 (having preceded me in the role of overseeing children's and youth work at St. Thomas's. Her vast experience in working with children and her wealth of original and creative ideas has meant that St. Thomas' children's work and activities has gone from strength to strength.

In May 2004 we appointed Gemma Machin as our new Youth Work Co-ordinator. Between the end of December, and the beginning of May, Gemma had been continuing the youth work side of Neil Roper's role on a voluntary basis. Gemma is an asset to our church; she has brought enthusiasm, vitality and depth to our youth work.

Under 5's initiatives

Rachel Michell and Emma Atkinson now have responsibility for overseeing the Sunday morning Crèche and aim to develop the Christian focus. The Parents and Tots Group now renamed 'Totzone' has been adopted by Julie Lomas, who aims to make this into more of an outreach opportunity to parents and carers.

Kidzone 627

In 2004 the re-launch of Kidzone proved to be successful. This group has developed over the months having various theme nights, and attracting more and more children. The group meets its aims in providing a safe and fun environment for church and non-church children. Without the team of volunteers Steve Lomas, Catherine Cowley and Robert Batten who turn up week in, week out, to assist Karen with Kidzone, it simply would not be possible.

Discoverers

In the Autumn Term of 2004, Karen and Julie Brown successfully carried the Discoverers through the transition of teaching material from 'Salt' to 'Light'. Julie Brown has continued to effectively organise and co-ordinate the Discoverers group leaders. The large team of volunteers functioning as group leaders for the Discoverers give of their time on a Sunday morning on a regular basis. Thank you to all of you for your hard work and commitment. (You know who you are and there are too many to mention by name!)

Holiday Club 2004

Karen's excellent planning and organisation once again produced a well-attended and lively holiday club 'All the Fun of the Fair' in the Summer of 2004. Over 100 children attended each day, played games, participated in craft activities, heard the Word of God, memorised certain verses, and (very important to them) accumulated points!

Church Links

Karen has visited Brownies, Beavers and the after school club several times in the last year, keeping open and strengthening existing communication links.

Schools

Karen and Gemma have continued St. Thomas's involvement in local schools. Over the past year or so Karen has spent a lot of time in the local Infant and Junior schools Westfield and Old Hall. She has delivered lessons on a variety of subjects such as 'The Image of Jesus', and 'The Christian View on Sharing'. Karen also leads assemblies in Westfield and Old Hall on a regular basis, focusing on themes such as 'Love' and 'Lent'.

Gemma spends some of her time in our local secondary school, Brookfield Community School delivering lessons on controversial ethical topics such as abortion, and euthanasia, alongside more interactive and fun lessons on major Christian festivals i.e. Christmas and Easter. She also delivered several assemblies in the autumn term of last year, looking at the issue of 'Respect'. Gemma also works with a network of other youth workers in Chesterfield who occasionally do schools work as a team in order to present a united front to young people across the area.

Pathfinders

Pathfinders, our group for those in school years 7-9, has been moving through a time of change over the past 8 months or so. Gemma has changed the structure of the average weekly meeting, and also tried to incorporate more social events for this age group into the calendar. Over the past few months attendance at this group has settled at around 14 young people each week, with a disproportionately large number of girls. To address this issue, Gemma is considering starting a mid-week boys group for those in Yr 7-9. Since May last year Pathfinders have covered a variety of topic areas in their group teaching times, including 'Exodus' and 'Respect'. Pathfinders are now coming to the end of series called "Getting into God". They have responded well to this material, and have grown spiritually, built stronger friendships as a group and improved their commitment to personal prayer. Pathfinders took part in our recent Youth Service on 20th February. They led a short piece of movement-worship based around Psalm 139:1-10 and several members of Pathfinders also wrote, and read prayers within the service. A youth weekend away for Pathfinders has been booked at Cefn Lea Christian Centre in Mid-Wales, for the 15-17th April 2005. Huge thanks are due to our team of volunteers who work with Pathfinders, in particular Tim Wheeler whose commitment has been unceasing, and to our two new team members Janet Haywood and Ruth Bird.

CYFA

CYFA members, in school years 10 – 13, have grown in number and maturity in recent months. They have studied Armour of God, Freedom in Christ, Prayer, and ways to read the Bible. During the year many members of the group have made major commitments relating to their lifestyle and personal devotions. Recently CYFA have been studying a programme of teaching about community action. Gemma has planned, prepared and delivered these sessions with the invaluable help of Gareth Alldread. CYFA would not be possible without Gareth and Kat's ongoing commitment. We owe them a considerable debt. A group of 14 went away to Cefn Lea Christian Centre in Mid-Wales. The weekend involved good food, a great location, lots of music, some deep meditations, fantastic scenery, some snow, a couple of movies, a small amount of sleep, some amazing fellowship, challenging teaching and an unforgettable communion service. You had to be there! (If you weren't ask one of the young people who was.)

Rapture

This is our peer-led mid-week bible study group for those in school years 10-13. This group has also changed considerably over the past few months. Rapture has studied various books and issues under the capable leadership of Chris Witham and Hannah Willis, who produced their own excellent lent series, termed 'The Big Lent House'. The group is the process of prayerfully transitioning leadership as older members begin to move on.

Inter-church

Karen and Gemma often work with other members of different churches in the local area to produce large scale children's and youth events. Karen hopes that there will be another 'Stargazers' event to be planned after Easter. Gemma is working with 2 other youth leaders on a regular basis to try and produce a Saturday night youth social event in Chesterfield, where young people can invite their friends, listen to music and relax in a safe environment.

Training/Conferences

In the past 12 months, Karen and Gemma have both attended a mixture of training days and conferences which they have found interesting, challenging and encouraging.

Karen: "I attended the children's conference last month and found it very beneficial if tiring! Thank you."

Gemma: "The MATRIX 2005 conference was a very educational experience and most of the teaching contained very high level theological content, which I enjoyed."

Volunteers

If you are already a volunteer helping in some way with our children's and youth work your help and service is appreciated deeply. We literally could not continue without you! If you're not already a volunteer, but feel you may have gifts and talents that you could put into use – you know who you are! Please, come and talk things over with myself, Karen or Gemma. Join us in our mission and ministry, for

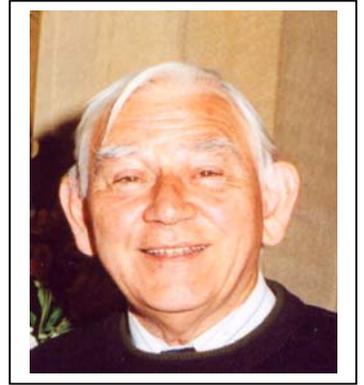
**"...we will tell the next generation the praiseworthy deeds of the Lord,
his power, and the wonders he has done."**

Psalm 78:4b

St Thomas' Mission & Ministry Teams

Update report for Evangelism & Nurture Team

by David Sanderson



Baptism Preparation

The baptism preparation team is responsible for preparing families for the baptism of their children. This usually involves two members of the team visiting the home of the family to talk through the implication of having their children baptised. The final arrangements for Baptism in church are made with the Rector. The CPAS video *First Steps* has been an essential tool in this ministry. We have an enthusiastic team of eight people. During the past twelve months we have prepared about ten couples for the baptism of their children. Once or twice the team has been at full stretch because of demand, which means we are currently looking to extend the team.

World Mission

Some major decisions were taken to amend our church giving policy in 2004. The September PCC took a decision after extensive discussion had taken place earlier in the year about how our support of and giving to world mission was to be facilitated. The following are the main thrust of the agreed the following procedure.

- On four Sundays each year, once a quarter, there will be opportunity for a mission speaker (or presentation).
- On four Wednesdays each year there will be opportunity for the World Mission Group to arrange a prayer meeting for four different mission agencies.
- The World Mission Group should be reconstituted with a church member given the task of representing each of the ten agencies we support.

It was also agreed to divide the annual church tithe into three amounts as follows:

- £2,000 is set aside for needs, which arise during the year, such as young people on three-month missionary placements or special appeals that may come in through the church office.
- The remainder of the church's allocation will be divided into two amounts
- 60% will be shared between the main four agencies: Andrew Goodacre, Hope for Life (work in Eastern Europe), Scripture Union and South American Missionary Society.
- 40% will be shared between the five agencies: Christian Solidarity Worldwide, Church Pastoral Aid Society, Crosslinks, Novimost International and Overseas Missionary Fellowship.
- The church's policy on the allocation of funds will be reviewed every three years.

TEAR fund each year is allocated the collections at Harvest and Christmas and will not receive any other funding from the churches 10% allocation.

The church was informed of these decisions in December 2004.

As a direct result of the new policy, two Sundays were designated as Missionary Sundays, September 26th with TEAR Fund and December 12th Novimost preachers. These were well attended and a good number of people stayed on for the meal after which there was an opportunity to hear further from the speakers and ask questions. We have dates fixed for the rest of the year it looks as if the regular pattern is a positive gain for the church.

Two Missionary Prayer Meetings took place on October 13th and February 14th. The attendance at both was around 30 to 40, but we need to see more members of the congregation supporting these events. The World Mission Committee also met twice.

Three members of our church have been directly involved in overseas missionary service. Seb Johnson returned to us in June 2004 having spent almost twelve months in Africa. Since the end of November two other members have taken voluntary service overseas. Sophie Stevens will be in Uruguay until the middle of 2005 and Robin Dawson has agreed to a two-year stint in Afghanistan. Please keep these people in your prayers.

Giving to overseas mission can only be a matter for great praise. We were able to give over 27,000 was given to support world mission

START! Discovering Christianity in six small group session

Start is an interactive course for small groups that takes the members through an introduction to Christian Faith. It can be used with small numbers of people. So far one *START!* course has been held at St. Thomas.. As we move into the year of mission we pray that there will be an increasing demand to use the course.

Living Stones Project - Building to Grow

(St Thomas' Year of Mission July 2005 to July 2006)

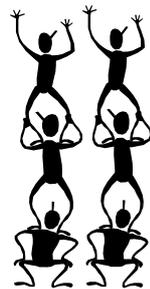
The aims of the year of mission are:

- Build on what we are already doing
- Encourage us to engage with people on the fringe of the church and beyond
- Develop further links with the local community.
- Present the Gospel clearly and in an imaginative way
- Encourage people to explore further the meaning of the Christian faith.

A planning group was set up to oversee the programme consisting of: Paul Benson, David Mouncer, Alison Prentice, David and Nanette Sanderson, Kathryn Shemwell

As a result of the planning committee's discussions a number of things have been arranged for the latter part of 2005.

- July 16th and 17th a weekend of prayer and commitment.
- July 25th to 29th Children's Holiday Club
- September 7th to 9th Holiday at Home' a 'Holiday Club' for over 55s
- September 17th Workshops on Faith and Life led by Geoff Shattock.
- October 14th and 15th participation in the national 'Big Draw' initiative



There will of course be all the usual things like the Harvest and Christmas events. Looking further ahead into 2006 some form of youth outreach, a mini outreach for children (April 7-11), musical evenings, a flower festival and exhibition (June 22-25) will take place.

The planning group is open to suggestions from the congregation about other possible activities.

MISSION ACCOUNT 2004

2003	Income	2004
2658.44	Balance from previous year	458.21
13150.00	PCC Allocation	17300.00
382.37	PCC Development Fund	392.98
	PCC Organ Fund	1960.00
4470.30	Donations including Gift Aid	7165.73
20661.11	Total	27276.92

2003	Expenditure				2004
	<i>Agency</i>		<i>PCC Allocation</i>	<i>Other Donations</i>	<i>Total</i>
	Barnabas Fund	O		705.13	705.13
536.08	Christian Aid	O		731.00	731.00
900.00	Christian Solidarity Worldwide	O	1520.00	3280.00	4800.00
900.00	Church Pastoral Aid Society	H	1520.00		1520.00
900.00	Crosslinks	O	1520.00		1520.00
1500.00	Andrew Goodacre	H	2850.00		2850.00
3865.48 1200.00)	Hope for Eastern Europe	O	2850.00		2850.00
918.00 900.00)	NOVI MOST International	O	1520.00	60.50	1580.50
250.00	Overseas Missionary Fellowship	O	1520.00		1520.00
1050.00 1000.00)	Scripture Union	H	2850.00		2850.00
2285.60 2250.00)	South American Missionary Society	O	2850.00		2850.00
2427.60 900.00)	TEAR Fund	O		1374.50	1374.50

	Sophie Stevens	O	300.00	250.00	550.00
4670.14	Projects not supported in 2004				
458.21	Balance carried		1575.79		1579.79
20661.11	Total		20875.79	6401.13	27276.92

The PCC allocation for 2003 where different from the total is shown in brackets.

Robert Batten

St Thomas' Mission & Ministry Teams

Update Report for Caring and Sharing Team

by David Holden

Word has kept being fed back from numerous sources of the wonderful friendship and help of many and different members of St Thomas' congregation to people who are both new to the area and also new to St Thomas'. This is on top of the work done by the various Caring and Sharing teams. So, to ALL members of the congregation I offer a very big WELL DONE and thank you.



On behalf of the church I offer grateful thanks to all the teams, both co-ordinators and volunteer workers that make up the various teams, who are always on the lookout for new support.

Two group co-ordinator meetings have been held where we share problems and ideas proving extremely beneficial in our support for each other. Consequently we are feel enabled to approach many of our hurdles in a new state of confidence.

Mums and Babies and **Parents and Tots** – Both these groups have met regularly each in their own way for the greater part of the year. These groups have met up with each other several times for a “Pram Service” which has proved very successful, averaging about 50 adults, babies and tots attending each one. However, in November 2004 Sue Percival had to relinquish her lead roll of the Parents and Tots group, for her work with this over the last years we offer our grateful thanks.

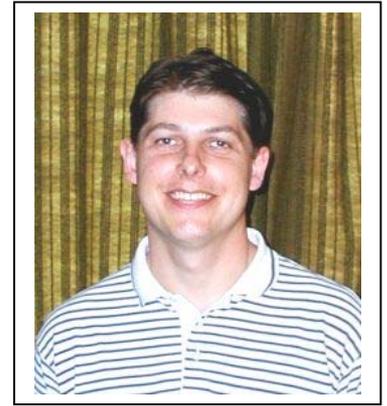
Julie Lomas has agreed to pick up the helm and has initiated moves to combine the two groups into one under the new title of **“TOTZONE”**. This is for everyone under the age of five with their carers – mums, dads, grannies and granddads as well as childminders offering fun, play, Bible stories, songs and prayers under a gentle awareness of God and his love for us all.

Men's Breakfast – Mick Topliss has taken on the roll of co-ordinator, assisted by Bryn Garland and Robin Balch. Several breakfast events have been held, mainly in the church meeting room. Breakfast generally follows the pattern of cereal, breakfast cob (bought in

the core values of the church. It is also hoped that many more of the congregation will see that giving of their time is at least as important as giving their money, and that many voluntary help spaces will be filled. The work of all these groups is very much involved in, and orientated towards **“Sharing the Love of Jesus”**.

St Thomas' Mission & Ministry Teams

Update report for Finance & Fabric Team, by Graham Brown



I sense we are on the verge of a significant development at St. Thomas'. Or should that be "of" St. Thomas'. I refer of course to our building development plans.

A year ago I highlighted in my APCM report the frustrations we had experienced in progressing our development project, together with my cautious optimism that things were about to change. Much has occurred in the intervening year and at the time of writing we are anticipating a decision that could lead to a significant new - and very positive - development, which I will have more to report on later.

Finance

The formal accounts for the year ended 31 December 2004 accompany this report. Without wishing to repeat their detail here, the accounts record that 2004 was a satisfactory year for our church finances as our general ('unrestricted') income exceeded our general expenditure. Put another way we saw an increase in our general 'reserves' and we were also able to more generously resource our missionary activities.

By contrast our 'restricted' expenditure exceeded our comparative income as we incurred significant one-off expenditure in relation to our development project and have therefore seen a reduction in the reserves currently available in our "St. Thomas' Development" account. I suggest we consider this expenditure an investment in the development of our mission-supporting church facilities, rather than a 'painful' (but necessary) use of resources.

It would be remiss of me not to mention in any financial report the willing, generous and able contributions that David Oldale and Phil Johnson (PCC Treasurer) have made throughout the year. Whilst they are often 'invisible' to all but the involved few, our church finances do not take care of themselves and merely require reporting upon once a year. There is much work required to process receipts and payments, budgets, reports, and formal accounts, and to ensure appropriate Christian stewardship of our resources - and yet again David and Phil have performed commendably!

Fabric

A significant amount of time and effort are required to maintain our church 'estate'. This work takes a number of forms, from general tidying and cleaning (of everything from church brasses to leaf-strewn paths), through caretaker responsibilities, to those of our estates manager - Mr Johnson, once more - and the willing volunteers who have congregated on the first Saturday of each month to progress the ground clearance work in our churchyard.

A notable contribution to the 'fabric' team is the splendid and greatly appreciated work led by Margaret Taylor and her flower team, who once again have provided us some beautiful displays to admire throughout the year.

Living Stones Project - Building to Grow

Having just re-read the report I wrote for last year's APCM I feel very positive about the progress we have made this last year - and still more positive about the new phase we may be about to enter, should the Council approve the formal planning application we have submitted.

There is no hiding the fact that the progress of our development project has not been straightforward. Last year's major 'challenge' was provided by the Diocesan Advisory Committee, who offered a range of opinions as to how and when we should progress our project (before, during and after the Interregnum). This year's 'challenge' has been provided by the Borough Council (and indirectly our neighbours, who have raised certain concerns about our project proceeding within their vicinity).

A number of these concerns were sensible and quite understandable. Was there evidence and have collated much information in support of our application.

At the time of writing the Council is considering the information we have provided ahead of a formal planning committee meeting (date to be advised), which we will be invited to attend to make our case. It may therefore be that we will start the new church year with a 'green light' to move to the next stage of our project - the little matter of fund raising! But with a God as great as ours all things are possible.

"Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God."

Phil. 4:6

I would like to thank you all for your interest, support, and prayers in helping to progress our project thus far. There is of course much work still to do before we can start taking bookings for our new meeting rooms, but God willing we will now be able to progress our plans apace.

Graham Brownof need for our project? How might our proposals impact the ecology of our churchyard? What impact would the project have upon the trees in our churchyard? How would traffic movements be affected by our plans? In response we have commissioned three surveys (in respect of churchyard topography, ecology and trees)

St Thomas' Mission & Ministry Teams

Update report for Communication & Co-ordination Team,

by Barbara Goodacre

Since I took over the role of Communication and Co-ordination team leader in September 2004, I have come into contact with many areas in the life of St. Thomas'. Perhaps the greatest impact that it has had on me so far, is that of a renewed awareness of the willingness and the generosity of the numerous volunteers who serve in so many ways "behind the scenes." It is impossible to mention everyone by name, but to all you "willing workers" a very, very big "thank you". Without your help much of what you are about to read would not have happened in the last year!

Church Office

The church office continues to be a hub of activity during the week, with many people popping in with a wide variety of requests. Thank you Heather and Anne for your continued work and also Sue Wheeler whose volunteer help is much appreciated. Please pray for our office staff as they are often the first contact that people have with our church.

Week by week Anne compiles the **newsheet**, a very important part of the Church's communication system. We continue to encourage all church members to submit material for the newsheet well in advance, in time for inclusion at least two weeks before the event takes place.

A complete revision and significant updating of the **church address list** is taking place.

Yet another "behind the scenes" task covered by our church office staff is that of taking **room bookings** for the Church or the Meeting Room. Here too we are continuing to further our links with different organisations and individual members within our local community.

The very slow progress on the new outside **notice board** has been outside our control. However planning permission was eventually given in November and we hope that it will not be too long now before we have our new notice board.

Rotas

The rotas for people who help at our three Sunday services continue to be masterminded by Allan Kitchen and Pam Brimelow and assisted by a representative from each service. Members of the congregation could really encourage them in this task by remembering to fill in the rota slips to say when they are not available!

Electoral Roll

The electoral roll was revised in 2002. Again this year, Myra Johnson has faithfully continued to keep it up to date, adding new members and making other necessary amendments.

Marriage Register

With their usual care and attention to detail, Pam Brimelow and Ray Batteson have continued to undertake the very exacting task of completing the marriage registers.

The Parish Leaflet

In September, there was no time to organise a special Christmas leaflet so instead we used material published by CPO (Christian Publishing Organisation). Over 2,700 copies of "Follow the Star" were distributed round the parish and smaller leaflets were handed

out to all members of groups and schools who held special Christmas activities in church.

In November a new planning group was formed to review and plan future parish leaflets. The first issue of St. Thomas' "Spotlight" rolled off the press in time for Easter. Special thanks go to Phil Michell and Janet Hayward for their enthusiasm and expertise in putting this together. The next issue will be out for Christmas!

A special word of thanks must also go to our distributors, especially to John and Brenda Trickett who faithfully organise the rounds for distribution and keep up to date with new housing in the parish.

Ploughshare

With much thought and care, Sue Ward and her loyal team have continued to produce our church magazine, Ploughshare, every two months. Colour has now been introduced onto the cover page and there has been a small increase in the cost. At the end of November, a special token of appreciation was given to David and Pam Oldale for so faithfully organising the distribution of Ploughshare for the last 24 years.

To Bernard Blanksby, who has now taken over this role, and to all the distributors, thank you so much for continuing to deliver Ploughshare. The delivery of Ploughshare and the visit of a friendly distributor means so much to some of the elderly members in our parish. We need more volunteers to help deliver Ploughshare. The next time you hear your copy of Ploughshare come through your letterbox, prepare to be challenged! Could you be a distributor as well as a receiver?

Welcome to St. Thomas'

The orange **Welcome Cards**, which are placed in the back of every chair in church, were first used at the beginning of October. They have already proved effective and several new contacts have been made.

A planning group was set up last November to produce a church **Welcome Pack**. These packs will be used mainly by David Mouncer, as he contacts newcomers who have filled in the Welcome Card and meets with couples who are getting married in church and will be living in the parish. They will also be used by the Baptism Preparation team. As I write this report, the front covers have just arrived from the printers and Janet Hayward has assembled the first completed packs. A special word of thanks must go to Janet who has prepared, written and printed all the individual information cards contained in the pack. She has agreed to update the individual cards as necessary.

Bookstall

We appreciate all the work that Mark Torkington has done in running the bookstall in the last few years. In February, Julie Lomas took over this responsibility and some changes are afoot! Look out for a special Book Week to be planned later in the year, to encourage us to browse through and buy a wide selection of Christian literature. If you want to order any books at any time, please contact Julie directly. Julie will be ordering all books and CDs from the Cliff College bookshop. As this is our "local" Christian bookshop, we feel it is very important that we support them as much as we can.

Tape Library

Did you know that all the sermons preached at St. Thomas' are taped? Martin Bailey continues to check that all is running smoothly and the recorded tapes are kept in the left hand grey cupboard behind the lectern. Several people have suggested to me that we need to re-think the role and the aims of the tape library. What is the best way of storing the recorded sermons? How could they be catalogued? Where should they be kept? How could they be shared with church members who cannot attend the services in church? If you have a gift in this area and feel God might be asking you to use it please let me know!

Website

Much time and effort has gone into the church website. I am indebted to David Holden who spent many hours last September updating and improving the existing website.

Thank you David, for all you have done in setting up the first St Thomas' website. A decision was then taken that Chris Witham and other members of CYFA should be invited to build a new website. This is now up and running, although, at the time of writing, work still needs to be completed in one or two areas. I am most grateful to Mark Hoare who has volunteered to be our new website co-ordinator and to keep it up to date.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all who are advising, supporting and praying for me as team leader. I have found it both challenging and demanding! I am aware that a lack of clear communication creates misunderstanding and frustration. On the other hand I have also seen the results of good communication and co-ordination, when everything seems to fall into place so much more easily, and people are encouraged and feel appreciated. From this there has flowed a real sense of anticipation and enthusiasm as we experience God at work, uniting us in our service for Him.

I look forward to the coming year as together we build upon these positive experiences and continue to **pray for:**

- All areas of church life
- The office staff and all the volunteers who work behind the scenes
- Renewed enthusiasm, encouragement and fresh ideas
- New volunteers to share the load
- Willingness to move forward, to improve our communication and co-ordination throughout the church
- A renewed desire to carry out the work that God is calling us to do and to communicate His love in meaningful and tangible ways within our fellowship and out into the wider community.

Let us remember the words of Paul in Colossians Ch. 3 v. 17, **“Whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.”**