

**The Parish Church of
Saint Michael and All Angels
Felton**



**ANNUAL REPORT
AND
FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
OF
THE PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL
For the year ended 31 December 2019**

Priest in Charge (from 31 August 2014)

Reverend James Harvey
The Vicarage
1 Benlaw Grove
Felton
Morpeth
NE65 9NG

Bank

Barclays Bank Plc
38 Bridge Street
Morpeth
Northumberland

Independent Examiner

Mr Ian Bell FCA
10 Riverside
Felton
Morpeth
NE65 9EA

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Background

St Michael's PCC has the responsibility of co-operating with the Priest in Charge, Reverend James Harvey, in promoting the whole mission of the church in the Parish, that is, pastoral, evangelistic, social and ecumenical. It also ensures effective maintenance of the church and of its fabric.

Membership of the Parochial Church Council

Members of the Parochial Church Council (PCC) are either ex-officio or are elected by the Annual Parochial Church Meeting in accordance with the Church Representation Rules.

During the year, the following served as members of the Parochial Church Council:

Priest in Charge	Reverend James Harvey	
Wardens	Alan Ferguson Angela Smith	
Lay Representatives to the Deanery Synod	John Marshall Mark Winter	
Elected Members	Anthea Smith	<i>Safeguarding Officer</i>
	Charlotte Bonnet	
	Charlotte Clarke	<i>Treasurer</i>
	Rev. Gabby Llewelyn	
	John Inglis-Jones	
	John Marshall	
	Lindsay Tanner	<i>Licensed Lay Reader</i>
	Liz Scurfield	
	Nick Morton	
	Peter Groves	
	Richard Evans	<i>Secretary</i>

Committees

Standing Committee

This is the only Committee required by law and it has the power to transact the business of the PCC between meetings, subject to any directions given by the Council. The Standing Committee comprises the Priest in Charge, Wardens, and two lay members of PCC.

Finance Sub Committee

The Committee comprises two Wardens, Hon. Treasurer, and one other member agreed by the PCC.

Church Electoral Roll

A new Electoral Roll was made in 2019. The number of members enrolled on the New Electoral Roll in April 2010 was 89. The number of electors on the Electoral Roll on 31st December 2019 stood at 91.

Debra Philips, Electoral Roll Officer

REVIEW OF THE YEAR

PCC Review of 2019

At the April 2019 APCM, three members of the PCC, Alison Marshall, Simon Beeby and Tim Maxwell retired. Nominations were made at the Annual Meeting for four new members to join the PCC and John Inglis-Jones, John Marshall, Nicholas Morton and Peter Groves were duly elected. Lindsay Tanner, licensed to St Michael's as a Lay Reader, is entitled to serve on the PCC and had agreed to continue to do so. Charlotte Bonnet had been co-opted during 2018 and was proposed and duly elected at the 2019 Annual Meeting. The PCC has fourteen members including Rev. James Harvey. Mark Winter was nominated at the APCM to be a lay representative of the parish at the Deanery Synod.

PCC met nine times in 2018 with an average attendance of 10.7. Other committees and groups met as necessary and reported to the PCC. The Treasurer reported to the Finance Sub-committee and attended PCC when necessary. John Inglis-Jones agreed to chair the Finance Sub-committee in May and Charlotte Clarke was appointed Treasurer in October.

PCC started its working year in May with prayer and discussion about the Worship Review initiated in 2018 and continued at the 2018 PCC Away Day. Among significant changes agreed was a proposal that we compile a new service book with more contemporary language and more liturgical options and prayers; and that we include more contemporary songs at 11:00am Communion Services. In June we discussed the positive feedback from a meeting James held with regulars at 08:00 Holy Communion. They voiced strong support for the way children's work was developing in the church and in other services and made helpful suggestions about communication with the rest of the church and the village.

Leading our Church into Growth was a standing item on all our meeting agendas. In June we reviewed children's and young people's work based on workshops involving the Junior Church and Youth work teams. The rapid growth in creche, Food & Fun, Junior Church and three youth cells were presented in a 10-minute video produced by Sue Inglis-Jones, which was shown at 08:00 and 11:00 services. In July we were encouraged that more church members were feeling confident in being missional and sharing the good news and God's love out in the parish. Proposals were brought forward by James in September to restructure the first and last 10 minutes of 11:00 Communion Service to make them more accessible for families with young children and for Junior Church.

We carried out a Risk Assessment for our buildings and grounds with the full report scheduled to go to PCC in March 2020.

The PCC reviewed safeguarding at each meeting and are happy to report no Safeguarding incidents during 2019. The church's Safeguarding Policy is reviewed annually, and a full Safeguarding Audit was completed and sent to Church House in January 2020. Anthea Smith, the church's Safeguarding Officer, reports that all who need a DBS and Diocesan Safeguarding training have completed successfully and are up to date and all areas covered in our Safeguarding Policy have been addressed

Through the year PCC also worked on West Window repairs and new glass design proposals, new positioning for the projector and screen, replacing the old lights in church with brighter, lower energy LED luminaires, and other maintenance and building matters, including efforts towards making better use of the space we have available and negotiating with Northumberland County Council to repair the long path across the churchyard.

Richard Evans Hon. Secretary

Churchwardens

It gives us great pleasure to present the churchwardens report for 2019. What a fantastic church family we are. We have continued to welcome new people to both the village and our congregation. Our numbers attending services are up in total and the average at each service is higher than the previous year. This increase demands a lot of effort with many people involved in all aspects of the services, welcome and hospitality. The house groups continue to flourish and contribute to the prayer life of the church. Under James's direction we have an increased prayer rhythm as we go forward in 2020 - a prospect that excites us all. Prayer is the most important factor in our church life and impacts on what we do as a church community.

The PCC has met regularly throughout the year. Liz Kerry from the Diocesan Board of Finance explained how our contribution is used for the wider church at our March PCC meeting. We once again paid 100% of our Parish Share which is important to help our fellow Christians in our diocese. We welcome regular givers and encourage taxpayers to complete gift aid forms which enables the church to recover a significant amount each quarter from the tax paid by our contributors. Thank you to all who have done that.

It is always a pleasure to welcome and celebrate with church family through weddings and baptisms, and this year has been no exception. We also had the opportunity to celebrate the lives of some wonderful people through the funerals held in our church, including two very active members of our church family, namely Roy Leech and Pat Shepherd. This of course is tinged with great sadness as we miss those involved.

There are many mundane matters that go on throughout the year which may go unnoticed but involve a lot of effort from a great deal of people. We have an army of unsung heroes which include those involved in fire risk assessment, safeguarding, keeping tablecloths cleaned and ironed, bell ringing and all those involved in the finance function, to name but a few.

Throughout the year various forms of maintenance to the building have been undertaken. The floor next to the lady chapel has been repaired, the main light bulbs have been changed to LEDs, the leaks on the parapet walls repaired. The light at the gate to the churchyard has been repaired but needs replacing before next winter. The boiler was serviced. The new projector and screen were installed during the year and is being used more and more during the services. A short-term repair to the west window has been done whilst we evaluate the best option for the main repair which should happen this current year. The Perspex on the outside of the millennium window has been removed as it had badly discoloured which enables us to enjoy the great work previously done on these windows.

**Alan Ferguson and Angela Smith
Churchwardens**

Financial Review

It is a privilege to be able to report on another satisfactory year regarding the financial position at St. Michael and All Angels Church, Felton. We are thankful to God for his provision in this respect and our appreciation to all those who have supported the church in so many ways, resulting in our healthy financial position.

We have met our Parish Share payment in full and have also fulfilled our aspiration to tithe 10% of our income to our mission partners.

Gift Aid continues to be recovered on a quarterly basis. Last year was an unusually high level of Gift Aid recovery as we moved that year from an annual to a quarterly recovery. 2019 represents a stabilising of this income.

Planned Giving to the General Fund has increased very slightly from 2018 and represents almost 70% of General Fund income.

Within payments, our Church Service costs and Children and Youth Work costs are reduced in General Fund expenditure, the latter through making good use of the Church's Restricted Funds.

The retained balance on General Funds is not considered excessive when considered in relation to our responsibilities in respect of the church building and ongoing activities.

Turning to the Restricted Funds, we can also be thankful that the situation continues to be satisfactory and there is generous giving to these funds. The 'Building improvement fund' now stands at £19.8k which is currently anticipated will be sufficient to meet the immediate needs in relation to the west window.

The current balance together with ongoing donations for Children and Young People is enough to cover this work for some time.

The fireworks evening was cancelled but the expenditure has been covered by generous donations, and the fireworks will be used in November 2020.

The PCC continues to administer the funds held within the Felton Relief in Need fund. No Grants were made in 2019.

The Projector Equipment has made a considerable improvement to services and required a transfer from General Funds of £1.4k to write off this debt at year-end.

We have been blessed with two exceptional contributions during the year. Firstly, we received £10k (and will do each year for a 3-year period) from Stewardship to support the administration of the Church. Secondly, we gratefully received an anonymous donation of £1k to support the Senior's Lunches.

We are grateful for the generosity of so many people in the Church and look forward to fulfilling God's work in 2020.

Charlotte Clarke, Hon. Treasurer

Independent Examiner's Report to the members of St. Michael and All Angels' Church, Felton, Parochial Church Council.

I report on the accounts for the year ended 31st December 2019.

Respective responsibilities of the PCC and Independent Examiner

The PCC consider that an audit is not required for this year under section 144(2) of the Charities Act 2011 (the 2011 Act) and that an independent examination is needed.

It is my responsibility to:

- examine the accounts under section 145 of the 2011 Act;
- follow the procedures laid down in the General Directions given by the Charity Commissioners section 145(5)(b) of the 2011 act; and
- state whether particular matters have come to my attention.

Basis of Independent Examiner's Statement

My examination was carried out in accordance with the General Directions given by the Charity Commission.

An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the PCC and a comparison of the accounts presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts, and seeking explanations from the PCC concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in a full audit, and consequently I do not express an audit opinion on the accounts.

Independent Examiner's Statement

In connection with my examination, no matters have come to my attention

- 1) which gives me reasonable cause to believe that in any material respect the requirements
 - to keep accounting records in accordance with section 130 of the 2011 Act; or
 - to prepare accounts which accord with these accounting records have not been met; or
- 2) to which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

Signed _____



Dated _____

29-2-20

Mr. Ian Bell FCA
10, Riverside, Felton, Morpeth, Northumberland, NE65 9EA

Parochial Church Council of St. Michael and All Angels Felton

Receipts and Payments Accounts

for 12 months to 31 December 2019 (£)

2018	<u>General Fund</u>			
	Receipts			
32708	Planned giving	32858		
5184	Other giving	4008		
17168	Gift Aid	8773		
2826	Fees	2162		
<u>17</u>	Other income	<u>21</u>		
57903			47822	
	Payments			
27623	Parish Share - note 1	27623		
814	Maintenance & repairs	1095		
3000	Vicar's Expenses - note 2	3000		
3389	Insurance	3627		
3202	Energy & Water	2888		
3000	Giving - note 3	4200		
5668	Church service costs	4559		
3147	Children & Youth work	196		
<u>3142</u>	Other expenses	<u>2528</u>		
52985			<u>49717</u>	
4918	Surplus for the period			-1896
	General fund at 1 January 2019	Contingency Available	15000	
<u>27632</u>			<u>17550</u>	<u>32550</u>
	General fund at 31 December 2019	Contingency Available	15000	
32550			<u>15654</u>	30654
<u>40231</u>	Other funds at 31 December 2019 - detailed below			<u>54257</u>
72781	Total of all funds at 31 December 2019			84912
	Represented by			
72781	Cash at banks			84912

Statement of Assets and Liabilities

	2019	2018	2017
Barclays Bank	£ 30,992	£ 23,715	£ 4,531
Santander Bank	£ 4,652	£ 861	£ 1,185
Virgin Money	<u>£48,568</u>	<u>£ 48,205</u>	<u>£ 57,835</u>
	£ 84,212	£72,781	£ 63,551

Movements on Restricted Funds during the Year (£)

	Building Impmnt	Mission Partners	Children Youth Wkr	Fireworks	Flowers	Holiday Club	Projector Equipment	Admin Worker	Felton Rlf in Need	Other	Total	2018
Balance 1 January 2019	17419	0	15907	77	0	104	0	0	6521	203	40231	35919
Add Receipts												
Donations	1970.00	1209.17	9093.00	900.00	737.22		2777.21	10000.00		3828.79	30515	18937
Collections										986.58	987	311
Grants											0	1134
Gift Aid	295.00		1275.00	225.00	128.56		403.75			254.15	2581	1633
Fund raising		22.82					120.00				143	267
Voluntary receipts											0	340
Other	134.66		118.53				130.00	63.04	45.98		492	321
Transfer from General Fund							1635.74				1636	
Total Receipts	2400	1232	10487	1125	866	0	5067	10063	46	5070	36354	22943
Opening balance plus receipts	19819	1232	26393	1202	866	104	5067	10063	6566	5273	76585	58862
Less Payments												
Church costs incl salary	588.26		6627.12					1061.35			8277	10635
Upkeep of services			905.47		395.38		6470.06			619.54	8390	954
Events & Evangelism		185.8	735.05	1124.90		104.02					2150	3665
Giving										1840.73	1841	3377
Fund Raising										1670.00	1670	0
Other				0.00							0	0
Total Payments	588	186	8268	1125	395	104	6470	1061	0	4130	22328	18631
Transfers	0.00	0.00	-1200.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1403.36		0.00	-203.36	0	
Balance at 31 December 2019	19230	1046	16926	77	470	0	0	9001	6566	939	54257	40231

In relation to Restricted Funds, flowers petty cash and coffee petty cash are only dealt with in these accounts to the extent that excess cash is banked. The balance carried forward in 'Other' is all in respect of Music Fund.

The PCC bank account also handled funds which are not under the control of the PCC and therefore do not appear in the accounts. These include wedding and funeral fees paid to the diocese, clergy and organist fees received from the diocese to cover locums, charity collection boxes and funeral collections for charities.

Total receipts for funds outside the control; of the PCC	£2,619
Total payments	£2,619
Balance at 1/1/2019	nil
Balance at 31/12/2019	nil

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS

- 1 Parish Share for 2019 has been paid in full.
- 2 A joint account with Longframlington PCC is maintained to pay for the Vicar's expenses and other items of expenditure common to both churches. Any monies remaining in this account at the year end have not been included in the assets of the PCC . A summary of the movements on this account is given below.

Felton and Longframlington Joint Ministry Account - (£)

(Twelve months to 31 December 2019)

Bank Balance at 1 January 2019 975

Receipts

Felton	3000	
Longframlington	3000	
Diocesan Contribution for 2018	1262	
		7262

Payments

Council Tax	2288	
Vicar's Expenses	1678	
Telephone/Internet	978	
Photocopier Lease	939	
Water Charges	510	
Photocopying Click Rate	420	
Mobile phone	248	
Stationery	401	
		7462

Deficit for the period -200

Bank Balance at 31 December 2019 775

- 3 Giving includes:-

Street Pastors	£ 1,000
Christians Against Poverty	£ 1,000
Tearfund	£ 1,000
Felton Fair	£ 100
The Bridge	£ 100
Gabby Llwellen (stair lift)	£ 1,000
Total	£ 4,200

- 4 The financial statements of the PCC have been prepared in accordance with the Church Accounting Regulations 2006 using the Receipts and Payments basis.
- 5 Other than those assets vested in the church wardens on special trust (i.e. inalienable assets) which are listed in the church inventory, Felton PCC does not own any item valued at over £1,000. Items below £1,000 are not listed as fixed assets but the church wardens maintain an inventory of all PCC property.
- 6 Where Gift Aided donations are made to a restricted fund and where it is appropriate to do so, the tax recovered is credited to the fund and debited to the General Fund immediately. This is subsequently recovered from HMRC and credited to the General Fund when the annual claim is made.
- 7 The PCC resolved that, up to November 2017, all interest would be credited to the General Fund. There after interest will be credited to the restricted funds.

Reserves Policy

The PCC aim to maintain a balance within the General Fund of £15,000.

Priest in Charge report for 2019

Visitors often mention to me the surprise they get when they walk into St. Michael's – having seen a pretty but very old (and possibly ruined due to the lack of roof) building. When they enter, they are struck by the warm, lived in and holy feel that greets them. I hope this is true for all our visitors – whether they be tourists, newcomers to the village or people who come to our services.

St. Michael's has an old and new feel to it – whether that is the building, the ages of the congregation (we had at least 3 new births in this year!), or the style of services, and we work very hard to maintain the combination of both. It is the combination of both that provides the buzz that is so often present, that keeps us healthy and rooted in the reality of today's world.

As with every year 'new' things have taken place or been introduced. 2019 saw the 8am service becoming more popular, the Coffee Plus home group attract new people exploring faith in this way for the first time, a third youth group (ages 11-12) start, our Mum's group be transformed into a thriving Mum's/Dad's/Grandparents and under 4's group called Food & Fun attracting many children and parents in the village, and it saw the start of a fourth homegroup called Outrageous Women (named due to the author of the resources as opposed to a quality needed in order to join!) based on meeting around a kitchen table. The joy for me is that between these 'new' things there has been something for every age and stage in our church community.

During the year we have welcomed new people to St. Michael's, but interestingly exactly the same number of people have departed (for a variety of reasons, including the sad passing of Roy Leech and Pat Shephard). It is a timely reminder of the extent of the challenge that faces all churches in remaining relevant in our 21st Century Britain – it reminds us of how hard we have to work, of how important reflection and looking forwards are, and how dependent we are on God's grace and provision.

Finally, I remain forever indebted to you the reader and to all who serve God by offering your time, talents and treasures to make St. Michael's what it is today. I am loath to single people out (for obvious reasons), but I would like to acknowledge the significant contribution made by Michael Hepper (in keeping St. Marys' ticking over on a weekly basis and enabling me to breathe a little more!), by Alistair Turner (in overseeing our finances for significantly longer than he originally offered), and to Angela Smith (for completing 5 years of sterling Churchwarden service without which St. Michael's would have so many more rough edges).

We ended the year with a 'conversation about prayer' as a church, as we sought more of God – his presence, his voice, his blessing – the exact place we need to find ourselves. To him be praise, glory and honour for ever and ever.

James

Children and Young People

Baptisms, preparation and follow-up

Following our discussions relating to Children in the Bible in 2018 in our Tuesday Bible Study group, we feel it important to support the families, where possible, who wish to have their children baptised in St Michael's. We obtain the names and addresses from the church administrator in order to have an informal chat about their wishes for their child and the baptism service, and to see if they would like to be more involved. This could be choosing a favourite hymn or a song, having an opportunity to have their own prayer or poem for their child or maybe doing a Bible reading. It is also an opportunity to find out how many adults/children may be in their party, and to let them know what facilities we have in Church, i.e. Junior Church area with toys or activities, tea/coffee after the service, etc. This information is passed on to whoever may be taking the service. This chat is usually with the mum's, and originally in their home or on the telephone. However, now that we have Food and Fun, this is an ideal place and opportunity to do all of this in a very child friendly, happy, relaxed and informal setting, where the mums and babies can meet others and feel relaxed while they have lovely food.

There have been 11 Baptisms during 2019 and each child was given the gift of an age appropriate Bible, presented by a child in our Junior Church. We have sent out Christmas cards with information about Christmas service and are hoping to send out 1st anniversary Baptism cards in 2020.

June Holmes

Food and Fun

On 28th February 2019 Food and Fun opened its doors to children aged from 0-4 years and their accompanying adults. We meet in the Community Room, at the back of the church, each Thursday from 12.00-1.30 during term time. At our first session there were seven mums with eight children. On average, by the end of 2019, we had between 15 and 20 adults, including dads and grandparents. Our greatest attendance at one session was 25 adults, and since we began more than 34 families have been to Food and Fun. These families come mostly from Felton, but also from Alnwick and the surrounding villages. We have a selection of toys and games for the children and provide a buffet lunch (two courses) for the adults plus tea and coffee.

We have three volunteers who are the core of the Food and Fun team, but we could not manage without a further 10-12 volunteers who help with washing up and tidying away. The support of the Church has been vital.

Our Christmas celebration involved a nativity play in which the mums took part, and this was followed by a party. With Food and Fun now established, we are considering what our next steps should be.

Anne Byatt

Junior Church

We have had a good year again with the Junior Church, with a variety of activities including regular group sessions based on Scripture Union resources, Godly Play, and games and discussions for our older members at Nelson's Café in Swarland once a month. We continue to meet every Sunday, apart from school holidays and Altogether services. The numbers of children involved fluctuates depending on parental attendance, family and other commitments and holidays etc., but generally we have a good range of ages. The number of children involved in Junior Church, from the youngest: Seeds (0-5), through Shoots (5-9) to the oldest group: Roots (9-11+) was estimated in June 2019, when the PCC reviewed our Children and Young People's activities, to be around 30 children.

Some of the children's work on Sunday mornings can be seen around the church e.g. Easter Gardens and the wonderful Nativity Picture Book created by Shoots. We also planned and led the Christmas Nativity service and some other Altogether services during the year.

A big thank you to over 20 volunteers, all DBS checked for safeguarding, who are on the rota to help with leading, supporting, driving, talking, baking, making things and generally being creative. You are all amazing and we couldn't do it without you, thank you!

If anyone is interested at all in joining the team, either leading, helping, or just playing in the creche please contact Julia Butlin or Sue Inglis-Jones. You would be very welcome and all help is appreciated.

Julia Butlin

M630 Monday at 6.30pm (12-14 years) and T630 Tuesday at 6:30pm (10-11 years)

What a year! From running one youth group in the parish we are now operating two more and with a vision to start another one at Easter. Why? Because God is blessing these groups and the structure seems to hit a spot! Kids like to eat around a table together, meet in a safe place, the Vicarage, where all their doubts, questions, fear and joys can be shared in a trusted open environment. We are privileged to run these groups with fantastic leaders and our on-going partnership with Alnwick Baptist Church has helped to give diversity and unity.

M630 has a committed group of 7 and T630 has 8 children. Each group includes children with no connections with church. We follow Youth for Christ material, based around games, questions and a small talk. We leave a lot of space for chatting.

It has been exciting to watch all the children grow in confidence and what a privilege to walk with them on their faith journeys. When ready, we offer a weekly mentoring service which two girls are currently on. One of our children is getting baptised later in the spring.

The vision for 2020 is that the groups will be able to welcome more children from the village from non-church backgrounds and, we hope, starting to partner with another local church, The Gateway in Shilbottle. Next year we would like to see both groups taking an active role in leading a church service. These children have so much to share about life and how to have a faith that is genuine. We are always looking for leaders to join us, we have so much, laughter and I cannot tell you how much you gain through being on team! Come and see for yourself!

Ruth Harvey

Tuesday Youth Cell in Alnwick

2019 was another good year for Youth Cell. Claire Groves, Chris Friend and I remain joint leaders of the group. We were sorry to say goodbye to Sarah Robinson in July when she moved to a new job.

During the last year we have had about 10 young people attending each week. The number of young people has remained stable since Youth Cell began in September 2017. We always eat together and then we have about an hour of planned discussion and activities. How that time is structured depends on the leaders' objectives for the session. We respond to the questions of the young people, covering topics like prayer, contemplation, heaven and hell, poverty and justice.

We have had some more informal sessions, for one of these the teenagers were split into two groups and each had a budget of £15 to fill a shoebox for a child in need at Christmas. We also gave and received communion as a group around a bonfire whilst praying a simple liturgy from the Northumbria Community.

We went to 7:7, the Youth for Christ event in Newcastle, a number of times in 2019, making these visits into a group social with a meal beforehand. Last spring as part of the event two of the group interviewed a police officer on stage about how his faith influenced his work. For bonfire night Youth Cell had a joint social with M630 which was a great success. Young people from every year at the Duchess High School was represented; this showed the benefit of bringing the groups together as they build relationships across different ages. After a review the end of the 2019 we decided to start Youth Alpha which will begin in January 2020.

Jessica McArdle

Deanery Synod Lay Representatives' report

For those who don't know, the parish of Felton, with Thirston, Swarland and Eshott, is one of fourteen parishes across Alnwick Deanery, and each parish has deanery representatives of its lay people who meet quarterly along with local clergy to discuss issues of relevance to the running of our churches. John Marshall and I (Mark Winter) are the current St Michael's Felton lay representatives. We are members of, and report to, the PCC. The deanery is very fortunate now to have an enthusiastic Area Dean as our leader, Rev Alison Hardy, vicar of Embleton. Alison's influence is already being felt in steering our meetings to be more spiritually focused instead of mainly fixated with finances. For example, in November she organised a 'quiet morning' entitled "*Waiting for God*", to mark the start of Advent.

We met four times in 2019 in different locations. Business meetings were in June and October; an Advent event in St Michael's, Felton; and a day-long open synod in May in Alnwick with forty-five people attending. The open synod day had an emphasis on mission, making a case for sharing best practices in outreach and community engagement. As a newcomer I found it positive and an exemplar for how our local churches can share experiences and support for each other in our tasks of proclaiming God's Good News.

Mark Winter

Home Groups

St Michael's supports four, weekly, self-led groups meeting for Bible study, prayer and friendship in people's homes around the village. More than forty people participate.

Tuesday Morning Bible Study

This is a small weekly Bible Study group meeting on Tuesday morning. In 2019 we grew from five to six members. The group will always be open to anyone who wants to be part of a group committed to exploring their own experience and beliefs about Christianity in the light of their understanding of what the Bible is telling us. Prior knowledge of the Bible is not a necessary qualification to join, and we do not do Theology. But a willingness to learn and to share the journey with each other is a commitment we try to honour. We will not become a clique. We are learners not learned. While we enjoy our friendship, we are not a 'fellowship' group. We are more like a book club – one that believes 'our book', the one we read and think about, is profoundly relevant to each of us.

In the first part of 2019 we continued *Following in the Footsteps of Jesus*. This was an attempt to follow Jesus from birth to ascension by reading and exploring the four gospels at the same time, including where he went, who he met, what was going on culturally and politically at the time. For Advent we looked at *Prophecies of the Messiah in the gospels' birth narratives*. In 2020 we shall concentrate on Matthew's Gospel and talk about why his gospel is different to the other gospels and what he might have been driving at as he thought through and planned his account of Jesus' life.

Richard Evans

Outrageous women – Wednesday am

This group has been running for over a year now. We have a regularly committed 10 people. We meet at 10am around a cramped kitchen table where we have our first coffee. At 10.15am we watch a 10-minute talk given by Charlotte Gambill. From 10.30-11am we then discuss this over the kitchen table, shoulder to shoulder followed by a further voluntary half an hour of more coffee and sharing of our lives. We have a wonderful mix of ages and people at different places on their spiritual journey. This year has seen many blessings with looking at the themes of "Be that girl" "Outrageous", and right now we are looking at "One" All the talks are deeply challenging and the vulnerability and trust that has grown in the group has been breath taking. God has taken us all to a richer place spiritually, including in our faith with prayer. During advent we took a break from talks and made Christmas crafts based around advent themes of hope, peace and joy. The vision of the group for 2020 is to look outwards to be brave as we live out our faiths radically within the strength and love of the group and the Holy Spirit moving among us. My heartfelt thanks to Liz Scurfield whose idea it was to do this group, and who has been devoted to each of the women who come and champions us all.

Ruth Harvey

Coffee Plus – Thursday am

Coffee plus is a Thursday morning home group. It has been running for several years and at present if everyone comes, which is most weeks, we are 15. We have coffee and cake or wonderful cheese scones on arrival and then some time to chat and exchange news, picking up any prayer points. What is said in the room stays in the room! We then watch a podcast or study a book or series of books. We followed the Prayer Course led by Pete Greig, this involved watching a short podcast and following with discussion.

We also looked at three of the Church of England's *Pilgrim – a Course for the Christian Journey* series of teachings, on The Beatitudes, the Lord's Prayer and the Ten Commandments. We usually stop for a few weeks over Christmas and Easter, we have a short break over the summer but not the whole school hols as few of us are involved in caring for children. We have a WhatsApp group for communicating and I think would all say we are a happy little group on a journey together. We would love to welcome anyone who would like to come and join us! Thursday mornings 10.30 until 12.00.

Gabby Llewelyn + Dave Archbold

Thursday Evening

We meet for about an hour and a half each week, taking it in turns to host the group and supply tea and biscuits - essential components of the evening of chat, exploration, Bible reading, and prayer. Everyone chips into discussions and questions are much enjoyed although relaxing, observing and being reflective are valued too depending on the kind of week you've had and what's happening in your life at the time. We have a lot of fun, support each other whilst on our own faith journeys, learn and grow together and pray for each other, those close to us and our communities.

This year we have explored a range of materials from the Podcasts from Cranmer Hall in Durham and an exploration of Esther with videos of Amy Orr-Ewing (from the Women Walking with God Conference) through to the 24/7 Prayer Course towards the end of the year and into the start of 2020. We take a break in the summer and at Lent when we encourage attendance at the Lent course.

The group always take an active part in other church activities especially the Thy Kingdom Come events and were instrumental in leading the Swarland Prayer Walk in May 2019. We have also enjoyed the occasional film night with the other house groups and The Shack and War Room were two films on offer during the year.

We have 8 core members of the group and we welcomed 2 new members to the group who are parents with young children so only one can come if they are back from work on time. As most of the group are retired or working part time, we have experienced petite groups from time to time while others have been making the most of their freedom to have trips away. We are currently female biased and there is a membership overlap with the Thursday morning house group. With all this in mind and the fact that this group is the full-time working person's group for the church, we will be seeking a prayerful re-set in 2020. If you would like to join this group, would like to know more or have some ideas about the group's re-set, please contact Liz Rowark E: lizrowark@gmail.com

Liz Rowark

Deeper Dive

February 2019 saw the start of an additional quarterly discipleship activity. Deeper Dive is a time for those who wish to come together to have the messy conversations about the parts of our Christian faith which are difficult to understand and where Christians can experience doubt, disagree or struggle. By coming together over a light meal to share what we know, ask questions about what we don't know, tell our experiences and gather insights, we can each take our faith on a journey together. There are no definitive answers, but hearty discussion helps challenge our own views and keeps our faith journey vibrant. We had three gatherings of twelve people on each occasion on 'Creation vs Evolution', 'Prophecy' and 'Healing'. Twenty people attended across the evenings.

Liz Rowark

Leading Worship and Music

We are very fortunate to feature a wide variety of musical styles in our worship ranging from traditional hymns to contemporary worship songs. There's usually something to suit all tastes, always remembering of course that we sing for worship and not entertainment.

This year we have begun to sing newer songs at the beginning and end of our 11 o'clock service. This is gradually widening our repertoire and providing a balance in style. Learning new songs is always challenging but it's worth persevering and feedback has been generally positive.

11:00 Holy Communion and Organ Music

For most of the year, we continued the practice of singing one contemporary worship song at the beginning of each service of traditional Holy Communion, followed by three traditional hymns accompanied by the organ. However, St Michael's is fortunate by having a diverse congregation with different preferences and therefore, to meet the wishes of the congregation, we introduced two worship songs and two traditional hymns at our services on a trial basis from September. The worship songs are accompanied by backing tracks whilst the hymns continue to be accompanied by the organ.

We are grateful to Tony Cloutt for assisting Dave Archbold in playing the organ for Sunday worship, weddings and funerals.

Dave Archbold

Five O'Clock Service

Praising and praying through music and song, at the Five O'Clock service, continues to be an integral and meaningful part of worship once a month. Mark, with the assistance of Libby, has embedded an ever-growing repertoire of Christian songs ranging from Hillsong to Rend Collective as well as the occasional traditional hymn. The group of musicians is evolving with the addition of Toby, trying out as a new drummer and on one occasion, Katie contributing with her beautiful voice to feature a special piece from a Christian contemporary chart singer, Lauren Daigle. Even with the pressures of studying, Yeverin, Rosie and Abi continue to give greatly of their talents as much as they can.

Joint planning with leaders ensures that music and song enhance the themes of 'Community', 'Worship' and 'Discipleship' so that all are welcome to be one voice, for the Lord, through the power of lyric and melody.

Libby Taylor

Simply Worship

Our well established second Sunday 11am Simply Worship service has continued to go from strength to strength in the past year although finding enough willing folk to be part of the music group can sometimes be a challenge. Our repertoire of songs has widened in recent years with many 'new' songs now well established. Our new A/V system has been a great addition enabling the projection of song words throughout most of the church.

We'd love to welcome new members to play, sing and to assist on the technical side so please contact Nick or Libby to find out more.

Nick Rowark

Mission Partners

We support three mission partners, one in each of three categories: international, national, and local, normally for a three year period.

Our commitment to our mission partners is as follows:

- Pray: We pray for our mission partners each month in our Sunday services.
- Engage: We nominate a member of our congregation to liaise with each mission partner over the period of our commitment, to gain information, feedback to our congregation and arrange for representatives to speak at our services.
- Donate: We support each of our mission partners by giving a minimum of £1,000 a year as a contribution to their work.
- Fund: We aim to hold at least one fundraising event each year for each of our mission partners, raising awareness of their work amongst our congregation, as well as raising additional funds to support their work.

Our mission partner support in 2019:

International: Berega in Tanzania is a poor rural community in Eastern Tanzania where Tearfund is training local churches in CCMP (Church Community Mobilisation Process). CCMP works with community structures so that the community and people can work themselves out of poverty. It works by local churches bringing the whole community together, addressing the root causes of poverty for their community, identifying the resources available to them, and building their capacity to tackle problems they face.

In July 2019, David & Anne Curnock visited us to speak about the programme at a Sunday service. We organised a Pizza Night and Quiz in September which raised £800. In October, Anna-Grace Harvey, a young person from our congregation, visited Berega and the surrounding area and was able to see the work at first hand. We held an African Evening fundraising event in November which raised an additional £1,000 to support the programme. After the meal, Anna-Grace told us all about what life is like in Berega and showed some pictures of the people she met there.

National: Christians Against Poverty (www.capuk.org) CAP runs a significant network of debt centres, job clubs and other services tackling the causes of debt and poverty and offering a lifeline and practical coaching to those trapped in debt. CAP runs 303 debt centres throughout the UK and over the course of 2018, 23,166 people were helped by one or more of CAP's services. We hosted a speaker from CAP during the year.

Local: Street Pastors (Ascension Trust) is a Christian inter-denominational organisation with a passion to empower individuals to work together within their local community and nation. One of the Ascension Trust's initiatives is Street Pastors. Street Pastors engage with people on the streets to care for them, listen to them and help them. They work together with police and other partners in the night-time economy to make communities safer.

On Sunday 3rd February, we were visited by Paul Waugh, the co-ordinator in Newcastle, and 3 of his colleagues, Simon, John & Mike. We heard a bit about their work and also some amazing statistics – Newcastle Street Pastors give out almost 600 pairs of flip flops and 400 foil blankets every year, mainly to those who are 'out on the town.' One of our church members, Val Leek, also volunteers as a Street Pastor in Newcastle.

John Inglis-Jones

Serving our Community

As a church, blessing and serving our community and parish is a vital part of our church life. Once again, our experience of this seeks to provide something for every age and stage as far as we are able.

We ran two Seniors Lunches (March & October) to offer food, company and hospitality in the Village hall to those who have reached the 70-year milestone. These are always great community occasions with a church/community team providing important and memorable times for many in the community. To compliment such occasions, we also ran monthly afternoon teas, again in the village hall, to offer a forum for community members to get together over a quality afternoon tea. Both are run by a team of faithful unsung heroes – thank you to them. In a similar vein, we continue to host a ladies' night in the Northumberland Arms each week on a Tuesday to enable women in the parish to develop healthy relationships, to help create networks, and to support one another.

During the year we visit those who can't get to church and offer home Communion. This year we also visited all the new residents on Coquet Park, the Bellway estate, with a simple welcome pack – both our presence and our packs have been tremendously appreciated. It was not uncommon to have to explain that Debra Philips was not my wife to those we visited – a huge thank you to her!

We continue to seek to run a free and engaging church stall at the Felton Fair each July. This year that included our very own mini golf course! I am in awe of the creativity shown by the people who made it and was delighted to spend the afternoon playing golf and chatting to all ages in the community. For those too young to play, we offered the only baby and toddler play space at the fair.

Finally, as a church, we serve our community by providing three Foundation Governors to Felton Church of England Primary School, and by offering expertise in Collective Worship and Religious Education. Our amazing *Open the Book* (Bible Society) church team provide a brilliant, visually stimulating story from the Bible each week which provides an excellent platform for the children and staff to explore for the rest of the week in RE.

May God's blessing rest on all parts of our parish and community.

James

Healing Services

The monthly healing service continues to be a valuable time for the people who come. We have time together to pray and remember those who are unwell and to pray for those who care for them. We light candles for those for whom we pray and share Holy Communion together. There is also anointing with oil for those who like to receive this and be prayed for.

Gabby Llewelyn

Memories Service

The annual Memories Service is held around the time of All Saints Day. It is a short service for people who wish to remember a loved one who has died. It is appreciated by the attendees that they can light a candle and place a flower in a wreath in memory of their loved one. This service is advertised locally and attended among others by families of people who may have had a funeral here.

Gabby Llewelyn

Rhythm of Prayer

Five years ago, when I joined St. Michael's as the Priest in charge, there was one thing I wanted to do – to ensure we were a praying church. Five years on and we have prayed together as a church twice or three times a week in term time for five years. I want to honour the faithfulness and prayers of those who have kept this imperative spiritual discipline and ensured God remains at the centre of St. Michael's. In the summer I become convinced God wanted us to pray more, so in December as a church we had 'a conversation about prayer'. This resulted in some plans to extend our prayer life as a church as from 2020.

James

Thy Kingdom Come 30th May to 9th June 2019

For our fourth year running, we participated in this national wave of prayer by organising ten days of activities as we committed to pray every day and provided a Place to Pray every day. We prayed for the Holy Spirit to fill us as a church and to empower us to be outward looking so that we could pray with and for others in our communities and Parish and help them feel able to pray. We also committed to pray for one or more friends to know the love of Jesus.

Thy Kingdom Come started in 2016 as an invitation from the Archbishops of Canterbury and York to the Church of England and has grown into an international and ecumenical call to prayer. People in churches from over 65 different denominations in 114 countries around the world, pray about every aspect of their lives. They seek to deepen their relationship with Jesus Christ and pray for God's Spirit to work in the lives of those they know. There's a large Facebook, Twitter and website following with lots of ideas and discussions about prayer www.thykingdomcome.global

We launched our prayer activities at our Ascension Day service in Brinkburn Priory where we handed out the Try Praying booklets to all who attended ready to use throughout the 10 days and then to hand them on to friends we were praying for.

The daily activities had varying attendance levels but particularly popular were the Prayer Posies prepared by our flower team with a prayer message and left around our villages to be picked up and enjoyed by anyone who found them. The prayer walks in the Thurstons and Swarland were a powerful way to pray in person over those living there. There were a good number of visitors who found our open church and enjoyed the beautiful Pentecost themed prayer stations and the peace of our rural and historic setting.

The whole time to pray was wrapped up after 24 hours of prayer with a special Pentecost Sunday morning service, led by our worship team while our children and some of their parents experienced a Godly Play session for Pentecost in a teepee in a nearby garden.

Liz Rowark

Talking all things Marriage

During 2019, in conjunction with St. Mary's in Longframlington, we held three Talking Marriage courses in March, April and November. Twenty couples took part in a day focused on marriage as opposed to their wedding day, exploring how they communicate in their relationship as well as deal with important relationship issues as conflict and commitment. One couple said: 'The day has been fantastic. The time to talk to each other about what marriage really means and a space to share honest thoughts has been invaluable.'

A huge thank you to the 'Longfram ladies' for their catering, to Jane Kartupelis for her oversight and presenting, to Flo & Sam for joining the team and to Eileen Ferguson – who after eight years of maxing 'wedding ministry' has moved onto other ministries.

In Felton we had the privilege of marrying five couples, including the children of congregation members as well as local couples and those using the facilities of local wedding venues. This year included my first owl and my first BBC cameraman – I'll let you decide which one was scarier!

James

Churchyard Report

The churchyard continues to be maintained on a regular basis. Weekly grass cutting and edging (weather permitting) during the summer months. Walkways have been cut regularly around the church. The council continue to cut the grass to the front area of church only.

During 2019 growth around gravestones has been cut back to the front and side areas of the church. All footpaths and gravestones edged. There was no requirement for the big Autumn clear-up as in previous years due to the regular cutting and strimming. We are planning in 2020 to cut back overgrowth behind church at the lower area of the churchyard.

Sunflower seeds were planted around the churchyard with a number flowering at the front of church. A number of perennials were planted to either side of the small footpath leading to church entrance. Wildflower seeds have been spread around the church garden some areas growing better than others. Tubs and the wheelbarrow were filled with summer plants and placed near to the entrance of the church.

A frame was erected and painted in the front area of the church to display the banner to advertise our website. The banner was screwed to the frame and has withstood recent high winds. The shed at the rear of the church was cleared out of rubbish and now stores gardening equipment and the 'Flower Ladies' buckets, boxes of oasis etc.

Any garden waste generated from cutting back or grass cutting is removed and taken to Alnwick Waste Centre, leaving the garden waste bins empty for use of the flower ladies. The garden waste bin collection service was not actioned during 2019.

There are several recordings in the visitor book as to how well maintained the church and churchyard looks. A family picnic was held during the summer in the grounds of the church.

David Phillips