

I hope that, like me, you enjoyed reading the written reports for this meeting. Our AGM is a great opportunity to thank God for all that He enables us to do and so celebrate our life together in his service. At a time when there is so much talk about recession it is good to have some positive news as well. Our faith must never, of course, become an escape from life's difficulties, we need to do much praying and provide whatever practical support we can to those suffering because of the world financial crisis, but at the same time, by our example, we can demonstrate how our living relationship with God helps us to enjoy the gifts he has given us, even in difficult circumstances.

No doubt there are many other things we could, and perhaps should be doing, but, as we continue to seek God's will for this parish, let's also remember our other responsibilities and the need to give adequate time to our colleagues, families and friends. We must also remember to celebrate all that we do in the wider community that doesn't directly have a St Peter's label, but which is the consequence of our care and concern for others as Christians.

I am very grateful to those who ensure that the fabric of both our church and this Centre is kept in good repair by giving so generously of their time and talents. It has been good to get the organ repaired and a new stop added. Our ongoing task is to make the church building more 'user-friendly' and the recent gift of cushions for some of our pews has helped in that direction! The PCC working party is still meeting and we are in the process of contacting a number of architects who might give us some concrete proposals for improvements to our historic building.

It has been good to welcome a number of speakers this year to keep us informed about organisations we support in our outside giving. Looking beyond our own boundaries is part of our calling, and it has been helpful to know more about where our money is spent and who and what we need to keep in our prayers. Our links with our local schools have been strengthened this year – it was wonderful to welcome so many children, parents and staff from Walsh Infants to second Sunday worship in January, and to have all of the children from both Walsh Infant and Walsh Junior Schools in church for their Easter service was a great joy, and, I think, unprecedented in recent years. Fitting nearly 600 people in was a tight squeeze, but well worth it!

Donna Mistlins' ordination as a Deacon was another joyful occasion, and I'm pleased to hear that she and Alan and the family have settled well into the life and worship of Christ Church. Please keep Donna in your prayers as she now prepares for her ordination to the priesthood in July. I look forward to being there in the cathedral on Saturday 4th and then having the privilege of preaching at her first celebration of Holy Communion on Sunday 5th.

As I said in my report about Churches Together, this past year has seen great changes in how things are organised. The forthcoming Plenty-cost Nothing Party demonstrates how the enthusiasm for working together has not diminished, and the new prayer boxes and monthly teas are already examples of how new growth is springing up. Likewise in our relationship with St Mary's in the Group Ministry, Neil Lambert has come in with a fresh approach and it will be good to see how our link can move forward now that he has had chance to settle in and begin to set his priorities for St Mary's. His initiative for turning the former Methodist Church into a community arts project is certainly exciting for us all.

In the last year we were saddened by the death of Geoff Lindley, and we shall also miss Kathleen who has now moved out of the parish to live closer to her son. Please continue to remember Kathleen in your prayers and to pray that Geoff may rest in the peace of Christ. Last year I reported the death of Olive Scard, and we are very grateful to her family and friends for the two altar cloths for the Lady Chapel that were given in her memory, they are a beautiful memorial to all that she did for the life of St Peter's.

As always my thanks goes to everyone who works so hard in contributing to our worship and social life, also to ensuring that the various day to day maintenance tasks are completed. Thank you to the Churchwardens, Readers, Pastoral Assistants, Sides persons, Sacristan, PCC and Deanery Synod members, Servers, Choir and Musicians, Flower Arrangers, Church Sitters, Social Events Organisers, Parish Administrator, Treasurer, Secretary, Sunday Club Leaders, Creche Team, Youth Leaders, Magazine Editor, Magazine Collators, Magazine Distributors, Bell Ringers, those on the Coffee Rota, Social Lunch providers.....and everyone else I have forgotten! A very big THANK YOU to you all.

In my recent review with Bishop Ian he commented that I seemed to be enjoying my ministry here in Ash – well, thanks to you all, I am, and I hope we can all continue to enjoy working together to spread the Good news of Jesus Christ in all sorts of ways in the coming year.