

Kings Norton Team Ministry

Parish Office: 81 The Green, Kings Norton
Birmingham B38 8RU Tel 0121 459 3289
Email: parishoffice@kingsnorton.org.uk
www.kingsnorton.org.uk
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2014/15 Change and Challenge

In 2003 we agreed a vision for the parish and its church as a worshipping transforming partnership in Christ, offering God's radical hospitality for all and being steadily equipped for work in God's world.

In this vision there are no visitors or 'passengers'.

All of every age have an honoured place.

All have gifts to receive and give.

In all the changes of the passing years, these convictions remain at the heart of all we pray for and do for in Christ. Though costly in prayer, time, work and money, God's people here have been faithful to this vision. We pray we still are in the new challenges and changes which lie ahead.

There is significant and growing socio-economic change and mobility in our parish. This is reflected in the life of our congregations. Almost half of those in church only 6 years ago have since moved away or died, yet even more have joined us.

Poverty is still a major challenge as is the bringing of God's Good news to all we meet through pastoral services, schools, Saint Nicolas Place and friendship.

In 2003 we did not know what foodbanks or Sweet Project were. Now we do. We did not know what the future of Saint Nicolas Place would be. Now we do. We did not know how large would be the need for home-based pastoral care and family support. Now we do. Crucially, we did not then know how we can respond to all these in worship, prayer and action in Christ. Now we do.

Within all this, the current clergy changes add to the challenge – but will also enable God's life to continue and grow in God's people in ways old and new.

For 2016's APCM, we pray that new Team Clergy will be in post alongside Assistant Priests, Readers, the new Lay Pastoral Team and other lay ministers, including of course our vital Children's Worker. We pray expectantly that fresh mission, inclusion, faith learning and confidence in God's grace and purpose will be flourishing within growing congregations.

As at this year's APCM, beneath and over all must be faithful prayer and love. Thanks be to God that

we have in all our changes discovered what this means!

2015 APCM: Reports

received at Kings Norton APCM 27th April 2015

Churchwardens

We give our very warm thanks to Anne Hughes and Phil Burton for their devoted commitment as the parish's lay leaders with special responsibility for St Nicolas, supported in 2014 by John Jelfs, Nathan Crooks, Jan Anson, Phil Burton, Michael Kennedy, Chris Hughes and so many devoted sidespeople. With Clare Dean, Nathan Crooks and Alan Haynes at Immanuel and Jim Clarke and Elaine Cooper at Hawkesley, they have been tireless in ensuring that all are welcome and that all is done well, with wisdom and dedication.

Electoral Roll Report 2015

The Parish Electoral Roll currently stands at **283**. (2014: 279). 205 (2014: 212) live within the parish. 78 (67 in 2014) live outside the parish but only 16 live over a mile from one of the parish's churches. St Nicolas ER: **205** (202 in 2014) Hawkesley ER: **21** (2014: 21); Immanuel ER: **57** (2014: 56)

Financial Report for 2014

Once again in producing the figures for this year's accounts we are grateful to Catherine Dehghani our Treasurer, assisted by Christine Gadd and Judy Ash. It has as always been a challenging year financially for the parish.

We have sustained the level of committed Christian Giving but some substantial givers moved away or went to glory during the year, placing a fresh challenge on us to be met by existing and new members.

From July, the running of Saint Nicolas Place events and activities passed into the hands of Saint Nicolas Place Community Interest Company. Fees from occasional offices were again encouraging.

Parish Common Fund has however been reduced in the light of the changing socio-economic context of the parish. It still stands at around £80,000 for the whole parish so we cannot be complacent. It is our contribution to the costs of three full-time clergy and the wider work of the diocese.

Once again we are indebted to Mike Edwards, our Accountant, for auditing our accounts this year. We

hope that this meeting agrees to appoint him for a further year.

Kings Norton Parochial Church Council

The PCC held six ordinary meetings and two special meetings in 2014/15. Continuing concerns have been Transforming Church, Saint Nicolas Place, finances, growth of ministry and mission and the care and renewal of churchyard and of our buildings. New business has been ensuring that we are able to go on building up our Children's and Families' work and of course the renewal of the Clergy Team.

We owe much to all who take on the faithful responsibility of PCC membership. Particular thanks are due to Phil Burton our vice-chair, to Judy Ash our PCC Secretary, to Alison Blumer and Sylvia Fox for their assistance. and to all who care for our finances, especially Catherine Dehghani our Treasurer, assisted by Christine Gadd and Judy Ash, Jayne Crooks, our Giving and Gift Aid Officer, our wardens for the weekly count, Roger Monk who looks after our Envelope Giving, Lynne Hayes-James (Immanuel) and David Smith (Hawkesley). We continue to be very grateful to John Jelfs for his wisdom in all insurance matters.

The Fabric, Goods and Ornaments of St Nicolas Parish Church

The general fabric of the building appears to be in good repair. However, we are due a Quinquennial inspection which may reveal issues that we are currently unaware of. Recommended contracts for clearing of rainwater goods and service of lighting systems are in place. The inventory is complete and no major additions or replacements have been required during the year.

There has been major work this year on the Central Heating system and on the lighting. The boiler was replaced in November 2014 but following problems over the winter we found that the pipework from the meter to the boiler also needed replacing, completed after Easter this year.

The lighting is steadily being replaced. This will shortly be completed. Window repairs are also ongoing. Floor tiles have been replaced or repaired as necessary.

All this work was met from the PCC Fabric Fund, supported by some small donations and legacies.

The churchyard continues to be cared for by Mark Rose and maintained by a dedicated small team led by Richard Harper and John Jelfs. We thank them very warmly for their dedication and hard work. Richard has produced a comprehensive report on the current state of the churchyard with proposals for the future which will be discussed at the first available PCC Meeting.

St Nicolas is a very welcoming and friendly church which is due in no small part to the sides people and assistant wardens who are the first point of contact for people entering the church. However, we are rapidly reaching a crisis point. We now have insufficient sides people and assistant wardens. Unless we engage more people in these roles we may have to run some services without the welcome of warden or sides people. This is a seriously important issue which must be addressed swiftly by all the congregations. As we are very aware, we are due to enter a period of Interregnum at the end of August. The issue of wardens and sides people will become even more critical during this period.

The Revd Jayne Crooks has made a gift to the Parish of two Silver Plated Oil stocks for use at the Healing Services and at Baptisms. Our thanks to her.

The wardens would also like to thank the many people who ensure that St Nicolas is such a welcoming environment. These include the people who clean our church and polish brasses and those who make Open Church and Candlelit Church possible. We also thank Alison Blumer and her team for the beautiful displays of flowers and flower arrangements. We also thank our dedicated team of bell ringers led by Julie Littlewood and Jim Dunn.

Our thanks also to Sylvia Fox for her continued work as Organist and as Church Facilities and Churchyard Manager and in coordinating contractors.

Phil Burton, Anne Hughes, Church Wardens

Hawkesley Church

People: Following the departure of our much beloved Rev. Dr. John White, good support by Parish clergy and Readers has complemented the works of Rev. Donald Sampson. Rev. Caz Hague will replace Donald from September 2015 after 10 happy years. We look forward to the ministry of Rev. Jane Platt (Interim Priest)

Worship: Whilst age and infirmity has reduced our numbers, an average of 20 attend regularly with uniformed groups joining us at Harvest and the Academy sharing the Christingle Service.

Pastoral Care: Coffee after worship, our Coffee and Chat meetings and home visits ensure that our people are well supported and cared for.

Youth: Our Guides, Brownies and Rainbows are superbly led. There is an attendance of approximately 45 girls.

Partnership with the Academy: A rich partnership is due to the new Head, Mr. Derek Higgins, continuing a strong sharing style. One member serves as a Governor. Another works in school. Clergy regularly share in Assemblies, support and pastoral care.

Partnership within the Team: Support from St Nicolas and Immanuel enriches our social occasions e.g. Pancake Evening and Quiz Night, as well as providing training opportunities and sharing in the Knit and Natter Group.

Finance: Thanks to the generosity of our people, the Circuit and Common Fund dues are paid, repairs undertaken and charities supported including the Food Bank and the SWEET Project.

Appreciation of Loyal Service – The recent loss of Betty Chadbourne has led us to reflect upon how she was one amongst a loyal, hardworking team.

Donald Sampson March 2015

Immanuel Church

Full reports, as given at the AGM, of all Immanuel's activities are available on request.

This will be my last Annual Report as Immanuel's stipendiary lead priest. It has been a great privilege to serve the congregation here over the last 5 years and I thank you all for your patience, wisdom and love. During this time we have had to make some difficult decisions, but through all of this, you have remained steadfast in your faith and commitment to Immanuel. You really are a great bunch of people and I love you all dearly. Although I am officially retiring – I now have a free bus pass!! – I will still be living in the same house and so after a time of rest and refreshment, I will return to minister in the parish, albeit in a different way and with a different emphasis

Clare Dean and Nathan Crooks have continued to serve Immanuel well in their roles as Warden and Assistant. They will be a great support to Revd

Robin Mortimore as Pastor of Immanuel and I am very grateful. The DCC met six times in 2014 and my thanks go to all who served on this committee, Katherine Bozic, Nathan Crooks, Clare Dean, Fay Fearon, Chris Gadd, Sue Hartley, Liz Malortie (co-opted in April), David Maynard and Nicky Moorcroft for their time, energy, wisdom and prayer and, of course, to Susan Haynes, our Secretary and Lynne Hayes-James our Treasurer.

Worship continues with our Parish Children's Worker, Pauline Weaver, now leading imaginative and stimulating All Age Worship services. Losing some key people from the setting up rota has increased the strain on the remaining few but continuing thanks go to our Sacristan, Carol, the Service Leaders, Intercessors, Readers and Musicians who so enhance our worship. to the laptop operators - Nathan, Faith, Sam, Ellie and Kai; and to Carol, Evelyn and team, who refresh our bodies afterwards!! And, of course, thanks as always go to those who faithfully unlock, set up and pack away the PA, chairs, tables and other equipment on Sundays – Alan, Dave, Dean, Debbie, Sue, Carol, Karl, Matthew, Nathan, David, Jonathan, and Gerry and of course all who help put away!

We had two confirmation candidates this year, Sam & Ellie. Oasis numbers have fluctuated this year and the Team of Oasis leaders have responded to the different challenges posed by differing ages. There has been one baptism at Immanuel this year and one Thanksgiving. Other special services included speakers from Open Doors, Betel, Toybox and of course our annual Carols by Candlelight service.

In April we experimented with an afternoon of fun and fellowship for all in the 'Messy Church' style and this proved very successful. It was repeated in June and November, when we launched the publication of our history book, 'God's Back Garden'. Past members of Immanuel were able to celebrate with us and it was a grand afternoon. Thanks must go to Heather Flack, Tony Hill and Harlequin printing for making this possible.

Once again, we purchased "It's Your Move" booklets for Year 6 pupils at Wychall and Fairway Primary Schools and Immanuel members delivered Christmas cards to the area.

Comings and Goings – in July we bid a very sorrowful farewell to Betty Joyner, a member of Immanuel since the very early days. Others have moved on elsewhere – and yet more have joined.

Once again, my thanks to you all for your friendship. My prayers and thoughts will be with you in the coming year as you face new challenges, walking in God's way. Revd Jayne

Hawkesley Church Primary Academy

Five years ago, the OFSTED inspection placed us in special measures. It was a turning point

We have grown strongly out of measures. Improvement is good, especially in the care of children, the quality of relationships and the spiritual life of the school, which all make our core work of learning and teaching the rich experience it must always be. It is a whole-school achievement, children, staff, families and governors together, raising standards and ensuring quality teaching and progression for all pupils, for now and the future.

School is in good heart, with committed, very able staff and the generous partnership of churches and the school community within the pressures and joys of life on the Three Estates. Our chief debt of thanks is however to Mr Higgins, Head from September 2014 and his leadership colleagues.

Hawkesley School has now become an Academy to secure the church-school ethos at the heart of estate life and ready for growth as regeneration makes its impact (at last) on housing and services. The spiritual life of the school is strong and deep, nurtured especially by staff, clergy and lay visitors. I am very grateful to my parish governor colleagues; John White, Gail Rogers, Liz Power, and Marion Fleming Froy and of course to parents, staff and above all Hawkesley's children. It has been very hard work, but the necessary change is steadily happening. We are committed – and hope that you are too.

Canon Rob Morris - Vice-chair of Governors

Children's Work

Children's work continues to grow within the parish. Tiny Tots and Bumps and Babies are flourishing with strong numbers and a loyal, regular attendance.

The new youth group, GPS, has doubled in size and is now a regular feature of our work with young people and are regularly involved in all-age services. Oasis has had a difficult year both at St Nicolas and at Immanuel but plans are underway to revive this, some of which will be trialled during May. Sunday attendance continues to grow particularly with the under 5s.

Our 'come and join in' nativity followed by a children's party was a huge success and looks set to become a regular part of our Christmas activities.

Links with the Sweet Project remain vital to our work with families in need with responses to the Christmas Challenge and other appeals for donations continuing to be well supported.

Knit and Natter continue to support the Baptism ministry through the baptism blankets and now regularly provide knitted items for the neo-natal unit at the Women's Hospital.

None of this would happen without the support of our congregations, clergy and most especially our faithful and growing volunteers.

Pauline Weaver
Childrens Work Development Worker

Schools and Uniformed groups

We give grateful thanks as always to the leaders and volunteers involved in the many uniformed groups at St Nicolas, Hawkesley and Oddingley. It is good to see so many of them at the monthly Parade services and special services. Of the 9 non RC schools in our parish we have governor representation on 4 and regular contact in a variety of ways. There is scope for more, so if anyone can offer time as a school governor or to hear children read, then please do let the clergy know.

St Nicolas Choir

The words commitment, humour and friendship mark the life of St Nicolas choir – along with the constant seeking to develop musical skills, an understanding/context of the texts we sing and the buildings in which we work. Our age-group is wide, and makes for a real multigenerational family. This is very important, as we share special birthdays and events together and have the joy of weddings both last summer and in 2015. They are committed to family, work, life and other activities, yet attend faithfully throughout the year. There may be media myths that "youth=bad". Ours are exemplary.

Musically we are "at home" with hymns in harmony, Anglican-chanted psalms or psalm songs, plainsong, chants from the Iona and Taizé communities, and anthems for the smaller choir (especially those by Tudor writers, who seemed to have the same sort of forces as us): sung unaccompanied, or with organ, piano or acoustic instrumental accompaniment.

Friday evenings are always a good part of my week. We rehearse and learn known and new music; discover faith together through music, our building and other resources (including our prayer world-globe); learn music theory and things about singing (including visits from “mini-bones” the skeleton who helps us understand more about breathing and posture) and we even share tea together for those in schools years 6 and above.

Sylvia Fox, Director of Music

Pastoral Life and Service

Baptisms

In 2014 we had the privilege of baptising 103 children and adults. Thank you to all those who act as sidespeople at the services and to Marlene, Carol, Joan and Mary who follow up on baptism families with phone calls and visits, giving books and prayers. The Giving of Baptism Blankets is much appreciated by families and our annual Service of Light was well attended by those baptised during the year.

Home Communions

We continue to minister to those who, for one reason or another, find getting to church on a Sunday almost impossible. It never ceases to amaze and humble me to see how much those receiving Holy Communion at home appreciate this ministry. They know they are a valued part of our church family, are in all of our hearts and prayers – and sustain so many of us with theirs. . The numbers and list fluctuate during the year, but just to give you a flavour the visiting team took Holy Communion to 12 individuals in their homes, 2 people, in hospital, 2 residential homes and 3 sheltered housing complexes, ministering to some 70 people in all. Thank you to all who help in this rewarding ministry: Fay Fearon, Diane Hutton, Mary Walker, Richard Carter, Greta Lacey, Anne Hughes, Carol Wozencroft, Marie Samson, Chris Gadd & Jim Clarke.

Rev Jayne Crooks

Marriage

We took 41 marriages and 5 blessings last year in St Nicolas. This still seems to be more than any other church in the diocese. We believe it has to do with what we offer in welcome, support and preparation. From first enquiry to the day itself, thanks to our Marriage Clerks, Vergers, Office staff, to our hospitality team – and to what they receive when they come on Sundays, couples and their families are finding much more of God’s presence

and promise than they perhaps expected in their welcome and relationship with God and church.

Funerals

Through church, churchyard and especially church people, care for funerals and for bereaved families and friends has been central to our life as a parish church for centuries. It continues. The Memorial Service each autumn gathers all this – but the care offered through Parish Office staff, Open church and the clergy and Fay Fearon are a deep and privileged strand of our work, as is the warm sensitivity and wisdom of so many church members. Thank you to all who share this church-wide ministry.

We continue to ensure that next of kin get copies of the magazine and invitations to the annual memorial service. Margaret Sweet follows up families alongside clergy and Pastoral Team.

Pastoral Ministry and a new Lay Pastoral Team

Pastoral ministry needs trained and experienced people. We have those in our new Lay Pastoral Team. But pastoral care and ministry in Christ is still for all.. It is about growing as the welcoming ministering community into which we are all baptised. It is the mature welcome and care we have grown to give here to each other, friend or stranger, which truly makes the difference by God’s grace. It is a huge privilege for clergy to work in worshipping communities which know and live this, discovering and working with God’s love wherever we are and whatever we face. Thank you very much indeed.

Communications

The **magazine** continues to go from strength to strength. David Ash bears the brunt of editing and production. Alison Blumer is tireless in caring for advertising, distribution, subscriptions and sales. We owe them all a great deal – including those who make lively contributions by each monthly deadline. Thank you to all our distributors and of course to David who also makes our website, photography and range of postcards a continuing inspiration. Thank you so much for www.kingsnorton.org.uk and now for www.saintnicolasplace.co.uk

Churchyard

Maintenance of grass in the Churchyard during the 2014 season was carried out on our behalf by the City's subcontractor, Birmingham Parks and Nurseries. During the season, both boxed and unboxed mows have been carried out to the required programme and standard. Previous problems with trees overhanging from Kings Norton Park were reported to the City Council. They have now carried out all the necessary work.

The Churchyard Caring Team has met on most Thursday mornings throughout the year. In addition to the general maintenance work around the Churchyard further work has been carried out realigning displaced masonry edging, laying down loose headstones and filling and seeding around sunken graves. Clearing the boundary areas alongside the children's graves to the north of the Rectory has continued but is not yet completed. Removal of alternate hornbeams in the lower churchyard is still in progress, as is the re-inforcing of the boundary fence/hedge between the lower churchyard and Kings Norton Park. Further hawthorn quicks have been planted. We continue to have problems with surplus soil from graves being dumped around the churchyard, despite instructions that a designated area be used. This counters our aims in the churchyard as hawthorn quicks are buried or damaged, stones are left exposed (a hazard for our mowing team) and previously seeded areas have to be cleared and seeded again.

Leaf clearing around the church was carried out by a small but enthusiastic team of volunteers and a large quantity of leaves was gathered up.

The "Unpaid Work Team", part of the Probation Service, have continued to carry out useful work around the Churchyard. Their major task was the removal of leaves in the lower Churchyard. During autumn/winter they successfully cleared the whole of this area. Currently the Team are clearing the Churchyard area from Birdcage Walk alongside the east boundary of the Rectory garden. It is intended that this area will be levelled, graded and seeded for easier maintenance.

There has however been a change in policy at the City's recycling centre in Lifford Lane. The Unpaid Work Team now only have a licence for disposal of recyclable green waste and are no longer able to take general rubbish to the Lifford Lane centre. As a result, the Thursday Morning Team are having to separate waste left by Churchyard visitors each

week into green and general rubbish ready for disposal.

Many thanks again to the Unpaid Work Teams and their Supervisors provided by the Probation Service and by Birmingham Parks and Nurseries for their work throughout the year, to those who turned up for the leaf clearing. Finally a very big thank you to the Caring Team who have turned up most Thursday mornings to carry out a variety of tasks and especially to John Jelfs who has given so many years of support, advice and encouragement to me for nearly two decades
Richard Harper

Saint Nicolas Place

We have continued to raise standards of service and grown new opportunities in learning, visits, room hire, catering and community use.

For all who use Saint Nicolas Place regularly, there has been change. Andrew Driscoll is now your first point of contact for all enquiries and information. He, with Judy Ash and our other staff members and volunteers are owed a very huge debt of thanks for their very hard devoted work. They have made a very big difference. Do contact either Andrew or Judy on 0121 458 1223 or 0121 458 3289. The Church Council has now set up Saint Nicolas Place CIC, a Community Interest Company, to handle trading on the PCC's behalf. Directors are the Rector, Phil Burton, John Creswell and Helen Kempster (Chair of the friends of Historic Kings Norton – faithful partners in our journey since 2004).

For those who know these buildings so well, it can be easy to forget just how important – and demanding – they are. Saint Nicolas Place with our church and churchyard are Birmingham's largest collection of mediaeval buildings – a major part of our local and city heritage. But they are not only a story from the past for us to wonder at, though that is good. They are alive and open for present and future community and church, for learning and delight at the heart of the story of Kings Norton and our region – and they are owned by KNPPCC.

Before Restoration, the *Saracen's Head* and the Old Grammar School, despite the valiant work of church members and community friends over so many years, were in real danger of closure and sale. Yes, we benefited enormously from winning BBC Restoration in 2004. With the wonderful support we then received, we were at last able to discover the real story of our buildings – and to undertake the huge and costly task of restoration and renewal.

We opened however in June 2008 – just in time for the world financial system to change beyond recognition. Our detailed realistic business planning was no longer workable. But thanks to the work of our staff and volunteers and of KNPCC, we have survived.

What now?

We continue to develop new community and function uses – and will grow more use of our cafe, shop and heritage events and programmes. Catering especially, in new and growing partnership with Mollie's Café grows strongly. We still seek committed support from church and community friends through small regular giving – especially through Gift-Aided Bank standing orders.

We must also continue to seek additional funding from major grant-givers for running costs and for specific programmes and events . . . and we can still to grow the range and scope of volunteering – for reception, shop, cafe and heritage events – and in fund-raising and promotion. This includes both the seasoned and the untrained; older people with an hour or two to offer each week and younger people seeking development of their skills and potential.

2014 was tough - but 2015 is promising, through all the changes we are now making. We need and ask for your support, understanding and prayer. With the hard work and dedication of those involved and those yet to be, we shall discover all that we need to sustain these buildings at the heart of our communities.

Rob Morris

Appreciations for St Nicolas

An Annual Report gives opportunity to record our heart-felt thanks to so many people who contribute to the life of the church. Those who give so much to the life of Hawkesley and Immanuel will have been celebrated and thanked at their own AGMs. There are others at St Nicolas for whom the only opportunity is at the Parish Annual Meeting.

We are blessed in our range and depth of worship and welcome week by week by over 60 servers, Communion assistants, readers, sidespeople and prayer leaders who share in it, along with those who help to clean brasses, prepare linen, decorate the building, offer refreshments and conversation –

and those who care for our churchyard. (There is always room for many more!)

There are too many to name individually – but all are precious and deserve our thanks especially for ensuring that newcomers are always welcomed and included. We also thank our flower team, led by Alison Blumer, who consistently bring fresh imagination and creativity in the changing life of our church. We need also to thank all who enable Open Church, Knit and Natter and Candlelit Church. They all make a difference to our welcome and to our being Kings Norton's true parish church.

We also have a too often unseen band of handy-people: John Bowen, Richard Harper, John Jelfs, Stephen Plant, Sylvia and Tony Fox and others who have kept St Nicolas well-lit, well-managed and well-furnished with inspiration to worship and prayer. Thank you to you all. Please join them!

. . . and in prayer and gratitude.

we remember all who have died in the past year. May they rest in peace and rise in glory.

May I also record again, on behalf of all in the parish, our deep gratitude to key people: All involved in Saint Nicolas Place, new friends and familiar ones, especially Helen Kempster and the team of Friends. We owe them much. Among Parish staff we must especially thank Judy Ash and Sylvia Fox. In SNP, church and churchyard they have carried a huge burden in the office, with Chris Gadd and Pauline Weaver. Clifford Skirrow, supported by Nathan Crooks, Anne Hughes and Mary Sandilands, is our ever-faithful verger.

We are of course deeply thankful for the continuing faithful service and friendship in ministry of Fay Fearon, Ruth Howman, Mandy Butler and David Ash our Readers, and of course to Donald Sampson, our Methodist colleague and dear friend and my exemplary Team colleagues, Jayne Crooks and John White and Pauline Weaver, our Children's Worker. They have been such a strong, graceful team.

With John's deserved appointment in last year to Kingsbury and Jayne's equally deserved retirement from full-time ministry this year and my own retirement, with Donald, in August, much is changing. We are very grateful that the Bishop has agreed that Kings Norton will have three Assistant Priests (none paid!) in the Revd Robin Mortimore, the Revd Jane Platt and of course the Revd Jayne Crooks! With Pauline, our Readers, wardens, Lay

Pastoral Team and other lay leaders, the parish is in good hands. Do pray for them and support them!

Canon Rob Morris, Team Rector