

good condition. Ian also works with the Health and Safety Group so that we can respond to issues raised there. Any faults or problems with the buildings can be advised to any of the group or via the Church Office.

Sandy Benzies

AGM REPORT 2020

Introduction

This report has been prepared to provide an update on what is happening in the various areas of ministry within the church family at St Thomas' Church.

Each leader has once again been asked to provide a report on the last year in order to inform and encourage the Church Family and make us aware of future plans and any needs in their area of ministry. The Trustees and Vestry hope that you will be able to see how we are moving on, working together towards our aims. We hope this will also highlight areas within the life of the Church that people can assist with.

If you would like further information then please contact the leader whose name appears at the end of each section of the report. General enquiries or comments on this report may be directed to the Trustees and Vestry.

The Vestry and Trustees would like to thank the Congregation for their prayerful support over the past year.

We hope you will find this report helpful and a source of encouragement as we seek to serve God together in His church.

**Compiled by Morag Bryce and Jane Ross on
behalf of St Thomas' Trustees and Vestry**

March 2020

Table of Contents

INTRODUCTION	1
Vestry Chair's Report	4
Rectors' Report	6
Young People's Pastoral Worker	9
Church Coordinator	11
LOCAL OUTREACH	12
Care Van	12
Nursing Home Ministry	13
CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE	14
Protection of Vulnerable Groups (Adults and Children)	14
Mums and Tots	15
Uniformed Organisations	16
HOSPITALITY AND WELCOME	18
Sunday Tea/Coffee	18
Welcome Team	18
Warden and Stewards	19
CREATIVE	19
Coffee Plus	19
Gardening Group	20
Flower Ministry	21
Table Tennis Fellowship	22

service, to the new St Thomas' Church. We also worked with David McCarthy to draw up and agree a contract for him.

In the coming year the personnel group plan to review and update our current personnel policies and procedures.

Sheila Nicol and Margaret Robertson

World Concern Group

We continue to partner in prayer and finance with:

David & Bev Meldrum in Cape Town, South Africa

Mike & Helen Parker with SIM focusing on the Middle East.

Stephen & Catriona Bennett serving with CMS at Gahini hospital in Rwanda.

Paul & Isolde James-Griffiths in Edinburgh with Christian Heritage.

In addition for the next year, following our Christmas Project, we will support Vive Kids in Columbia.

We've also sought to encourage Emily Robinson during her year away.

The team watching over this area of ministry has been Miller Bogie, Morag Bryce, Fiona Christie, Liz Fairley and David McCarthy,

David McCarthy

Buildings and Maintenance Group

The Buildings and Maintenance Group undertakes or organises minor repairs and maintenance requirements on all the Church buildings and houses as required. Ken Robb, Peter Bennett, and Ian Devine provide valuable practical work and wisdom as we seek to keep our buildings in

Both sets of Accounts for 2019 are available on the member's section of the church website and copies are available on the table at the back of Church.

Agnes Murray.

Personnel Group

During the past year the personnel group have continued to be involved in staff matters, supporting staff, dealing with ongoing issues and liaising with the finance team as appropriate. We have continued to hold a regular review meeting with our cleaner.

Prior to her long term absence we worked with Jane Ross to consider the different aspects of the coordinator job, and we met with Rosemary Harvey before she began covering much of this role. We are grateful to Triona Busby and Miller Bogie who took on other parts of the role. Jane and Rosemary, meanwhile, invested considerable time in liaising, ensuring that the church office continued to serve the needs of the church and to function efficiently.

Jane asked to return on a job share basis, and Rosemary expressed willingness to share with her, and so we worked with them to implement this.

With the departure of our Youth Pastor, Rebecca McMillan, we were involved with David McCarthy in the process of recruiting her successor, including considering the Youth Pastor job description and the advert to be used. With others, we participated in the interviews and the appointment process. We prepared the contract of employment.

As we disaffiliated from the SEC we implemented the TUPE process (Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) Regulations) transferring each of our staff members, their contracts and conditions of

Musical Praise and Worship	22
TECHNICAL	23
St Thomas' Website	23
Podcasts	23
P.C.Team	24
DISCIPLESHIP, FELLOWSHIP AND PASTORAL	25
Family First	25
Homegroup	26
Bible Reading Notes	26
Prayer Support	27
Prayer Base and Central Meeting	28
World Day of Prayer	28
VESTRY SUB - COMMITTEES	29
Finance Group	29
Personnel Group	30
World Concern Group	31
Building and Maintenance Group	31

Vestry Chair's Report 2020

It is the responsibility of the Vestry Chairperson to present to the AGM a report on the steps which have been taken in pursuance of our charitable objects during the financial year which is under review.

Those objects are:

- a) the advancement of the Christian faith in Edinburgh and also throughout Scotland and the rest of the world, by all means consistent with the teachings of the Bible including worship, ministry, prayer, evangelism, education, service to the community and the support of agencies, individuals and other charitable organisations involved in Christian ministry, mission and service;
- b) the advancement of community development; and
- c) the relief of those in need.

The event with most obvious significance during the year has been the implementation of the congregational vote to leave the SEC and to establish ourselves as a new charitable entity. The importance of that step should not, however, obscure the fact that the work of St Thomas' has continued without interruption. Through the World Concern Fund, we have continued to support the same mission partners and we have given support to new ones. We have supported members who have been undertaking particular ministries (currently, Emily Robinson in Uganda). We have members who serve with the Care Van. We have visited homes to make contact with people. Within our congregational life we continue to worship God, learn from His Word, pray for the advancement of His Kingdom and pray for each other as we have always done. We appreciate the contributions of those who preach and those who contribute in so many ways. I started to list them but the list became too long. The reports from all ministries are available and we appreciate all that is being done. The point is that the work of St Thomas' has continued without interruption.

service to The Cedars/retirement housing in Corstorphine. We were warmly welcomed and about 12 people attended. Thanks to Kathleen Demerican, Irene Brydon and Phyll Brown for their support.

Dorothy Martin

VESTRY SUB-COMMITTEES

Finance Group

The responsibilities of the Finance Group are as follows:

Agnes Murray – Church Treasurer, does all presentations, AGMs, attends vestry meetings. Prepares the annual budget, prepares the annual accounts in statutory format and liaises with our auditors.

Miller Bogie now reviews the draft accounts before they are passed to the auditor. The treasurer prepares monthly management accounts and pays all invoices and expense claims.

Sheila Nicol and Agnes together input all invoices and bank entries on the accounting system to arrive at the monthly figures. This system seems to work well.

Sue Brown is the 'Paying Officer'. Sue runs the monthly payroll for all staff under the "RTI" (real time information) system set up by HMRC and has to calculate and arrange payment of the Nest pension for all employees other than the Rector.

Agnes Murray lodges Gift Aid claims on a monthly basis using details of standing orders and copies of weekly collection sheets completed each week by the warden.

Agnes holds the folder of all gift aid declarations.

Miller Bogie is the Treasurer of the World Concern Group.

3rd and 5th Sunday of each month. Throughout 2019, the dedicated team members were encouraged by the number of people regularly asking for prayer, as it showed prayer ministry still plays an important part in the weekly worship of God. We believe it helps deepen the fellowship within the church family. If anyone would like prayer, please just get in touch with one of the team .

Jennifer Vere

Prayer Base and Central Meeting

Prayer Base has continued on the first Sunday of each month at 6.30pm. Numbers attending in recent months we have been nearing thirty people.

Central Meeting has been held on the third Thursday each month. Bible teaching and prayer together have been the purposes of this gathering.

These meetings have been such an encouragement. It is vital that we are praying people who seek after their loving Father.

David McCarthy

World Day of Prayer 2018

The World Day of Prayer service was held on the 1st March 2019 at St Ninian's Church. The title was "Come All Is Ready" and was based on the invitation by God to come to his feast as written in Luke 14:15 - 24. The service was written by the Christian women of Slovenia. The preacher was the Reverend Andy Scarcliff a retired Baptist minister who emphasised that just as the servants in the story were sent out to the highways and byways to invite the people to the feast, so the church needs to reach out to the people outside its walls.

In the morning a group from St Thomas' took a shortened edition of the

The last few years have been overshadowed by the question of our relationship with the SEC. That is now resolved. We now have Episcopal guidance from Bishop Andy Lines and we are grateful to him for his wisdom and his support. We are contributing to the cost of his ministry and we encourage all members to support him in prayer. We are operating independently, under a new constitution. Some people have remarked on its length and the detailed procedures it specifies but it should be understood that it was necessary to provide not only a replacement for the congregational constitution but also for the SEC Code of Canons which previously applied to us and which made much more detailed provision at very much greater length and which prescribed procedures which were much less transparent. Our new constitution is informing work on similar documents in several other churches.

We are heavily involved in planning just now. We have the Great Commission to fulfil and we have a mission field on our doorstep which is large and which will increase when the new houses are built at Cammo. We want to find the best ways we can to share the Gospel with the people who live, and who will come to live, in our area. We are looking at our presentation (branding, website), at how to build social capital so that people find St Thomas' an attractive organisation and at how we might use all of our resources to make disciples. We are very conscious of the need to look outwards and not to become self absorbed and inward looking.

We are conscious, too, of the strong support we have received from other churches, in Scotland through the Scottish Anglican Network and globally from churches linked through the GAFCON network. We are very grateful for that support and we are active in maintaining those links. We need other Christians, other churches. GAFCON represents about 80% of all Anglicans in the world and there are significant differences in practice amongst its members. GAFCON makes no attempt to be prescriptive about those differences. But what holds them and us together is the belief

that the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments are the Word of God written and contain all things necessary for salvation; and the affirmation that the Bible is to be translated, read, preached, taught and obeyed in its plain and canonical sense, respectful of the church's historic and consensual reading. That is immutable and we will move forward, in the coming year, on that basis.

Finally, we record our deep appreciation of the commitment and the work of our Rector, David. He works faithfully and tirelessly on our behalf, often at considerable personal cost to himself and to Ali. We are blessed to have him. We should support him in every way we can.

Alastair Brown

Rector's Report 2020

Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity. Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful.

Let the message of Christ dwell among you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom through psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit, singing to God with gratitude in your hearts. And 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.

Colossians 3:13-17

Dear Friends,

Last year my report suggested that we would attempt to be an **Active Bible Community** in the years to come. It's good to revisit that aspiration and ask how it has gone.

One thing that stands out for me is the way some members have sought to

regular Bible reading and personal growth in faith. We would love to encourage children too to develop a love of the Bible reading habit. The notes are usually ordered for the beginning of the year and collected quarterly but can be ordered at any time. Please contact me for more information on notes both booklet form and digital, of which some of the latter are free to download.

Elizabeth Norwood

Prayer Support

The purpose of prayer ministry is to offer time and space for the congregation in St T's to actively bring their concerns, requests and thanks to God. People may share needs for themselves and others, both within and outside the church family. In this way, the prayer team aim to 'carry each other's burdens' and so 'fulfil the law of Christ' Gal 6:2. We are made aware of individual prayer needs in many different ways: people come after the service or during communion to the small circle of chairs on the left at the front of the church; through our conversations with people at coffee time; through the Rector and others alerting the group to particular needs during the week. The details of the prayer request will be kept confidential within the prayer team or, if requested, kept confidential only to those of the team who prayed with the individual initially.

We will pray continually over weeks and months if necessary, and we try to follow up by sensitively asking the person how they are doing. We also 'rejoice with those who rejoice' and enjoy thanking God together when individuals tell us of God's goodness, especially when he answers our prayers. The list of team members is on the notice board at the back of church, and this year Kerstin Prill joined the team. By the end of 2019, there were 8 members in the prayer ministry. As two people are allocated each Sunday, this means we can offer prayer support on 1st, 2nd,

regularly. All families with school age children are welcome to come along and join us.

**David Fairhurst, Julie Fairhurst,
Claire Forrester and Keith Forrester.**

Homegroups

We have five home groups/small groups which meet on varying nights of the week. The groups are identified by geographical area, but membership of each group is not defined by where people live.

Some meet weekly and others fortnightly for study, prayer, mutual support and fellowship. Leaders meet regularly with the Rector to coordinate the studies and to inform him of the needs of any group member. Bible studies are linked to the sermon series on Sunday mornings and sometimes to the monthly church central meeting.

This years studies have been from 2 Corinthians 'Sing' and Colossians. Group members take responsibility for mutual support particularly when individuals are unwell or infirm. Social events, especially meals together, enable people to get to know one another better and to integrate new members. Around 50% of church members belong to a home group. Details about group locations and leadership can be found on the church notice board. If you would like to find out more or would like to join a group, please speak to Mike and Wendy Carrington (0131 339 6991).

Mike and Wendy Carrington

Bible Reading Notes

A wide range of publications for Bible reading, suitable for all ages, is published by Scripture union, CWR and the Good Book Company. We would like to see an increasing number making use of notes to encourage

engage with the wider community by serving. I know of people who are on school parent/teacher councils, who are serving on the Community Council and who are engaged with serving the poorest in our city. Some are taking seriously the need to care for the most vulnerable in our church family. I am mindful too that those who are in work are on the frontline of actively witnessing to the love of God in Christ – that is where our faith can be experienced at its most active. Our buildings continue to be used by many different groups in the area, Guides and Brownies, and for social occasions like parties. Our own group for carers and toddlers on Tuesday mornings continues to attract parents, childminders and grandparents with their little ones. There is much in the way of social capital available to us – we should make better use of such contacts and offer God's love to those with whom we connect. We continue to visit homes with invitations at Easter and Christmas, where we have also offered to pray for any needs.

We have sought to keep the Bible at the centre of our life together. Sunday morning remains the key time in the week where we come together to listen for the Lord's voice in the preaching of His Word. We have experimented with a new monthly gathering for worship called "Embrace". This is from 4.45pm on the second Sunday of the month. Our home groups have continued to gather around the Bible on a regular basis and remain the primary place for fellowship and encouragement. "Family First" continues to draw people together for fellowship, fun and learning. We pray and learn together at the monthly "Prayer Base" and "Central" meetings.

Community-building has continued with Hospitality Sundays being re-introduced as one way to do this. We have seen some growth in the Coffee Plus gathering on Thursday mornings, especially among the number of men attending. Recently a little "Bible Thought for the Day" and discussion/prayer was introduced. We have contemplated a church weekend away but issues of venue and cost have proved inhibiting so far.

There is much still to do. Phil Taylor's joining us in the autumn has been a tremendous help and indicates our commitment to working with young people. Yet we have few in number (what we lack in quantity we make up for in quality!). Let's pray for and work towards seeing more joining our community.

We must also seek to build a wider church community of those congregations who have sought realignment within the Anglican tradition. We are exploring a day with the other churches in our network, perhaps in the autumn. This year should see the establishment of a missionary diocese in Europe operating under the oversight of the Anglican Network in Canada. The Scottish congregations will have a leading role in its formation – please pray for wisdom as we build something together that will have the Gospel at its heart, a lightness in its organisation and an outward looking attitude.

The vestry and trustees are exploring the way ahead in terms of our vision and how we organise ourselves. Expect to see some new expressions of our mission and values as we head into the autumn. These will help fuel and keep us to account for how we build and how we live.

Thank you to all those who serve the Lord so well. I love that so many are engaged in serving in sacrificial ways. Several people have stood down from their roles this year after very long service (or are in the process of doing so). For example, Rob Hyder is stepping down from organising our wardens and Rosemary Kemp stood down from the flower ministry. We can only be grateful for their faithful service. Our treasurer, Agnes Murray will also be standing down this year. She has been an exceptionally faithful overseer and I am personally very grateful for the way she has conducted our finances.

This reminds us that gaps open up when people stand down. These roles are vital and must be filled in order to build the body of Christ. I am most aware of this in relation to vestry membership. Several vestry members will

autumn, Fred had to stop active participation due to health issues, although he continued to organise the rota till the end of the year. His direction and sense of humour will be greatly missed by us all.

The team welcome any comments and suggestions from church members; we will eagerly pursue any idea that enhances the worship of our Lord.

Ali Cathcart, Miller Bogie, and Scott Vere.

DISCIPLESHIP, FELLOWSHIP AND PASTORAL

Family First

Our motto is *Keep calm and put Family First* - and that is what we strive to do. We've welcomed new families this year and said farewell to old friends - but although the faces attending our group this year might have changed, our vision certainly hasn't. We still strive to provide a space in the church calendar which provides a place where families can meet together, share together, worship together, pray for one another and eat together! We have continued to meet monthly throughout the year providing a forum for coffee and chat for the adults; whilst the children are engaged in a craft activity linked to the theme of our evening; this is followed by an all age style talk and family prayer time; then games finishing with a meal together offering more time for fellowship.

This year we've looked at topics such as belonging to the Body of Christ; being prepared on our *front line*; sharing; and citizenship - looking at being a citizen of Heaven. We also enjoyed a night of amazing fireworks out at Dobbies and, as a group, we organised a food collection for our local foodbank here in Corstorphine.

We meet on the first Saturday of every month from 5.00-7.00 in the church hall and we currently have eight families who come along

with Triona Busby. Together we ensure that Sunday sermons and central meeting talks are available to the congregation and indeed those beyond it. This makes it easy to catch up on missed talks or to listen again and also supports Homegroup Bible study preparations. It is a service that is valued and heavily used – talks or sermons may be typically downloaded over 50-60 times and one of the Christmas 2019 sermons had 168 hits! We hope that the new website currently under development will make it even easier to access recent media.

We'd love to expand the team as everyone currently involved has other regular rota commitments so please get in touch if you'd like to join us. Some technical ability with PC file management is needed but full instructions are provided on audio editing with Audacity and in working with the church's website. Automated rota reminders from the website make it easy to remember when you're on duty. Anyone aged 13 or over is very welcome – there is no upper age limit! We look forward to hearing from you.

Angela Benzies

PC Team

The PC Team is responsible for the visual output from the tech team, who you will see on Sundays sitting at the desk situated at the rear of the church. The PC Team's remit is to provide the visuals that are required for use during church services. So, in response to requests from those who are participating in the services, we source and display the required graphics, which may take the form of words, pictures, videos or more complex presentations. During the year, one area that we have focused on is to ensure that we comply with relevant copyright legislation. Those who have been part of the team during the year are Ali Cathcart, Fred Norwood, Miller Bogie, and Scott Vere. We were saddened when, in the

stand down this year after serving through our difficult time of transition. Please consider whether you have the gifts and ask if the Lord is calling you to this key area of our common life. Have a conversation with me if you are considering this.

Finally, I remain grateful for being called to St T's. It is a privilege to serve the Lord with you. My prayer this year is that we will see the Lord continue to work among us in such ways as to bring more people, young and not-so-young to know Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour.

David McCarthy

Young People's Pastoral Worker

Due to starting in my role in late October, with my own involvement being delayed due to waiting for my PVG to come through, my report on this last year will be somewhat brief, with some comments on plans for the future.

Lighthouse Groups

Attendance for Fusion has been averaging between 5 and 6 over the past year, though there are at least 10 young people on the register. The younger Lighthouse groups have also had low numbers, often fluctuating and sometimes seeing numbers so low that they have been merged on occasion.

We have a good number of dedicated volunteers across all groups, though one or two more volunteers for working with the younger groups would be much appreciated.

YF

YF resumed at the start of February 2020. Future plans include termly trips, various activities and the intention to make it a group that church youth feel they are able to invite their friends to.

The intention will be to have a slot during the evening where a discussion with a Christian element will also happen.

Bible Study

Bible Study also restarted in February 2020. The intention of the group is to establish good Bible study habits and practice and both study the Bible and answer any questions the young people have about their personal Bible studies between Bible Study sessions.

SU and Jaffa Groups

The SU group at Craigmount High School has continued under the leadership of 2 members of staff at the school, along with support from Zonya Bewick of Scripture Union Scotland. Due to the current attendance numbers at the group, it is currently thought best if no other leaders are present as any more would mean the ratio might have a negative impact on the group. The current aim is to build positive relationships with the staff involved so that either I am able to fill in if they are unable to be there or join with them if the attendance increases.

I am in communication with SU Scotland to start involvement with 2 Jaffa groups in local primary schools. My involvement is dependent on getting a PVG through SU, so that I am able to go in under their already existing relationships with the schools

Community

Plans are in place to hold a community fun day on Easter Saturday afternoon. There is also the intention to run a holiday club for a week during the summer holidays.

Phil Taylor

church with often limited resources.

We are also indebted to the Sound and Projection Teams for their tireless support and energy as they balance the sound and organise the words to be projected each week.

I have considered it a privilege and joy, as well as a sober responsibility, to have led this area of St. Thomas' Service for the Lord Jesus for another year. Thank you to all the musicians and singers who serve in this area of church life, and to you all in the congregation for your hearty singing as we seek to worship God and encourage one another in song Sunday by Sunday.

David Harvey

TECHNICAL

St Thomas' Website

A team comprising Angela Benzies, Gavin Hamilton, Jane Robertson and me have been tasked with revamping the current church website and also looking at the option of restyling it with our logo and a new colour palette. Current proposals are to remain with Church Insight as the host but to purchase a new template which is appealing and informative to visitors which includes improved 'what's on' and sermon podcast information. It will keep the member's section for easy access of internal workings of the church family and include contact details. The updated template is expected to be more user-friendly to our internal and external users.

Jeremy Southam

Podcasts

The podcasting team is small, just four members – Doug McLaggan, Richard Mitchell, Scott Vere and Angela Benzies - working in conjunction

Table Tennis Fellowship

Although few in number we had lots of fun and have not met lately due to unrelated injuries and other commitments. Should we get a viable interest we will reconvene and play again. We welcome new players and ask that anyone who wants to come gets in touch with Nick Harding or myself.

Michael Brown

WORSHIP

Musical Praise and Worship

As ever, there's been a movement in and out of the worship team over the last year. We've been delighted to welcome Watson Wilson to our singers, whose contribution and enthusiasm has been very warmly received. Sadly, due to work and other commitments, Dee Turner has been unable to continue on the team. We give thanks for her involvement and wish her God's blessing as serves the Lord in her place of work and elsewhere.

There is always room for more people on the worship team – in fact, it's been difficult to cover some Sundays, or when people need to pull out at short notice, so if you feel you could perhaps make a contribution to this area of ministry, we'd be delighted to hear from you.

We have enjoyed attending and hosting 'Open Mic' nights for Corstorphine Churches Together and also forming a 'pop up' choir at Christmas time and were glad that the Lord seemed pleased to bless the efforts of the regulars and pop uppers at our Carol Service.

The leaders' group continue to meet almost quarterly with the Rector to discuss any issues, pray together, and reflect on any feedback from services. Thank you to the congregation for your ongoing support and encouragement as we seek to serve this local part of the Lord Jesus'

Church Coordinator

The Church Coordinator role at St Thomas' was changed to a job share after sick cover in May, June and July 2019. Rosemary Harvey has done an amazing job of picking up the role. The Church Coordinator covers all church administration, organizing, welcoming hall users and sorting out problems arising from hall hires such as bad weather, changes to services and last minute problems. In fact everything behind the scenes at St Thomas'.

This past year with a change to the logo and moving on as a church we have had help from members with the correct skills, to change all letting agreements, stationary and the notice sheet.

The staff meet weekly when possible to read a Bible verse and pray. It's an important part of the staff week and thanks go to and David and Phil for their prayer support for both of us and our families. They have been very supportive and encouraging. We want to thank members of the Congregation who have helped out, rescued us many times and supported both of us during this past year.

The job role as first point of contact at St Thomas' Church is very varied and can be challenging. People hiring rooms regularly or as a one off booking have made positive comments about our halls being large, bright and welcoming to the local community. Our hall rentals have varied over the year but are down on last year. People are being careful about what they spend money on.

We have hosted charity events and musical groups this year and had a local Nursery hold their Nativity play in the Sanctuary.

Thank you to the heating team who set the heating for us each week and as each groups needs are different, that is a challenge. Building repairs have been a problem this year and we would like to thank members of the property team who have tried to oversee most of this work. We have a team of workers who are on hand to assist us when problems arise we

can't cope with. Triona Busby is involved with back up and any computer problems and does an amazing job when we continually ring her for help or advice. We would also like to thank the finance team who organise the wages of the staff and the personnel team who deal with all staff issues. They do a grand job behind the scenes.

The Church office is open every morning so please feel free to come along during opening hours with ideas for further improvement of the Church Coordinator role and we can usually manage to arrange tea/coffee and a chat . Thanks to everyone for their support and prayers.

“Hold me close let your love surround me, bring me near, draw me to your side. And as I wait I'll rise up like an eagle; and I will soar with you, your spirit leads me on, by the power of your love” Geoff Bullock

Jane Ross and Rosemary Harvey

LOCAL OUTREACH

Care Van

St Thomas' has successfully provided a team for Care Van for another year. Thank you to the team who generously give of their time to man the Van on the last Sunday evening of the month to serve soup, hot drinks and give out a few clothes to the homeless and struggling of Edinburgh. A particular thanks goes to Bob Kemp who managed our teams over the last year. Going into 2020 we have three teams comprised of regular St Thomas' members and friends from further afield. However, other volunteers would be welcome to join the team. There is also an opportunity for members of the congregation to support the work of the Care Van by donating clothes, blankets or financially to help those who live on the streets of Edinburgh. If anyone wishes to donate or volunteer please contact myself or Mark Gilmour. Thank you for your support of this Ministry.

Flower Ministry

The **Flower team** decorates the church at Christmas, Easter and Harvest, and makes up posies of daffodils which are distributed on Mothering Sunday. Individual members also arrange flowers, as required, which have been donated by members of the congregation for other Sundays.

After each Sunday morning service members of the **flower distribution team** dismantle the arrangements. They gift the flowers to individuals as a thank you, or as a remembrance on a special birthday or anniversary or other celebration, give them to any who are unwell or who have suffered a bereavement, or take them to members who are housebound or in nursing homes and no longer able to come to church. The flowers are much appreciated by those who receive them.

Members of the congregation (or home groups ...) are encouraged to sign up to donate and arrange flowers for a particular Sunday, or to donate money for flowers which will then be arranged by a member of the flower team.

They are also encouraged to make suggestions of particular recipients for the flowers on any Sunday.

Both flower teams would love to have additional members. Please speak to any member of either team if you are able to help in one or both teams, or if you wish to discuss more about what volunteering with them might involve.

Thanks go to Rosemary Kemp for her leading of the flower ministry for many years and to each person who has donated, arranged or delivered flowers during the past year.

Sheila Nicol

As always, we are grateful to all who bake, set up and clear up each week but we give thanks and praise to our God who sustains us and encourages us week by week.

Alison Bogie

Gardening Group

Caring for our church's gardens is often called 'The Ministry of First Impressions'.

Coming into St Thomas' from either the Glasgow Road or the Gyle Park entrances people pass through our church gardens, so it is very important they look attractive and colourful. This is the first impression – and welcome – to all, even before entering our buildings!

A wonderful team of volunteers carry out necessary gardening tasks and it has been encouraging to welcome new hands. It is still hoped in time we can plant more to ensure that entering by the back gate is as welcoming as arriving at the front of the church. As always there is a need for more people to help – no gardening experience necessary – and this need is now an urgent appeal as, naturally, the time comes when volunteers have to hang up their ploughshares.

We meet on the first Saturday morning of the month from 10.00 am and in true St Thomas' tradition this includes a break for refreshments and sharing of ideas.

The spacious garden areas around our church buildings are a special privilege and blessing but this in return requires of us, all of us, a shared stewardship of their care. If you are able to help out, even for a short time, please contact Margaret, Delia or the church office for more details.

Margaret Mitchell and Delia Hyder

Nursing Home Ministry – Manor Grange Nursing Home, Pinkhill

We are grateful to God for many encouragements this year as we have sought to provide a monthly Service of Christian worship with a Gospel message to some of the 80+ residents and staff at the Manor Grange Care Home. This serves to reconnect people with a wider Christian community, and to remind them of God's unfailing love and faithfulness throughout their lives, especially at times of loss or amidst major changes of circumstance. Quite a number of the 14 or so who attend Services have a real faith and longstanding church connections.

Two of their Activities Coordinators in particular (Lorna and Maureen) have been very supportive of this ministry, and Lorna brings some of the more mobile residents to Coffee Plus one Thursday each month and it has been good to chat with them. Our speakers have included Sandy Benzies, Bill Mc Gillivray, Bruce Gordon, Christine Macdonald, Ian Young and Revd. Stan Brook, all of whom have given excellent short messages. Linda Aslet kindly plays the piano at our special Services (e.g. Christmas or Easter). Most Services are held on Tuesday or Thursday afternoons in the fourth week of each month.

26 people, including some relatives and staff, attended the Care Home Carol Service, a joyful occasion at which Stan Brook reminisced over life as it was in Scotland 70 years ago and helped us reflect on the living Saviour who still comes among us with life-transforming power today. We know of at least 4 members of the Manor Grange staff who are committed Christians. Please join us in praying for their work and witness to colleagues and residents in the Home.

One dear Christian lady 'Sally' died shortly after Christmas – the same lady to whom we had given an Easy-Read Bible one year previously and such was the family's appreciation of our ministry to this resident that they asked us whether we might conduct Sally's funeral. As she came from South

Queensferry, Canon Mike Parker kindly obliged, with Mark contributing an Appreciation of this lady as we celebrated her long and well-lived life.

Again this year we were invited to run a Craft Stall at the Home's pre-Christmas Fair. This was fairly well attended and the sale of many beautifully, hand-made articles raised a total of £280 for Bethany Christian Fellowship – well done all our crafty ladies at Coffee Plus. The possibility of some form of Pastoral Care or Chaplaincy is also under consideration by Care Home Management.

Thank you for your prayerful support of this Ministry Team: Dorothy Martin, Mark & Elinor Gilmour, Dorothy Robertson, Kathleen Demircan, Irene Brydon, Phyll Brown

Mark Gilmour

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

Protection of Vulnerable Groups (Adults and Children)

The PVG group currently consists of Margaret Robertson, Sheila Nicol and Linda Henderson. Margaret keeps a watching brief on issues relating to older, vulnerable people. Linda takes responsibility for the Lighthouse monitoring role to ensure adequate child/volunteer ratio and undertakes any admin required. All volunteers working with adults, children and young people at St Thomas's are checked under the PVG scheme and currently Sheila is responsible for obtaining these. We are now using Volunteer Scotland as the organisation through which we apply for PVGs. We remain committed to maintaining policies and procedures to help protect vulnerable members of our church community and we are in the process of registering with the Christian organisation "thirtyone:eight" who will give support in all areas of safeguarding.

The group meets 3 or 4 times a year and we are always available to offer

Wardens and Stewards

Our Wardens and Stewards provide a most important ministry within the church's life. There are 8 teams of Wardens and Stewards who fulfil a vital role to ensure the reputation continues of St Thomas' as a friendly and welcoming church – if done well, as it almost always is, they may not be noticed but if very occasionally it's done badly, it can be obvious. In all 40 different people are required and are involved on an 8 week rota basis to provide this service. More volunteers would be greatly appreciated to ensure continuity and support for the clergy and groups taking part in church services. I have stepped down now from organising this particular contribution to the Sunday services and would like to take this opportunity to thank the many people who have assisted over the years. Inevitably replacements become necessary as existing stewards move away or retire, so if you would like to assist in the future please contact the church office.

Rob Hyder

CREATIVE

Coffee Plus

Once again Coffee Plus has had another good year. We are thankful to the Lord for increased numbers and the thriving men's group. In October, Coffee Plus organised the Blythswood Shoebox appeal for St. Thomas' and approximately 60 boxes were given. In November and December many regulars at Coffee Plus knitted 500 angels which were then delivered to homes or hung in various places in the community. In February Coffee Plus hosted a soup and sandwich lunch at which Dave McCarthy gave a short epilogue. Throughout the year donations have been given for coffee and cake which have enabled us to give over £700 away to Charities such as SU Scotland, Mozambique Hurricane, Lifecare, Vive Foundation. We have also given £200 to St. Thomas to help with heating and coffee costs.

HOSPITALITY AND WELCOME

Sunday Teas and Coffee

Kathryn Scott has taken over responsibility for ensuring supplies are up to date each week, thank you to Cathy Morrison for doing this for a number of years. My task is to create and update the weekly rota which remains available on line to all church members as well as being emailed to all when renewed every six months. Tea and coffee hospitality each Sunday is an essential asset to church life to allow a catch up, further dialogue about what has been taught and provides a warm welcome to visitors; many people on the rota have volunteered for many years and this is mixed with some newcomers and I remain very grateful for the continued commitment of all.

Jeremy Southam

Welcome Team

Going beyond greeting to building community

Welcome is an important whole-church activity, serving visitors and regulars alike, and we recognise that many people are very good at doing this, not just the 15 of us on the welcome team. It is an opportunity and a privilege to help people feel welcomed as individuals, noticing them and being interested in them, helping each one feel at ease with us and making the most of their time at church, even if it's just a one-off visit.

For those who wish to join the church, being able to find ways to make connections with a number of people is vital. Much as a friendly greeting is important, we have a desire to help new people become integrated into church life, to help them find friendship and fellowship here so that they have a sense of belonging. If you'd like to be part of the welcome team, please do talk to us – it's a great way to get to know people! Rota commitment is about once in every 7 weeks.

18 **Sandy and Angela Benzies**

any guidance to members of the congregation working with vulnerable groups within the church.

Finally we can report that there have been no incidents or areas of concern requiring to be investigated over the past year.

Linda Henderson

Mums and Toddlers

Mums and Toddlers' meets in the Gyle Hall on Tuesdays from 10:00 to 11:30. Each week between 10 and 20 adults attend. The group is for babies and toddlers who bring with them mums, dads, grannies, foster carers, child minders, nannies and the occasional grandad.

Everyone is friendly and supportive of one another. The group was established about 40 years ago and we at St Thomas' still provide a place for mums or other carers to meet, chat and have a cuppa while the children play. We sometimes do a structured activity and we always sing together at the end.

'Mums' hear of us through health visitors, by word of mouth or the Internet and through other St T's groups. As the St Thomas' link I can give information about activities and events at St T's such as Holiday Club, uniformed organisations, Sunday services and groups, Christmas services etc.

Only about a third of the children attend with a parent, so the friendships that evolve and the contacts made are very different to the 1970s!

Please remember the group in your prayers.

Hilary Robin son

Uniformed Organisations

After a year of transition the new Girlguiding UK programme reached implementation stage in August. The programme begins with Rainbows starting at stage 1 and continues through Brownies and Guides to Rangers able to progress to stage 6. Whilst some of the previous content was retained, updating the programme has led to the inclusion of new content such a vloggin and geocaching! Leaders in all three groups are finding it a challenge to incorporate and use the content and methods of the new programme in a stimulating and fun way whilst keeping space for the very popular seasonal activities and special projects, and an ability to respond to the interests and ideas of the girls. Brownies, especially, would love to have more interest badges to do!

Rainbows

Our Rainbows unit is full with a group of 5 and 6 year olds who are very enthusiastic, even on a cold wet evening. They are delighted to have an additional qualified leader. Highlight of the year was a visit to an amateur panto performance where the girls enjoyed shouting and responding to the performers.

Messy crafts and noisy games continue to be extremely popular, whilst the girls look forward to lighter evenings that will allow them to enjoy more outdoor fun.

Brownies

Brownies also have a full unit, but have been able to accommodate girls progressing from Rainbows without the need for a waiting list. Regular leaders Grace Donald and Catherine McGuire are supported by a group of young leaders, all of whom are likely to move on at the summer as they take up university places. Fiona Campbell has shared her crafting skills and Gladys Bennett has provided additional help, and the McGuire family has provided considerable practical help. However, more adult help, especially on a regular and weekly basis, is required.

Highlights of the past year have included engaging with Comic Relief, taking part in a drama workshop, and learning the country and people of China as part of an international theme. Discovering about butterflies and going up Corstorphine Hill on a nature walk stimulated excitement about the outdoors. Similarly, going outside to observe the stars in the night sky linked with a focus and enthusiasm for learning about space. Last summer's outing was an afternoon spent visiting the Guides at camp and taking part in a range of activities with them.

Guides are down in numbers this year, older girls having moved on at the summer. A small but enthusiastic group meet each Friday evening. Recent activities have centred round baking and crafts, the smaller group size facilitating the learning of new skills. Themed evenings have considered 'new' things and eco friendly habits, Scottish culture, and an international focus. Time has also been spent on learning emergency and first aid skills. Before the summer many opportunities were taken to explore aspects of the outdoors, the highlight of the year being our weekend camp at Carsewell, near Penicuik, where we pitched and slept in tents and cooked and ate in the open air, and took part in activities based round the theme of Space. In November we went to the King's Theatre to watch the 50th anniversary Scout and Guide Gang Show in which two of our group were performing.

Rainbows, Brownies and Guides continue to be encouraged by the numbers of girls who belong. The majority of members come from the local area, many with no other church connection. A particular challenge is how to encourage the girls and their families to link with other activities in church.

We are very grateful for the interest and support, practically and in prayer, from many at St Thomas's – and would love to speak with any who might be interested in future involvement and leadership, even on a part time basis, and especially with Brownies.

Carol Gray, Grace Donald and Sheila Nicol