



ST JOHN THE BAPTIST

BURSCOUGH

ANNUAL TRUSTEES REPORT

for year ended 31st December 2025

APCM

Sunday 17th May 2026

11:00am

St John the Baptist Church, Burscough

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➤ ELECTORAL ROLL – Changes in Membership

After a new Electoral Roll was completed last year, we had 223 members. Over the last year, we have sadly lost 11 people; 7 through death and 4 who moved away/moved churches. However, 7 new people have joined. Therefore, 2026 sees a decrease of 4 and the total number of people currently listed on St John the Baptist's Electoral Roll is **219**.

Pauline Rimmer
Electoral Roll Officer

➤ PCC REPORT

This PCC have met six times over the last twelve months, and have discussed and made key decisions on a wide range of issues which include: -

- Safeguarding. An important subject led by our Safeguarding Officer, Denise Prescott.
- Finance.
- Hall Hire
- Deanery Synod matters.
- St John's Nursery proposal for Church Hall.
- Psalm 57 missional opportunity – rental/building work associated with rental of No57 to provide a presence in the heart of the Burscough community.
- Various Estate maintenance including,
 - Church*
 - Stonework repairs.
 - Video upgrade/AV equipment.
 - Laying flat vulnerable monuments.
 - Graveyard grass mowing.
 - PAT testing.
 - Test fire extinguishers.
 - Defibrillator.
 - Roof alarm.
 - Building compliance work.
 - Church Hall*
 - PAT testing.
 - Service heating
 - Test fire extinguishers.
 - St Andrew's Crabtree Mission*
 - PAT testing.
 - Test fire extinguishers.
 - Asbestos.
- Links with local schools.
- Social media/Branding.
- Staff changes.
- Youth Ministry and Trips.
- Women's/Men's ministry.
- Harvest Projects.
- Service times.
- Christmas Plans.
- Church Terrier and Inventory.
- St John's and Lordsgate School Governors.
- Worship, prayer, discipleship and mission.
- Taking forward our new 2026 Vision of "Following Jesus and Making Him Known" which includes: -
 - *Praying Faithfully* - *Serving Sacrificially* - *Giving Graciously* - *Sharing Boldly*.

Safeguarding

This has been led by our Safeguarding Officer, Denise Prescott – thank you Denise for all your valuable work in this respect.

As a Church we have adopted Diocesan safeguarding policy and the policy for safer working practice. At each PCC meeting a report is given regarding safeguarding and the PCC has complied with its duty to have 'due regard' to the House of Bishops guidance in relation to safeguarding.

We endeavour to ensure that all safeguarding issues are logged and reported, where necessary, to Social Services and the Diocesan safeguarding team. As far as possible we ensure that: -

All volunteers complete a self-declaration form, updated every 5 years (thanks to Jennie Short for co-ordinating this).

Where necessary, DBS applications are completed and updated every 3 years.

Volunteers are appointed following the guidelines in the safer recruitment policy.

Safeguarding training is completed by all volunteers to the required level.

There has been a review of role descriptions, risk assessments, various policies, and an update of the safeguarding plan.

We are blessed by the arrival of our new curate Paul Davies, Hannah and family and pray that God may richly bless their time with us at St John's.

PCC members act as Trustees of a Charity and as such take responsibility and the lead in running Church. We have ensured that our Church and buildings continue to be carefully maintained and improved.

Special thanks to the following people: -

Pete Short (Treasurer) – Thank you Pete for all your brilliant work as treasurer over the years. The meticulous way you have looked after the Church's finances and all your help and support have been invaluable. Pete and his Finance Team continue to do a fantastic job and are much appreciated.

Stephen Magee (Estates Management Team) – Thank you Stephen for the care and dedication with which you and your Team have looked after the Church & Buildings and for making sure that the work undertaken is always to such a high standard. Your Estates Management Team reports to PCC are helpful, comprehensive, and informative. Thank you also to Dave Hurst for supporting the Team and for agreeing to take over Stephen's role as Estates Manager.

Caroline McCaul & Steven Baxter (Church Wardens) – Throughout yet another busy and challenging year Caroline and Steven have always carried out their duties in an enthusiastic and caring way. They always make themselves available and demonstrate much patience, love and care in all things. I have appreciated your help and support in my secretary and deputy Church Warden roles – many thanks.

For those whose PCC and Deanery Synod terms are coming to an end – *Malcolm Lever, Helen Cobos, Mark Aspinall, Mark Taylor, Clare Hughes, Peter Dorling, Katie Street and Pete Short* – thank you for your faithful service and helpful contributions at our meetings. I know that some of you may continue for another term, but for those who are leaving us, we will miss you at our meetings and pray that God blesses you as you continue to move forward with him.

Another challenging and exciting year lies ahead as we prayerfully continue to seek God's guidance for the future direction of St John's.

Thank you to everybody who has helped and supported me throughout the year.

Love and God Bless.

Stuart Ashcroft
PCC Secretary

➤ CHURCHWARDENS REPORT

This Dear Church family and friends. Can it really be over 12 months since the last APCM? We think someone is meddling with time!

A lot has happened in the last year, not least of which is the opening of the Psalm 57 project, which is now fully staffed and almost open for business! We owe a lot to the volunteers who cleaned and decorated the premises when we first got the keys, and to all those of you who donated to this worthy cause. We are also grateful to St Johns primary school for their agreements to rent the church hall from us for their nursery and thus allowing us the funds to go towards the running of the project.

We are also grateful for all those who contributed to the work done in church to move the screen, to move the worship band and to install the lights on the light bar and those in the chancel. These we think have all added to the experience of worship in our lovely church.

Although not everyone will agree, we also think the standard of coffee and tea available is much higher than it was, now that we have the CLO system in operation.

This year, we are not going to name individuals who have volunteered for so many roles as we would run out of ink as there are so many of you (well over a hundred.) Rather, we will thank individual groups: -

Firstly, we would like to thank the clergy team and staff team, without whom we wouldn't even be here.

The treasurer and safeguarding officer are certainly worthy of great thanks.

The worship and sound desk teams are also greatly appreciated; they really add to the depth of our worship.

We all appreciate that prayer is important to our church family, so we would like to thank the prayer ministry team and prayer connect for their faithful service.

Our thanks also go to the Estates team, who keep the building and fabric in good order.

Then we have the hospitality and welcome teams who make being here a far more pleasant experience, along with the meals ministry team who help those struggling at home.

We can't forget our lovely deputy wardens who make our job as Church Wardens just very easy.

The graveyard tidy team and those lovely ladies who fill us with bacon barmes are also highly valued.

Communion administrators and those who take communion into homes serve us well.

The cleaning team, be it dirt, dust, brass or purifiers are also busy working behind the scenes, and we are very grateful to them all.

Those who set up for special occasions such as weddings and baptisms and those who decorate church for such events are vital in Church life.

We are also lucky to have those who sell their wares in the West End for several worthy causes.

All our volunteers are highly valued and many of you are on multiple teams and so we thank you, multiple times. As Jesus said we are one body with many parts and we work together with different gifts and abilities to make this wonderful church work. And if we have forgotten anyone, we beg your forgiveness.

Steve Baxter and Caroline McCaul
Church Wardens

➤ DEANERY SYNOD REPORT

Last year started with the decision that Ormskirk Deanery as a whole, decided not to continue with FFM. This does not mean we are not in favour of working together, but that cooperation/partnerships between churches will be more organic and flexible.

For example, Peter Dorling has got the deanery treasurers together for mutual support, he has also offered personal help to treasurers of other churches in the Deanery. There has been youth work and safeguarding training hosted here at St Johns, including members of other churches. Rev. Eileen Heaney hosts a popular and growing bi-monthly women's breakfast at St Mark's Scarisbrick, for women across the whole Deanery and the Renew Women's Day is open to all women from Burscough and beyond.

There have been number of personnel changes across the Deanery. Rev. Ian Greenwood (known to many of us here as a previous curate of St Johns) has become vicar at Christchurch Aughton. A new priest in charge has been appointed in Ormskirk - Rev. Andrew Bailey, who is currently curate at Penny Lane in Liverpool. This is an exciting appointment for Ormskirk. It is a revitalisation/church plant from Penny Lane who themselves were a Church Plant from Holy Trinity Brompton in London.

We have also just had approval to create a post at Westhead that will, include a new missional role within Skelmersdale.

We still have challenges across the Deanery in some areas, but there are also some exciting things going on. For example, St Pauls in Skelmersdale have a monthly worship community that meets in Trinity Primary school on a Thursday afternoon. This is aimed at families who wouldn't normally come to church. Children must attend with an adult, and they regularly get numbers of 75+ coming along.

In my role as lay chair, I am extremely grateful to Rev. Chris Spittle (Area Dean) from St Pauls Skelmersdale, for trying to balance all the complexities and demands from across the Deanery. I also want to thank Elliott, who I quite often use as a sounding board.

Mark Taylor

Lay Chair – Ormskirk Deanery

➤ MINISTRY IN THE PARISH

○ CHILDREN'S & FAMILIES MINISTRY

To start the report I would like to give a big shout out to our fabulous teams of volunteers, across all the different groups that we run; from helping to run sessions, making resources, hospitality, praying and a whole range of different activity that goes on to ensure that the ministry to our children and families continues. Thank you all. Also like to say a thank you to Joanna; it has been great to work alongside one another in our ministry to children and young people; and a blessing to support and encourage one another personally and professionally. Of course, we will continue to do so in a slightly different way, with Joanna's changing role.



Here are just a few key things that have been happening over the past year:

It has been a year of building – building team and making changes that enable us to support our children, young people and families. We have also been changing and adapting practically through building changes. We are developing a joined-up approach with our children and their grown-ups, exploring how we can live

out our faith in all the different spaces we meet, growing as families of all shapes and sizes in an intergenerational way.

Pastoral - This unseen yet relational part of ministry is so important and valuable; supporting families and individuals through the everyday, celebrations, exceptional circumstances and storms of life – exploring how we can navigate life together with Jesus as part of a Church family.

Little Lambs - Our Little Lambs team are so faithful in offering this weekly family ministry, and in recognising the importance of offering a supportive network for families with pre-school children and building relationships. It is great to see some of the families come along to Community Coffee and Family Time too.

Kingdom Kids and Tots - On the first and third Sundays throughout the year we have offered children's provision through our primary school age and pre-school age groups of Kingdom Kids and Tots. The change in the building use has meant a transitional time of our programme has occurred, which we have adapted within. We currently run a Cheeky Panda programme for children up to Year 2 – and also a Forest Church (outdoors) style of group for our key stage 2 children with a great group of leaders, who enjoy being with our children and sharing Jesus with them.

Creche Area - It is encouraging to see new families coming along to our 10:45am service with young children, along with the birth of some new babies within our congregation this year. The creche area has had a lot of use. We are just starting to improve it, offering some resources and play items that will help families to engage and foster faith through play amongst the very smallest of children. We aim to signpost our families in developing faith at home.

Kids Family Lunch - We continue to meet every other month to share food and fun together after Church; this is such a great way for families with children to get to know each other in an informal setting, spending time together and building relationships across families.

Family Time - Scripture Union have done research called Sticky Faith, showing faith grows and sticks best when done in an intergenerational setting. Family Time allows families (primarily of children age 0-11) to get to know each other, to recognise that every family is different, yet all God connected and to explore ways we can practically develop faith at home with our families. Faith at Home has been further championed by sending resources home for families to use. It is encouraging to hear that different packs we have sent home have become part of family life during different rhythms and seasons of the church calendar. This year we did a few Family Time's at Lordsgate School but decided to move back to the Church Hall as it offers a more practical space, being next door to the Church for new families and for families who may come into the Church building first, making it easier to pop across to join with us on the day.

321 Course/ Baptism Prep - We are asking families who would like their child to be baptised, to come onto our 321 Course, as a way of sharing what the Christian Faith is all about, and of making their baptism promises in the light of knowing what believing and following Jesus is about. The course is good; with the conversations during and afterwards often the best part of 321. Chatting about God, wrestling with life's challenges and supporting people as they navigate beliefs while providing a foundation for baptism families is working – allowing people the opportunity to consider the 'why' in faith and in supporting faith in the family.

Schools - This year we have supported our local schools through Collective Worship, Prayer Spaces, Seasonal Specials, Church Tours and offering our Church Buildings four times a year for School services for Lordsgate and St John's School primarily, although we have links and provide sessions with other schools too. There have also been times of supporting staff through difficult situations; this has been made possible through investing time, and building relationships, in schools. We are trialling a new monthly worshipping community at Lordsgate after school called The Lighthouse at Lordsgate. We have run two sessions, and while numbers are small, they do allow us to build relationships with each other. A recent one explored worry; unpacking what

to do when we face different types of worry. Some parents who came along later shared how the session challenged and helped them as well - it is encouraging to see how we can help both children and grown-ups in exploring faith at the same time.

Additional Stuff - There have been the usual and exciting range of events throughout the year, including Christingle, kid's leading services, significant all age services, such as Good Friday and our 2025 Summer Holiday Club: A Knight's Quest. These are all aimed at bringing our children and families closer to Jesus and in offering opportunities to explore faith as individuals, as a family at home, and also as a Church family. If you would like to find out more about anything kids or family related, please get in touch. I am so thankful to be part of a Church that loves and champions children, young people, families and schools.

Thanks for all your support. Love, Tracey x

Tracey Fitzsimmons

Children and Families Ministry Coordinator

○ YOUTH & YOUNG ADULTS MINISTRY

As always, a huge shout out to all the leaders who commit regularly to serving in what has been another busy year in the world of young people here at St Johns. Our youth leaders are a phenomenal group of people, who give time, love, money, energy... in bucket loads, to ensure that our young people have the best experience they can when they attend any of our groups. THANK YOU to all of you who help regularly or are just available to step in when needed. You are amazing examples of what it is to serve wholeheartedly.



So, what have we been up to?

Games n Grub continues to meet on a Tuesday and has now been using No 57 for some time. This is a really safe space for youngsters to drop in after school, have a bite to eat and let their hair down, while playing a range of different board games. Such a competitive space 😊

JCs continues to meet with two different groups on a Wednesday evening over in the church hall - Juniors (Y7-Y8) Seniors (Y9-11). These meetings cover all manner of things, from rounders tournaments, beach visits, roller skating, to thinking about the impact of drugs and alcohol, what we watch on TV, What the Bible says about creation.... Soooo many different themes and topics are explored in a fun and accessible way.

We have run **Alpha** in Burscough Priory Academy over the Autumn and Spring terms, which has been great. There have been some great conversations and discussions among the young people – some of faith and some of none, but all keen to explore what it means to be a Christian.

Youth Band had been running successfully until the end of summer when the young leaders, rightly, decided to step down. Unfortunately, with no one able to take on the leadership of this group we decided to pause it for now. We have been hugely blessed by this ministry and look forward to seeing our young people lead us in worship again at some point in the future.

Thursday evening sees our 14+ gather for their **house group**. It is a bible study, where we read and wrestle with what the bible is saying to us through its different books and genres. We aim to try and understand the context in which these books were written, the audience they are for.... It's been so encouraging to see the older guys leading the study too – they put us leaders to shame at times with their hunger to know more, their understanding and insightfulness.

Energize is the group we run for our younger teens (11-14). This has been on a Sunday evening but has more recently moved to a Sunday morning. Again, this is primarily a Bible study, where the focus is on learning about and understanding how the Bible relates to our daily lives; with food and fun thrown in for good measure!

Satellites Festival - In summer we took a group of young people down to Shepton Mallet for a 5-day conference under canvas. As always, the young people had an amazing time, building relationships, experiencing God's Spirit and learning about themselves and their faith.

Youth Weekends - More recently we took a group to the Whitehall Centre in Derbyshire. Again, so much fun was had by all – leaders included. Woven in among the activity we worshipped and learnt about our God being the same 'yesterday, today and forever'. It was fab to have our young people leading worship too.

Stand-alone courses that we have run though out the year include:

***Fusion** – the 'Off to University' preparation course run over a day.

***Young leaders' essentials course** – a 6-week course, aimed at those aged 16-18, looking at the character of Jesus and how as young leaders, they can try to adopt these in their leadership.

*We have also hosted and led the **Youthscape Youth Leaders Essentials Course** for all of our youth leaders who were able to attend, but also for other youth leaders or people with a heart for young people from across the Deanery. This has run for 10 months and seems to have been very well received by all in attendance.

A small group of us were involved in the Leading Your Church into Growth (**LyCIG**) – **Youth pilot**. This is now being extended country wide.

I also attended a **training course on incels and misogyny** which was particularly eye opening and disturbing in equal measure. The world in which our young people are living is amazing but also filled with some very worrying spaces too.

1:1's - I spend a lot of time meeting **with young people and leaders**, checking in with them, encouraging them, challenging them in their walk with Jesus and drinking coffee!! I also try to keep in touch with those who have moved on from St Johns so that they continue to know our love and prayers go with them, and that they are welcome to return here when back from university or visiting parents' back here in Burscough.

Baptisms and Confirmation - One of the best things this year has been seeing some of our young people take big steps in their faith journey and choosing to mark that by getting baptised or confirmed. Journeying with young people and chatting through their reasons for making this choice is always really humbling but joyous too.

As we approach **exam season**, we offer prayer and support for all our young people who wish to take it up. I have also been involved with schools and social services supporting children and families with TAF meetings.

Some things that I do in the background include keeping the **first aid courses** up to date, offering annual first aid training to ensure all our youth and children's groups have sufficient cover. Supporting Denise in her role as safeguarding lead, helping to ensure the Parish safeguarding dashboard is updated regularly, administering the DBS checks for our church and for Newburgh. The youth groups actually generate a lot of administration too – risk assessments, rotas, session plans....

Finally, there have unusually been **two visits to Uganda** this year – in June and February. These have not been specifically youth focused, though young people have attended both visits. We have also tried to involve applicants from other churches to help spread the news and work of International Needs. We look forward to continuing to support their work, though no trips are in the pipeline just at the moment.

Please continue to pray for all our young people and for those who we are yet to get to know. The Youth work here aims to provide safe spaces where young people in our community can receive love, care and support, but most importantly can be a stepping stone in them getting to know Jesus and build a long and lasting relationship with Him

Joanna Marshall

Youth and Young Adults Ministry Coordinator

○ **PASTORAL MINISTRY AND SOCIAL ACTION**

As a church, we are seeking first to be a place of encounter, with Jesus and with the Spirit of God at work among us. Out of that, something begins to take shape in our life together. Pastoral care is one of those expressions. It is, in many ways, the overflow of Christ's love being received and then shared. Much of it is unseen and unrecorded, but it is there all the time. People are being cared for through visits, phone calls, messages, lifts, meals, and simply taking time to listen. It isn't heavily structured, but it is real, relational and full of kindness.



Again and again, I hear of small acts of care that come at just the right moment. Someone reaches out or sits with another person when it matters most. Often it doesn't feel like much at the time, but it means far more than we realise. In those moments, something of the love of Christ is made visible among us. So, a genuine thank you to all of you who do this so naturally and faithfully.

It would really help me, in my role, to hear more of these stories. If you do visit someone, whether as part of a recognised visiting role or simply as a friend, do let me know with a quick email. It doesn't need to be anything detailed, just a simple note to say you've been in touch. It helps build a clearer picture of how people are being supported and where there may be gaps, so that no one is overlooked.

Home Communion and visits to care homes remain a deeply valued part of this. Being able to bring the bread and wine, pray and spend time with those who cannot easily get to church is always received with real warmth and appreciation. These are simple moments, but they carry real spiritual weight. Sometimes just showing up is the ministry and in that space, Christ meets people.

One of the quiet strengths behind all this is the Prayer Chain. We now have around a hundred people involved, which is wonderful. It's such a simple thing—receiving an email when a request comes through and taking time to pray—but it means that no one is left on their own in times of need. People are upheld in prayer quickly and faithfully, often at very short notice. It's one of those ministries where you may never see the outcome, but you can trust that God is at work as his people pray.

We would love more people to be part of this. It's probably one of the simplest ways to care for others yet, one of the most powerful. If you're not currently on the Prayer Chain and would like to be, just send me an email and I will gladly add you.

The Meals Ministry also continues quietly in the background. When someone is unwell, moving house, or going through a demanding time, a few meals provided by others can make a big difference. It's a very practical way of saying, "you're not on your own," and reflecting something of the generosity of Christ.

There is also room to grow in pastoral care. It is not something for a small group of people, but something we can all share in. Even occasional involvement can make a real difference. You don't have to have all the answers, just a willingness to care and to be present. If you would be open to being part of this, perhaps through visiting or being part of an informal pool of people who could be asked from time to time, please do

get in touch. Safeguarding checks and support would, of course, be part of this and we would make sure you feel comfortable in whatever you offer.

Alongside this core life of care, we have also had some encouraging times of gathering together. Our occasional film afternoons and evenings in the church building have been really enjoyable, with good numbers and a lovely, relaxed atmosphere each time. It's been good simply to be together.

We are also planning a coach trip in September, which we hope will once again provide an opportunity for shared enjoyment, conversation and time together. These moments of shared life matter more than we sometimes think.

The Memory Lane Café has been a much-loved part of our life together for a very small number of people. At the moment, we are taking a short pause as we think about how best to relaunch it in a fresh way. This may include using Number 57, as we continue to settle into that space and explore how it can best serve the life of the church. We are hopeful about what this might become in the months ahead.

Thank you again to everyone who plays a part in caring for others, often quietly and without recognition. It really does matter, more than we perhaps realise. These small acts of care are part of the bigger story of what God is doing among us.

If you would like to be involved in any way, I would love to hear from you.

Dave Emmett

Pastoral Ministry & Social Action Coordinator

○ OTHER MINISTRY GROUPS AND EVENTS FROM LAST YEAR

As you will know, St John's is a vibrant church that offers a wide range of worship, ministries, groups and events to help people connect with God, each other and our communities. Below is a list of just some of the things connected to our church, that happened over the last year (that haven't already been mentioned). If you would like more information about any of these ministries, please get in touch with us.



- 9am, 11am, 7pm, Tuesday and Crabtree Services
- 321 Course
- Advent and Lent Meditations and Bible Studies
- Asylum Seeker Support
- Baptism Preparation
- Bible Craft
- BSL Taster Sessions
- Burscough Outreach Trust
- Carols and Christmas Cheer Event
- Charity Cake Sales
- Christian Aid & MacMillan Coffee Mornings
- Comfort & Hope Christmas Service
- Commonwealth War Graves History Trail
- Community Coffee
- Community BBQ (7pm Service)
- Christmas and Easter Breakfasts
- Fairtrade
- Film Nights
- Firm Roots
- First Aid Training
- Graveyard Tidy
- Holiday at Home
- Hospitality Training
- Lunch Aid
- Marian's Morning (at St Mark's Scarisbrick)
- Marriage Preparation
- Men's Breakfast's/Socials
- Men's Weekend (with St Paul's Church)
- Men's Can't Cook, Will Cook
- New Wine Reset Women's Day
- Parcevall Hall Trips
- Prayer Connect
- Psalm 57 Project

- Reset – New Wine Women’s Day
- SJB Women – Let’s Get Together
- SJB Weekend Away (at Home)
- Small Groups
- Staff away at NW Leadership Conference
- Staff & PCC visit to Ladybridge Connect Manchester
- Surf Stage
- Time for Us
- Uganda Mission Trip
- Volunteer Thank you Night
- Volunteer Essential Refresher Training
- World Day of Prayer
- Wedding Preparation
- Worship and Prayer Nights

There are many more things happening quietly behind the scenes, and none of it would be possible without our amazing army of volunteers. We are so incredibly blessed to be a church full of servant hearts who represent the body of Christ so well and who use all the varied skills and talents he has given us, to reach out to our community in so many ways. It may not always be easy, but it is worth it. Thank you!

“Well done good and faithful servants, come and share in your master’s joy!” (Matthew 25:21)
“Keep shining God’s light in the darkness, for all to see and glorify his name!” (Matthew 5:14-16)

Jennie Short

On behalf of St John’s Staff Team

➤ VICAR’S REFLECTIONS



In 1674 Bishop Thomas Ken composed The Doxology, a short hymn of praise that begins with the words “Praise God from whom all blessings flow”. It invites us to offer praise to the one who is most praiseworthy and reminds us that every good and perfect gift comes from the Father of the heavenly lights (James 1:17). Whenever we gather to worship God, we have the joy of being reminded of His goodness and how this should shape how we live and love.

As Artemis II travelled to the far side of the moon and before it lost radio contact with NASA, pilot Victor Glover reminded the listening world of the greatest command, to love the Lord God with all our heart, mind, soul and strength. He also pointed out the second greatest command, is to love our neighbour as ourselves. The two commands are interconnected; the one flows from the other. In loving God, we must love our neighbour.

The five marks of mission of the Church of England begin with ‘Proclaim the good news of the kingdom’. This is what Jesus did at the very beginning of His earthly ministry, and so, as His followers we are to do likewise and proclaim it afresh to each generation. The message remains unchanged but with each generation comes new challenges and new opportunities for how we are to proclaim the good news of Jesus Christ.

In the past year we saw God open a new way for us to proclaim afresh this good news as the Psalm 57 Project took shape and we moved into number 57 Liverpool Rd North. It has been exciting and challenging in equal measure. We have been able to step out of the boat and respond to the call of Jesus to ‘Come!’

After over two decades of serving young people in the church and community, Joanna was successfully appointed into a new role as Community Engagement Lead, to help us navigate and shape the new mission initiative God has called us to embark on. We have seen God provide in generous and at times unexpected ways and have been reminded that our God is indeed faithful, and from him all blessings flow.

Now that we have inhabited this new space, the challenge is to steward well the resources God has given us, to impact the community in positive ways. In loving God and neighbour, it is our mission to help all people come to the source of blessing. Mission is not comfortable and requires us to think differently, hold things lightly and live generously towards one another and those who do not know the Father of Lights who has made us 'co heirs with Christ' (Romans 8:17).

Archbishop William Temple once reminded the church of its unique purpose stating that the church is 'the only society that exists for the benefit of those who are not its members'. Herein lies a challenge for the church not to get comfortable and to always be looking to those outside. Any goods that we enjoy and celebrate as we gather should serve in determining how we reach others and invite them to discover those very same goods. It has been exciting to run the 3-2-1 course which helps people discover life according to Jesus and as well as numerous infant baptisms, to baptise 8 adults and young people and welcome Bishop Geoff to Confirm 6 candidates from St Johns and 3 from St Marks.

We look to the year ahead with a new vision: 'Following Jesus and Making Him known'. To proclaim afresh to each generation the good news of Jesus who connects us to the source from whom all blessings flow. To remember that we exist for the benefit of those who don't yet know him. Jesus came for the sick, the abandoned and the lost. King David, when asking for God's help, was sent the distressed, the discontented those in debt. To follow Jesus faithfully is to do something that is impossible alone and without the power of the Holy Spirit. As we seek to follow the one from whom all blessings flow, we must stay close to the Lord, praying faithfully, serving sacrificially, giving generously and sharing boldly. As we move to a new church year, these ancient habits help keep our eyes upon Jesus the King, whom we are called to serve for our good and His glory!

Rev. Elliott Ireton
Vicar
