

St John's Vicar's report

We can record with thanksgiving, that God has richly blessed us again this year. We have seen a number of new families settle with us and some good new contacts have been made within the community.

Kate Bailey and Brian New have both made a significant difference to the life of St John's, as have their spouses John and Liz, and it's been a blessing to me to realise that there are two faithful servants that I can share the priestly ministry with. We are grateful too, to Chris Robertson who is giving some time each week to co-ordinating the children's work - and his input has been hugely beneficial.

Between us we go into Shelley, Arunside, and Farlington Junior and Senior Schools on a regular basis and we've been able to give increased input into the Broadbridge Heath Gala Association putting on a Santa run at Christmas, an Easter egg hunt, a quiz night and this year there'll be a summer fete.

A major cause of rejoicing is that the present Kinderoo leadership have asked to become a St John's activity which means a greater input of Biblically based stories, themes, music – the occasional event in the church and it opens the door for more opportunities for St John's families to have more of a role in it.

St John's camp was brilliant again with a star team that worked together very well to produce an imaginative and successful weekend – this year we have more challenges – but I know we'll rise to them.

I would like to highlight the sterling work the Pastoral Team do within the life and witness of St John's – you may not even know of the variety and scope of their work and the team of other pastoral workers with them - until you are a recipient – but it's there and is a great blessing to us. Safeguarding is part of that team's brief too and our safeguarding officer Vivien is always proactive in ensuring the various activities are properly managed from this perspective. She has also made significant headway with new Diocesan SQP material.

This report has some emotional strands for me. When I came in 2012, I had a clear expectation that I'd be able to continue until 2021 – but sadly underlying health issues are dictating otherwise. So, this is my last APCM and I want to thank the current leaders and helpers within St John's as well as recollecting past leaders, wardens, DCC members with whom we've learnt, prayed and wrestled together with our calling to the community over the years.

The Clergy team within the Horsham Parish under Guy's superb leadership have also been a real blessing and support to me over these past six years and I feel privileged to be in such a team that is quick to pray for each other and has a good record of envisioning the parish in its mission to lead people to Jesus.

My wife, Ann does so many things at St John's it is difficult to list them all, but she is a natural at seeking out needs and getting involved pastorally and musically at all sorts of levels and I know that as our time draws to a close she feels, as much as I do, the sadness of retiring earlier than planned and moving further away from the friendships that have been forged in these six years.