

St. Mary's Church Report

What is the role of the church in Bleasby today? This is the most important question for us, as members of the church and village community, to consider. No longer do we have the luxury of knowing that all the pews will be filled every Sunday, so that the gospel message we are charged with sending out is spread quickly and effectively. Priorities within the population have changed, but the importance of the message hasn't. So the obvious answer is to work outside the church walls as well as within them. Now that we are one of the 7 churches within the Benefice of West Trent, with one Vicar, the Revd Phil, the task can be shared, and as an additional bonus, there are more services available for us to attend each week within the Benefice. However, it is worth noting that if within the next 15 years the pool of those who support the church financially dries up, we will be in serious difficulties. As the average age of donors is 76, this is not a fanciful notion.

During the past year we worked to maintain and improve the growth of involvement within the community. Led and encouraged by the Revd Phil, the Christian ethos of our Church of England Primary school has been deepened, and there is now an after-school club every month led by a Reader and a youth worker from Holy Trinity, Southwell. The Mothering Sunday Service is also growing under the guidance of the Reader. All the classes visit the church during the school year to learn an aspect of the Religious Education Curriculum appropriate to their age, such as Christian Buildings, Signs and Symbols, and Weddings. Revd Phil leads a termly act of worship in church at the end of each term.

The Bleasby News is an extremely important means of communication within the village, and the editorial team has always had strong connections with the church. Members of the Parochial Church Council have been involved with the preparation of the Parish Plan, and we joined with the Parish Council in the Christmas event with carols in the church before the switch-on of the Christmas tree lights. We are heavily involved with the organisation of the Open Gardens event, and are always willing to be involved with events where we could play a useful part. The popular monthly coffee mornings are run jointly by the WI, the Village Hall and the church, and we continue to keep in touch with those people in the parish we identify as lonely, house bound, sick or in need of support of various kinds, including the residents at Hazelford. Sadly there were no weddings or Baptisms last year, but you are all welcome to come to a live screening of the Royal Wedding in the church on May 19th.

This report is just a brief extract from the church's Annual Report, a copy of which can be found on the website of the Benefice of West Trent.