



ANNUAL REPORT 2007-08

FOREWORD

Paul writes in 1 Corinthians 15:10 "His grace to me was not without effect. No, I worked harder than all of them - yet not I, but the grace of God that was with me."

The evidence that God's grace is operating in a church is that people work with effect. This Annual Report is evidence of God's grace operating in our midst. The variety and vibrancy of these ministries is so encouraging. We are very blessed with all that goes on, even though the busier we get the more problems we create on space, facilities and providing leaders. Friends, God is at work; you are at work; we need his grace. He gives more grace to the humble. Be encouraged.

Jonathan

CHURCHWARDEN'S REPORTS

Judith Shore:

It is amazing to see, week by week, new people coming to join us at our Sunday services and, in particular, to welcome so many new families. From a pastoral point of view it is great to be able to welcome newcomers, include them in our activities and help them to feel part of our church family. However, we have found that it has become increasingly difficult to keep our pastoral link scheme updated. The future organisation of pastoral care may well have to develop in new directions in order to cope with this growth. What a wonderful problem to have!

The recent increased numbers attending both BLT and CAMEO has been incredible, bringing many non-churchgoers into the Centre and giving us the opportunity to serve the local community where there is so obviously a need.

Our Church House Party at Hothorpe Hall in February was a great success and a total of 80 adults and 28 children joined in the fun. Anthony Delaney was an inspiring and entertaining speaker and, as always, such a weekend gave us all a wonderful opportunity to relax, enjoy good food and get to know each other better.

As I step down from being Churchwarden I would like to thank the many people who have supported me over my five years, in particular my stalwart friend and confidant, Catherine Rowland, who has supported me at every turn. I have felt truly blessed to have been given the opportunity to serve the church in this way.

David Barnardo:

My responsibility is to see that our buildings and resources are well-maintained and optimal use is made of them.

In the mid-part of last year buckets on the floor in St Andrew's signified an acute problem with the roof! Some tiles were replaced and emergency repairs carried out but the quinquennial inspection of the two churches confirmed that

we have on-going problems with the roof of St Andrew's that will require a very major (and costly) overhaul sometime in the next decade. I am most grateful to Ray Pearson for his assistance as we evaluate this, and a number of other points that our architect has drawn to our attention.

The concourse has been tidied up and better use is being made of the space that it provides. Storage areas (there's never enough of them) have been improved and we have begun to think about creating within the Centre loft a purpose-designed facility for use by our Youth Group and the Children's / Youth leaders.

The fire exits and fire-evacuation procedures have further been upgraded to meet the latest requirements. Shortly, one Sunday morning, we will be having that fire-evacuation drill that my predecessor, Ian Ross, promised!

The car park area has been tidied up and I thank those who assisted, and those who will maintain the external appearances during the summer months.

St Bartholomew's and its surroundings look as lovely as ever. Elsewhere, Chris Wakeman will be referring to continuing efforts to make good use of the former Verger's Cottage. Finally, I remain most grateful to the long list of church members who make my life that much easier by contributing their practical skills and time to the task of keeping everything running smoothly.

CHURCH CENTRE USE

The Church Centre has continued to thrive as a meeting place for church and local community groups, health service organisations, Gloucester Diocese, private individuals and much more! Church use has grown extensively with new groups starting eg the Women's Fellowship and Babies, Lunch & Toddlers - the Centre is an exciting and busy place to be on most days of the week. Our aim is always to provide a warm welcome and an efficient and helpful service to all our visitors. Much progress has been made during the last few months on streamlining the concourse area to facilitate the

free flow of people at busy times and to improve the display of information about our church activities - an excellent way to reach out to all who come through our doors. We are blessed with such a wonderful facility let us continue to do all we can to look after it.

Pat Cook

ST BARTHOLOMEW'S RESTORATION PROJECT

Repairs to the church

The survey of defects, 12 months after completion of the repairs contract, was carried out in December 2007. This revealed a number of minor issues which will need to be completed by the contractor before final payment is made. This will be completed over the next few months when weather conditions allow.

When the final payments have been agreed and the outstanding English Heritage grants obtained it will be possible to decide on the extent of any further work such as improved inside lighting and public address/hearing loop.

The quinquennial survey at St Bartholomew's concentrated on the tower since this had not been a major item for the restoration project. A number of relatively minor items have been itemised which will need to be addressed over the next few years.

A fire safety risk assessment has been carried out and the findings are being implemented.

Verger's Cottage

After a great deal of consideration and investigation it is now considered that residential use of the cottage may not be appropriate.

A small group has been established to look into opportunities for use of the facility by sections drawn from St Andrew's and St Bartholomew's. The remit includes the group exploring the possibility of other parties who have an interest in the hill and surrounding area sharing in the use. It is hoped that this might

appeal to grant-making bodies in supporting the appropriate level of refurbishment. The group would very much appreciate receiving views and ideas from any members within or outside the church family.

Chris Wakeman

THE PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL

The PCC consists of the parish clergy, twelve elected lay members and others who are ex officio, for example the Church Wardens, or who are co-opted for some particular purpose. Its duties are outlined in more detail in the Annual Report but it is a body which, after consultation and discussion, can make decisions on matters affecting the parish. During the past year it has met on eight occasions and discussed a range of matters. Perhaps its most important achievement has been the adoption of the Parish Vision. This was produced by the Church Management Committee based on proposals arising from Focus groups of Church members. It was discussed by the PCC on several occasions and eventually approved at the meeting on January 14th. An issue which has taken up a great deal meeting time and is not yet resolved is that of the future use of the Verger's cottage at St Bartholomew's which is dealt with in more detail elsewhere. Among other matters the PCC has arranged for the preparation of a new Church Directory, provided for repairs to Church property, agreed to support the mission for Innsworth with financial help if necessary, supported the search for a new choir leader, received and approved the environmental audit recording its intention to address all the issues raised in it and authorised and approved a number of policies for example the child protection policy as it is obliged by law to do. It has also received reports from the members who attend the Deanery Synod. Finally at its most recent meeting the PCC approved the Annual Report and Financial Statements prepared by the Treasurer.

Enid Castle

Secretary to the PCC

DEANERY SYNOD REPORT

Gloucester North Deanery Synod has met three times during the year plus a social at Hartpury.

The Mission Action Plan (MAP) project continues to dominate business but it is showing signs of success particularly with the spread of Open the Book and other activities, some of which we have assisted with. The deanery now has a website which is accessible from our own.

Experience Easter was regarded as a success and members shared their experiences.

Finance and the Parish Share came under discussion with a presentation by the Diocesan Financial Director. Our deanery is generally doing better than many in its giving but fresh ideas are being considered to help matters including a possible central direct debit scheme for planned giving that churches can take advantage of.

Reports on the repeated flooding of some parts were given.

The bishop has produced a DVD setting out his vision for the diocese that it is hoped congregations will be enabled to view.

A discussion paper on the future structure of deaneries was considered. The Bishop's Council consider it desirable to have fewer larger deaneries and to revise the role of area (or rural) dean to ensure better management. Various suggestions of how this might be achieved in our area were discussed but no final decisions reached.

Robert Cook

THE CHOIR.

The main aim of the choir is to assist the clergy to lead traditional worship through singing and participation at St Andrew's and St Bartholomew's.

The choir currently has 15 adult members and one junior. During the year the choir attended 89 services, 50 choir practices, 12 weddings, 9 funerals and 4 events at other churches.

Our most notable achievement in 2007 was that we kept going as a choir! And our plan for 2008 is to keep functioning and to see the appointment of a choir director.

Bernard Henshaw

MUSIC GROUP

The music group leads sung worship at the 10:30am Sunday services and Fuel services, and helps provide music at a number of other events (e.g. weddings, first priority, women's breakfast). We currently have 22 members and are joined once a month by another 10-15 musicians for the all-age services.

This year has seen the addition of more musicians. We have extended our repertoire, running music workshops to develop our skills and learn new songs, some of which have been brought back from New Wine by members of our congregation. Last April we led the music at the Scouts' Centenary service at Gloucester cathedral, and will be doing so for St George's day service again this year.

In the coming year, we hope to increase youth involvement. The introduction of more Fuel services and the extension of prayer ministry will provide new challenges for the music group. We are excited to be involved in these and other activities at this time of church growth.

Alex Anderson

SUNDAY'S KOOL

- Aims of the group

To provide appropriate worship, education and nurture for children.

To enable children to use their gifts in service to the church community.

To consult children about matters of concern to them

- Numbers attending

47 regularly, plus crèche

- Achievements in 2007

A fourth group, Shining Stars, started in September
Creche moved to more appropriate accommodation in the lounge

- Plans for 2008

Continue to look for leaders and helpers for the groups - we never have too many!

2009 is the Year of the Child and I hope to get a group of "our" children involved in planning and participating in a Diocesan Festival to celebrate children.

Alison Summerskill

OPEN THE BOOK

- Aims of the group

To support schools in Collective Worship.

To tell the Christian story to children during their primary school years.

To encourage ecumenical lay participation in schools.

- Numbers attending

The project continues in six primary schools in Churchdown and Innsworth. This is our sixth year of running it.

- Achievements in 2007

Storytellers have left the scheme for other commitments but teams have been able to find others to replace them.

There are currently 10 adults from St Andrew's in OTB teams.

- Plans for 2008

To continue to support the project, which is gradually being, rolled out nationally

To continue to train new storytellers

I am exploring possibility of starting Open the Book at St Mary's and working with Our Lady's RC church, but as yet that's all it is - exploration.

Alison Summerskill

YOUTHWORK

In response to the focus groups and vision planning of the church, our team spent time over the last year prayerfully considering our direction and the changes that would need to be made to achieve our goals. I am excited to share with you our vision for the youthwork of our churches, in relation to the wider church's vision.

1. Provide for all a maturing relationship with God

- § Effective training of 14-18 year olds as young leaders, and opportunities for them to use their gifts in a significant way.
- § A team of leaders who are supported, encouraged and well-trained for their role.
- § A structured, age-appropriate teaching programme, which is both varied and engaging.

2. Create an effective worshipping community

- § *Encounter project*

3. Care for all in the church family

- § Active participation of young people in programme and activity planning for their respective groups
- § A core group of young people who use their gifts to benefit the wider church, also engaging in mission and social action.

4. Reach out to all in the parish and beyond

- § Equip young people to engage in peer evangelism.

5. Be good stewards of the resources God has provided

- § *Finance committee*

We are already making steps to achieve these goals, including the division of our START and Youthie groups into two, more focussed, age-specific groups. START now runs for 11-14 year olds, and Youthie for 14-18 year olds. This allows us to run a more structured, varied and engaging programme.

Events

The Alton Towers camping trip (Easter 2007) was very successful. It was attended by 16 young people, and

encouraged stronger friendships between young people of both Churches. Unfortunately the residential event at Kinver for 11-14s had to be cancelled due to lack of numbers.

This academic year, so far, we have shared an exciting time exploring worship at the Encounter conference, leading to more frequent Encounter services. On Easter Eve around twenty young people gathered for our all night vigil, exploring the story of Easter from creation to the resurrection, concluding with the dreaded walk up Chosen Hill for the Dawn Celebration.

We have also just returned from our ID Conference. This was a five day residential in Dorset for 14-18 year olds. Each day we shared in teaching and worship, discovering more about who we are, who God is and how we relate to other people. We also had a day out at Weymouth which was enjoyed by all.

What Next?

In the summer we will be accompanying a small group of young people to Soul Survivor; a youth festival which runs immediately after New Wine. We also plan to have an on site residential event for 11-14s at the end of August.

I pray that you will share in our excitement and anticipation of everything that God will do in and through our young people in the coming year.

Rachel North

Youth Leader

CAMEO

The aim of CAMEO (Come and Meet Each Other) is reflected in its name: to provide opportunities for the older members of the community to enjoy each other's company. We meet monthly, except in August when the CAMEO team runs Holiday at Home with six or seven activities over three weeks.

Over 110 members have attended during the last 12 months. About a third attend this church, a third worship at other churches in the village and a third are not church-goers.

The meetings vary; we always have food. In addition we have enjoyed speakers on wide-ranging subjects, entertainment from the START youths, armchair aerobics, trips to the theatre, to Prinknash Abbey and to gardens, a memorable barbeque on a rainy August day, Christmas lunch etc.

The programme for the next year is being put together. For example, we look forward to a light hearted talk with a serious message from the Police on doorstep crime and rogue traders. The CAMEO team receive many messages of appreciation. I personally would like to help all those who have contributed to its success, whether cooking, serving, offering lifts, speaking to us or offering their gardens for visits.

Jane Whittaker

CONNECT GROUPS

Connect Groups are small groups meeting in people's homes for Bible study, prayer, fellowship and support. They are a vital way for people to make friends, receive pastoral care and grow in their faith. There are currently nine Connect groups meeting. In the last year two groups ceased to meet, and three new groups started up (including a Post-Alpha group). Numbers attending Connect groups over the last year have remained steady at around 100 people. In the coming year we hope to recruit new leaders to start up 1-2 new groups, and to encourage more church members to join a group. Please see the new Connect Group display on the notice boards for details of current groups, or email rob.crofton@tiscali.co.uk if you are interested in joining one.

Rob Crofton

FILM CONNECT

The aim of this group is to help make film, faith and the big issues of life connect. It is to help Christians relate their faith to the stories and messages of popular films and find points of contact for conversation and faith-sharing among their friends - both Christian and non-Christian.

We have between 12 and 15 members attending regularly. Significant achievements in 2007 were going 'on the road' for 'Films for Lent' arranged by Gloucester diocese; introducing new members to the group and having a member of the group lead.

In 2008 we hope to have a group open to all; to introduce more not-yet-Christian members to the group; to have others lead the group on films of their choice, to go to the cinema as a group, to have the group meet in public - say in a coffee bar - to discuss; to publicise the group outside the St Andrews base eg local paper, library.

Stan & Sue Rothwell

CHRISTIAN MEDITATION GROUP

This group was started as a small informal group of people interested in exploring meditation and early Christian spirituality. Interest grew and currently 10 people from St. Andrews and St. Johns Churches are involved.

We meet in each others homes for 1.5 hrs fortnightly, from September - July and members of the group take it in turns to lead. Led meditation, use of creative tools (drawing, collage etc), prayer walks and self-exploration exercises have all been explored.

We would love others to join us on a Friday afternoon!

Sheila Appleton

MOTHER'S UNION

The Mother's Union **vision** is of a world where God's love is shown through loving, respectful, and flourishing relationships.

The **aim** is to demonstrate the Christian faith in action by the transformation of communities worldwide through the nurture of the family in its many forms.

To achieve this vision the **mission** is:

- To promote and support married life

- To encourage parents in their role to develop the faith of their children
- To maintain a worldwide fellowship of Christians united in prayer, worship and service
- To promote conditions in society favourable to stable family life and the protection of children
- To help those whose family life has met with adversity

Mother's Union has 48 members, with several ready for enrolment and welcoming. The afternoon meetings average nine and the evening meetings average 20-25.

Throughout, we play a strong supportive role in many areas of church family life - helping Sunday school groups, crèche, baptisms and home communion. We use many multi-talented skills when helping with funeral teas, wedding receptions, alpha suppers, cleaning, babysitting, refreshments and raising money for many worldwide projects and at home, such as "Away From It All" holidays.

2008 is about putting our faith into action in the most effective way with this year's theme being "Time for Relationship".

Louise Fazeli
Branch Secretary

WOMEN'S BREAKFAST.

We are continuing to be delighted with these events which are proving to be a real help to so many. The aim is to provide stimulating and faith-building events, as well as giving the women a small treat of a lovely breakfast. We have had very moving talks from speakers, including Paulette Maxted, Susie Perkin, Christine Perkin, and Anne LePage. The numbers have been very encouraging from 80-100 per breakfast. The breakfasts will continue in 08/09, but we are also thrilled to have Mary Pytches, the wife of the founder of New Wine, who is coming to lead a Women's Day on 27th September. More details later.

Susie Perkin

FRIDAY MORNING WOMEN'S GROUP

We are a group of women (6 - 10) who meet every Friday morning (10.15 - 11.30) for Bible study and prayer in the Quiet Room at St Andrew's. Most (but not all) of us have small children, who are looked after in a crèche in the small hall. In the past year we have done studies on Advent and Lent themes, but have also reflected on Jesus' parables and the lives of women in the Bible. We hope to continue meeting this year and would welcome any women to join us. We would love to hear from anyone who would be able to help with the crèche occasionally.

Petra Crofton

MEN'S BREAKFAST & EVENTS

The regular monthly Men's Breakfasts have gone from strength to strength. A wide variety of excellent evangelical speakers are provided through "Christian Vision for Men" at full English breakfasts (average attendance 35) and members of the church lead the more informal coffee and croissant breakfasts with a time for prayer (average attendance 26) on alternate months. In addition, the men organised a most successful Valentines Dance and attended CVM weekends and Leadership Training Days.

Gordon Goodman

THE MARRIAGE COURSE.

This course is aimed at helping marriages to become stronger. Before we drive a car, we take lessons; before playing the piano, we take lessons. If we take lessons for relatively trivial things why not take lessons for the most important relationship we will ever have on earth? The course is DVD based and only requires the couples to talk to each other. There is no group discussion. Last year we started the course in the Parish with 15 couples, ranging from those married for only a few years to one couple who had been together for over 45 years. We cannot overemphasise the benefits of doing this course which would be suitable for any couple regardless of levels of faith. The course begins this year on May 1st.

Jonathan Perkin

FIRST PRIORITY.

Prayer is the vital activity of any church if it wants to become strong and healthy. Corporate prayer is important as it both encourages faith and unites the members together in a common aim. Getting people to attend a prayer meeting is challenging in any parish, as sadly it is seen as 100th priority not first priority. Best wisdom says that if one can attract 10% of the congregation then one is doing well. We seem to hover around 20 per meeting, which is marginally less than the benchmark. We continue to meet on the second Wednesday of every month, 7.30-8.30pm sharp. Those that have come have found them to be very encouraging. I recommend you reprioritise your diaries.

Jonathan Perkin

PRAYER MINISTRY

We continue to offer prayer ministry at the 9am, 10.30 am and Fuel services. At most services this happens in the north porch which is set up to provide a confidential private space for prayer.

In 2007-08 we have expanded the role of prayer ministry and the number of prayer ministers. We now have about 45 prayer ministers and have developed two teams that offer extended prayer ministry at the 10.30 service on the 3rd and 4th Sunday of the month. This happens at the front of the church towards the end of the service and increasing numbers of people are now coming for prayer ministry.

The teams meet once a month prior to the service and pray for the service and offer prayer ministry to each other.

In 2008 we plan to continue with this development.

Derek & Sue Conaty

MORNING PRAYERS

Each weekday morning at 9 o'clock a nucleus of people meet together in the Quiet Room to start the working day with prayer. Usually the half-hour service follows the Common

Worship Daily Prayer morning service, including a psalm, and two or more readings from the Bible, followed by prayers for the worldwide and local Church, the community in Churchdown (on a monthly rota of streets), and for individual people whom we know need our prayers. Between two and a dozen people come - on Wednesdays the staff all attend, and on Thursdays clergy from the other churches join us. Numbers can be thin on Mondays, Tuesdays and Fridays and it would be good if more people could come on those days - perhaps adopting one day a week as their day to attend, as some people do already. During Lent and Advent in 2007 we used the diocesan "Praying Together" booklets, and on Wednesday mornings held prayers in St Bartholomew's. We welcome requests for prayer, which should be put in the **Prayer Requests** pocket in the concourse, or given in to the Office or one of the clergy - they will be prayed for for about a month, and a further request should then be put in.

Sarah James

SPIRITUAL GIFTS.

What are you good at? What do you think your special gift is? What fires you up in life? What has God asked you to do for the Body of Christ? These are the right questions to ask, but not that easy to answer. The Spiritual Gifts Course seeks to give you tools to answer those questions. Attendees have often come away encouraged and affirmed in what they sense God is doing in their lives. This is a 'must do' course which we hope to put on again this summer. It involves a one-off session of about 3-4 hours using a manual. It is very simple and user friendly. Watch this space.

Jonathan Perkin

ALPHA 2007- 08

We aimed to run an Alpha course in Autumn 2007, with the subsidiary aim of setting up a 'Post Alpha Connect Group'. The course was run in the Autumn and 43 people signed up to it. The course was a blessing to our guests. One said ' I went from a part time to a full time Christian, and developed my relationship with God, and met some lovely people'.

Many were changed, especially the leaders, several of whom had their faith renewed. A post Alpha Course is now being run at Derek and Sue Conaty's and this is proving a success.

Our thanks to Susie Perkin and her catering team, and to Sue Goodman and her task force team.

We plan to run a 'Faith Sharing Course' in June 2008, a major Pre-Alpha event in September and the Autumn Alpha Course starting on 2nd October. Please do sign up for the course and bring your friends. Alpha is for everyone, young and old.

Mike Browne

POETRY TEA

On a Wednesday afternoon in alternate months, between 15 and 25 people meet to share and enjoy poetry. A theme is chosen in advance and people bring poems they have found, and either read them themselves or pass them to somebody else to read; other people come just to listen. In the middle of the two hour gathering a delicious old-fashioned tea is served. In 2007 we were especially grateful to Audrey Newby and Reg Hammond who made and served most of the scones and cakes.

Subjects chosen last year included "Old Age", "Hymns as Poetry" and "Love", but in three years we have heard a wide variety of poems on each of the four seasons, "All Creatures Great and Small", "Christmas" and "New Year", "Lent and Easter", and "Mountains and Hills". The next Tea will be on Wednesday 14th May at 3pm in the Church Lounge when we shall share poems on "Colours of Day - or Night", and we expect to have our last Tea (for the present anyway) in July. All are welcome.

Sarah James

BLT - BABIES, LUNCH & TODDLERS

The aim of the group is to reach out to families in Churchdown by making friendships with the mums, serving the mums lunch to give them a break and to give babies & toddlers free play. We are offering this service as a witness.

At the end of the summer term 2007 there were roughly 12 mums and we used to meet in the lounge with babies only. In September 2007 we moved to the big hall as the babies had grown into toddlers and we didn't want to send these regular mums away, We now have over 40 mums with babies & toddlers.

Achievements in 2007/early 2008 - There has been a huge rise in numbers which has made more families aware of life at St. Andrews. In the last month at least 4 new mums have started to come to Church on a Sunday, with their families. We always say a prayer/grace before lunch, which has become a natural part of BLT and have started to pray for specific things, such as an ill child.

We have special events, such as the Christmas party with a full roast & Santa, Easter trip to Dick Whittington Farm Park.

Plans for 2008 - We want to continue doing what we are doing but need more helpers on a regular basis. We want to open up more links to other aspects of Church life, for example the Alpha Course, Marriage/parenting courses, women's breakfasts, evangelistic events etc...

Vicky Phillips

STACS (St Andrew's Coffee Shop)

On Thursday mornings St Andrew's coffee shop continues to have a regular attendance of between 40 and 70 people. We welcome all ages and offer a wide variety of drinks and homemade cakes and cookies at a reasonable cost. As well as meeting friends and enjoying tasty food there is also the opportunity to purchase fairly traded food and gifts from the Traidcraft stall. New people are always welcome to join the STACS team of volunteers who run this non profit making venture. Each year we have been able to give away about £1,000 and in 2007 we gave £500 to Headway and £500 to The James Hopkins Trust.

Judith Shore

PARENTING GROUPS

Bringing up children is fun and rewarding but it isn't always easy. The challenges of parenthood are many, from dealing with a fretful baby to counselling a confused and unhappy teenager. Mothers' Union parenting groups provide an opportunity for parents to get together in a supportive environment and talk about the joys and challenges of bringing up their children. It is great to share stories - whether they are happy ones or traumatic ones and the hugely comforting outcome is to realise that you are not alone! We do not profess to have all the answers. What we can do is look at ways of communicating more effectively, building confidence, problem solving, defending boundaries and active listening.

Judith Shore

BAPTISM PREPARATION

Requesting baptism for a baby or child is an important entry-point to the Church for many young families in the community. The clergy offer a home visit and the families are encouraged to start attending Sunday worship. The parents are then required to attend a baptism preparation evening at the Church, where the Christian faith commitments made in the baptism service are clearly explained. One of the ways we can help these new families to follow through on their baptismal promises is to welcome and befriend them. In the coming year we hope to develop an informal 'link' scheme whereby each new baptism family would be 'adopted' by a regular Church member or family, who can look out for them and support them. In the last year we conducted 13 baptisms, and the advent of BLT is now proving a fruitful source of baptism requests.

Rob Crofton

CONFIRMATION PREPARATION

Confirmation is for those who wish to make a public 'confirmation' of their commitment to Jesus Christ. It is especially appropriate for those who have recently come to

faith as adults, or for those who were baptised as infants but have never publicly made a Christian faith commitment for themselves. Candidates follow a five-session preparation course leading up to the Confirmation service, where they will receive God's 'confirmation' of his Spirit in their lives through the laying on of the Bishop's hands. Last year (2007) 4 adults from St. Andrew's were confirmed, and this year (2008) six adults and six young people are preparing to be confirmed on Pentecost Sunday, 11th May . The confirmation service and preparation is done jointly with the Methodist Church and St. John's Church.

Rob Crofton

MARRIAGE PREPARATION

In 2007 the clergy conducted 18 weddings at St. Andrew's and St. Bartholomew's. All the wedding couples attend a wedding morning at St. Andrew's, covering all the practical aspects of the wedding day. In addition, they were invited to attend a DVD-based marriage preparation course, abridged to fit onto one Saturday morning, as well as an individual interview with the minister conducting their wedding. The course allows couples to take time out to focus on their relationship, and covers very practical matters such as commitment, communication and resolving conflict. The DVD course proved very popular, so we extended it in 2008, offering all five sessions of the course on five Saturday mornings. In 2009 we plan to offer the whole course again, with more choice of dates for participants.

Rob Crofton

A & B VILLAGE CARE

A willing, faithful and dedicated group of about six active car drivers have continued to offer lifts (mostly to hospital and doctor's appointments) to members of the local churches and community of Churchdown and Innsworth. Donations towards the cost of these is a private arrangement with the drivers who each have various charities which they support. Eighty lifts have been given during the last year which means about

six or seven calls per month to the Church Office which acts as the control point

Pat Cook

RIPPLES

Ripples began with the support of both St Andrew's church and the Methodist Church and will be 7 years old at the end of May this year. Our aim is to recycle and sell good quality goods, proceeds helping charities and projects locally nationally and worldwide. We offer a friendly face and a listening ear. many customers have become good friends of Ripples and often pop in for a chat. We have approximately 100-150 customers visit every week.

In 2007 Ripples has generated several thousand pounds and recently, supplied clothes, goods and toys to an orphanage in Vietnam and another in Devon. Also a playbus project in Sri Lanka and a village in Brazil are all ongoing.

Our plans for 2008 are to continue the same success we have had since May 2001.

We would like to give our grateful thanks to the volunteers, without whom Ripples would not operate. The majority of volunteers are aged 70plus (which includes Alan and myself) and some are 80 plus, without new, younger volunteers coming forward, Ripples will be struggling to keep going in the near future, not through lack of customers but volunteers.

Jill Flower

TRAI DCRAFT

Established in 1979 as a Christian response to poverty with a vision of a world freed from the scandal of poverty, where trade is just and people and communities can flourish. Traidcraft combines a trading company with a development charity called Traidcraft Exchange which is the UK's only development charity specialising in making trade work for the poor.

The Traidcraft stall in St Andrews has been running since September 2003. This year we have an operating profit in

excess of £1000 which shall be forwarded to Traidcraft Exchange.

We continue to supply and support local churches that run Traidcraft on a smaller scale but are unable to keep their own stock. St Andrews stall is run by a wonderful team of dedicated volunteers but we shall be losing some helpers and are looking to recruit at least 8 more to lighten the load for those currently involved.

Alice Oakes

ST ANDREW'S & ST BARTHOLOMEW'S FLOWER GUILD

We are a group of approx. 14 flower arrangers who regularly make sure that there is a fresh pedestal arrangement next to the Altar at both Churches.(with the exception of Lent and Advent).

When we have a festival, wedding or other celebration we can be called upon to enhance both Churches.

We take an active part in the Marriage Preparation morning (usually in January each year) and speak to the couples who wish to take advantage of our skills.

When called upon we demonstrate at Mothers' Union and CAMEO meetings (and anyone else who wants us to).

What will 2008 bring? We have no definite plans as yet - but hope to arrange "an evening of floral art" and perhaps a couple of Saturday workshops for any age.

Watch this space!

Sue Howell