

As you are aware, we established the role of pastoral administrator a number of years ago, when we understood we would no longer have a resident parish priest. Deacon Philip took on this role to ensure we were fully supported as we transitioned to this new reality. Deacon Philip expressed a wish to focus on his deaconate role and we are delighted that Suzanne Yates agreed to take up this role. As you know, all that goes on in the parish is not by accident and this role is vital to the smooth running and co-ordination of the many activities that we are privileged to support.

As a parish council we have been focused on working through the various changes and this has demanded a singular focus on our parish with the resources available to us across the themes of community, formation and resources. To bring a more outward balance to our work, we are proposing to focus on one charity for each year (to change annually). This will be in addition to the charities we currently support.

As we look forward to completing our Year of Prayer and Vocation, let us pray that our parish will be blessed with vibrancy and support all the people of the parish.

## Community

### The SVP

2017 was a busy year for the SVP. We grew in numbers with new members and undertook over 1,500 visits to people in homes or at home. We provided transport and shopping. As always the support from the parish was phenomenal – over £1,000 raised to support the famine appeal in Sudan, 1,400 items for the giving tree in Advent and £1,500 in the annual appeal. Thank you.

### Charismatic Prayer Group

We meet on the first and third Wednesday each month. We share a time of worship, praise and prayer. For part of this year, we were greatly blessed with having Fr. Nathaniel join us throughout the time he was with our parish. He truly inspired us and challenged us to reach out and invite more people to join us. After Mass on every first Sunday of the month, we offer to pray with people and we have had the privilege to see the Lord blessing those we pray with.

### Mothers' Prayers

A Mothers' Prayers group has been meeting in our parish for sixteen years to pray for our children, families and friends. The Lord has blessed us richly by answering many of our prayers. We have seen some of our children come back to church, pass exams, find work, find accommodation and make good friendships and relationships.

### Macmillan Coffee Morning

There was yet another very successful Macmillan Coffee Morning on 29 September. It raised £555.62 in all but equally important was the lively social gathering of parishioners and friends. The Canon Denis room was packed. Thank you all the bakers and those who donated raffle prizes as well as all who attended. We can't do it without you.

### Sewing Group

The Sewing Group had dropped to five regular members prior to Christmas due to illness. With all the changes going on in the parish we decided to take a break until Easter. This was fortuitous as the weather was

bad. We started again after Easter. We are a happy ecumenical group of 10 to 12 regular attenders. We meet on the second and fourth Mondays each month to knit, sew or have a chat and a cup of tea. New members are always welcome.

### Activities

In 2017 we had two men's breakfast meetings and an afternoon tea for the ladies. Deacon Philip spoke of his pilgrimage at these events.

We organised a coach to go to the diocesan pilgrimage to Walsingham for the first time in many years, and we had about twenty pilgrims.

In September we said farewell to Fr. Bennie at our first summer brunch.

We organised a visit to the Intelligence Corp Museum in Chicksands to which eighteen parishioners attended. On the Night of Light, eight children celebrated Jesus being THE light of the world as the world celebrated witches and ghosts. One child's comment summed it up, 'I'm glad I came here; Jesus is much more fun and ... nice'. Faith was celebrated with fun food and friendship.

### Welcomers

With the changes to Sunday Mass times we needed to look at the role of our welcomers so at the end of 2017 we had an appeal for welcomers and now have a rota for Sundays. If you would like to help, please see Suzanne Yates or Deacon Philip.

### Book Club

In 2017 we discussed three books, *The Fisherman*, *A Nun's Story* and *Impressions of Jesus*. These were well received and lively discussions were had. We thank Ros Penn for organising and hosting these.

### Weddings and Funerals

In 2017 we had five wedding and nine funerals

### Housebound Holy Communion

Fourteen people received Holy Communion at home regularly, as they were unable to get to church. Other people received during a short illness or time of recovery. The taking of Holy Communion was undertaken by nine of the parish's special ministers; visits were approximately every three weeks or according to need.

### Churches Together Amptill and Flitwick (CTAF)

CTA&F has had another good year and was involved in so many community events together. It is so important to meet and pray and build these bridges. The successful Lenten Prayer Space event encouraged us to visit our different churches, reflect and grow in faith. We look forward to another year and we are thinking about how we can deepen our sharing experience whilst retaining our individual identities, how we can live out in our community what Pope Francis calls 'reconciled diversity'. Please pray for this work.

## Formation

### Sacramental Programmes 2017

#### Baptisms

We welcomed fifteen new members to the parish through the Rite of Baptism during 2017. The parents of these infants joined one of the five baptisms preparation courses held throughout the year.

The course explored the role of the Church and the

parents in developing their child's faith life.

### Reconciliation and First Holy Communion

Catechesis programmes have run well last year, with a new scheme of learning for First Communion that extended and deepened, understanding. Reconciliation also ran smoothly and we had many positive reports back from our reconciliation morning from parents and children. We had ten children make their first reconciliation and twelve receive their first Holy Communion. Numbers going forward, however, are low for next year.

### Confirmation

We welcomed twelve boys and girls towards the end of 2017 to start their preparation towards receiving their confirmation in 2018. We have our confirmation programme every two years in the parish.

## Resources

**Funding** – see separate sheet

### People and Volunteers

During 2017 we had two people employed in the parish, Deacon Philip as pastoral administrator and Suzanne Yates as parish secretary. We have many more parishioners volunteering to fill over one hundred and twenty-one roles in the parish, and without every single one of them the parish would not function as it does. So this is a special thank you to all of them.

### Parking

As you are all aware, parking is a continual problem at Sacred Heart and with the reduction of Sunday Masses to only one Mass, parking was seen as a major issue. We have been fortunate to be able to use Flitwick Lower School's parking and playground and this has eased the parking. The church car park is restricted to visitors and people with permits.

### St Francis Suite

The St Francis Suite has continued to be upgraded over 2017, with curtains being added and a replacement ramp. We are very fortunate to have Carmel and John Gallagher as caretakers for these rooms.

### Planned Giving and Gift Aid

The financial impact following the reduction to only one weekend Mass will not be fully evaluated until figures are available at financial year-end in April 2019. The positive news is that the trend of parishioners now making their offerings by standing order is still increasing. (results below).

	2017/18	2016/17	2015/16	2014/15	2013/14
Offertory envelopes used	56	62	70	75	84
Gift Aid Declarations	98	101	105	99	94
Standing Orders	76	72	69	53	49

This year the parish will again be able to take advantage of the Gift Aid Small Donation Scheme (GASDS) which will allow us to claim a tax rebate on non-gift aided offerings up to a maximum of £8,000. This should result in an additional £2,000 each year to our funds.

## Sacred Heart Church Flitwick



## Parish Pastoral Council Annual Report 14 June 2018 7.30 pm

### Chair's Report – Siobhan Campbell

As I signed off my report in early 2017, I prayed that we would **'work together'** as we entered another period of change and transition. It is appropriate in this Year of Prayer and Vocation that we are thankful for the resilience and adaptability shown throughout this period.

Through our time **'of challenge and change'** I really want to acknowledge the difficulties that this has caused, in particular moving to a single Mass. I know many have had to work this through in their families and find ways to continue to be part of the parish. Change, and the frequency of changes have been challenging and I thank all for their resilience and support.

To **'grow and flourish'** through such change is a testament to all the people of the parish. The active support of the many parishioners, each contributing in whatever way they can, deserves a big thank you in making our parish work. This commitment breathes life into the parish which makes it stronger and stronger. I would urge you all to consider if there is something you can further contribute to ensure our parish maintains its vibrancy.

Bishop Peter's visitation was a particular highlight to support us; his Masses on both Saturday night and Sunday morning were inspirational. He made such an effort to meet as many as possible in the short time he had with us and shared tea and conversation with us after both Masses. He also popped in to see our youth group. I had the privilege of meeting him with the PPC members on the Sunday and he was pleased to see the level of involvement and commitment to maintaining parishes, and is committed to supporting us.

That commitment manifested itself as Fr. Nathaniel arrived to spend some time with us, and blessed us with his highly energetic and passionate preaching. His arrival allowed us all some time and breathing space to adapt and change in a gradual way, in light of how quickly change had come again to our parish.

We really welcome Fr. John, who we have taken to our hearts in such a short period. Fr. John has embraced the challenges of moving beyond a single parish and I pray that he will be granted the energy and zeal to fulfil his ministry with us. He has welcomed our children in a delightful way and reminds me of the Bible passage 'let the little children come to me'. This is played out each Sunday with the children's liturgy children welcomed on the altar, but was particularly special for the family Mass at Christmas and on Easter Sunday (don't miss them the next time!).