

## Ministry Report January 2022

Happy New Year! And welcome to the penultimate meeting of this Parish Council, as we move towards the Annual Meeting to take place at the end of February. It's a time to take stock, and to think about where we, as a parish, are hoping to move forward towards in the coming weeks and months.

### **Advent, Christmas, and the start of the new year**

Our Advent and Christmas services were well supported and beautifully put together by a team headed by Stephanie Wood, David Stratkauskas, and the Liturgy committee. Particular mention should be made of the excellent work done by David in the Advent Sequence and the Carol Service, and at our 'flagship' First Communion of Christmas (midnight mass) service – the choir were on top form and the music choices were excellent. Those who led the services and who preached put a huge amount of time, effort, and care into their roles, and this was amongst one of the most profound Advent-Christmas periods it has been my privilege to observe.

Of course, post Christmas the highlight was Bishop Anna's visit to us at Epiphany to ordain Stephanie to the Priesthood. I am grateful that Stephanie is now able to exercise the ministry she has been called to, and her infectious joy and careful, prayerful, attitude at the Eucharist is already showing us that she is indeed a valued and valuable priestly presences in our community.

### **Community safety and well-being implementation working group**

The busy-ness of the past month leading up to and beyond the ordination have meant that I have not got to convening a meeting of the group – the Terms of Reference for the team will be sent out for this month's PC meeting and I will be seeking PC approval for them at this meeting. I hope to have a meeting of the group, or for them to call their own meeting, before the next Parish Council.

### **Recruitment and volunteering.**

We are finding that with reduced numbers in church (though many still join online) and with concerns over the Omicron Variant of COVID-19 there are fewer people who are offering to undertake the roles that we need to make our worship gatherings function. We do need readers, interceders, vergers/safety officers, greeters, and someone to assist in the livestreaming of services – at present these roles are coming down to a very small number of people who are, understandably, feeling tired. In the case of livestreaming, it is only Karen Coverett covering things at this time, we do need someone to take on some of those responsibilities from her – now much simplified by the new system.

There is much still to consider in our Parish Council, and in the life of our community – I encourage you to prayerfully think of what you might be able to offer to the life of the parish in the coming months, and to seek to discern those who may be able to assist in the many ministries our community undertakes.

Thank you for all you do and all you give to our community, I continue to be deeply grateful for your part in our leadership of this Parish Church of St John the Divine,

With thanks for our partnership in the Gospel,

*Alastair*