

*'Show me your ways, Lord, teach me your paths. Guide me in your truth and teach me, for you are God my Saviour, and my hope is in you all day long.'* Psalm 25:4&5

On the one hand sitting down to write my report to this meeting is one of those jobs that just has to be done! On the other hand it is one of those tasks that I look forward to, as it gives me the opportunity to look back over the last year and see how much God has been at work amongst us and to be aware of where God is calling us in the year ahead.

As I look back over the last year there is once again so much to celebrate in our life as a Church. In thinking of those things to celebrate it would be easy for me to name the big things that we have done together as a Church, Alpha, the Church Away Day, Youth Group Weekend Away, Knitted Christmas Tree, Open Church at the Christmas Markets; and indeed I want to give thanks for each of those and many more that have helped us be the Church that we are.

But as I look back over the last year what I rejoice in and celebrate much more are the individual testimonies that I hear as the Minister of this Church of people whose lives have been transformed through Trinity's ministry and mission. The story of the individual who because they came to Alpha wants to be Baptised or the person who felt they understood that Jesus really died for them because they came to Alpha. The child who stopped one of our Open the Book volunteers in the supermarket and said you're one of the people who comes to my school to tell us about God, the former member of Trinity's youth group who is now President of their University Christian Union, the gentleman in a nursing home whose hand I've held as he's grieved the death of two of his daughters. Those whose weeks' have been brightened by the Church flowers being taken to them. It is these testimonies and so many more of lives that God has touched and transformed through the ministry of this Church that enable me to celebrate that God has been at work through this Church in so many ways over the last year. Praise be to God!

During the last year the Church Council has also paused and taken stock of how we are doing as a Church at achieving the vision, which we agreed in 2015. As part of this process the Church Council agreed a new set of achieving the vision priorities for each of the Church Co-ordinating Groups to help them to continue to move towards the vision. Last year at this meeting a number of you fed back that not everyone in the Church was aware of the vision and since then we have produced the banners and bookmarks to try and help people be more aware of the vision statement, the stewards and I hope they have helped.

Whilst I recognise not everyone gets excited by talk of the Church vision and setting priorities or even think we need one! Many of the testimonies I have mentioned above come out of the opportunities that were created from the vision priorities in 2015 and I trust that many more testimonies will come from the priorities God has led us to for 2017-2019.

The Church vision is not an end in itself, it is a means to an end, it provides us with a focus as a Church, as God's people, to help us be the Church at this time that God has called us to be. It helps us to keep focussed on doing what God is asking us to do. It helps us to keep listening to the Spirit of God, trusting in the words of Psalm 25 that God shows us his ways and teaches us his paths so that together we can achieve his vision for us.

I believe strongly that as a Church we need to continue to have a united focus, which we are committed to, as a Church family and that the Church vision gives us that. It doesn't mean we all have to be the same, or do everything the same. The vision unites us as a family in worshipping and serving God here, not for our sakes but so that year by year we can continue to hear the testimonies of lives transformed by God's love and of the world transformed into God's kingdom.

The testimonies I have shared today and the many more that you have shared in your conversations are made possible by the hard work of so many of you who are here today and so many more who can't be present today. All that God has done through this Church over the last year has been made a reality because of your hard work and I'd like to thank each and everyone of you for all that you do to make the mission and ministry of Trinity a reality – God says to each of you, well done good and faithful servant. You truly are an amazing team, without each of you Trinity simply wouldn't be the amazing Church that it is. THANK YOU.

In particular I'd like to thank the Church Stewards and Staff who it is a privilege for me to work so closely with. To our stewards, Pete, Alison, Anna, Carol, George and Keith – who finishes his term as a steward today and those who have been part of our Church Staff team for long or short periods over the last year Alison, Esther, Isaac, John, Tara, Tim and Richard, thank you for all that you have done and will continue to do to serve Trinity and serve God.

As we look to the year ahead, may we be focussed as a Church on the God who through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ calls us to new life, may we trust him to show us his ways and teach us his paths so together we may each play our part in Trinity being *'a place for everyone to question, discover and explore the Christian faith, learning to live as followers of Jesus, so more people know of God's love.'*