

PLOUGHSHARE

December 2009/January 2010

Volume 18, No 1



St Thomas' Brampton St Peter's, Holymoorside

Share the love of Jesus

*We aim to become more like Jesus every day
as we respond to His love for us and
as we share the good news of Him with others*



Breaking the Ground
-see page 12



Pumpkins at The Treat
-see page 11



**St Thomas' Church is open during the week from 9.30am to 12.30pm
for quiet prayer and reflection -see page 6**

60p per copy (£3 per year)

Monthly Pattern of Sunday Services

There is a variety of services each Sunday in both our churches. Details are set out below. Please note that changes may occasionally occur at short notice. For the latest up to date information please check the weekly notice sheet or www.st-thomas-brampton.org/diary.html

St Thomas'

Sermon themes and readings are available in church or at www.st-thomas-brampton.org/services.html

Recordings of the sermons and readings are available at www.st-thomas-brampton.org/podcast_index.html

For those who enjoy tradition:

9am A service of Parish Communion (*Morning Prayer once a month*) using 'Common Worship' and with the choir and organ.

For those with families:

11am An informal service that's 'family friendly'. Sung worship led by the worship band. Weekly crèche (0-3's) and children's groups (3-10 plus years old).
1st, 2nd, 4th (and 5th) Sunday Morning Worship
3rd Sunday Holy Communion

For those looking for something more:

6pm A relaxed service with in-depth teaching and extended worship led by the music team.
1st Sunday Informal Communion
2nd, 3rd, 4th (and 5th) Sunday Evening Worship

4.30pm 'energize -1' for 10-14 year olds

8pm 'energize -2' for 14-18 year olds

St Peter's

9.30am A traditional service of Holy Communion every Sunday using 'Common Worship' and 'Mission Praise' accompanied by the organ.
There is Sunday Club (3 years old to school year 9) and a crèche.

6pm A traditional service of Evening Prayer using the '1662 Service' and 'Mission Praise' accompanied by the organ.
(*Note: the evening service on the 4th Sunday of the month is held at Holymoorside Methodist Church.*)

For details of Christmas Services at both our churches see page 13



From the Rector

Dear Friends,

Welcome to Ploughshare.

The coming of a New Year brings with it lots of hopes and dreams. Some of us have a plan for how we'd like things to be different; others of us just wonder what the future will bring.

A hope foremost in my mind is that St Thomas' will be a very different place by the end of 2010. If our plans are successful then the desire to build a much longed for new parish facility that will service the needs of both the Church and local community will be realised. After thirty five years of effort, finally we hope this project will be brought to its conclusion. There is still some hard work ahead of us; we have many obstacles to overcome. One difficulty is we've been told that our land may be very tough to build on –filled with unseen problems and pitfalls. The only way our new building will stand is if we get our foundations right –this may be a costly endeavour but if we fail to make the investment 'below ground' any money that is spend 'above ground' will be wasted.

This is an analogy for life –if the foundations of our lives are not secure then we try and build our life on shifting sand. The fundamental foundational human need is to know that we are loved. As parents pass away, as marriages fail, as friends and family leave the area, is it any wonder why so many people struggle in life to find secure love? We need to find a solid foundation upon which to build –who would have thought to look into a dirty stable and there to find the most solid of all foundations lying wrapped in baby's swaddling clothes. Whatever your hopes and dreams maybe for 2010 the only way that they will make a lasting change is if they're based on Jesus Christ –the cornerstone to our lives.

I do look forward to welcoming you to St Thomas' over the Christmas period and New Year as together we lay the foundations of faith and hope and love for the new year upon the Christ child, Jesus Christ our Lord and Saviour. If you'd like to make a New Year's resolution to explore faith more deeply then why not consider signing up for our Alpha course (see page 15 for details).

Every best wish and happiness for a joyful Christmas and peaceful New Year.

Matthew Barnes
Rector

From the Editor

Exciting happenings are featured in this edition including our Christmas events -as we mark and bear witness to the birth of our Saviour, building work starting, our next *Alpha* course and a possible mission to Peru. For three couples exciting things are happening in their lives together -Jake and Hannah have just got married and Steve and Gemma and Paul and Angela have become engaged. We also give thanks for people who serve the Lord faithfully including Shirley Witham, our organist at St Peter's and Graham Brown who has become a Deputy Warden at St Thomas' again. I hope you enjoy reading about these and the other items in the magazine.

People at St Peter's - Shirley Witham

Shirley was inspired to learn the piano at the age of eight by watching her teacher play for her class's singing lessons. Her mother agreed to her having lessons at home -at a cost of two shillings (10p) a week -on condition that she couldn't go out to play until she had finished her practice. Added encouragement came when her music teacher got her the music to the film *Pinocchio* with its popular songs such as *When You Wish Upon A Star*. In her teens, she enjoyed playing sheet music, bought at one shilling a time, for her own enjoyment and for family and visitors.



Shirley and Roy married in 1958 and have two children, Debbie and Neil and five grandchildren. After twelve years without a piano, one was bought in 1970 when Debbie started her lessons and Shirley began playing again.

Having made her mark playing *Jerusalem* to open the Walton Women's Institute meetings, Shirley was invited, in 1981, to help out with the Sunday services at St John's. Four years later under our then Rector Christopher Frith's guidance, a second-hand Hammond organ was bought to replace a very old piano. Shirley accepted the offer of four free lessons, which came with the purchase of the organ. Up to that point she had never played the instrument. In addition to the Sunday services, she played at many weddings becoming well practised in what Christopher referred to as the 'ordinary ins and outs'; the wedding marches of Wagner and Mendelssohn.

In January 1994, a couple of years after she and husband Roy moved from Somersall to Holymoorside, Shirley started playing for services at St Peter's. She has favourite hymns, both traditional and modern, including, *The King of Love My Shepherd Is*, *O Lord My God, How Great Thou Art*, *Thine Be the Glory* (played to the tune Maccabeus), *Shine Jesus, Shine* and *Make Me a Channel of Your Peace*. Among her favourite contemporary hymn writers she places Timothy Dudley Smith very highly, for both his words and music and likes some, but not all, of Graham Kendrick's work. "One of the challenges of the modern hymns is that there is often a good deal of accompaniment, a lot of music between the words that presents a challenge for those who don't read music. Traditional hymns, on the other hand, offer one syllable for one note, which makes it easier to get into."



Shirley playing the organ at St John's in the eighties

Shirley chose as her favourite song, Nat 'King' Cole's *Stardust*, the one she would save if her Desert Island Discs were about to be washed away. She's recently enjoyed Alan Titchmarsh's *Nobbut a Lad*, about his childhood in Ilkley, an area close to where she and Roy were brought up, and Julie Walters's autobiography, *That's Another Story*.

Shirley outlined what is involved in being a church organist. It includes choosing the hymns for the Sunday morning services, always easier at Advent, Christmas, Easter and Pentecost than in the long season after Trinity. Her choice is influenced by the Bible readings, which she researches before each service and often after consultation with the Minister. Then there are weddings and funerals, which present their own challenges and rewards. Shirley also has a group of singers at St Peter's who meet on Tuesday afternoons to practise new hymns and help provide a lead at Sunday services.

Finally, asked what she enjoys about being a church organist, Shirley said she was pleased she "had the confidence to do it and the confidence has grown". She paid tribute to her husband's support throughout the nearly thirty years she has played at the two churches and spoke of being very privileged to do so. For our part St Peter's continues to be very fortunate in having Shirley who makes such a massive contribution to our worship.

Passionate for the Kingdom

On Sunday 25 November St Thomas' had a Mission Sunday for Novi Most International. Novi Most has been one of our Mission Partners since 1994 and it was good to welcome back Gill Rowell, the Director of Novi Most.

Gill spoke at all three of our services and shared a light lunch with a number of us in church.

She is passionate about two things: Novi Most and the Kingdom of God –and in her life and work they are inextricably linked –she wants to share the Kingdom with the people of Bosnia Herzegovina.

Gill had a number of Good News stories about how God is working His will out among the young people of Bosnia –the people whom Novi Most is trying to reach primarily. She also updated us on Sarah Watts. Some may remember that she accompanied Gill at our last Novi Most Mission Sunday in 2006.



Gill Rowell (left) with Irene Jones, St Thomas' Novi Most representative

So what did we learn about the Kingdom of God from Gill? Well at the 11am service she asked the children what they thought the Kingdom was like. The answers included peaceful, relaxing, quiet, calmful (*sic*) and like home. I hope it is like all these! Gill went on to tell us that the Kingdom of Heaven is near, it is where God is and where He reigns and where the least and the greatest of us are.

Gill took Matthew 13:31-53 as the Bible reading to go with her talks. It is about the Kingdom of God being like a mustard seed –growing from something tiny (the seed) to something huge (the full grown mustard plant). When God puts that seed of faith in us and we say “Yes” to Jesus, things happen.



From a tiny seed....
....to the harvest



Gill challenged us, are we saying “Yes” to Jesus? –in obedience, trust, stepping out with Him to do what he has called us to do. Remember who we are in Christ. We are born of God, we are new creations, co-workers with God, citizens of heaven, we are seated with Christ in the heavenly realm, we are His possessions, we are more than conquerors, we are His ambassadors. We are God’s workmanship; God made each of us just as we are; He made us unique. We are His gift to the world. The word for ‘workmanship’ in the Greek means poem. When God created us He was writing a poem –a love poem. We are here to love, God created us for love with His love

Novi Most began with one person’s “Yes”. If we say “Yes” to God there is always fruit. In Bosnia the Christian church is still small –but growing. Novi Most is working to help the poor and under privileged and to bring together those who have traditionally been enemies. Through this work they are ‘growing’ the Kingdom of God.

Read more about St Thomas’ involvement with Novi Most and listen to Gill speaking at st.-thomas-brampton.org/ms.html#novimost

More About Novi Most

‘Novi Most’ means New Bridge. The name is the antithesis of Stari Most (Old Bridge) which spanned the Neretva River in the middle of Mostar and was destroyed during the war in 1993. When it was destroyed, all hope was lost and the international community began to wake up to the atrocities being committed at the time.



Novi Most International is a relational organisation, and the different projects which have evolved over the years have always come out of the desire to see the Good News of Jesus Christ taking root in individual lives and bringing healing and hope to the nation. Novi Most also believe that every young person in Bosnia Herzegovina should be offered the opportunity to make friends across the ethnic divides and learn skills to help them grow in confidence.



The bridge destroyed and now rebuilt



1000 Days of Prayer

On Sunday 11 October 2009 St Thomas' embarked on **1000 Days of Prayer**. The thousand days will end on 7 July 2012 -just before the Olympics start!

St Thomas' Church is open each weekday morning 9.30-12.30 for prayer. This, plus our normal 'opening' times on a Sunday, will amount to about 1000 hours per year. The morning will start and end with prayer with a time for personal prayer between.

In order to facilitate the church being open the staff team are working from the church in the mornings, rather than their homes. With the staff on hand there is always someone available to pray for anyone with a need.

Even if you cannot physically be in church, you can pray wherever you are in the knowledge others are praying too.

Each 100 days will be marked by a 'Focus Day' on the Sunday after the actual day. Day 100 is Tuesday 19 January 2010; the Focus Sunday will be Sunday 24 January 2010.

Why are we doing this?

- Our open church is a sign that Jesus is in our community. An open church will create new possibilities for engagement with our local community. We will ring our church bell to tell Brampton that they are being prayed for. *You also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. –1 Peter 2:5*
- Having the staff working together will build up a bond amongst them. People coming into church will see that St Thomas' is alive, with a buzz of activity of things going on. And there will be the opportunity for prayer and fellowship. *Is any one of you in trouble? He should pray. –James 5:13a*

- We will be able to pray corporately together.
- We need to saturate our new parish centre in prayer. This initiative will allow us to do it whilst the centre is being built. *Unless the LORD builds the house, its builders labour in vain. –Psalm 127:1*

Why 1000 Days of Prayer?

When we put the Parish Profile together last year as we were looking for a new rector, one of the areas we highlighted was a lack of corporate prayer at St Thomas'. Since his appointment as rector, Matt has been thinking about and praying about this. In August he felt God was saying to him "one thousand". Initially he thought one thousand hours but God was saying "one thousand days!"

More about the 1000 days of prayer (including the Rector's introduction and suggested prayer topics) is available at st-thomas-brampton.org/1000.html

CARE International UK

Our Christmas offerings this year at St Thomas' will be going to CARE.



CARE International UK is an independent humanitarian organisation working to end world poverty. CARE was founded in 1946 in the United States to send food packages to Europe after the Second World War. Since then CARE has grown, and now works in 70 countries helping 55 million people.

In its development work, CARE concentrates in three areas: primary health care such as nutrition, education, immunisations, clean water and hygiene projects; agriculture and natural resources projects that teach farmers how to grow more and better food without destroying their land and small economic activity development such as rural credit schemes, small business loans and practical advice about selling vegetables and handicrafts. **Its programmes aim to promote positive, lasting change and reduce long-term dependency.** The goal of all CARE projects is for the people participating in them to carry on implementing the practices they have learned, once CARE is no longer there.



An example of what our donations could achieve is Rehana. Rehana lived in a Dhaka shanty town. Following the death of her husband, the family had very little income. She struggled to care for her two children and keep them in school. Their only means of survival was for all three to climb over the rubbish tips, collecting things like bottle caps and plastic bags to sell for a tiny amount of money.

Through a CARE savings and loans project, Rehana was given a small loan of just £9.15. She used this money to set up a street kitchen selling fish cakes and rice. In just eight months, she has paid back the loan, bought mosquito nets to protect against malaria and most importantly put her children back through school.

CARE also provides emergency food and shelter to survivors of natural disasters, wars and conflicts. **It remains with communities long after initial relief efforts are completed and supports initiatives to enable people to rebuild their lives and to face the future with renewed confidence.**

Currently, in Ethiopia, CARE is building and rehabilitating the water infrastructure to create access to potable water for drought-affected people, providing extra food to malnourished women and children and providing emergency food rations to more than 300,000 people affected by hunger. In West Sumatra, the part of Indonesia affected by the earthquake in September 2009, nearly 200,000 houses were damaged and over 1,000 people lost their lives with thousands missing. CARE's emergency relief focus is on the heavily damaged district and city of Padang Pariaman. They are distributing jerry cans and water purification kits, as well as blankets, sarongs, hygiene kits, and materials to build community latrines.

To read more about CARE projects and the countries in which they work see www.careinternational.org.uk

New Archdeacon of Chesterfield Appointed

The Rev Christine Wilson, currently Vicar of Goring-by-Sea in the Diocese of Chichester, has been appointed to succeed David Garnett as Archdeacon of Chesterfield.

Christine, 51, will take up her new responsibilities in the New Year and will have particular responsibility for pastoral and ministerial leadership in the Chesterfield archdeaconry where she will also keep an eye on the building and legal side of the life of the church.



A former chief cashier in a building society before becoming a full time mother, Christine studied for the priesthood in the mid nineties before being ordained priest in 1998. To date she has served all of her ministry in the Chichester Diocese and has been active in a wide range of activities including overseas links, community development and mission strategy. She has also done a great deal of work in the area of spiritual direction and ministerial formation.

Christine said that the new challenge facing her was “an exciting opportunity to participate in the senior leadership of the diocese.” She added: “I look forward to championing the mission and ministry priorities of the diocese and supporting the clergy and parishes of the Chesterfield archdeaconry as they build on the opportunities for growth and renewal.” We look forward to meeting Christine when she visits St Thomas' and St Peter's.

The 'Grateful Heart' Challenge

St Thomas' 11am Harvest Service was on the theme of **Developing a Grateful Heart**. We focused on Tear Fund's work in Uganda and how grateful a group of people were to have a water supply provided in their village.

At the end of the service Karen Herrick set us this challenge. It can be done by all ages at any time of the day.



We have much to be grateful for every day but we often take it for granted. However we do acknowledge that we do also have difficult times. So each day ask yourself the question:

"What am I most grateful for?" Or children could ask "What was the best moment of my day?"

Then ask yourself the question:

"What am I least grateful for?" Or again for children "What was the hardest moment of my day?"

Share your answers with God if you are on your own at the time or with family and friends if they are around. A good time to do it might be when sitting down together at a meal time. Thank God for all the good things and ask God to help with the difficult things.

Listen to the service and download a flyer at st-thomas-brampton.org/podcasts2009.html#34

The Treat

'The Treat' was held in St Thomas' Church on 31 October 2009 as an alternative to Halloween. There was worship, competitions, a bouncing castle, plate decorating, making chocolate apples, the parachute game, pumpkin beetle drive and of course party food! A great time was had by all. A big thank you must go to Karen Herrick and all her helpers for a really successful event. *See more pictures at st-thomas-brampton.org/treat2009.html*



St Thomas' -a Christian beacon of light in the darkness



Karen Herrick introduces 'The Treat' with the 'Cross of Light' behind



A couple of pumpkins



Plate decorating



Fun on the bouncing castle



The parachute game

The Building Work Begins

Sunday 12 October 2008 was the Day of Commitment for St Thomas' Development Project. A year later, **2 November 2009**, having obtained all the necessary permissions we were able to start the building work.

(The initial work is to clear and assess the condition of the ground to be able to put the work out to tender.)



The Rector leads the 'Breaking the Ground Service

A short **Breaking the Ground Service** was held the day

before, Sunday 1 November 2009. During the service we gave thanks for God's leading and provisioning to this point in our project, remembered those buried in the affected area prior to the removal/relocation of their headstones and prayed for safety for those involved in the construction.

Phil Johnson spoke at the service. He told us that thirty five years ago our then Rector, Vyvyan Watts-Jones, realised there was a need for a new facility. A party of eight members of St Thomas' travelled to Wakefield to see a new building that had just been completed. The only two people left from that party now were he and Myra.

Phil explained there was good reason for the delay. In the intervening thirty five years we have built a new Parish Centre at St John's, Walton (our daughter church until 2000, when it became a parish of its own), made the Garden of Remembrance outside the West Entrance and re-ordered the interior of St Thomas'.



Work in progress

The service concluded with Phil and Myra symbolically 'breaking the ground' to mark the commencement of the building work. (See front cover picture.)

Listen to the service, see the order of service and more pictures at st-thomas-brampton/sttdev.html

Some Diary Dates Including Christmas Service Times

More information on the notice sheets and on the diary page of
st-thomas-brampton.org

Wednesday 2 December

6pm Beavers Carol Service

Thursday 3 December

1pm Rendezvous, St Thomas'

Friday 4 December

Men's Christmas Meal, St Thomas'

Saturday 5 December

8am Men's Breakfast, St Thomas'

2pm Christmas Craft Market, St Thomas'

Sunday 13 December

4pm Christingle Service, St Thomas'

6pm Carol Service, St Peter's

Friday 18 December

7pm Blessing the Nativity, Holymoorside
Youth Ball, St Thomas'

Saturday 19 December

Youth Ball, St Thomas'

Sunday 20 December

10am Nativity Service, St Peter's

4pm Christingle Service, St Peter's

6pm Carols by Candlelight, St Thomas'

Thursday 24 December, Christmas Eve

7pm Carols around the Christmas Tree, Holymoorside

4pm and 6pm Family Carol Services, St Thomas'

11.30pm Midnight Communion, St Thomas'

Friday 25 December, Christmas Day

9.30am Holy Communion, Holymoorside United Reformed Church

10am All Age Communion, St Thomas'

Sunday 4 January

6pm Covenant Service, Holymoorside Methodist Church

Thursday 7 January

1pm Rendezvous, St Thomas'

What if?

What if we should see a bright
and shining star

To lead us to the inn?

What should we do?

What could be say

To greet the King of Kings?

What if we should meet some
eager shepherds

Running to Bethlehem?

What should we do?

Should we go too

Or stay and question them?

What if we should stand within
the stable gloom

On that Christmas Day?

How would we feel?

And should we kneel?

Or turn and go away?

A Dinner Party

If there's one person you could say was always welcome at a party or meal, Jesus would be a good candidate! During his brief three years of active work he produced wine at a wedding, ate with various dignitaries who wanted him to dine with them and made sure that he shared his very last meal with his friends. He really valued the time he spent relaxing and enjoying the company of others.



So we wondered whether we could plan an evening of food and relaxation which would widen our circle of friends. We decided to try a buffet dinner inviting five couples who attend St Thomas' and who we thought would enjoy getting to know each other a bit better. So we asked for advice and set to. Invitations went out, were warmly accepted and we were committed!

The day came, the guests arrived and we produced the food and drink. We had managed to set out three tables where we could sit after helping ourselves to a choice of a roast dish or (and!) fish, followed by scrumptious puds. The aim was to get us all mixing during the evening and, judging by the level of animated conversation going on, (possibly helped by the wine!), that definitely happened! The evening was reckoned a great success by our guests and, seeing the small amount of food left over, we agreed.

Out of it we hope friendships will be strengthened and, maybe, others will consider holding similar events. You don't need to do it as a buffet dinner: you could hold a barbecue or a summer lunch, plan a bring and share meal or maybe have a drinks and nibbles event. The principle is to try to invite people who are not already close friends so that more friendships are created.

Don't worry if your house is a bit cramped -we have been to evenings where we have sat on the stairs as we talked -and don't aim to have a perfectly manicured place. When folk are enjoying themselves they never notice things like that. Jesus only once made a comment about the domestic aspect of a meal and that was to tell Martha to relax like Mary and not get fussed about the housework.

So, have a go! Invite people from church or, if you are not yet a regular worshipper, why not invite your neighbours to such an event? By all means contact us to get more details about how we did our meal.

Maureen and Peter Rolfe

(01246 566998, peter.rolfe@talktalk.net)

Alpha



Have you ever wanted to find out how life could be better for you?

Have you ever wondered about religious things?

Have you wished you could find out more about Christianity without going to church?

Have you ever wanted to learn to pray to God?

Have you ever wished you could understand the Bible better, and make sense of it so that it can speak to you?

Have you ever wondered what life is really all about, why am I here?

If you would like to explore any of these questions, then ALPHA is for you.

Interested? The next course at St Thomas' starts on Tuesday 5 January 2010 at 8pm.

If you would like to come, contact the Rector in person or on 01246 567634. Alternatively, more information and a booking form is available on a flyer in church or can be downloaded from st-thomas-brampton.org/alpha.html

Congratulations

We offer our congratulations to **Steve Willis and Gemma Machin** and **Angela Gregory and Paul Wright** who have announced their engagements recently. We pray that God will bless the rest of their lives together.

Deputy Warden (Again)

Graham Brown has been appointed a Deputy Warden at St Thomas', (replacing Irene Jones). This is Graham's second stint in this role. Thank you Graham for offering to serve in this role.



Is this a Message from the Future?

The editor received this by e-mail a few days ago. It appears to be a report written in September 2011 but only part of the message has come through:

...and they arrived back early in September. The St Thomas' team, ranging in age from 18 to, shall we say, 70+, have spent the last few weeks in Peru. They decided that 2011 was the best year to go as a group of volunteers supporting the work being done by Christians in Lima. Guided by Paul and Sarah Tester, (the couple who are supported in mission work by St Thomas') the team have been able to help build a school in one of the poorest shanty towns and also join in a range of activities with children and families. Lack of Spanish was not a problem and they are bursting with excitement about what they saw and achieved. As Roger told us...



Sadly that is all that we have of this glimpse into the future but if you would like to know more –read on.

Does the idea of being part of that team in summer 2011 interest you? The church is considering encouraging a group of volunteers to go to Lima for 2-3 weeks to tackle whatever we are capable of with the help of Paul and Sarah Tester. It would mean being willing to commit holiday time, raising travel costs which would probably be £1200 - £1500 and working hard.

What would you get out of it? You would have the joy of serving brothers and sisters who live in great poverty; you would experience wonderful faith amongst those you were serving and you would come back saying that the time was one of the most rewarding in your life.

If you would like to express interest, without commitment at this time, let me know by telephone, e-mail or in person.

Peter Rolfe

(01246 566998, peter.rolf@talktalk.net)

St Thomas' Harvest Supper and Line Dance

Some 200 people came to the pie and pea supper on 3 October. The supper was followed by line dancing led by Kathryn Shemwell -both for experts and those (including me) who are not so expert!

The great thing about line dancing is you can never make mistakes. Even if you are facing or going in a different direction to everyone else it isn't a mistake, it is apparently a 'variation'! *See more pictures at st-thomas-brampton.org/harvestsupper2009.html*



The 3 Fs Walks

Over the summer, Ann, our dog Troy and I invited members of St Thomas' to join us on five short walks or strolls. These were held in the evenings and on one Saturday afternoon; the focus being on Fun, Fitness and Friendship, hence the name of **'The 3 Fs walks'**

Let's start with a few facts and figures:

- The total length of the five walks was 16.5 miles.
- A total of 25 friends joined us on the walks.
- Some came on more than one walk so the cumulative total of walkers was 45 plus a number of dogs!
- Only one walk was held in the rain. The rest enjoyed warm and pleasant conditions.

So what about the 3 Fs!

Fun

I know that Ann and I enjoyed each event. They were all different in their location, in the friends that joined with us and in the opportunities to enjoy the countryside and a laugh and joke with others. We always came home with a warm glow of having relaxed and just enjoyed the moment. Some of the walks were described as 'up hill and down ales!'

Fitness

I suppose that walking 16.5 miles is a starter for this. However, in reality we think the fitness comes from the 'stress busting' element of being out and about and doing something that is just for pleasure, having time for self and others and from being away from everyday pressures. In fact we felt quite 'ale and hearty' at times!



Friendship

It was apparent that everyone sharing in the walks used the opportunity to get to know others from church and their families a lot more. As we set off to drive to the start of each walk we always said "Do you think anyone will turn up?" and each time it was a most pleasant surprise to find friends waiting 'booted and suited' ready to start.

It is a truism that the more you spend time with someone the more you get to know them. It is important to use opportunities to get to know people in a different setting, away from the church. I know I was involved in talking about many important things including family, friends, dogs, holidays as well as thinking and discussing our faith and the common bond it brings.

The idea of the walks seemed to spark a lot of interest and both Ann and I want to say a big thank you to those that came and shared with us on the walks, those in church that asked about the events and prayed for safety and to those who wished that they had been able to join us, but some how didn't quite make it. Perhaps next time!

Ann, Troy and I are planning some more '3 Fs' walks for next summer to again enjoy time with old friends and make new ones. Details will follow soon. In the mean time make a resolution to join us on a walk. I know that we would look forward to that and enjoy spending some time with you.

John and Ann Small (and not forgetting Troy the labrador!)

See more pictures at st-thomas-brampton.org/walks.html



The Wedding of Jake and Hannah

Jake Howe and Hannah Willis were married at St Thomas' on 7 November 2009. It was a truly uplifting service taken by the Rector, the Rev Matt Barnes. The service was a mixture of traditional and contemporary, with Philip Herrick leading on the organ and piano, ably assisted by Gaz Simmonds and the band. The readings were by Kat Witham and Jenny Ward and Tim Wheeler led the prayers. The sermon was delivered by the Rector. The bride was given away by her father, Paul. Chris Witham was the Best Man and the bridesmaids were Gemma Machin, Rachel Thomas and Nicola Bates.

After tea and cakes in church for everyone, the bride and groom left in a Land Rover (a Defender no less) for the main reception at Cressbrook Hall. After the speeches there was a hog roast. Entertainment included singing and music by the duo 'Keeping up with the Joneses' and Hannah herself, who sang two songs. The reception was rounded off by a spectacular firework display before the bride and groom left for their honeymoon in the Lake District. *See more pictures at st-thomas-brampton.org/2009jhwedding.html*

