

With the transfer of chairmanship from Sue Waldron to Sara Napper in Spring 2017, to give thanks to God as we witness again fulfilment of the words expressed by the prophet Jeremiah: 'For I know the plans I have for you, says the LORD, plans for your welfare and not for harm, to give you a future with **HOPE**' Jeremiah 28: 11

Under the 5 marks of Christian mission, this report makes reference to how greatly God has continued to pour his blessing over the activities planned through Tewkesbury Churches Together during the past year:

**tell** ..... witnessing to a Christian presence in the town through the variety of activities hosted during the year; including ecumenical agreement via the ministers for the dates to run Alpha Courses in pubs as well as places of Christian worship and giving thanks too this year for the combined fellowship course offered at Twynning during Winter 2016–7; the Good Friday March of Witness starting from the Baptist Church, passing Holy Trinity and continuing through Tewkesbury town centre ending with an open air service in the Abbey Lawn Trust grounds on 14–04–2017, before continuing to share in fellowship together enjoying Hot Cross Buns and beverages served in Tewkesbury Abbey Parish Hall; expressing our gratitude for the work undertaken to date by David Amies to develop the Tewkesbury Churches Together Web Site, enabling us to promote future events to a wider audience; and the provision of funds to place advertisements in Tewkesbury Direct giving details of services being held in the member churches leading up to Christmas and Easter – to fulfil the commandment of Jesus to '*Go into all the world and proclaim the good news to the whole creation*' Mark 16: 15

**teach** ..... the ecumenical membership of the local Open the Book teams; the Easter Art Competition, recording our gratitude to Tony Cullingford for his contribution towards these links with the participating schools and also for his oversight enabling the advertising of ecumenical Bible Study groups being hosted across the town leading up to Lent each year; for the oversight by Babs Cory for the organising of the Women's World Day of Prayer as she now transfers this responsibility over to a team led by ladies from Ashchurch; the requests to support in prayer for engagement with schools and out into the local community e.g. the Messy Church Knit [i] vity organised through 'The Cross' Methodist Church, Experience Easter / Christmas hosted in different member churches relating to Tewkesbury Churches Together – as our contribution towards the extending of God's kingdom here in our midst through fulfilment of this promise: <sup>18</sup>*And Jesus came and said to them, 'All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. <sup>19</sup>Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, <sup>20</sup>and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age'* Matthew 28: 18–20

**tend** ..... of how we have witnessed God's blessing, under the spiritual guidance and direction of the ministers relating to Tewkesbury Churches Together, working together towards this advice given by Paul the Apostle: <sup>12</sup>*And may the Lord make you increase and abound in love for one another and for all. <sup>13</sup>And may he so strengthen your hearts in holiness that you may be blameless before our God and Father at the coming of our Lord Jesus with all his saints'* 1 Thessalonians 3: 12–13 through the efforts of volunteers from across the congregations of Tewkesbury Churches Together working together at the Tewkesbury Food Bank and Refugee Support Group; the hosting of a Christmas Day celebration meal at Priors' Park Chapel, also noting the overwhelming kindness through the response of the general public towards this event and the gifts of food they also provided for the Christmas Hampers being given out to families whose lives had met with adversity via the Tewkesbury Food Bank and Salvation Army; the offering of hospitality and activities at 'The Cross' Methodist Church during the switching on of the Tewkesbury Christmas lights; the generosity of the offerings received by those attending the united ecumenical 5<sup>th</sup> Sunday services then being passed on – this year including support of members of Priors Park Chapel congregation, assisting them towards the costs incurred to attend a Christian Conference in April 2017 and towards costs incurred for the 'Covies' boys group from the Baptist Church to attend a Christian camp in May 2017; supporting Tewkesbury Community Hospital at their annual fete; and looking forward to the provision of an ecumenical Christian presence at the Medieval Festival on 8<sup>th</sup>–9<sup>th</sup> July 2017, expressing our thanks to the Revd Wendy Ruffle and the Revd Ed Sauven on behalf of the ministers relating to Tewkesbury Churches Together, for progressing the plans to date for this event.

**transform** ..... in response to the Apostle Paul's call: '*Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds, so that you may discern what is the will of God — what is good and acceptable and perfect*' Romans 12: 2 – our gratitude to Sue Waldron for organising the ecumenical Quiet Day on 14–11–2016; giving thanks to God that we enjoy the political freedom in this nation to be able to provide another Thy Kingdom Come 24/7 'Call to Prayer', very kindly hosted at 'The Cross' Methodist Church again this year from Ascension Day to Pentecost 2017 with each 24 hours being overseen by a different fellowship; for the support offered to the Tewkesbury Churches Schools' Team, including Activ8, Christian Union, Soul Space, funding It's Your Move books for pupils, and for the 'Every School is a Prayed For School' prayer event hosted on 23–05–2017; the provision of additional financial aid via Tewkesbury Food Bank through Trussell Trust to cover costs incurred to host Summer holiday clubs, recording our thanks to Helen Hill for her efforts to secure this additional funding – to open the way for others to discover the wonderful promise of Jesus: *I have come that they may have life, and have it abundantly.* John 10: 10

**treasure** ..... the willingness of the ministers who work so closely together to form this ecumenical partnership and of the benefits of their spiritual guidance and direction, enabling the proclamation of the good news about Jesus – through the united ecumenical Sunday services hosted during the year in addition to the many blessings received during the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity in January 2017; and also of the ministers' combined efforts towards the Tewkesbury Town Remembrance Day Service at 'The Cross' – of how they are rising to the challenge given by Jesus: '*for where your treasure is, there your heart will be also*' Matthew 6: 21

..... and looking forward towards the planning of **Going for HOPE 2018**, for the fellowships relating to Tewkesbury Churches Together to continue to proclaim the good news about God's gift being offered to all of the new life made possible by Jesus Christ – equipping and enabling each one of us to share our stories as we work together to build **HOPE** that all can experience the power and peace that the love of Jesus can bring to those who call on his name in faith – out into the world we have all been called to love and serve in the name of the risen Christ.