



Making **Connections**





The Community of St. John The Divine

The Mission Statement

The Community of St. John the Divine, An Anglican Religious Community, live under the threefold Vows of Religious Life, establishing a centre of worship and prayer under the patronage of St. John the Divine, the Apostle of Love, and together with the Associates of the Community form a network of love, prayer and service.

Within the ethos of healing, wholeness and reconciliation, we exercise a ministry of hospitality for people to come for times of rest, retreat and renewal and to share in the life and worship of the Community. We seek to offer a ministry of spiritual accompaniment and pastoral care, and to respond to the needs of the poor and marginalised.

The heart of our call is to be a praying Community seeking God in our daily lives and serving Him in reaching out as channels of God's love to others.

Did you enjoy watching 'Call the Midwife'?

Did you wonder who inspired it?

Well it was US, the Community of St. John the Divine

This is how it really was

Call The Midwife! Our Past Life and Work hits the TV Screen



Monica and Marie Clare in the Clinic in the 1960's

The Community of St. John the Divine provided training for midwives and when qualified some continued working alongside the Community. Jennifer Worth was one such midwife who trained and worked with us in Poplar in the East End of London in the 1950s. Later she wrote a series of books based on her experiences, asking us to read and comment on drafts of her first and last books. This year the BBC launched 'Call the Midwife', a T.V. series based on her books.

We watched with enthusiasm, along with 9 million others. It was wonderful to have our past work recognised and we felt the issues were

presented with great sensitivity and accurately portrayed the poverty in which families lived and coped with childbirth in the aftermath of World War II.

The programmes did wonders for our website which received 7,000 hits during the serialisation. We've heard from people around the world including those who were pupil midwives and babies we delivered. One that stood out for us was a 92 year old gentleman who together with his twin brother was delivered by Sister Elizabeth in 1920.

Viewers response to the series also prompted our being contacted by journalists for articles in both the

national and local press, as well as for features on television and radio. There has been much posing for photographs and discussion about our work and calling. We are thrilled to be discussing the production of a book about the Community's history in Nursing, Midwifery and the Religious Life.

It has been wonderful to have our pioneering attitude and spirit recognised and we hope the publicity will help us to raise the resources to respond to the challenges in our current work in Birmingham.

What Do Real Sisters Do Today?



Christine and Margaret Angela – copyright Andrew Fox for The Daily Telegraph – printed with permission

A DAY IN THE LIFE OF A SISTER

SR. CHRISTINE WRITES:

I can remember when I first became a Sister, how the structure of the life felt like a pair of very unyielding new shoes that pinched somewhat and certainly weren't at all comfortable. Yet as the years have passed that same structure has given important shape and form to the life I and all my Sisters share.

My day starts early at 6.30 a.m. with an hour of personal prayer in chapel. It's a time of deep silence, of making an offering of myself to God as well as praying for the events of the day ahead and for those who have asked for prayer support. We all bring our prayer together in Morning Prayer at 7.30 a.m. Praying through the day takes on its

own rhythm with the Eucharist at 12.30 pm, Evening Prayer at 5 pm and Compline at 8 pm – important times for offering our love and worship and becoming refocused.

Each day has its own plan for work and ministry but often unexpected things arise that challenge the best of plans.

Along with Margaret Angela, I am responsible for the administration of the Community, personally being responsible for preparing for Community Conferences when we meet together on Mondays to discuss things that concern us all. Sometimes, like in any family, there are thorny issues that need time and space to work through.

Having a new member of Community who is now starting out on her journey to become a Sister is a joy. Each week we have time together working with the details of her studies.

I also have the privilege of walking with people who have asked for someone to accompany them on their journey of faith – that too is a joy – getting to know them well and being able to pray for them each day.

There are also those who come distressed for some reason who need to share, where it is important to be able to respond to that immediate need by listening and praying.

Part of the life of any Sister is to help with the 'daily chores' in the house. Every day is different and busy but I know how important it is to put on my apron and roll up my sleeves and share in that part of our life, especially when there are gaps needing to be filled.

We have the gift of a day off each week in which to be refreshed and renewed – and when we want to relax I know Margaret enjoys a good read – as for me – give me some flowers to arrange.

How Do You Become A Sister?

Becoming a Sister is a long journey. It takes at least seven years of prayer and study.

There are many Communities with different ministries. They all have entries in the Anglican Religious Life Year Book. A person feeling attracted to the life of a Sister could look there first. Most Communities also have web sites. Then contact can be made with Communities and visits arranged. It is important to build a relationship with the one with which they feel most at home.

Taking it further would mean a time living alongside the Sisters. The person is called a Postulant, as this is a time of asking, which provides a gentle introduction to the Religious Life.

The next stage, if it seems right to both sides, is a

more formal step. This is called the Novitiate. This involves specific study and the living of the life for 2 to 3 years.

If the Novice feels called to make a deeper commitment, this is when she takes her First Vows that last for 3 to 4 years; this ceremony is called First Profession. Final Vows, that involve a life-long commitment to God and the Community, would be taken three or four years after that.

These Vows are as important as marriage Vows and are a serious commitment. Anniversaries of Profession are celebrated each year just as a married couple would mark their wedding anniversary.

If you feel that God might be calling you to explore this way of life we would be delighted to hear from you

Tel No. 0121 327 4174 Email: csjdivine@btinternet.com

This year Ruth was Admitted to the Novitiate

Ruth writes:

"I wasn't Baptised until 1989 when I was in my 30's and I genuinely thought that I had arrived and that there was no need for anything else.

But God has plans for everyone! The 1990s were very significant for me and I did everything I could to meet with God - study groups, prayer partners, personal prayer, courses, journaling ... and I let God lead and I sought meaning and purpose for living life.

It didn't prove to be an easy journey, there were rocky times when hard decisions had to be made, highs and lows and joy and sadness including the pain I felt and caused when I sought divorce in 2000 from a long standing marriage and broke up the home of my two children.

In April 2009 I wrote in my journal, "Moving On - I believe that God said to me today that it is time to let go and move on. I believe that He wants me to let go of everything and walk with Him."

My understanding of this was that this will mean giving up a lot of my well established independence, home, job, pets, yet still I answered, "I will do whatever it takes". I knew it would not be easy, in fact the Lord had indicated pain of loss but my answer was from the heart.

In the cruel light of day you think it is all rubbish and you have imagined it all, Say inwardly, "you're getting above yourself!" but I still took the next step - talking to my priest. I wasn't turned away and he did not think I was nuts, so I continued to pray and to ask God, "What? What is it?" What was I expected to do next? How would I know?

My priest found me someone for spiritual guidance and it was this lovely patient woman, who I now know as Sister Ann Verena, who after a few months, suggested I contact this Community.

When I made my first visit I had a sense of being home. What I mean by this is that I searched all my life for love and there have been times on this

journey when I have felt very loved by God. Although there was a warm welcome at the door of St. John's House and a gratefully received cup of tea after my journey, it was more the God of Love in me, the peace in my head and in my heart that I recognised and felt on entering. This I interpreted as coming home to Love. In May 2012 I made another commitment to trusting God when I was admitted to the Novitiate here.

Ruth



This year Sister Elaine celebrated her Silver Jubilee, 25 years in Vows.

Elaine has written:

“The celebration of my Silver Jubilee was for me a perfect day from beginning to end! Members of my family, some close friends and local Associates of the Community were able to join the Sisters of the Community for a Eucharist of Thanksgiving and a lunch party afterwards.

I feel it is a privilege and a blessing to be called to live the Religious Life and to have been drawn to this particular Community. I remember visiting for the first time as an eighteen year old and being inspired not only by the love of the Sisters but for their zest for life.

Being a Sister has allowed me to develop; grow; be challenged; in a way I don't think any other life choice could have done. So I give heartfelt gratitude to God for the ways in which my Sisters have encouraged and supported me over the years. In a professional capacity after having been an Enrolled General Nurse working in a hospice for a number of years, I was given the opportunity to undertake a course to become a Registered General Nurse. Since then I had the experience of being a student midwife for a short time but realised that wasn't for me. Sometime later I worked in a residential care home and then became a deputy care manager there for two years.

A great joy for me ten years ago was to undertake a training course to learn reflexology and to offer that as a personal ministry in the



Elaine Silver Jubilee celebration

house. Alongside that there are opportunities to develop talents; pursue hobbies and interests like photography.

Another important aspect which is valued and encouraged by this Community is to keep connected with your own family and friends. For me that has been an important source of support and encouragement in my journey of faith.”

HOW CAN YOU BE CONNECTED TO THE COMMUNITY?

By being an Associate, Alongsider or a Volunteer

WHAT IS AN ASSOCIATE?

Associates are men and women from all walks of life who desire to have a close link with the life and work of the Community. They make a commitment to God, to the Community and to one another. Together they

form a network of love, prayer and service. They visit the Community staying as they are able, to join in the worship, life and ministry of the House, or for a time of rest or retreat for themselves. Currently there are 68 Associates from the UK / Canada / USA.

Associate meeting 2012



An Associate's Story



World AIDS Day 1989 Steph with Monica and Iona

"My name is Steph and here's why I became an Associate. In 1982 I ran a community project working with unemployed people in South London. A man came in bewildered and frightened. His colleagues had put his desk out in the street and refused to work with him. Why? Because they thought he had AIDS. I'd never heard of it. Then the papers were full of it and sadly the general public, including Christians from all denominations, were condemning gay people as AIDS carriers. I wasn't a Christian but my blood was boiling at the lack of compassion. I went to a meeting about AIDS.

Two Nuns dressed in blue habits smiled at me. I glared and turned my back. How dare these symbols of oppression attend this meeting! Another meeting and again they smiled at me! They were Sisters Iona and Monica from CSJD living in a Community House in Vauxhall along with Sisters Christine and Teresa. They invited me to their house to discuss their AIDS work; nervously I accepted. What I found were four very hardworking Sisters, a house full of love, laughter and genuine compassion, giving sanctuary and care to people in need including those reeling from an HIV diagnosis and those living with and dying from AIDS.

They were visiting the sick, making food for them and sitting up all night with the dying.

WOW! When I heard their Community's story, which included setting up the first ever School of Nursing at King's College Hospital, I knew that this was a pioneering, courageous group of women I wanted to know more about.

AIDS was spreading, thousands were dying and still the papers were full of condemnation. Health professionals were urging people to use condoms but the message didn't seem to be getting through. What to do? Answer: organise an event for World AIDS Day to shock people out of complacency, spread the message of prevention and give a voice to those Christians who cared and were prepared to act. I asked the Sisters 'would you be prepared to hand out condoms on the street to spread this message?' They took my request to their Reverend Mother who prayed about it and agreed. On a grey December day Sisters Monica and Iona, both retired nurses and midwives, stepped out of a taxi to face over 80 photographers and journalist from the World's Press. Cameras flashed, voices shouted. It was a frightening scrum and it seemed they would be overwhelmed. They looked at each other, at me, and then strode forward smiling, began to distribute the condoms and to talk to the gathering crowd about why it was so necessary to use them to prevent the spread of HIV. When asked why the Sisters were taking part they replied 'We are here because we are human beings caring for other human beings. We believe in the whole ministry of healing and we don't discriminate against anyone'. The next day every major paper carried the story.

If you would like to know more about becoming an Associate please telephone or email us to arrange a first informal visit.

MANDY O'CONNOR HAS WRITTEN

"Hi! My name is Mandy and I have been making sure the Sisters are up to date and competent with their computers and the ever increasing amounts of technology we have in the world. I have worked with them now for nearly five years and I enjoy my time with them very much. I come on Mondays but it never feels like a work day. There is a deep spirituality here which grows on you, but you don't have to be religious to work here. When you have been here for awhile it is like having an extended family. Laughter is essential and there is lots of it here. You won't want to volunteer anywhere else.



Mandy and Mike with Sister at computer

What is an Alongsider?

Alongsiders are people who come to the Community for varying lengths of time, usually six months to one year. The aim is to provide an opportunity of sharing in the worship and life of the Community but with less commitment than an Associate. It could be useful for a sabbatical, a time of spiritual renewal, study, to respond to a specific need or to allow time and space to consider the way ahead. The Programme has been running for 10 years. Guidelines are available to anyone interested.

BARB AND LYNNE CLAY HAVE WRITTEN

"For the past few years we have come over from Canada and spent several months living as Alongsiders with the Community in Birmingham and it has been both rewarding and challenging. Rewarding – to have the opportunity of sharing in their life from morning to night, attending the Daily Offices and sharing in the ministry of the House which includes everything from Refectory/Kitchen duties to welcoming the stranger at the door and many diverse people coming to CSJD for a variety of reasons. We really appreciated the daily Eucharist especially as it was not early in the morning and we enjoyed sharing with the clergy over the mid-day meal. Challenging – in learning to understand each other's individual quirks and the gentle bantering, along with a sense of humour, went a long way to maintain a healthy Community.

Being present for such unique celebrations as Profession Anniversaries and major feast days in the life of the Church was a real privilege and we witnessed an in-house Confirmation, an Ordination at the Cathedral and the Wedding of a previous Alongsider, plus the uplifting funerals of two Sisters. St. John's is certainly good material for film scripts and how exciting it was to see the BBC TV series this year. Many small changes in the routine, like special biscuits on saints' days ... 'ooh goody!' – and of course cake on Sundays breaks up what might be seen as a very mundane existence, but the Religious Life is anything but – it is a blessing and inspiration to

all of us who have appreciated the sense of prayer and caring which emanate from the walls of that lovely old convent which we both hope to re-visit – God Willing.

Barb and Lynne



If you would like to receive the Guidelines of the Alongsiders' Programme, or arrange a visit, please do let us know



Brenda

People who work for us

The house would not survive without its staff and volunteers (Associates and Friends)
Staff – Brenda, Anthony, and Ken. Not a member of our staff Derek Prigg is our Master of Works.



Derek

*We give a Big Thanks
for each of them*

Anthony Ken



What Is The Sisters' Ministry Today?

Our House is situated in one of the poorest areas in the country which is in the worst 5% of poverty nationally, and where child poverty is the highest in Birmingham. As well as continuing to be a praying presence in this highly diverse, deprived area we are supporting clergy and lay people, some of whom are working in the poorest areas, by providing a place of spiritual and physical renewal to enable them to continue their ministry and to walk with people who daily face poverty and injustice.

This year we have been busier than ever with over 1300 people coming to our House. We have hosted parish away days, clergy training days, local community meetings and have provided spiritual accompaniment and pastoral care and support to many individuals in need.

Canons from the Cathedral with Choristers – Quiet Day



Groups



Group from Hodge Hill exploring a community house and asking help of the Sisters

Saturday is a busy day for groups with increased demand particularly in Advent and Lent. We value our links with the different parishes as this is a means of praying and supporting the local churches.

People come for quiet days, which means having time and space to stop from the usual busyness of each day and things like the telephone that demand attention, to be able to reflect on their own journey of faith and pray in surroundings that are quiet and peaceful. Most groups have a leader offering input to a greater or lesser degree. From time to time a Sister is requested to conduct the day and on several occasions Christine and Elaine have worked together combining a quiet day with foot massage. Margaret Angela has also conducted quiet days in the local area.

Some groups are small and come on a regular basis, whilst others are much larger ones from different

parishes. Other groups that come are much larger groups from the Diocese including the “Growing Gifts Days” which are study days for those who have completed the Diocesan Course for Developing Discipleship.

A few are nationwide groups, for example, people living the Single Consecrated Life, who have their annual meeting here.

New groups that are coming include a steering group from a nearby parish who are exploring buying and setting up a community house on a needy housing estate, and the Women’s Christian/Muslim Forum which meets in turn at different venues developing relationships across Birmingham.

Christian/Muslim women’s group



Comment From Revd. Jo Johnson Who Conducts Regular Quiet Days For Her Parish:

"Over the last six years I have seen the benefits of Quiet Days at St. John the Divine in Alum Rock. Most people who come with me are those who work long hours of paid and voluntary work. Everyone finds a warm welcome; rest and refreshment for the body, soul and spirit; and an opportunity to recognise Jesus and encounter Him more."

People with Individual Needs

The Corporate Ministry of the House involves each Sister welcoming people into the heart of the Community to share in our life and worship. Each day a variety of people come for space, rest, quiet days or study. For instance one visitor told us that when she steps over the threshold she feels she is able to leave everything behind and find this an oasis where she can be renewed. Others who come value having time to meet with a Sister to discuss their journey of faith and among them are those who are discerning the way ahead particularly for the Ordained Ministry, during their training, and in the early days of their ministry.

Some people come to convalesce after illness, particularly when they live alone. It has been our privilege to walk with people who are living with cancer, recovering from surgery and following accident and injury, and those with long term illness.

Here is a previous Alongsider's story:

"When I arrived at the door of St Johns House I did not understand how ill I was both physically and mentally. In fact I did not really know where I was following the death of my husband whilst I was in re-hab. However, the CSJD Sisters have shown that they were willing to take on what may have been seen by many as a hopeless case. They offered me lots of love, a shoulder to cry on, tasks to occupy me within my capabilities and a safe haven.

Whilst living as an "Alongsider" they nurtured my blossoming faith. They showed their love to be a reflection of God's love which is ever present, even for those who have taken the wrong path in the past; this included the organisation of my Confirmation by Bishop Michael Whinney in their chapel and I was overwhelmed with all the people who attended.

As time progressed they helped me to start loving myself and encouraged me to start planning a different future by making links with other Christian groups such as Christian Music Ministries (CMM) which in turn rekindled my love for music. CMM, like the Sisters were willing to go that extra mile.

I now have an active Church life including being a member of the singing group of my parish church, sharing in Bible studies, preparing intercessions for Sunday worship and being the PCC secretary. I have completed some computer courses and also the 'Learning for Discipleship' study courses at Queen's Theological College here in Birmingham. At present I am doing a 'Pastoral Care and Community Skills' course and when I have completed this I will be licensed as a Pastoral Care Assistant for 5 years. (The convent is an excellent place to come to study/do essays). My other interests include using the swimming pool at my local gym 2/3 times a week when I can and obviously I come to help the Sisters.

Although I now have a lovely flat in a pleasant area, the Sisters have never deserted me and still welcome me whenever I feel low and vulnerable. I still have a distance to go before I can say my problems are over but I'm working on it and so are all the CSJD Sisters and God.

The world is a much better place for such dedicated people and their home which they are willing to share with love and compassion. I would have accomplished nothing without their support, but most importantly along with my Dad they are my family."

Occasionally someone comes with serious difficulties, such as those being abused and exploited and others escaping oppression and persecution.

Among others who come to the house are those who call for a sandwich and a hot drink. In the past these people have been described as "wayfarers" but nowadays not all of these people are homeless, e.g. some may live in hostels and others may just not be able to make ends meet on the income available to them. One of our almost daily callers has recently celebrated a "big birthday" and for weeks before the event this was his main topic of conversation, counting down the weeks and then the days as they went by.

Clergy

Our links with local clergy continue to grow with excellent contacts with the Cathedral, the Diocesan Director of Ordinands and with those responsible for Continuing Ministerial Education.

It is good to welcome the vocations groups where people are encouraged to explore their future. Every year we welcome a group of students from the Queen's Ecumenical Foundation for Theological Education, and following Ordination enjoy hosting study days for both Curates and those in Self Supporting Ministry.

There are great pressures of work in parishes in big cities such as Birmingham and it is important to try to provide a place where clergy



can come and have time to relax, read and pray which hopefully renews them to return refreshed to their parishes. In the diocesan prayer cycle we telephone the clergy mentioned each day to assure them of our prayerful support in their

SSM Day – Clergy in the Refectory
ministry. There are times too when for instance they are studying and value a place of quiet in which to work.

Rev. Simon Cartwright has written

"I was very grateful to the Sisters at St. John's for their wonderful hospitality as I was writing my PhD. I joined them for regular study weeks where I was able to participate in the rhythm of the daily life of the Community which created a great framework for study, time to pray, time to read/write and time to socialise. Thank you for all your love and support."

Many clergy are very generous to the Community in being willing to preside at our daily Eucharist and then join us for lunch. This is very much appreciated and is meaningful especially at times like Christmas, Holy Week and Easter as it means that the Community can worship together with our visitors.



Simon Cartwright

We gave him a small cake, card and gift. During this time of recession and higher food prices, we have found that people are even more in need of food parcels and it is good to be able to provide them with some basic supplies which we all take for granted (bread, margarine, tea bags, milk, sugar, cereal, biscuits and tinned food).

Hopefully the little we can offer will nourish them sufficiently until their next payment of income is received. Would you be willing to contribute towards providing food parcels or refreshments for those we describe as Wayfarers?

This year we have been grateful for donations from the Warwickshire Mason Charitable Association Ltd., and the Banners Trust.

We need donations to keep coming in order to meet the on-going need of this ministry.

An average food parcel costs
£10 - £15.00
Meeting the needs of
Wayfarers, averages
£1,500 per annum

One senior member of the clergy recently said,
 "You underpin the ministry of the clergy here in Birmingham".



Lighting the New Fire – Easter morning 2012

Sisters Individual Ministries



Elaine Reflexology

Besides the corporate ministry of the Community, Sisters have their own individual ministries either within the house or within the local Community. All Sisters worship on Sundays in different local churches. Christine and Margaret-Angela offer spiritual accompaniment; Elaine has a ministry of reflexology;

Shirley visits the residents of Greswold House, a residential home for the elderly and Ivy volunteers two afternoons a week at a local specialist cake shop.

The shop owners, Ruth and John Button, come regularly to the house and have been here to have their Engagement and their Marriage blessed.



Shirley at Greswold House



Ivy at character Cakes

Ruth Button writes:

"I have known the Sisters of St. John the Divine for many years. I have been made welcome on my visits and when I take Sister Ivy back to the Convent after a hard afternoon's work at my shop, Character Cakes. When I met John we decided to commit to each other in a special service – we were too old for an engagement!

We discussed our plans with Sister Christine, the other Sisters and with Simon Cartwright the local curate. A service was prepared and what a wonderful Sunday afternoon it was – we felt so much love and warmth bestowed upon us. That was the beginning and on the 11th January 2012 John and I were married at Northampton Civic Hall.

We asked the Sisters and Simon if we could have our marriage blessed in the Chapel at St. John's House and this made our marriage complete. John and I will always remember the very special time spent with the Sisters, who no matter when we visit have shown us remarkable humility and love, for which we both give heartfelt thanks."



Ruth and John Button

Sister Ruth

Since joining the Community, Ruth has helped us to develop links with The Nehemiah Foundation Trust <http://www.nehemiahfoundation.co.uk> which is a key partner in the Near Neighbours Programme, <http://www.cuf.org.uk/near-neighbours>.

Through this we are helping to deliver support to people and organisations in our own diverse and

deprived neighbourhood. We are really getting to know our neighbours, local people and groups. Ruth, pictured here with colleagues doing similar work, is currently facilitating a series of workshops with residents from Alum Rock, Faith group leaders/representatives of Faith Groups and members of local organisations.

Through discussion they will try and establish what they would like to do to bring the people of Alum Rock

together to help them to explore and address local needs.

We have also recently developed our links with the Christian and Muslim women's forum, <http://www.christianmuslimforum.org> being invited to participate in interfaith events around Birmingham and hosting the Birmingham branch meeting here in St. John's House

Ruth and the Near Neighbours Group



HOW CAN THE SISTERS FACE THE CHALLENGE OF THE FUTURE?

In the days of “Call the Midwife” the work of the Sisters was only possible because of the support of people outside the Community helping to provide resources required. The same is true today. The Sisters still need your help and support.

This year has become increasingly busy, exciting, tiring, full of new challenges demanding attention, yet full of hope that something new is growing among us.

As Sister Teresa, aged 94, recently said, “One should always be willing to embrace change.” The history of the Community shows a pioneering spirit where we have never been afraid of change, hard work or a challenge and we pray we never will be.

We continue to pray for the future of the Community, recognising the ever increasing need for spiritual and pastoral care and the need to support those living and working in the areas of escalating poverty; our development work with the Near Neighbours Programme and our growing involvement with inter-faith work, it currently feels right to remain here in Alum Rock even though it imposes a real challenge to us regarding financial and other resources.

“Call the Midwife” has also had an unexpected impact on our lives. In response to the BBC TV production and the coming second series and a possible third. As a result of increased publicity, members of the Community are being asked to speak at a number of different gatherings.



We also want to develop the “old bakery” in our grounds, as funds become available, into a neutral meeting place for the Near Neighbours Programme as well as an additional meeting space for groups. With the increasing number of people who come to the House for Quiet Days or meetings it has become obvious that we need to provide an additional meeting place to meet the needs.

We hope to develop our website to enable us to reach out to more people and to share the news of our work on a regular basis. www.csjd.org.uk

Teresa – copyright Andrew Fox for The Daily Telegraph, printed with permission

How Can You Help Us in Our Work and the Possibilities for the Future?

Pray

Please do support the Community and it's ministry with your regular prayer.

Volunteer?

The time given by our volunteers is invaluable to us. With only 7 Sisters, 2 employees and a large and busy House to run we need people willing to get involved by sparing a few hours either weekly, monthly or occasionally. We could really use some help in the kitchen, garden, with D.I.Y. and generally around the house. In return you will get good food, good company and a real sense of contributing to the life and work of the Community.



Janet Herbert



Helene Horan



Donna Williams



Malcolm Knowles



Val Bryon



Sue Tuffey-Bulger



*Back row :Jenny Dainty, Brenda Shipman, Helene Horan, Margaret MacLachlan, Carole Senior, Elizabeth Pritchett, Geoffrey Herbert Front Row : Denise Raby, Father Simon Holden C.R., Janet Herbert
The Team that looked after the houseabd Us during the Community Retreat 2011.*

Regular Giving to C.S.J.D.

Almost 50% of our regular income is from our Pensions. This year our budgeted expenditure is **£155,000** which includes significant money for roof repairs and electrical work (totalling £16,254), excluding the refurbishment of the bakery. Apart from one gift of £3000 from the Worth Family, for which we have been grateful, we have not received any other financial remuneration from Call the Midwife. Would you be willing to make either a one off donation or a regular monthly commitment through direct debit? As we are a registered Charity all donations can be made through Gift Aid – see enclosed form.

GIFT AID

IF YOU ARE A UK TAX PAYER WE CAN CLAIM 25 PENCE IN THE £ ON YOUR GIFT FROM THE GOVERNMENT, SO A DONATION OF £100 IS WORTH £125 TO US.

HOW TO GIVE
 By on-line Giving: www.mydonate.bt.com. Type CSJD in search box named Donate to Charity.
 Donate from our website: by going to www.csjd.org.uk and finding the "My Donate Button" on the Home Page.
 By cheque: made payable to "The Community of St. John the Divine"
 By Direct Debit: Contact the Sister Treasurer: srshirley@btinternet.com for further information
 The Community deeply appreciates all donations. The most helpful way of giving is by a regular monthly contribution for use wherever it is most needed. For example, out of our General Funds this year we are saving to improve the facilities of visitors, i.e. upgrading day facilities and bedrooms for those who come to stay.

If you are able, please complete the Gift Aid form:

The Community of St John the Divine
 Reg. Charity No: 210254

Gift Aid declaration – for past, present & future donations

Please treat as Gift Aid donations all qualifying gifts of money made
 Today in the past 4 years in the future

Please tick all boxes you wish to apply.
 I confirm I have paid or will pay an amount of Income Tax and/or Capital Gains Tax for each tax year (6 April to 5 April) that is at least equal to the amount of tax that all the charities or Community Amateur Sports Clubs (CASCs) that I donate to will reclaim on my gifts for that tax year. I understand that other taxes such as VAT and Council Tax do not qualify. I understand the charity will reclaim 28p of tax on every £1 that I gave up to 5 April 2008 and will reclaim 25p of tax on every £1 that I give on or after 6 April 2008.

Donor's details
 Title _____ First name or initial(s) _____
 Surname _____
 Full home address _____
 _____ Postcode _____
 _____ Signature _____
 Date _____

Please notify the charity if you:
 Want to cancel this declaration
 Change your name or home address
 No longer pay sufficient tax on your income and/or capital gains. If you pay Income Tax at the higher or additional rate and want to receive the additional tax relief due to you, you must include all your Gift Aid donations on your Self Assessment tax return or ask HM Revenue and Customs to adjust your tax code.

**Let Your
Donation Grow
Giftaid it**

Please return this form to:
 CSJD St. John's House, 652 Alum Rock Road,
 Birmingham West Midlands B8 3NS UK

OUR THANKS TO YOU ALL

We hope you have enjoyed reading this Annual Report, called Making Connections. If you have any comments on what you have read, we would welcome you getting in touch.

Our past has been brought into sharp focus by the BBC TV Series, CALL THE MIDWIFE. So this report has tried to make connections between those times, our history, our present and our future. It has told you about our Community: Sisters, Associates, Alongsiders and Volunteers. It has given a flavour of our varied ministries and our hopes for the future. It also invites you to participate in the Community's development and offers a chance for you to journey with us in the future. We welcome your help and support in any way you are able to give it.

We want to thank all those who do help us already. Particularly we would like to thank Steph Blackwell, Beth Falkingham and Dr. Peta Dunstan for their assistance with writing this report.



Carole in the Library

And to our Associates, whose support is so vital, we would express our grateful thanks and especial thanks to Carole Senior for her regular help over the years in the kitchen. She has also accomplished the immense task of re-organisation of the Library, entering over 5,000 books on a database.

We owe thanks too to the clergy: our Bishop Visitor, our Chaplain-General and our local chaplains and the many clergy who preside at the Eucharist for us. Also to those who act professionally on our behalf.

Many thanks to all who have so generously donated funds and gifts to the Community this year.

To continue our ministry we do need this financial support. Our donors are therefore of great importance to us and much appreciated.

We hope that in the coming year God blesses you and your family and friends and your work.

With greetings and prayers

Christine, Margaret-Angela, Teresa, Elaine, Ivy, Shirley and Ruth

The Community of St. John the Divine,
St. John's House, 652 Alum Rock Road, Birmingham, B8 3NS

Tel. No. 0121 327 4174

Email: csjdivine@btinternet.com

www.csjd.org.uk

Printed and designed by Macklow Brown Printers - www.macklowbrownprinters.co.uk

Potted History of CSJD



1848

At **King's College Hospital**, London, Robert Bentley Todd wanted to reform medical training. This included improving the low standards of nursing care of the time. To begin a new group of highly-trained nurses, a public meeting was held. Three women came forward. With the blessing of Bishop Blomfield of London, **a Community was created**, resident in Fitzroy Square **and took the dedication of St John**. Not all nurses trained would be Sisters but the presence of a core group of nurses who were **dedicated to the profession as a vocation**, not only as a job, **would have a profound impact on the development of the profession**.

1854

A war with Russia in the Crimea had broken out and many injured British soldiers were not being properly nursed. The high standards, both of practice and hygiene, introduced by the **St John's Sisters impressed Florence Nightingale**. At a meeting at St John's House, she persuaded the Secretary of State for War and the army's Chaplain-General to let her **go out to the Crimea**, to take charge of the military hospitals. **She took St John's Sisters with her**.



1857

The Sisters founded the **first School of Nursing in modern Britain** at King's Hospital, London. They continued to be responsible for nursing at the hospital there, as well as doing district nursing. They also served at Charing Cross Hospital 1866-1883.



Poplar General District Clinic – 1880's

1862

This year saw the first of several disputes between the Sisters and the all-male Council at Kings College Hospital. The Sisters needed more freedom to develop their calling and ministry. Some Sisters left to found a separate Community. Others stayed St John's Sisters but took their specialist skills to **work in Poplar, Lewisham and Chelsea**, where they opened the one of the first maternity hospitals in London. Work in **Deptford** began in 1886.



Triplets born in Deptford – 1890's

1914-18

During the First World War, the Sisters were responsible for 40 beds for British and Belgian **wounded soldiers in St John's Hospital in Lewisham**. They received no financial help from the government.



Ward at St. John's Hospital Lewisham – injured soldiers

1923

With only five Sisters remaining, all aged 70 or over, the Community's survival was precarious. However, the new superior, Sister Martha, uttered the famous words: **"We go on!"** More vocations were forthcoming and, as new Sisters joined, the traditions of the religious life developed. In 1945, Sisters were able to take life vows for the first time.



Pictures taken in Poplar in the 1950's of Mothers and Children who were delivered by the Sisters



1945

The house in **Poplar** was **struck by a bomb** and **Sister Marjorie** was killed. The Sisters' work continued after the Second World War on an agency basis, in partnership with the new National Health Service from 1948. This continued in Deptford until 1966 and Poplar until 1978.

1951-76

The Sisters ran a **Nursing Home in Hastings.**



Photograph of Sister Madeline with a Pupil Midwife after a home delivery in Deptford in the 1960's



Sister Teresa in the General District Clinic in Poplar in the 1960's



St. John's Nursing Home



Sisters on the front steps of St. John's Nursing Home Hastings 1967



Patients in St. Luke's Ward, St. John's Nursing Home

1969-74

Three Sisters were sent to **run a maternity hospital** at Nkota-Kota in Malawi.



Sister Christine with the Student Midwives in Malawi



Child Health Clinic, Malawi

1976

The Mother House **moved to Birmingham**.

A branch house was maintained in London at **Bow, then Vauxhall**, where two Sisters began a **ministry to people affected with HIV and AIDS**. One Sister taught midwifery at the British Hospital for Mothers and Babies, and then Greenwich District Hospital.



1986-87

Sister Christine, a Midwifery Tutor, working in the clinical area teaching Student Midwives about a tiny premature baby. Linking the theory of the classroom to the clinical practice whenever it was possible was always considered important in learning.



Sister Christine in the Special Care Baby Unit at Greenwich District hospital

1989

On World AIDS Day, the **Sisters took part in a ground-breaking public event**, to bring attention to the prevention of the spread of HIV/AIDS, which received national acclaim.

1993-96

4 Sisters worked with 3 Franciscan Brothers, and 4 lay people, at **the Royal Foundation of St Katharine at Limehouse**, London, providing for retreats and giving pastoral and spiritual support. Over the years, numbers in the Community have fluctuated and the work has evolved and changed according to need. Since 1996 all the Sisters have been in Birmingham and the leadership of the Community has become shared, with a collegial understanding of authority. The Sisters provide a major resource for the Diocese. They have a ministry of hospitality, spiritual and pastoral care, and also pursue their own specific ministries.

Elaine and Shirley preparing the Barbecue supper!
June 2010



Left to right: Geoffrey Herbert, Alison Joyce our Local Chaplains and Gordon Mursell, Chaplain General



Associates Day 2010 at St. John's House



Cloister Garden at St. John's House Birmingham June 2010



The Chapel St. John's House June 2010



Photograph taken for The Sunday Mercury Newspaper
Copyright and Printed with permission

Back Row left to right:

Sister Shirley Hart, Sister Elaine Knight, Sister Christine Hovord,
Sister Margaret Angela King, Sister Ruth Cooper

Front Row: Sister Teresa French and Sister Ivy Patten