Each year I have the opportunity to celebrate and give thanks for the ways we have been living and sharing the Good news of God through Christ and in the power of the Spirit. There is so much to celebrate and so many people to thank. It is a privilege and a blessing to be involved in God's work in this Benefice. I think that this year we have been blessed with growth in various ways.

Growth in numbers.

With the development of the new Service pattern to two Services on a Sunday morning we have certainly seen an increase in those attending church. Particularly encouraging are the new families joining and an increase in numbers of children attending our children's group, COAST.

Growth through people's gifts and talents being recognised and used.

An expanded rota has meant that more people have been involved in the Services.

Ministries continue to be developed with Ruth Gillings being Ordained at Michalemas as Assistant Curate, Chris Rees now beginning his second year of training as an LLM. Also it was a joy to celebrate with Ken Radley his 60th Anniversary as a Deacon.

We have seen new members to churches through Baptism and Confirmation; to PCC and Deanery Synod.

Spiritual Growth

The Life Groups and the seasonal Lent and Advent Courses continue to be valuable resources for spiritual nurture and learning which are available for everyone.

Growth through mission and outreach into the community

Social and fundraising activities again this year were varied and new events were included. The Car wash at Shaw school with breakfast was just one of the new ideas for this year. A holiday club for children was launched this year using the opportunity that the Olympics provided. This was greatly appreciated and valued by both children and families. With thanks to Churchfields school and to Andy from Sportzcoach. The Flower Festival in Atworth gave opportunities for both community and school involvement.

The Community Carol Service this year saw record numbers attending through extending the possibilities for community singing through which the primary schools and youth club were represented.

We were pleased for our church hall to be the venue for Churchfields for their performances of Hosanna Rock; and would like to thank them for being part of The Nativity LCT this year.

Open the Book and New Starters Service, all work to provide even stronger links with the schools.
We have had a change of school governors for Churchfields. Our thanks to Ian Weldon for his years of service and to commend Althea Lee for taking up this vital role.
There are also new possibilities for connecting better now with Snapdragons Nursery.

This year saw the visit of Bishop Nicholas to the Deanery, and was an opportunity for him to meet with people from the Benefice.
I am grateful to the commitment and support particularly of those taking an official role in the churches in this Benefice and would like to give my thanks and appreciation to them all for their generous giving.

This growing team within our Benefice is a sign of the kingdom within our midst. Other exciting signs are through missionary engagements.
The PCCs' Away Day when looking at mission, agreed that we run Session Cafes for the community to start in January 2013. These are held on Mondays between 2.15-3.30pm in Shaw and the same time on Wednesdays in Atworth. Everyone is most welcome but those collecting children from school might find it particularly helpful.

Our mission focus will develop further next year and we will be greatly encouraged in this through our Benefice Away Day, led by Archdeacon Alan Jeans on 11 May.
As we celebrate the past year may we look to the future with renewed hope and eager anticipation of all that God will do, both in us and through us, in 2013.