

## Play & Praise

Play & Praise was born about 18 years ago. Alison and Woodmansey and Sarah Robinson (from St. Wulstan's) were praying about the parish and the needs of local families and the idea that became Play & Praise began to crystalise. Right from the start it had several ingredients which it retains today. Play and Praise is a parent and toddler group which is provided free of charge to the community and run by volunteers from the church. Until lockdown it met at 1.30 – 3.00 pm every Tuesday in the Church Hall. The children are greeted by a large number of toys already put out by our wonderful team of volunteers and a baby area set apart. At about 2.00 pm there is a short act of age appropriate Christian worship. This worship begins with a familiar welcome song which acts as a call to the children to come to the special place at the front. We celebrate birthdays, sing nursery songs have a short Bible story, sing a Christian song and then, with the help of Teddy Eddy pray for issues that the various families have raised. After the worship time there is craft based on the bible story for the children to do if they wish. This has been supplied by Ann Bowes for many years and we are all grateful for her doing this. At the same time refreshments are served by our faithful team. The presence of children with allergies has been a factor for the last couple of years and the parents have generally been very cooperative in keeping food to limited areas. Numbers fluctuate slightly, but the hall always feels full, with many of the families being there every week. The closure of Play & Praise because of the pandemic was a cause of sadness to volunteers, carers and children, and all are looking forward eagerly to when it can restart. Our Vicar used to lead the worship section, with Sue Waller or Janet Sharpe standing in for him when he was absent. When we restart we will be looking for volunteers to take on this role.