



baptism.

In total seven children from St Alban's, Windy Nook, Gateshead, were baptised in February 2020.

The Messy Church movement was set up 17 years ago, and has been supported by the Bible Reading Fellowship since 2008, offering mainly families and children food, activities such as arts, crafts and sports and worship.

Revd Danie Lindley, vicar of St Alban's, explained: "As we finished our Messy worship at Christmas, I announced the next Messy Church would be about Jesus' baptism and said someone might want to be baptised.

"We could not have imagined that within five minutes three families had approached us and asked if their child could be baptised."

The parish, which started offering Messy Church in 2015, saw families with no prior connection to the Church coming forward.

"The baptism of Jesus was the highlight of the year for me, myself, the whole team and the wider church for the year or so since,"



“Messy Church is church - it is a service in its own right and all the people who come encounter God in that space.”

St Alban's Messy Church operates between four and six times a year, and during the pandemic, the church has been offering well-attended “outdoor Messy Church.”

Self-sustained, apart from Communities Together Durham supporting holiday clubs, the project has been supported by the congregation.

The Messy Church is run by a core team, headed by people who are not clergy. The parish also offers Messy Church Extra, which requires less planning and fewer volunteers.

St Albans' success was highlighted in the recent report A Voyage of Discovery published in May 2021. The paper is a result of Church research funding which was tasked with investigating how Messy Church worship expanded and deepened faith.

The report cited examples from Bristol, Durham, Hereford Dioceses.

The main Messy Church meets on Sundays in the afternoon – offering a distinctive form of Sunday worship.

**More information:**

- A Voyage of Discovery is based on research conducted across Bristol, Durham, and Hereford Dioceses.
- Commissioned by the Archbishops' Council, it builds on the 019 report Playfully Serious.
- It brought together 24 Messy Churches with all but three completing the researching.
- The research was based on the Participatory Action Research model, and was developed by the Archbishops' Council's Evangelism and Discipleship team, CARU, and the Messy Church team at BRF.

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