

# **St Mark's Church Gillingham**

## **AGENDA**

for the meeting on 23<sup>rd</sup> April 2017

## **MINUTES**

of the last APCM on 17<sup>th</sup> April 2016

**plus**

## **STATUTORY AND ADDITIONAL REPORTS**

for the year ended 31<sup>st</sup> December 2016



## **Agenda for the Annual Parochial Church Meeting**

Sunday 23<sup>rd</sup> April 2017

### **(1) Worship**

### **(2) Meeting of Parishioners for the Choosing of Two Churchwardens**

### **(3) The Annual Parochial Church Meeting of St Mark's Electoral Roll Members**

*Members may ask questions or raise relevant matters at any time during the meeting.*

- 1.** Apologies for Absence
- 2.** Minutes of the previous year's meeting
- 3.** Elections
  - a) Appointment of 5 tellers for the election.
  - b) Introduction of each candidate standing for election.
  - c) Election of Electoral Roll Members to serve on Deanery Synod.
  - d) Election of Electoral Roll Members to serve on PCC.
  - e) Election of Sidespersons or Approval for the Churchwardens and PCC to appoint suitable Electoral Roll Members as Sidespersons.
- 4.** Report on Buildings Work
- 5.**
  - a) Report on the financial affairs of the Parish Church (*Annual Report*)
  - b) Examined Accounts for the previous calendar year (*Annual Report*)
  - c) Examined statement of Funds and Property for 2016 (*Annual Report*)
- 6.** Choosing of an Independent Examiner of the Accounts for the current year.
- 7.** The following agenda items should all be covered in the Annual Report or the Additional Reports; if not they will be provided at the meeting by the officer responsible.
  - a) Electoral Roll Officer's Report (*Statutory Reports*)
  - b) Report on the Proceedings of the PCC/Church Members (*Statutory Reports*)
  - c) Churchwardens' report on Fabric, Goods and Ornaments (*Statutory Reports*)
  - d) Proceedings of Diocesan and Deanery Synods (*Statutory Reports*)
  - e) Receiving the Reports from Church Ministries given in the Additional Reports and Good News stories
- 8.** Closing Worship.

## **Minutes of the Annual Parochial Church Meeting Held in Church on Sunday 17th April 2016**

### **(1) Worship:**

- Saju (SM) opened the Service. Time was then spent in worship.
- Richard England (RE) preached from Matthew 28:16-20, The Great Commission. He spoke of how this commission applies to us as individuals, and what it means to be a witness.
- It was confirmed that no other members of the congregation opted to stand for PCC.
- There was a coffee break before the APCM commenced. Members may ask questions or raise relevant matters at any time during the meeting.

### **(2) Meeting of Parishioners for the Choosing of Two Churchwardens**

- SM advised that Terry Whittaker (TW) and Deano Standing (DS) are willing to stand as Churchwardens for one more year and suggested this be accepted. This was agreed, TW and DS then took their seats.

### **(3) The Annual Parochial Church Meeting of St Mark's Electoral Roll Members: the meeting commenced at 11.30am**

#### **1 Apologies for absence**

- 14 apologies for absence were given

#### **2 Minutes of the previous year's meeting, held on 26th April, 2015**

- SM asked the congregation to approve the minutes. There were no questions, the minutes were approved.

#### **3 Elections**

##### **3a) Appointment of 5 tellers for the election**

##### **3b) Introduction of each candidate standing for election** (see 3c and 3d below)

##### **3c) Election of Electoral Roll members to serve on PCC**

- Candidates for PCC were introduced
  - Mic Aldington
  - Rob Byles
  - Jonathan Mann

- Luke Prankard
- Helen Towers
- Denise Young
- We have more candidates than there are PCC spaces, but all are good quality candidates. It was therefore proposed that Jonathan Mann be co-opted to PCC for one year, and Luke Prankard be elected to Deanery Synod, with others elected for the standard three years. This proposal was agreed, with all in favour.
- SM thanked those who are standing down for their service to PCC, commenting that PCC are here to do a Godly and prayerful job:
  - Gary Atkins
  - Karen Dyer
  - John Beck
  - Lucy Wheatley
  - Lynne Martin
  - Mic Aldington – standing for another term

### **3d) Election of sidespersons or approval for the Churchwardens and PCC to appoint suitable Electoral Roll Members as Sidespersons**

- DS and TW advised they were honoured to be re-elected as Churchwardens, but they have decided they will not be standing the following year. They encouraged anyone interested in the position to think about it and ask any questions.
- Deputy Churchwardens were thanked for their service with a round of applause. DS asked for authorisation for Steve Trebill and Trevor Towers to continue as Deputy Churchwardens, and agreement to appoint two further deputies. This was agreed by a show of hands with none against.
- DS provided an overview of the role of sidespeople, noting that providing a welcome is as crucial as managing the collection. Authorisation was requested for the Churchwardens to appoint further sidespeople from the Electoral Roll as required. This was agreed by a show of hands with none against. Thanks were given to all who give their time and service as sidespeople.

#### **4 Presentation on Building Plans from DS**

- The Building project group has been re-formed to pick up the project, members being the PCC's Property Task Group and others with professional skills in this area.
- New drawings have been brought to PCC for agreement, as well as the appointment of new architects to perform a digital survey.
- Drawings have been received from the architects with a proposed new floorplan. Graham Wilkins (GW) and Glyn Allen (GA) provided details of the floorplans. The cost involved in the revised proposal is around half of the cost of the original project. An anonymous donation of £50,000 means we have the money to progress this.
- The project will transform the Choir Vestry into space for crèche and meeting room; loft storage will be accessed via a new staircase.
- GW noted that this design will align with longer term plans for any extension work.
- GA talked through the steps required to start the work, and associated timelines. The current aim is completion by year-end.
- DS advised that the drawings are available. There were some questions from meeting attendees on:
  - Whether toilet access will be available whilst the works go ahead – confirmed yes.
  - Will nappy changing facilities be taken into consideration – confirmed yes.
  - There was a suggestion that the drawings need to be amended, DS advised he would discuss the plans with anyone who has questions following the meeting.
- Approval was requested for submitting the planned works to the Diocesan Advisory Committee (DAC). SM asked whether all are in favour, this was agreed by a majority vote.

#### **5 Report on the financial affairs of the Parish Church**

##### **5a) Report on the financial affairs of the Parish Church (Annual Report)**

- GA advised the accounts for 2015 are on the Church website. He also summarised income and expenditure as set out in the report, noting that the year ended over £3,000 in surplus against a forecast deficit of £11,000.
- Voluntary giving is significant and makes up 95% of general fund, thanks were extended to all who give to St Mark's.

- GA then talked through other funds and net assets, and invited questions: Bruce McCready asked what expenditure comes under 'worship etc.'. GA advised this relates to Communion and some other expenses.
- GA advised that the PA role is an official staff position with a significant amount of work involved, so is now paid.

**John Beck – Gift Aid Secretary provided an update on giving:**

- 82 people are currently giving through the gift aid scheme, it's likely there are more givers who are eligible for the scheme. Where this is the case, attendees were encouraged to see John Beck to complete Gift Aid declaration form. This is relating to the Gift Aid scheme for named giving. The Gift Aid Anonymous Donations Scheme has increased to £8,000 that can be claimed on anonymous donations of no more than £20.

**5b) Examined Accounts for the previous year (Annual Report)**

- Accounts are still with the external auditor; no changes are expected. Attendees were asked to accept the accounts, this was agreed by a majority – all in favour with one abstention.

**5c) Examined statement of Funds and Property for 2015 (Annual Report)**

- No questions or objections to accepting this report.

**6. Choosing of an Independent Examiner of the Accounts for the current year**

- An independent auditor is required, Rob Trice was proposed by GA. This was agreed with all in favour.

**7. The following agenda items should all be covered in the Annual Report or the Additional Reports; if not they will be provided at the meeting by the officer responsible.**

**7a) Electoral Roll Officer's Report (Statutory Reports)**

**7b) Report on the Proceedings of the PCC /Church Members (Statutory Reports)**

**7c) Churchwardens' report on Fabric, Goods and Ornaments (Statutory Reports)**

**7d) Proceedings of Diocesan and Deanery Synods (Statutory Reports)**

- No questions were received on the above reports, they were therefore adopted by attendees.

## **7e) Receiving the Reports from Church Ministries given in the Additional Reports and Good News stories**

### **Good news stories:**

- Students and Internationals: Lynne Martin shared positive feedback from students on the sense of community they experience being part of *Tabletalk* and the World Café, as well as the success of the Sunday Lunch Scheme.
- Small Groups: Gary Atkins explained the level of support that Small Groups can offer as an honest, open and safe space for people to gather together.
- Faith and Light: Rachel Littlewood updated that a recent concert for Faith and Light had raised £200 towards funds for their Bristol conference. If anyone is interested in helping Faith and Light they can contact Rachel, or Melanie Davis.
- Children's Groups and SPLAT: Jo Whittaker thanked the team of volunteers who have stepped up since Sarah Ryan moved on.
  - SOS – It's encouraging to see how engaged the children are.
  - Kidz Club – 50-70 children regularly attend each Friday evening, the club is led by Natalie and Jason Read.
  - SPLAT LAB – 80 children were involved in the recent event which is encouraging.
  - The next step for these ministries is to appoint a Head of Children, Youth and Families work who can bring a fresh vision.
- Youth: Luke Prankard advised that 5-10 young people currently attend Landmark. Their Youth Alpha series has been provoking some great, more in-depth conversations. They have a weekend away coming up. Luke encouraged prayer for Landmark, and expressed the need for male leaders.
- Foodbank: Paul Smith explained that Foodbank is not just about giving people food, but also an opportunity to signpost clients to schemes and support such as CAP, to offer prayer, and make people aware they are welcome to join Sunday services. A recent client joined the Alpha course and is now a Church member.
- Alpha: Keith Sheepwash advised that the most recent Alpha course started in January. Ten people are attending and have seen their lives changed. They have experienced healing, learning and people coming to faith. Keith asked to continued prayer for this ministry.



- MAP team: Chris Atkins provided an update on the work of the MAP team.
- These reports were received with no questions. There were no formal motions.

## **8. Closing Remarks**

- SM closed the APCM noting that he could have asked for Good News stories from 55 different ministries and activities our Church members are involved with. He extended thanks to the significant number of people who give their time and support in this way, Church happens because we all play our part.
- Public thanks were given to: Pauline Jackson, Lynne Martin, Jo Whittaker, Richard England, Deano Standing, Terry Whittaker, Glyn Allen, Becky Pedder, Suzanne Wilkins, Chris and Gary Atkins.
- This concluded the APCM at 1.15pm

## **Statutory Reports**

### **Treasurer's Report 2016**

#### **General Fund**



At the beginning of the 2016 financial year we forecast a budget deficit on PCC unrestricted General Fund of £19,506. This included transfers between Repair and Pre-School Funds plus a provision of £10,000 for employing a Head of Youth, Children and Families Ministry (HYCFM), based on an anticipated start in September 2016. A possible proportionate grant of £3,333 from the Diocese of Rochester, as a contribution towards the HYCFM costs, was also included in the budget. We give thanks to God that at the year end the large forecast deficit finished as a surplus of £4,117. Overall, compared to budget, our income was approximately £8,200 higher and our expenditure £15,400 lower than forecast.

Donations (Voluntary Income) increased to £159,271 from £151,584 in 2015 and higher than budget by over £9,000. Gift Aid Tax recovered amounted to £29,089 – a very significant sum.

The Pre-School funds transfer to General Fund, for the daily use of the Vicarage Hall, was £5,000, which is a useful contribution towards the fixed costs for the building. Income was also supplemented by rental provision for the Garden House of £850/month which the Diocese commenced paying in October. There was again a drop in wedding and funeral fees, which, at £2,438, were only 50% of what we had expected.

For expenditure, not appointing a HYCFM, reduced our budgeted staff costs by £10,000 and the cost of running our buildings was £4,570 lower than budget, excluding major repairs. Mission Giving was £12,790, compared to a budget of £15,000. The balance of £2,210 was transferred to the Mission Fund as carry over to 2017. Total Away Giving was £13,159, which included £369 to Medway Winter Night Shelter. Based on 10% of donations received in 2016, our General Fund Away Giving in 2017 will be budgeted at £15,900.

This year the PCC, together with St Mary's Island Church DCC, agreed that the Parish Offer paid to the Diocese, as a contribution to meet both stipend costs for parish clergy and towards other Diocesan support costs, would be £80,000. This was apportioned £68,000 for St Mark's and £12,000 for St Mary's Island – i.e. 85%/15% split. Due to Diocesan financial difficulties, the PCC donated from our mission allocation, at the year end, a further £2,000 to be earmarked by the Diocese for mission. SMIC DCC also matched this donation, making the total Parish Offer for the year £84,000.

The General Fund cash at bank and in hand at 31 December 2016 was £37,241. After debtors and creditors adjustment the net current asset was £44,521.

<b>General Fund Highlights</b>	<b>2016</b>	<b>2015</b>
Donations (Voluntary Income)	£159,271	£151,584
Total Income	£167,604	£158,489
Total Expenditure	£161,664	£154,774
Surplus (Deficit)	£5,940	£3,715
Net Surplus/Deficit after transfers	£4,117	£3,767

### **Other Funds**

The total year-end balance in our Repair Funds was £28,072. We deposited a total of £5,025 and withdrew £19,030 from the Church Repair Fund for repairs to the church roof and other parts of the building.

We were delighted that our application for a grant to The Bishop of Rochester's Fund for Mission was accepted and we received a donation of £10,000 towards the funding of the HYCFM. This grant has been placed in a restricted HYCFM Fund, pending the proposed appointment in 2017.

During the year, we settled architect's fees of £7,914 from the Development Fund, which now has a balance of £70,700.

The balance in the Mission Fund is £5,006, which included £2,210 unallocated transfer from General Fund Mission Giving. We donated £200 towards the staging of the 'Let Loose' Concert from the Mission Fund. We are grateful to those who faithfully give regularly to the Development and Mission funds.

The Vicar's Discretionary Fund received donations of £460 with discretionary spending of £352 giving a surplus of £108. The fund current balance is £1,646.

Pre-School income from all sources was £57,985 and expenditure £56,055, giving a surplus for the year of £1,930 and a net deficit of £3,482 after transfer of £5,412 to General Fund. This compares to a net deficit of £6,749 in 2015. The Pre-School Fund balance is £19,114.

<b>Fund Balances</b>	<b>Closing 2016</b>	<b>Opening 2016</b>
General Fund	£44,521	£37,473
Development Fund	£70,700	£72,121
Mission Fund	£5,006	£2,343
Repair Funds	£28,072	£41,947
Small Funds	£500	£500
Vicar's Discretionary Fund	£1,646	£1,538
Pre-School Fund	£19,114	£22,596
HYCFM Fund	£10,000	£0
Net current assets less current liabilities	<b>£179,559</b>	<b>£178,518</b>

The PCC approved the 2017 v2 budget, with a small year-end forecast deficit of £339, which includes provision for a Head of Youth, Children and Families Ministry from April 2017.

I would like to again record thanks to all those who help and support the financial tasks within St Mark's - the Gift Aid Secretary, Payroll Management Officer, the office staff, the offering counting team, banking cash and management of Pre-School accounts. I also thank the PCC Finance Task Group for their support and guidance throughout the year.

Approximately 95% of our General Fund income is from voluntary giving and we thank God for the sacrificial giving of so many that His work may continue and grow here and beyond.

*Glyn Allen, Treasurer*

### **Fabric, Goods and Ornaments**



The following buildings, associated land and other related assets are entrusted to us and it is our corporate responsibility to care for their upkeep led by the Churchwardens and PCC. Our responsibility relates to:

- St Mark's Church
- The Old Vicarage
- The Vicarage Hall
- The Garden House.

The maintenance of The Vicarage is the responsibility of the Diocesan Board of Finance and minor works have been undertaken by them during the year.

### **Property Task Group**

This sub-committee of the PCC meets to ensure that our various buildings are fit for Christian mission and activity as well as to oversee the work necessary to keep our buildings in good running

order. We would like to thank the members of this group for their diligence and in particular, Graham Wilkins and Mic Aldington, who continue to make themselves available to respond to emergency repairs and generally serve in a selfless manner.

Some members of the Task Group, as well as Peter Guinness, Richard Tolhurst, Keith Sheepwash, Trevor Dyer, Glyn Allen and Kelvin Summoogum continue to meet as a specific Buildings Development Group to oversee the Accessible Toilet project.

### **Quinquennial Inspections**

The Church building is inspected every five years by a Diocesan appointed surveyor - this is known as the Quinquennial Inspection (QQ). The report makes recommendations on short, medium and long term issues and assesses the amount to be contributed to the Diocesan Repair Fund which will assist in the financing of such works. The Church was last inspected in October 2013. Most matters associated with that inspection have now been dealt with, especially given the significant work on the Church roof during this year. The Property Group are looking to address the balance of the issues at the same time as the work being undertaken for the accessible toilets.

### **The Church**

We hope, in the early part of next year, to finally start making good progress on the accessible toilet project; for plans to be agreed by the Diocese giving us a green light to proceed. We believe that we have the funds to cover the costs but will not know this for certain until the final estimates are in. (**Stop Press** – we are pleased to confirm that this is the case and are now busy getting quotes with a view to work starting after the Summer break!)

The AV team have continued with the running replacement of items needed to support our activities.

We undertook significant repairs to the Church roof and rainwater goods because of storms; these costs have been met by our insurers where the cost has exceeded our policy but have still involved us in significant expense. The tiles on the roof are not nailed down so unless something is done to rectify this long term, we will inevitably continue to face a problem each time the wind blows hard. Obviously, to nail them all down now would have a large cost implication which wouldn't be covered by the insurers.

We have not lost sight that one of the two Church boilers remains out of commission. We are not unduly concerned as the other boiler continues to heat the Church effectively, but it does leave us exposed if our final ageing boiler fails. The Property Group will be

discussing this issue in the context of the work being undertaken in the vestry area.

Finally, we would like to particularly thank the small team - who know who they are - but especially Barry Hills, for their ongoing commitment to caring for the building and for litter-picking around the Church and Old Vicarage sites, especially on a Sunday morning.

Thanks also to Robert Bitton and Stan Brown who have cleaned the church building during the year.

### **The Old Vicarage**

This building continues to be used significantly and is subject to running repairs; our thanks go to all who help in this regard.

Of more concern was the partial collapse of one of the boundary walls on the site, in an area of wall that is St Mark's responsibility. It would appear that the issue has arisen because of the growth of weeds down into the cavity between the two skins of the wall. We continue to be looking at repair/rebuilding options with the other parties responsible for sections of the boundary wall on this site. We are grateful to Graham Wilkins for some creative cement work to cap off the top of the collapsed section and ensure that no further water ingress can happen.

Again, thank you to Stan for his commitment to cleaning the premises.

### **Vicarage Hall**

The Hall also remains in almost constant use and is in regular need of repair as a consequence.

We are grateful to Graham Wilkins and Kev Hall for polishing the Hall floor over the summer as well as Steve and Lynn Trebill for their diligence in cleaning the Hall week by week.

### **The Garden House**

Richard, Kathryn and family moved onto pastures new in May and the Garden House has been empty since then. There will need to be some work done to get it fit for purpose; this is largely superficial, although the GRP fascia and rainwater goods are all in need of repair. We are pleased to advise that we have the verbal agreement of the Diocese to share the cost of this work. From October, the Diocese have been paying us rent for its use by the University Chaplain, who, as at December 2016, was still to be appointed.

Particular thanks to Denise Young in turning out to single-handedly clean the Garden House (and Terry in clearing the garden) in preparation for interviews for the Chaplain's role.

## **The Vicarage**

The Diocese continue to undertake maintenance of the Vicarage in support of Saju, Katy and the family living there.

*Deano Standing and Terry Whittaker (Churchwardens)*

## **Proceedings of the PCC**

PCC met nine times following the April 2016 APCM, welcoming new members Helen Towers; Rob Byles; Denise Young; Jonathan Mann; Luke Prankard.

Each meeting commenced with a short Bible reading and time spent in prayer, and was chaired by Saju or Terry.

Three of our meetings were a short 'All-PCC' meeting followed by Task Groups meeting separately to focus on HR, Finance and Property. Task Groups put in a considerable amount of time and effort to progress key issues impacting Church life, with proposals and decisions being brought to wider PCC. A brief summary below:

<b>Property</b> Accessible toilets project, repair works and long-term maintenance requirements.	<b>HR</b> Head of Youth, Children and Families role description, job advertisement and interviews.
<b>Finance</b> Looking at income and expenditure against 2016 budget and the 2017 proposed budget. Discussing our offer payment to the Diocese.	<b>Mission Links</b> Meeting outside PCC, looking at giving to our mission partners and proposing changes for the coming year.

At every meeting, detailed updates were provided by Treasurer, Glyn Allen on finances, and Gift Aid Secretary, John Beck on giving.

Throughout the year, reports were gratefully received regarding Pre-School, Children and SPLAT! events, Foodbank and Students and internationals.

In 2016, discussions and decisions have also included:

- Health & Safety matters, including security cameras in Church
- Funding and preparation for the Big Lunch
- The appointment of a Chaplain for the Universities
- Approval of Youth and Children's events
- MAP updates and agreeing the purpose framework
- News of our new curate
- The 2018 mission trip
- The future vision for Pre-School

- Centralised administration for St Mark's and SMIC
- The new Church website

As PCC members are trustees, we are careful that actions taken and decisions made are discussed, reported, agreed and documented, prayerfully bearing in mind that decisions are aligned to God's will rather than our own.

*Becky Pedder, PCC Secretary*

## **Electoral Roll**

During the period 2016-2017, we've recorded 9 leavers and 18 newcomers at St Mark's, taking the total on the Electoral Roll to 191. Similarly, 6 regular worshippers left St Mary's Island and 6 new members joined, therefore the total on the Electoral Roll remains at 64. The two tables below provide a breakdown of the movements recorded during 2016-17.

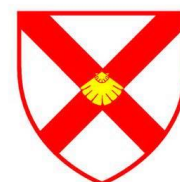
St Marks	<b>Activity</b>	<b>Qty</b>	<b>Qty</b>
	Total in 2016 report		182
	Left	9	
	Deceased	0	
	Joined E/Roll in 2016/2017		18
	<b>Total in 2017 Report</b>		<b>191</b>

St Mary's	<b>Activity</b>	<b>Qty</b>	<b>Qty</b>
	Total in 2016 report		64
	Left	6	
	Deceased		
	Joined E/Roll in 2016/2017		6
	<b>Total in 2017 report</b>		<b>64</b>

*Kelvin Summoogum, Electoral Roll Officer*

## **Rochester Diocesan Synod Report**

The Rochester Diocesan Synod met three times during the last synodical year in March, June and October. Through the year there was clear emphasis on the future direction of ministry in Rochester Diocese with Bishop James putting forward proposals for future deployment of clerical and lay ministry in the Diocese.





At the March meeting, there was an interesting item on the various **Diocesan overseas partnerships** and Synod reaffirmed its links despite the present financial and other pressures on the Diocese. As usual, there was a financial item updating the Synod on the financial situation of the Diocese and its £600,000 shortfall in funding for its various ministries. Plans for the preparation of the Budget for the next financial year were considered.

In June, at the Math's School, we had an excellent presentation on **Mission** from the **Diocesan Youth Council** after an encouraging call to mission from the retiring Director of Mission & Community Engagement, Canon Jean Kerr (a former staff member of St. Mark's).

The young people from the Youth Council left us with these questions;

Mission – Why do it?

Mission – What does it look like?

Mission – Whose responsibility is it?

Mission – How can we make it happen?

This was followed by an item on **Deployment for Mission and Ministry** with the increasing effort on Clerical and Lay Vocation. We were told the future would see a reduction of stipendiary clergy nationally from 8,100 to 6,400 by 2021 (21% less). The estimated pro-rata loss for the Diocese of Rochester would be 50 full-time equivalent clergy less. It was suggested a number of indicators would be agreed in the Diocese to determine future deployment of full-time clergy. These would include population, congregation size and growth in numbers, financial strength and engagement with the community amongst other things.

At the end of the year, at the October Meeting, **the Strategic Framework Project for the Diocese** was launched with all of us in the Diocese invited to take part in "Our Conversation; Our Future". This is an opportunity for all of us to share our thoughts on the way ahead for the Diocese. The other main item was the **Budget for the Diocese in 2017** and the accounts for 2015. The final Diocesan Budget deficit for 2015 was £552,875 even with some parishes giving more money towards the end of the year and various items being frozen such as staff salaries. So, the diocese is in a very difficult situation trying to juggle its finances to fund the work it would like to do.

And so, on to the last year in this session of the Diocesan Synod with the next meeting on March 18<sup>th</sup> 2017, which will have taken place by the time of the Annual Meetings at St. Mark's and St. Mary's Island Churches. Amongst the agenda items for this meeting The Archdeacon of Bromley and Bexley will present **Safeguarding –**

**New Patterns for Governance and Resourcing.** With the number of cases of historic child abuse by church personnel constantly in the news this is an area in which everyone must endeavour to follow the guidelines as laid down by the Archbishop's Council.

*Canon Ernie Mann, Diocesan Synod Representative*

### **Gillingham Deanery Synod**

It took just 34 days into the New Year for the Gillingham Deanery Synod to convene its first meeting of 2016 on February 3<sup>rd</sup> at St Barnabas church hall. For all meetings, unless there are items of significance in the core agenda items, these will pass without comment.

The **Mission and Ministry Plan** forming part of the North Gillingham Review is moving forward. Of the six areas of **Mission and Evangelism** identified in the previous September 2015 Synod, two are up and running – Café Church in Costa Coffee in Rainham and the Night Shelter. The latter had been running for just over four weeks at the time of the Synod and was reported as being 70% full and having clocked up 1,700 volunteer hours. Other initiatives involving Street Pastors and a Deanery post-confirmation Discipleship Course are works in progress.

As host church, **St Barnabas** reported on what was happening within their parish, but the main part of the evening was given to the Rev'd Mark Griffin, Diocesan Lead Vocations Advisor, who spoke on '**A Look at Vocation**' complete with handout. Highlighting we were all called as Christians, he encouraged us to examine what our vocation might be and follow up with attendance at vocation courses held within the Diocese. Time was given to talk through what we had heard in groups and take back to our churches. The Rural Dean (the Rev'd Ann Richardson) said that she will buy all the short courses and encourage parishes to run one of the short courses each year.

The next Deanery Synod was held on June 2<sup>nd</sup> at St Luke's parish hall. Rev'd Paul Matthias reported on what was going on in the parish mentioning that **St Luke's** was a church plant from St Mark's. Mission and outreach continues with limited resources but they are able to sustain communion and a Bible study in local sheltered housing. A Crafty church and Youth Group runs monthly incorporating a short service afterwards. Attendance had increased as a result of new developments around.

Canon Ernie Mann reported on **Diocesan Synod**. Most notable being, it is now mandatory that anyone leading or preaching needs to prove that they have a clear DBS check.

Mission and Ministry Plan for the Deanery was no longer relevant but had been superseded by '**Leading Your Church Into Growth (LYCIG)**' which was seen as an opportunity for collaboration, where parishes can optimise their strengths and be supported in weaker areas. Arising from this were the youth gathering at Brompton Academy in July, a dementia day at St Matthew, Wigmore and a joint effort for promoting wedding preparation and good practice will re-start. The Synod gathered into parish groups to discuss questions relating to various ways in which cross parish help and collaboration might be given for a number of different initiatives. Parishes identified needs while others identified help that could be given all of which were recorded. In particular, St Mark's offered PA and sound set-up assistance plus ideas and materials for children's work. It was suggested that a Deanery circular could be issued containing such information. A draft Mission and Ministry Plan would be available for the September Synod.

**The North Gillingham review** - the Rural Dean was additionally Priest-in-Charge at St Barnabas and the details were being worked on with a view to be presented to the Bishop by the end of the year.

**[Post-meeting note:** St Barnabas will continue as a parish church].

The final meeting of 2016 took place at All Saints, Hempstead on 29<sup>th</sup> September. **The Diocesan financial situation** took centre stage with the Chair of the Diocesan Board of Finance, Judith Armit and the Diocesan Secretary, Geoff Marsh delivering the presentation. The financial position is somewhat serious having medium to longer term adverse consequences for the Diocese and, by extension, the parishes. Much is being done to trim expenditure but parish contributions have not been as generous as might have been expected especially from the better off parishes. This is a situation that will continue to be with us until parishes develop a mindset of sacrificial giving.

**The host church** reported that life at All Saints was small in number, elderly yet with occasional highlights involving families. The transition from family activities to church membership is still one that is difficult to make.

**The North Gillingham review** was planned to be given in November to identify where efforts should be concentrated for effective mission.

**The winter night shelter** which had resulted from last year's Deanery Synod was seen as a success in terms of accommodating

people. The number of those finding housing and work was disappointing. To overcome communication problems, a full-time co-ordinator would be employed raising the cost from £14K to £20K. More offers of overnight accommodation were also required in addition to volunteers.

Although progress is relatively (and inevitably) slow, initiatives to show love and compassion in Jesus' name are coming from Deanery Synod and being seen in action. Ideas for initiatives are encouraged at every meeting. It is the vision to see inter-parish co-operation and working together develop and grow, sharing resources and playing to the strengths of each parish.

*Graham Davis, Deanery Synod member*

**Gillingham Deanery Synod:** St Augustine; St Barnabas; St Luke; St Mark (including St Mary's Island); St Mary Magdalene; Holy Trinity, Twydall; St Margaret, Rainham; South Gillingham (St Matthew, Wigmore – All Saints, Hempstead – St Paul, Parkwood – St Peter, Bredhurst)



## **Additional Reports**

### **ALPHA – An Introduction to the Christian Faith**

At the beginning of February, we began the twelve weekly Alpha Course evenings, plus one Saturday session. Each evening started with a meal (cooked by church members) followed by a time to watch a DVD presentation of the session theme, for example 'Why did Jesus die?'. We then took time as a group to discuss what we had watched and encouraged feedback from group members. As the weeks went by we found that attendees became more open to hearing the Christian message and some made the decision to commit themselves to the Lord.

As always, it was a blessing to be part of Alpha and see God working in people's lives.

*Keith Sheepwash on behalf of the team*



### **Audio Visual Equipment**

This year has been very good as far as keeping equipment running, but the projector is beginning to show signs of ageing.

Chris has been making improvements to the network, which now means that leaders and preachers can use both PC's and Mac's at the front of church.

Unfortunately, Bruce is no longer on the team as he has moved to another church for family reasons and both Mike Haslam and Mike Young have had to take time out for health reasons. I am, however, sure that with the team we still have we can continue to give the technical support needed to enhance worship.

Once again, we thank all the team who give up so much time, not only operating on Sundays, but maintaining and improving the system during the week.

*Mic, Chris and AV team*

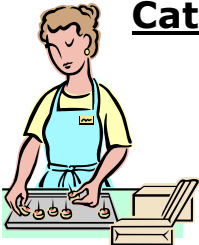


### **Baptism Visiting**

During 2016, we had several enquiries for infant baptism and, each time, contact was made to visit families at home to show the CPAS 'The First Steps - a parent's guide to baptism' DVD. This gives an overview of the Christian faith and talks about taking a journey of faith with your child, allowing an open discussion about the process of baptism and the promises we ask parents and Godparents to make.

We have now produced a booklet which is given to everyone who enquires about baptism; this outlines both the church's expectations and the process of baptism itself, as well as answers to frequently asked questions.

*Keith Sheepwash, Pastoral Assistant*



## **Catering and Hospitality**

2016 has been quite a busy year for the catering teams with various events and opportunities for St Mark's folks to offer hospitality and showcase their generosity, servant-heartedness, cooking and baking skills!

We started in March with a special celebration for the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of St Mark's Church, followed by the Passover meal on Maundy Thursday. Then came the sad but wonderful 'cake day' for Richard, Kathryn and the children's farewell. The Old Vicarage garden party for the Big Lunch was a huge success with many of the parish residents attending. There was also an afternoon tea for the over 60's within the church community, as well as three SPLAT! events - Olympics, Harvest and sadly the last one at Christmas.

In the lead-up to Christmas we also celebrated the Carer's Carol Service in church, and the Empty Chair Service. Sadly, we also had the Thanksgiving service for Rose's passing.

Thank you to all the members of St. Marks who baked cakes, served teas/coffees, cleaned up and washed up, without which none of these events could have taken place. THANK YOU!

*The catering teams*

## **Cricket Team - for St. Mark's & St. Mary's Island**

Amongst some of the new activities at St Mark's has been the formation of a cricket team. It has been quite surprising to discover the hidden depths lurking beneath the surface, both at St Mark's and St Mary's Island.



A few net practice sessions were arranged and with a few members already part of the village cricket scene, some ex-players coming out of retirement and some others being persuaded to have a go, this has been a further contribution in encouraging a family and communal atmosphere, especially when we have had a few spectators to view the talent on the field of play.

As the team started to find its feet, it was inevitable that some of our opposition was going to be a bit too strong, but the character and morale in the team remained upbeat, and by the end of the

season we were no longer a pushover and turned in some winning performances. Some games have been in the 20-20 format played in the evening, others have been longer games played during a weekend afternoon.

More net practice sessions have been underway for 2017, and some fixtures arranged. We look forward to another season of enjoying our great national summer sport!

*Guy Jackson*

## **Elderly Care:**

### **Charing House Care and Residential Home**

The monthly services at Charing House have continued throughout 2016 very much the same since the first service in January 2012 (following the 2011 Carol Service). Four teams, drawn from five local churches, operate on a rota basis to take a service on the second Sunday of each month. The service comprises of intercessions, confession, Scripture reading, a short talk, three hymns and a blessing. However, the after-service cup of tea and fellowship are equally important as contacts are made and we can share in the lives of the residents. As is the way in residential care homes, the attendance varies from 6 to – on a good day – 14. There is a small core of “regulars” who are mostly there and a wider number whose attendance ranges from fairly regularly to very occasionally. We are very much indebted to Diane and Becky for bringing the residents who are able and want to come, without whose help and cheerful support, the event would not happen.

Each of the four teams has a leader to whom I am very grateful, since their enthusiasm, reliability and competence save me a good deal of additional work! Two new leaders have come to their roles during the year making a seamless transition. They organise the service, allocate roles to individual members and just get on with it. This past year only one service was cancelled at short notice due to an outbreak of the *norovirus*. The Grand Finale, the Annual Carol Service almost didn't take place last December due to a shortage of team members for various reasons. However, I am grateful to those who helped and those who responded to a last-minute appeal to make the Carol Service happen. I am grateful to both God and yourselves for your help.

Additionally, a Holy Communion service is held on the last Monday afternoon of each month (adjusted for Bank Holidays) in the main Lounge at Charing House with attendance varying between 1 and 5.



Two retired clergymen alternate each month to take this service. I am very grateful to these two people for their commitment which, on the odd occasion, might be fruitless if some of the residents are ill or other things prevent them coming.

For such a large number of people involved in the four teams, the support has been remarkably stable for which we thank God. However, inevitably people drop out for various reasons so I am always able to accommodate any new people who feel they would like to help out at Charing House. Particularly welcomed would be musicians (keyboard player or guitarists) but not exclusively so. The commitment is basically 1 hour three times a year which is not too taxing. Thanks to the addition of some recruits during the year we have no serious shortages but we can always do with a few more who may like to minister in this way. If I got sufficient to make another team, the commitment would be even less. Please contact Graham Davis for a chat to find out more.

It is one area of service where churches of different denominations seamlessly serve the residents of Charing House as "The Church" in North Gillingham. It is very much appreciated by the residents and staff knowing that we have a concern to serve those of more mature years and nourish them spiritually.

*Graham Davis*

### **St Mark's House**

On the second Sunday of each month we provide a short church service to the elderly residents of St Mark's House sheltered housing. Through this service, which lasts about 30-40 minutes we aim to provide relaxed fellowship and spiritual refreshment. Services include prayer, praise and worship and a short talk for the purpose of reflecting on God's Word. Informal fellowship takes part after the service with a cup of tea and biscuits.

The meetings are organised by St Mark's Church with help and support given by loyal representatives from a number of other churches. Numerous speakers are invited throughout the year chosen mainly from lay readers and other willing volunteers. Some services include Holy Communion which periodically includes prayer for healing and anointing with oil.

Generally, we have five elderly residents who attend but considerably more came for the Christmas Carol Service at which we were particularly blessed by Kathryn Thom and her choir who led the singing. Everyone had a joyous time praising God with over twenty people filling the lounge and tucking into mince pies afterwards!

*Richard and Jane Tolhurst*



## **Eritrean Church**

The Eritrean Church have been holding their services, every Tuesday evening, at St Mark's since September 2016. The demography of the congregation are young people aged 16-20 living in Medway, Maidstone and Gravesend. The average attendance ranges between 20-40 members on a weekly basis. The mode of worship is orthodox and is narrated in two/three different languages. Regular fasting and visits to a Monastery are central to the youths' worship.

Beyond offering a place to worship to the Eritrean youths, the leadership at St Mark's discerned a prophetic gospel work to come alongside these youngsters to build relationships, promote dignity and respect for and around them.

Therefore, in November, a curry night at the Shipa Restaurant was arranged to bring together our church members, the Eritrean Church and other key stakeholders in our community. It was a delightful evening of relationship building, where some of the young men shared their harrowing escape from child-soldier recruitment to their treacherous journeys to the UK. They also shared their hopes and aspirations of getting to know local families, fluency in English and becoming University graduates.

In December, a needs assessment was carried out to ascertain their actual need rather than what we perceived to be their need. The following were identified as the top five: 1. Legal status 2. University aspirations 3. Entrepreneurship 4. Sports club membership 5. Technological access. As a Church, we also recognised that these youths are vulnerable to hostility and prejudice, therefore there's a constant church volunteer present throughout every service.

2017 will hold more dinners, networking, empowerment events and a mobile application launch. Overall, the young men have expressed a sense of belonging and see themselves as part of our extended Church family.

*Siju Adeoye*





## **Faith & Light**

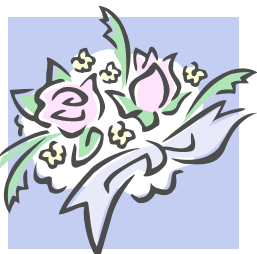
Faith and Light is a church community for anyone, of any age, with a learning disability and their families and carers. We have a community for adults that meets fortnightly on Wednesday evenings, 6.30 – 8.30pm in the Vicarage Hall, except for August. Our evenings are spent learning more about our Christian faith together in a fun and relevant way. We regularly have between twenty and thirty people at our meetings and all are encouraged to take an active part. During August this year, we met twice in Costa for 'coffee and catch up'; also, many of our community joined a 'Hand in Hand' Celebration with other communities from the South of England in Bristol and many of us went to visit Minister Abbey to spend time with the Benedictine Nuns.

We have a Faith and Light Junior community for those aged 16 and under which meets every second Saturday of the month, 10.30am – 12, during term-time. We have a mixture of games, craft, messy play, story, song and prayer led by a dedicated team, all who have experience of working with children with additional needs. We have a small number of families who attend regularly, and this is growing!!

This year the Adult and Junior communities came together in July for a BBQ and a joint Christmas party, where we were privileged to have a Family Trust puppet show!!! A fun and blessed time for all!!

*Karen & Trevor Dyer*

## **Flower Arrangements and Displays Team**



A small team of church members organise the weekly arrangements of flowers at the front of church and in the church entrance. At present, we mainly use artificial flowers with fresh greenery except when people have sponsored an arrangement or on specific church festivals i.e. Easter, Christmas etc. On these occasions, fresh flowers may be used.

I hope you will agree these arrangements add greatly to the church worship area.

*Keith Sheepwash on behalf of the team*

## **His Majesty's Gospel Choir**

His Majesty's Gospel Choir is a music group that consists of various people who enjoy singing; an individual does not have to be a musical genius or be a part of St Mark's – all you need to do is:

- 1) Enjoy singing
- 2) Be comfortable with singing in front of a crowd
- 3) Have a voice that carries a tone/melody
- 4) Be filled with brotherly/sisterly love

We do not limit ourselves to Christian songs alone, we also dabble into inspirational/motivational songs, in as much as it portrays a positive message. Obviously, Christ is the foundation, centre and crown of the group but we aim not to use this grace in a judgemental or uncomfortable way when reaching out to the public. We love fun and creativity.

2016 was the quietest year we have had, due to some of our members falling ill, going to University or other church commitments. We lost a dear, significant member of the group too.

Although, one of the requirements for us to be an 'official' part of St Mark's was for the choir to have a secretary and treasurer, we have been unable to achieve this because of various individuals' commitment.

We had an invitation to sing at one of the youth events organised by the Medway Youth Trust; although many of us were unable to attend we achieved our goal with those that made it. A small number of us also attended a music workshop at Medway University. We were also invited to sing with the MEDWAY CAN SING mass choir. A further invitation was extended to us for the 'Churches Together Sunday' at King's Church and a small number of us attended. We also sang during an event that celebrated all religion. Most of our performance really carries the crowd along and we have, in most cases, been invited back to perform.

Our aim is to reach out to both the church and unchurched, to share hopes and positivity within our immediate environment. Massive appreciation also goes out to those in the choir who have added positively to the growth of the group.

*Mayowa Oyinloye*

## **Ladies Group**

*No report submitted*

## **MAP (Mission Action Plan) Group**

During 2016 there was lots of talk about MAP – who, what, why, when, how is MAP?

Saju invited a group of eight people (Chris Atkins, Becky Cooper, Martin Hunter, Lynne Martin, Martha Prankard, Raymond Shergill, Terry Whittaker and Graham Wilkins) to come together over a period of months to listen and discern what God was saying to St Mark's, in order to develop a Mission Action Plan that would enable the church to have a focus, a vision, a way forward for the next five years. That's the 'who, what, why and when' but what about the how?

The MAP process involved lots of discussion, prayer, reflection, a fantastic listening week when many church members got involved in a variety of ways to listen to God, each other and the community, more discussion, reflection and prayer, with the result that the following purpose and values statements should shape our thinking and focus over the coming years.

### **St. Mark's Purpose and Values**

<b>Living for Jesus</b>	<b>Loving Gillingham</b>	<b>Learning together</b>
<b>Means that we:</b>		
Acknowledge the authority of God's Holy word, the Bible, and prioritise prayer;	Are a welcoming and safe place, a beacon of hope in the community;	Are an inclusive and diverse, yet unified, community who are committed to each other;
Are a worshipping community, where Jesus is the centre of our focus;	Are outward looking and intentional about sharing the Good News of Jesus both here and abroad;	Make and grow disciples who study the Bible and are open to the Holy Spirit and His gifting;
Do everything with integrity, to the best of our ability, and with joy.	Prosper the local community by valuing the place and people of Gillingham.	Develop leadership through training, support and encouragement of <u>all</u> ages.

Please continue to pray and listen to what God is saying through these statements – What is your role? Where do you fit in? Does our life and ministry as a church reflect the fact that we are committed to living for Jesus, loving Gillingham and learning together?

*Chris Atkins, on behalf of Saju and the MAP group*



## **Medway Foodbank Centre for Gillingham**

St. Mark's Foodbank has been running well throughout 2016. We have distributed 616 food vouchers to people in crisis. The vouchers were issued by a variety of referral agencies across the Medway Towns including: Age UK, Support Services, Primary Schools, Academies, Children's Centres, Health Care Professionals, Mental Health Professionals and Churches. From these vouchers, 823 were adults and 472 were children, totalling 1,295 people fed. There has been a steady increase in food donations being brought to us, both by the public and from other churches; this is then forwarded to the warehouse for re-distribution.

We continue to offer prayer to our clients with a 90-95% uptake and also invite them to our Church service on a Sunday.

We are not here just to offer food - a big part of what we do is to signpost people to organisations that can help, for example: CAP (Christians Against Poverty) money course for people with debt problems; the ALPHA course for those who would like to go further in exploring Christianity; housing & homelessness for people facing eviction; The Night Shelter for people who are sleeping rough; and also for those suffering domestic abuse or alcohol & drug abuse. Sometimes a friendly face and a telephone number of an organisation that might be able to help will be all it takes to really make a difference in someone's life.

We are also involved in a new initiative called Medway R.E.A.P (Restoration - Empowerment - Action - Purpose). Medway REAP is a partnership of Medway Charities which include Strood Community Project, All Saints Community Project, Home Start, MEGAN (Medway Engagement Group And Network) who offer help for people with mental health needs and MRS Letting (Mid-Kent Residential Services). All these charities are committed to helping anyone who is in hardship crisis.

In 2016/17 Medway Foodbanks issued 2,661 vouchers and those affected 5,847 people - 3,700 (63%) adults and 2,147 (37%) children.

Out of the total, 1,364 (23%) gave 'benefit delays' as the main reason for their crisis, 1,304 (22%) said the main problem was 'low income, 1,293 (22%) said 'benefit changes' were the main reason for their crisis, 521 (9%) said that 'debt' was their number one issue.

Ian Childs, Project Manager of Medway Foodbank, says "*I am simply overwhelmed by the generosity of those that donate their food, money or time to Medway Foodbank. Without them it would simply not happen. I am particularly grateful to those that are able to meet*

*people at their point of need and to reveal the love of God, through His local church. The team at St Mark's are a vital part of the work of Medway Foodbank... my deepest thanks to you all."*

*Paul Smith*

### **Men's Group/Curry Nights**

*No report submitted*

### **Mission Links Task Group (MLTG)**

The Mission Links Task Group (MLTG) is a sub-committee of the PCC responsible to oversee support of our Mission Partners through prayer, pastoral care and financial support. MLTG recommends to the PCC how we allocate our Mission Giving (10% of our previous year's voluntary income), and other Away Giving.

There were some changes in our Mission Partners portfolio in 2016. After many years, we finished supporting Mike and Helen Tozer and wish them, with Hannah and Josiah, many blessings as they settle into life in Australia. We also stopped supporting Andy Flintoff on his return to the UK, after twelve months with Mission Year in Philadelphia USA.

We have continued to support Katy Barnwell (Wycliffe), Tim and Tricia Barrow (SIM), Lucy Haslam (UFM), Carrie McFarlane (Mission India), Francis and Diane Dognon (France), Hyndman's Trustees (our Patron), Tearfund (Change a Nation) and Word on the Street (Gillingham). We also made one-off donations to the Diocese of Rochester (mission support), Night Shelter (Medway), Rebecca Wilkins (LST mission trip) and the 'Let Loose' Concert (Gillingham).

It is good to receive news updates from those we support and these are published on our website. Please continue to pray for our Mission Partners and if you would like to join MLTG, please speak to either of us.

*Keith Sheepwash and Glyn Allen*



### **Music Worship**

Why do we worship with singing? And why do the worship leaders spend hours preparing to lead the congregation in song? I think the best way to explain this is with the opening lines to some of the songs themselves.

*Because O Lord I really want to praise You, In Christ alone my hope*

*is found, He is my light, my strength, my song. Bless the Lord O my soul, Oh my soul, worship His holy Name.*

*We want to Celebrate in the Lord He is the reason we rejoice; There's nothing worth more that will ever come close; You are my vision Oh Lord of my heart, This is my desire to honour You;*

*Over the last year, life has often made preparing and leading worship difficult, but By grace alone somehow I stand; and Even when the waters rise, Great is Thy faithfulness. There is power in the Name of Jesus and Strength will rise as we wait upon the Lord.*

*Sometimes we feel that A thousand times I've failed, or that There must be more than this, but with Jesus at the centre of it all, we know that All things are possible and Holy Spirit You are welcome here.*

*So, in all things, we Give thanks to the Lord our God and King, O come let us adore Him.*

*Graham Wilkins on behalf of the worship teams*

## **Prayer Ministry Teams**

The prayer ministry teams continue to offer prayer and a listening ear in the strictest of confidence. This takes place in the small side chapel at the front of church after services, as well as at other times when required, for example: prayer stations offering anointing with oil, often after communion.



The team are there to listen, minister in prayer, anoint with oil for healing, to help you in your faith journey, hear your answers to prayer. We are here for you whatever you need.

*Keith Sheepwash on behalf of the team*

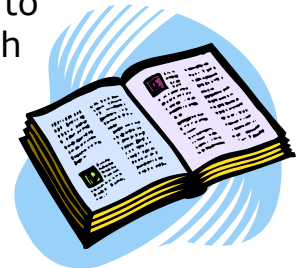
## **Small Groups**

Small Groups have continued to meet in a variety of locations and times to suit their members. Membership remains fairly static with some new members of the congregation having joined groups, but others having left for different reasons. The Junction group that was set up to offer people the chance to join in with studying King's Cross has continued as a small group.

The primary focus this year has been on enabling members of the small groups to reflect and discuss the messages from the Sunday sermon themes; these are planned by Saju and others as a result of listening to what God is wanting to say to us as a church, therefore it is good that as many people as possible have the opportunity to unpack the Bible passages and teaching further.

Leading and facilitating a small group is rewarding but it can also be a challenging role – we are extremely grateful to those who work hard to make the small groups happen, encouraging and building up the members through prayer, support, Bible study and social gathering. Over the year, we have seen some leaders take a 'sabbatical' and/or hand over the leadership role to others in the group – please continue to pray for all those in a leadership position at St Mark's. Small group leaders have continued to meet regularly throughout the year to support each other through discussion and prayer.

*Gary and Chris Atkins, small group co-ordinators*



## **Students and Internationals**

The past year has been a good one in the world of Students & Internationals. All our regular activities continue to go well, not necessarily high numbers, but a solid core of committed students who we see every week, either at the World Café or TABLEtalk or both. What we lack in numbers we make up for in depth of relationship.

In 2016, I attended a two-day Mental Health First Aid course. This was very helpful indeed as, sadly, I see students on a weekly basis that are struggling in this area.

**Current News:** As many of you will know, since January 2017 I have been covering the Medway Campus Chaplain post as an interim agreement. Mid-February I was successful at interview and by the time you are reading this I suspect I will have formally left the employ of St Mark's and be under contract with Rochester Diocese. There is no doubt lots of adventures ahead and I continue to value your prayers as I work alongside the three university institutions at the Medway Campus.

As always, I want to thank all those who give their time and energy to helping out at the World Café, TABLEtalk and through our Hosting Scheme.

*Lynne Martin, Students & Internationals Co-ordinator*

## **Winter Night Shelter**

2016 saw the start of a new 'Churches Together in Medway' project called 'Winter Night Shelter'.

Starting in January and running for an initial 10-week period, the scheme would be run by volunteers from across the churches, each playing roles in a variety of different capacities, with the aim to



support the homeless and needy of Medway throughout the cold months of winter.

Each night, a maximum of 12 guests and 4 overnight volunteers would meet at the chosen venue where a hot meal was provided, followed by board games and activities, before the guests got settled for the night in their camp beds. A listening ear and a supporting hand was given to those who required it. The guests would also make use of the shower facilities and were given toiletries and clean clothes on a regular basis.

Over 100 volunteers took part in the scheme with a total of 11 different venues used during the run, and by the close, 28 different guests had entered through its doors, and, as the project was well received by both volunteers and guests, a decision to extend the shelter by another 4 weeks was made 😊. At the end of the run, each guest was given a backpack containing some of the aforementioned products plus a tent and sleeping equipment.

Of course, the 'Shelter' couldn't have run without the financial support from various parties and organisations and the donations generated by St. Marks were greatly appreciated. During the run, lives and hearts were touched so much so that instead of saying bonjour, adios and goodbye, a couple of ideas and projects were set up to encourage and give our guests (who had become more our friends) ongoing support throughout the year 😊

*Kev Hall*

## **Youth, Children and Families Ministries**

### **Children**

**Crèche** (up to 3 years old, meeting on a Sunday morning)

The area at the back of church has continued to be used for crèche throughout the year on Sundays when SOS Club is running. Crèche is for children, under 3 years old and their parents, providing a small, protected area where parents can keep an eye on the service at the same time as their children play with the toys provided.



It has been good to get to know some regular babies and young children, as well as welcome newcomers and visitors and reassure them that even the youngest children are welcomed into the life of the church. Thank you to those of you who have helped to keep the crèche area relatively clear and clean – we recognise that it is a multi-use building but setting up is made much easier when there aren't tables, chairs and display boards to move 😊. Keeping the cupboard locked has also helped to keep the resources safe and

age-appropriate for under 3's. Most parents and carers take note of the notices that the crèche is for children up to the age of three, but please don't be offended if we ask you not to let your older children play in this area. If crèche is running, then there will be SOS Club or Pathfinders available – groups that are more suitable for older ones to attend.

Thank you for your understanding in recognising and valuing the youngest members of the church family. Thank you to those who facilitate crèche and a special thank you to Katy as she steps down, for all her help and support; we are grateful for Alastair and Lucy joining the crèche rota.

*Chris Atkins, Natasha McCready, Katy Muthalaly, Alastair and Lucy Williams*

### **St. Mark's Pre-School** (for 2 to 4 year olds, Monday to Friday during term-time)



St. Mark's Pre-School continues to provide a safe and stimulating environment for Pre-School children, five mornings a week. The three and four year olds, as well as a small number of two year olds, access the government's Nursery Education Funding to attend Pre-School. For other children who are two years old, their parents must meet the cost of the session fees.

During 2016, the Pre-School included an increasing number of two year olds. The staff team ably met the challenge of providing the curriculum to a younger cohort. Initially, places for two year olds were offered at a rate that would encourage parents to take up this education opportunity. However, during the year, it became clear that the session fees were insufficient to meet the running costs and latterly the session fees have been increased.

The staff team saw some changes during the year, but has remained stable since September. The staff have a dedicated team approach and are led by Julie Hanning, the Pre-School Manager. The team benefits from additional support for snack time and access to cover for practitioners as required. Currently the role of Senco is vacant. Julie and the Pre-School team are dedicated and work hard to maintain the quality of the curriculum delivered.

Pre-School provides full access to the Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum for over 30 young children. The staff team plan learning activities that are fun as well as providing a challenge. These learning opportunities help the children develop their abilities and self-esteem. Where children require extra support this is

incorporated into the planning and support. The focus of the Pre-School staff team is to ensure a high-quality learning environment for all the children who attend.

The Pre-School Management Committee meets four times a year. As well as ensuring that policies and procedures are in place and regularly reviewed, the committee receives reports from Julie on the day-to-day issues and successes of Pre-School. Over the last year, Julie has reported on the progress made by the individual children.

Although this is the 2016 Pre-School report it is important to note that in 2017 there will be a number of “retirements” of key members of the Management Committee. With this in mind we have been making the initial steps towards a partnership arrangement to support the on-going work of Pre-School. We will be able to report more about this in the near future.

*Suzanne Wilkins, Chair of St. Mark’s Pre-School Management Committee*

**SOS Club** (for 3-11 year olds, meeting on a Sunday morning)



SOS Club is run by a team of volunteers who are committed to sharing God’s love with the children of St. Mark’s and equipping them as they grow in their faith. It continues to meet most Sunday mornings, during term-time, from 10.20–11.40am in the Old Vicarage. The first Sunday of each month is an All-Age service and each fifth Sunday we join with the rest of the church family for a Baptism service in church.

Numbers continue to fluctuate week by week but, on average, there are 20 plus children who come to play, make, create, learn about Jesus, pray and eat – all whilst having fun. This tends to be an equal split between 3-5 year olds and 6-11 year olds. We are grateful to the parents/carers who entrust us with their children and with whom it is a real joy to spend time.

From January to July, along with the wider church, we looked at the King’s Cross and the Frontline series and then, in July, ended the school year with our annual visit to FunDrum– a soft play venue – where the children continued to prove they were braver than the leaders with their escapades on the drop slide!! Thanks to the PCC for helping to support this financially.

The start of the new school year in September saw a change in the team as we said goodbye to Becky Cooper (who had stoically stepped in for a year to fill a gap; Lisa Hambling, who graduated and moved away to start her new job; Charlie Blewett; and Rob Bitton. We are very grateful to them all for their commitment and all they

brought to the group. At the same time, Niamh Cooper joined us a junior leader.

With a new term, new team and new children, we also had new teaching material from Energize (who are part of Urban Saints). Again, big thanks to the PCC for agreeing the annual subscription fee for what we have found are excellent resources and ideas and which are available for all areas of youth, children and families work, both at St Mark's and St Mary's Island. At SOS, we started the Christian Foundations course, looking at various subjects ranging from 'Who is God?' to 'Jesus' Mission' and 'The Holy Spirit'. This will finish around February 2017.

None of this would happen without a committed and talented team. Please remember to thank them!

**TEAM:** *Caz Read, Stuart Read, Charlie Burston, Des Burston, Sheena Davidson, Jo Whittaker, Lucy Day, Claire Banner, Sam Richardson, Niamh Cooper.*

*Jo Whittaker on behalf of the team*

**Kidz Klub** (for 7-11 year olds on Friday nights during term-time 6.15pm – 7.30pm)

Kidz Klub continues to be the highlight to so many children's week. Every Friday approx. 40 children turn up ready to have fun (98% of whom are from non-church families), with new children joining on a weekly basis. These children need somewhere safe to come and have fun knowing that they are loved unconditionally and so, week by week, we continue to show God's love to these children by just being us.

**Last Easter**, we met on Good Friday and Richard England came to join us on the hot seat! The kids asked so many questions about the Easter story and life in general; Richard was great and the kids could have gone on for ages. **In September**, we sadly had to say goodbye to Lauren & Ruby, who were an amazing part of our team and have been missed greatly - we would like to thank them for being part of our team! The children raised an impressive £80 **in November** for Children in Need by inviting their parents to buy cakes they made and drink hot chocolate. The hall was packed and we had some great conversations with the parents as well!

We all have different memories of Kidz Klub from the past year: our end of term summer party; our food from around the World evening; and a highlight has got to be our party in the dark with lots of glow sticks. One boy said, *'this is just mad it's totally amazing!'*

The children continue to amaze us with what they say and even some of the little things we do have such an impact on their lives.

Prayers for the future would be:

- We have over 60 children on our books; we really need some more leaders going forward. It doesn't need to be every week - could Kidz Klub be for you?
- What happens after Kidz Klub is still an issue. There is another large group of year 6's that will sadly be leaving us in July 2017. Currently there still isn't anything to offer them..... is this another group of young people we are going to lose ☹
- We have a vision for summer 2017 to have a BBQ that we can invite all the parents along to as well, please pray that this is something we can do!

Jason and I would really like to say a massive thank you to such a fantastic team. We really wouldn't be able to do it without you!

**TEAM:** *Jason Read, Nat Read, Stu Read, Lesley Boast, Lorraine Schulze, Darren Thom, Lucy Wheatley, JT Mann, Zac Schulze and James Higgins & Eva McIntyre, our two Year 9 helpers! Plus, a special thank you to Caz Read who steps in regularly when we are short!*

*Nat Read on behalf of the team*

**SPLAT! Holiday Club** (for 7-11 year olds during October half-term)

So, what happened to SPLAT! in 2016? Did you miss it? Around the midpoint of 2016, the SPLAT! planning team reached a decision following lengthy discussions, much prayer and sleepless nights(!); the outcome being that we were unable to achieve SPLAT! 2016. This was also influenced by long standing team members who, for a variety of reasons, were unable to commit to SPLAT! Holiday Club this year. Although we had a sense of sadness we also had complete peace and believed it right for SPLAT! Holiday Club to "go on holiday" for 2016. At the time, the planning team saw this as an opportunity for us as a church to reflect on what SPLAT! is and redefine its vision, purpose and function within the life of the wider church. The planning team also continue to believe that this is a time for something new; a time to do something different using the relationships that have already been made with the families within our community.

The planning team are acutely aware that there are numerous people across St Mark's Church and beyond who have been part of the SPLAT! Holiday Club team in one way or another over the



(many!) years it has been running - whether that's as a group leader or helper, on the refreshment team, techie team, welcome team, or in a variety of other ways! We want to thank you for your commitment to, and support for, all that SPLAT! is and has been over the last 16 years and encourage you to join with us as we seek God's guidance for the future. It has been a joy to share in this work with you all over the years and we feel that there is still more to come; we would love you to be part of this and we look forward with anticipation and excitement for what is to come! But for now, "farewell SPLAT!"

*Becky Cooper*

### **Families:**

#### **SPLAT!@St.Mark's**

SPLAT!@St.Mark's (aka SPLAT! Saturday's) met five times during 2016. They continued to be gatherings where our family contacts from Kidz Klub, Parent and Toddlers and Pre-School, as well as church families, were invited to come and hear about God's love for them in a different but relevant way and to build community.

This past year has seen the SPLAT! Reunion where all those, past and present, were invited as part of St. Mark's 150<sup>th</sup> Celebration, SPLAT! Olympics, SPLAT! Harvest and SPLAT! Christmas, as well as inviting all SPLAT! families to the BIG LUNCH in June. Each Saturday had a different flavour, but with a common message of how God wants to be involved in our lives. Huge thanks to all those who helped in so many different ways - the techie team, serving refreshments, baking cakes, manning craft tables, chatting to all those who come along, clearing up, washing up, helping to move chairs.....! We couldn't have done it without you.

**TEAM:** *Jo Whittaker, Nat Read, Helen Towers, Becky Cooper, Karen Richardson, Mike Aldington, Lorraine Schulze, Caz Read, Katy Muthalaly, Chris Blewett, Martha Prankard and many others who help on the day!*

*Jo Whittaker on behalf of the team*

#### **Parent and Toddlers**



We are continuing to provide a safe, fun afternoon for pre-school children, their parents and carers every Wednesday afternoon during term-time. We play, paint, glue, sing, listen to a story and have a snack time together. We also celebrate special times and events such as Christmas, Easter, the

Olympics and the Queen's birthday.

This year has been difficult in terms of leaders. With just Ruth and myself remaining into September we have relied on Mums to help us set up and Ian giving up part of his "Dockyard day" to help put away. So, a huge plea!!! Is there anyone in St Mark's who could commit to joining us on a Wednesday afternoon??

With a large number of our children going to school in September 2016 we have worked hard to draw in new families. It has been good talking to these Mums as they share many issues which surround our community in general. These include childhood cancer, long-term parental health issues, serious injury and relationship breakdown. It has been a privilege to talk over these situations with individuals. Does anyone feel this is something they could be part of?

A huge thankyou to everyone who has helped us this past year. To Caz and Jo who have faithfully and lovingly reached out to young families over many years. To Ian and the group of Mums who help us set up and put away each week. Finally, a special award to Vanessa, Terry and Kathy, our ever-dependable kitchen team. We really could not operate without you!!

Please pray for us and the future of this group, particularly as part of the whole church ministry to young families in our community.

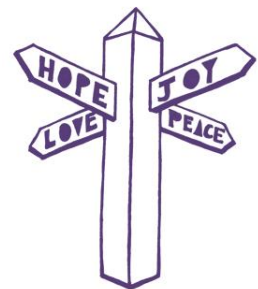
*Sheelagh Graves and Ruth Howard*

## **Youth:**

**Pathfinders** (school years 7 to 9, 11-14 year olds)

What is it?

Discipleship, community, fun and a genuine and personal relationship with Jesus is at the heart of Pathfinders. We meet most weeks on a Sunday morning with an emphasis on biblical teaching and developing community within the group and in relation to church in an enjoyable and loving environment. This group sees young people as disciples, letting them explore their faith in a safe space and encouraging questions.



What has happened this year?

Pathfinders has gone through some changes over the last year, welcoming new young people into the group and saying farewell to some others - this includes some of the leaders. We thank God for the service of Jacob Taylor and Lance Hanning who stepped down from PF in July. We were grateful for the support of temporary leaders Martha Prankard, Luke Prankard and Becky Cooper who



volunteered to cover the Autumn term. We are glad for the new leaders who have joined the group, including Joseph Roberts, Simon Morbey and Charmaine Jones.

Pathfinders has spent this year so far exploring biblical messages in relevant ways with the assistance of Youth Alpha (last academic year) and the Urban Saints material. The YA series was really positive and enabled our young people to understand their individual faith journeys that bit more. We started this academic year studying 'Fruitfulness on the Frontlines' alongside the series in church. This last term we have been studying 'Influences' which has investigated what we come face to face with every day that influences our choices and lifestyles and how we can let Jesus be our greatest influence. It has also been a time of getting to know our newer members and creating a comfortable environment tailored to them. Relationships have been developing and the young people have been maturing, asking more questions and engaging in conversations with the leaders about current topics.

Just before Christmas we moved from the Carers Building (opposite the back entrance of St Mark's) as it became unavailable. Although it was sad to leave such a great space, we have been able to settle into a room at the Old Vicarage fitting our group well. This space may be temporary as we consider alternate venues going forward.

#### What's next?

We have a social trip to Flip Out the trampoline park planned for the start of 2017. The Summer term will continue to be a time of exploring using material from Urban Saints. We hope to continue to promote a safe environment for questions to be asked and opinions to be shared, whilst encouraging feeding into the love that God has for each person through Jesus. We plan to have another Pathfinders trip during the summer term.

#### Please pray for the leaders:

Trevor Towers, Simon Morbey, Joseph Roberts, Charmaine Jones and Katie Byles.

#### Please pray:

- Thanks for the continuing meeting of Pathfinders, the faithfulness in the young people who come and the relationships that have been made within the group.
- Thanks for the provision of leaders and venue that allow Pathfinders to meet each session. Please pray for each young person to know God's love for them in a real personal way that sets good and healthy roots.
- Please pray that in 2017 the young people are encouraged to grow in their faith and enhance their commitment to God.



- Please pray for the provision of youth leaders as changes happen. Please pray for the appointment of the Head of Youth, Children and Families, that St Mark's consider and decide wisely, with enthusiasm and passion.

*Katie Byles*

**Landmark** (school years 9-13, 13-18 years old)

*No report submitted*

## **St Mary's Island**



### **St. Mary's Island Church (SMIC)**

#### **Electoral Roll and Statistics for Mission summary:**

The electoral roll reported figures for March 2016 were 64. In comparison with 2015 (63), three people ceased to attend/moved away, one died and there were two additions.

	<u>2015-16</u>	<u>2016-17</u>
Infant /child baptisms:	04	03
Adult baptisms	01	00
Thanksgivings:	04	01
Average Sunday attendance: (adults)	45	43

The average Sunday attendance figures show a slight decline over the past 4 years although the church membership, together with regular adherents, is growing.

#### **Outreach:**

- In September, we again hosted a welcome meal for the overseas students attending Greenwich University. This event was led by the Assistant Chaplain for students, Lynne Martin.
- Some people continue to offer their help at Charing House, together with other churches in Gillingham, to provide a Sunday afternoon service. Each group is called on about three times a year.
- Our Christmas services and events had quite a wide outreach this year with new initiatives of an outdoor evening carol service by the Community Centre and Messy Church. Together with the carols outside The Ship and Trades, the Christingle and Advent services, Messy Church on Christmas Eve and a Christmas Day service, the total attending over this period was 350 adults and 153 children.

- Messy Church was introduced at the end of March 2016 on Easter Saturday and has continued to attract a wide group of people including 145 adults and children who we do not see on Sundays. This has been a very successful introduction.
- Two young people's groups are run in the school on a Tuesday (after school) and at a lunch-time by church personnel (The Kings Squad and Revolution). Connect continued to meet until the end of June but attendance was very low and it was decided to discontinue this until there were enough personnel to run it at a different time – immediately after school.
- Our financial giving supports charities at home and abroad (MAF, Toybox, CMS (Peru), Morning Star Trust, Family Trust and Tearfund). The two children we have been supporting via Toybox have now grown up and no longer need our support. The DCC decided to give more support to the work in Peru instead.
- The Men's Curry Night continues as does the now well established and well attended Ladies Evening.
- We continue to link up with the local community and several members responded to the request for help at the re-established Youth Club held in the Community Centre and now help on a regular rota. This was coordinated by Carolyn in response to a request from the Chair of the SMI Residents Association.
- Two members are actively involved in the Medway Churches Night Shelter and others within the church have supported by means of material contributions.
- Another community venture was a church Dragon Boat Race team! Those not in the boat were actively showing a St Mary's Island Church presence by wearing beautifully designed T-shirts (by Henry).
- Our latest community focus is to provide and deliver 'Welcome packs' to the new build development behind the school (Azure sector). We have liaised with the Countryside Marketing Suite people and received a good welcome and offer to place any leaflets and information about SMIC in the marketing suite.

### **Life and Work of the church:**

- There are four **Home Groups**: three meet on a fortnightly basis and one monthly.
- Links with the **St Mary's Island School continue**: via school staff, volunteers and governor/volunteers, John Bloor helps with The King's Squad at the school and a team has led **school worship** every Tuesday (John Bloor, Carolyn Facey and Saju Muthalaly).
- **Prayer (God's Powerhouse)**: Two mid-week prayer meetings a month are well established and a prayer ministry

team is available after each service. Prayer before the morning service has been introduced at 10.30 a.m. each Sunday morning.

- The music group continues to meet fortnightly for practice and prayer and has tried to focus on the worship element of the service. Sandi stepped down as music co-ordinator and this role is now shared between Jonica and Luke. More people have become involved with the music group (Kathryn and Sola).
- Groups of church members attended Spring Harvest again this year.
- The café style Family services continue on the last Sunday of each month and usually has a visit from Malachi the mouse!
- Work with the children on a Sunday was led by Michelle Saunders (Kids 4 Christ) and Marilyn Watson (Children of God). Michelle and Dan moved to St Mark's at Christmas so Carolyn has taken on the role of leading Kids4Christ. More adult helpers have now become involved with both groups.
- More people have undergone updates for First Aid Training. To meet legal requirements Gwynne Grant was appointed the 'Safeguarder', Janet Mann the 'Verifier and Appointer' and Janet Adkin nominated for responsibility re. the Elderly and Vulnerable.
- We said farewell at a morning service to Revd Richard England as he took up his new post. Some Bring and Share lunches have continued and recently we had a special bring and share lunch for the baptism of Willow.
- A session with Revd Jean Kerr enabled the church to look at where we are together with where we want to be. As a result, this several people are being trained/developed into leadership of services and are embarking on further training.

### **Leadership:**

The leadership of the church has been the overall responsibility of John Bloor (Focal Minister). Various teams have operated under his leadership.

Lay/Focal Leader: John Bloor

Ministry team: John Bloor, Carolyn Facey and Janet Adkin, who meet occasionally with Revd Saju Muthalaly

Preaching team: Saju Muthalaly, Richard England (until May 16), John Bloor, Carolyn Facey, Ernie Mann plus Bernie Pinner and Mike Worthing.

In training: Andy Ward, Matt Keeler, Sally Bloor and Jayne Shillito

Youth Work team: K4C - Michelle Saunders (until December 16), Carolyn Facey; *COG:* Marilyn Watson; *Revolution:* John Bloor; *Connect:* Sandi James (until June 16)

Family services: Chris Pinner, John Bloor and Carolyn Facey with occasional leads by Jayne Shillito and Sally Bloor.

Prayer team: Sally Bloor

Home Group Leaders: John Bloor, Janet Adkin, Matt Keeler and Mike Worthing.

District Church Council: *Diocesan Synod Member* (ex officio) – Ernie Mann (until March 17); *Deanery Synod Representative* (ex officio): Carolyn Facey; *Clergy* (ex officio): Saju Muthalaly and Richard England; *Deputy Church Warden* (annual appointment): Steve Farrin plus Sathish Narayanan (appointed by the DCC in November 2016); *Non-Elected places:* Janet Adkin (Secretary); Andy Ward (Treasurer) *Elected Members:* John Bloor, Bernie Pinner, Elgar Curling, Luke Knott, Mark Shillito, Sandi James; *Co-opted member:* Gwynne Grant.

Also, *St Mark's Church Wardens* (ex officio): Terry Whittaker and Deano Standing.

*N.B. Term of office ends in 2017 for: Bernie Pinner, Mark Shillito, and John Bloor. John will now be part of the DCC as Focal Leader.*

Deputy Church Wardens: Steve Farrin and Sathish Narayanan

Safeguarder: Gwynne Grant (until March 2017)

Verifier & Appointer: Janet Mann (until March 2017)

Responsibility for The Vulnerable and Elderly: Janet Adkin

We said farewell to Revd Richard England and his family as he took up another post in June 2016. Four members of SMIC went to his Licensing service in June. We wish him blessing on his new role and work.

After a meeting with Revd Jean Kerr one Sunday afternoon, members were challenged into examining what St Mary's Island Church is about and what it aims to do in the future. This has impacted on planning and leadership and so, during the year there have been adjustments with regard to the change/style of leadership; there is now a team of people being trained in leading worship. It is encouraging to see new faces at the front of the church leading services. We are looking for a 'succession management' model so that longer term members can eventually hand over.

I feel our greatest success this year has been the introduction of Messy Church ably led by Carol and her team. On a smaller but equally successful scale the Women's Friday group has encouraged church members and their friends to come along to the monthly meetings imaginatively led by Chris. This meeting is now a year old. Both these ventures reach out to a wider community than just church members. St Mary's Island Church is richly blessed with many people offering to share their gifts for the service of the Lord.

*Janet Adkin, DCC Secretary*

## **St. Mary's Island C of E (Aided) Primary School (SMI School)**



St Mary's Island School has a daily Act of Worship. On a Tuesday, there is a rota whereby church leaders, Rev Saju Muthalaly, John Bloor and Carolyn Facey conduct the service. However, on a rather more regular basis, Carolyn usually leads at least one Act of Worship each week. On a Friday, the school has a Celebration Assembly where the children receive certificates and their work and sports endeavours are celebrated. Carolyn always concludes this assembly with prayer.

Carolyn is in the school every day and she has the opportunity to work with Fiona Farrin, the RE leader. Together they plan services and displays around the school.

At the beginning of the year Carolyn led all the children on an Epiphany Walk. The children were taken on a journey around the playground and invited to think about the journey of the Wise Men as they searched for Jesus. The walk concluded with a labyrinth walk and the children were encouraged to review their own relationship with Jesus.

The children prepared special programmes for Christmas, a Nativity from Reception and Key Stage 1, whilst the children in Key Stage 2 prepared a Cantata. This was a tremendous effort on the part of the children and both Rev Saju Muthalaly and Carolyn Facey spoke at these services.

We are also able to introduce the children to different styles of church worship and sometimes set up the hall as we do on a Sunday for our worship service. The children experience a mini service which they thoroughly enjoy and write about afterwards in their RE school books.

Carolyn attends the School Foundation Committee and acts as the secretary.

As a church, we continue to be welcomed into the school by the head, Christine Easton. Our aim is to try to support her work and introduce the children to having their own personal relationship with Jesus Christ.

*Carolyn Facey*