



St Mark's Church, Gillingham

'Living for Jesus, Loving Gillingham, Learning Together'

AGENDA

for the meeting on 28 April 2019

MINUTES

of the last APCM on 25 March 2018

plus

STATUTORY AND ADDITIONAL REPORTS

for the year ended 31 December 2018

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Agenda for the Annual Parochial Church Meeting Sunday 28 April 2019

- (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
1. Apologies for Absence and Minutes of the previous year's meeting
 2. 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 PCC
 - d) Election of Deanery Synod Member
 - e) Election of Sidespersons or Approval for the Churchwardens and PCC to appoint suitable Electoral Roll Members as Sidespersons
 3. Fabric Goods Ornament
 4.
 - 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 2018 (*Annual Report*) (*GA*)
 5. Choosing of an Independent Examiner of the Accounts for the current year (*GA*)
 6. 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 (*Statutory Reports*)
 - c) Churchwardens' report on Fabric, Goods and Ornaments (*Statutory Reports*)
 - d) Proceedings of Deanery Synods (*Statutory Reports*)
 - e) Receiving the Reports from Church Ministries given in the Additional Reports and Good News stories (*SM*)
 7. Closing Prayer (*SM*)

Minutes for the Annual Parochial Church Meeting
Sunday 25 March 2018
Meeting started at 11:30 am

(1). Worship

(2). Meeting of Parishioners for the choosing of two Churchwardens

The Rev Saju Muthalaly welcomed everyone to the meeting and explained that the first meeting is for choosing Churchwardens. There are two Churchwardens who are willing to stand for another year, Raymond Shergill and Helen Towers. Raymond Shergill was proposed by Margaret Green and seconded by Sandra Pedder. Helen Towers was proposed by Karen Dyer and seconded by Mic Aldington. Saju asked if there were any other proposals. None were put forward.

Motion: Raymond Shergill and Helen Towers will be elected as Churchwardens for another year. All in the meeting were unanimously in favour.

Raymond Shergill and Helen Towers joined the meeting at the front, along with Glyn Allen the Treasurer. Saju said that we should thank people for the way they have served the church and he encouraged everyone to speak to others offering words of encouragement for all they do during a five-minute break.

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

1. Apologies for Absence and Minutes of the previous year's meeting.

Apologies were received from Kelvin and Marcella Summoogum, Ben Towers, Charley Whittaker, Rory Whittaker, Emily Mann, Jonathan Mann, Mike Young, Kevin Hall, Paul Smith, Mayowa and Damola Oyinloye, Alan and Brenda Allen, Jane Banner Martin, Becky Cooper, Katy Byles and Helen Standing. SM asked for prayer for Paul Smith, as he was ill. Saju wanted to thank Pauline Jackson, who will be retiring, and revealed that there will be a thank you lunch in the church in May. Saju said that he is grateful to the Churchwardens who always go the extra mile and explained that leadership is tough and thanked God for calling Raymond and Helen. Saju gave special thanks to Glyn Allen, expressing Glyn's importance as Treasurer for the PCC.

2. Elections

- a). Appointment of 5 tellers for the election.
- b). Introduction of each candidate standing for election

The nominations to stand on the PCC were:

Graham Wilkins, proposed by Raymond Shergill and seconded by Jo Whittaker.

Lance Hanning, proposed by Pauline Jackson and seconded by Ruth Howard.

Lisa Highsted proposed by Pauline Jackson and seconded by Karen Dyer.

- c). Election of Electoral Roll Members to serve on PCC

Motion: Lance Hanning, Lisa Highsted and Graham Wilkins are appointed to the PCC. This was carried unanimously.

Terry Whittaker clarified that although all the nominations were for three years, Lisa Highsted had indicated that she only wanted to serve for one year, and the PCC recognised this.

d. Election of Sidespersons, or approval for the Churchwardens and PCC to appoint suitable Electoral Roll Members as Sidespersons

Helen Towers said she has a list of people who wish to continue as Sidespeople and on the Welcome Team. These are Denise Young, Jane Banner Martin, Kevin Hall, Vicky Onitiri, Margaret Green, Phillip Gates, Leslie Boast, Sandra Pedder, Lynn Trebill, Karen Dyer, Trevor Dyer, Barry Hills, Janet Mann, John Townsend, Ann Townsend, Joyce McAvoy, Pauline Jackson, Siju Adeoye, Monica Shergill and Lynne Martin.

Motion: The above names are elected to be Sidespeople and on the Welcome Team. The meeting was unanimously in favour.

Chris Tozer thanked the Sidespeople for their work and pointed out that it is everyone's responsibility to welcome people to the church, not just those on the Welcome Team. He also expressed the positive influence the Sidespeople have on newcomers.

Helen Towers then read out a list of people who are willing to stand as Deputy Wardens. They were Karen Dyer, Trevor Dyer, Stephen Trebill and Trevor Towers. Helen also thanked Deano Standing for all his work as a Deputy Warden. Sajū said that Neville Piper will be standing down from the PCC, as he has been part of the PCC for three years, and he thanked him for all his work.

3. Report on Buildings Work (Fabric Goods and Ornaments)

Raymond Shergill explained that there are four buildings to look after: The Church Building; The Old Vicarage; The Vicarage Hall; and the Garden House. He said that the Properties Task Group is a very hardworking team who believe in getting the work done. The approach now is to take small steps, and each task is taken one at a time. Raymond explained that the Properties Task Group has decided to update many aspects of the church building. Those aspects are the lights, projector, carpet, chairs and boiler. There are plans for the other three buildings, which need to be discussed. Raymond then handed over to Deano Standing for an announcement.

Deano explained that the church has had a vision for accessible toilets for many years. He revealed that over the last three years, the Properties Task Group have gone through a painstaking process to get plans that were accepted and could go out to tender. He said that the start date for the accessible toilets project is the 26 March. There are two phases, and the first phase is to allow easier access into the church from outside. This will involve raising the pavements up to a level where they meet the door, thus eliminating the step, which will allow people, such as those in wheelchairs, to be able to enter the church more easily.

Deano explained that there are three contractors working on the project, and the second one, Howard Allen, will be repairing the roof and implementing an emergency exit ramp from the toilet area. The old Vicar's Vestry will be converted and will be a key part of the new toilets. Howard Allan will be starting their work on

the Tuesday after Easter. On the 27 March, the Task Group will meet with the second contractor, Charlier, to finalise and sign the contract, and they will be accomplishing the main body of the work. Charlier is predicted to start the work in late April/early May, and portable toilets will be needed during this time. The small room will be a meeting room. After that, the two toilets currently in the church will be refurbished, and a further two toilets will be added, one of which will be an accessible toilet. Deano also explained that, a generous donation of £50,000 enabled the church to start the project. The money is not enough to complete the work, but they are confident that the project can go ahead.

Raymond said the Task Group want to modernise the church building, and the toilets will be completed first. He appealed for people to offer support, both practical and in giving ideas. Saju explained that behind all the building refurbishments, is that it is about welcoming everyone and being hospitable. He explained that a Gift Day will be taking place in May.

4 Report on the financial affairs of the Parish Church

Glyn Allen explained that the Annual Report and Accounts for 2017 are on the website, as is his Treasurer's Report. He said that the accounts are being examined by an Independent Examiner and will be cleared within the next month.

Glyn described the purpose of the General Fund and revealed that the total income and expenditure surplus for 2017 was higher than originally budgeted. The income was £192,935, expenditure was £160,526. Glyn thanked everyone for their voluntary donations, from which 82% of the church's income is generated. The surplus is £32,409, £38,942 after transfer. This is a significant surplus. The biggest fund, after the General Fund, is the Development Fund, which is set aside for development projects in the church, e.g. buildings, chairs and carpets. Many people give to that fund and a large amount of the fund is due to the £50,000 donation towards the toilets. Two new funds were opened last year, the India Fund for the India 2018 project, and a fund for supporting the teams and church in India.

The Net Current Assets add up to £235,109, and the Tangible Assets are the assets that the church has for the value of the buildings. GA explained that the reason the General Fund surplus is larger than originally planned was because there was a delay in the appointment of Shane Cordle, and there was a £10,000 grant from the Diocese the previous year, so that grant was used to cover some of his costs.

There was a change in employment in Lynne Martin, and her employment is now met by the Diocese instead of St. Mark's.

The church also receives rent from the Garden House, and had reduced the Offer to the Diocese after Richard England left. These made a big difference to the surplus. However, surpluses are needed in case there is an emergency, to ensure that the staff commitments can be fulfilled.

£30,873 in Gift Aid was recovered for General Fund, and Glyn thanked John Beck for managing Gift Aid. Away Giving was maintained at 10% of 2016 giving, and approximately £14,000 was our Away Giving. General Fund reserve is was 42% of

what is intended to spend in 2018. £70,000 was donated to the Diocese between St. Marks and St. Mary's Island Church. £8,000 was sent to architects, and the church received £10,000 from the rent of the Garden House.

There was concern about Pre-School running, but there was a surplus at the end of 2017 of almost £5,000, and Glyn thanked the Management Group for their work.

Glyn asked if anyone had any questions. Rod White expressed his congratulations to Glyn, and said that looking at the accounts, it looks as though there is a 30% reduction in the heating cost, and how can that be accounted for in a cold building. Glyn said they have not tried to reduce the amount of gas that is being used. The outside temperature makes a difference, and because there is a smart meter, there is an overlap on the billing, and they might not have included a bill related to the charging period. There was also hoped to be a saving, since the heating can now be controlled over the internet.

Glyn said that the church is not asked to increase giving to the Diocese for Amanda Maskell, but they have been pressuring the parish to give up to 40% rather than 32%. The Diocese is experiencing a deficit of half a million pounds, which is why they are asking for an increase.

Glyn thanked everyone who contributed financially.

The PCC have come up with a final budget for 2018. Rather than £38,000 surplus, there will be a shortfall of £15,000. Shane will be at St. Mark's for the full year and there won't be a grant from the Diocese. Rent and fees are 8% of the income, and contribution from St. Mary's island and Pre-school makes up the rest of the budget along with voluntary giving. A large proportion of the spending is on staff costs, 35%, and there will be another staff member. Buildings will be 22%. Glyn asked if there were any questions, none were raised.

Glyn explained that the total cost of the toilets will be around £97,000, and the Development Fund has £67,000 available for the toilets, and £10,000 will be transferred from the Repair Fund. This means there is a £20,000 shortfall, and the money can be borrowed from the General Fund. There will be a Gift Day in May to make up the shortfall.

5. Financial Needs of the Church – Gift Day 2018

Saju explained that the PCC will have to manage a tight budget this year. He explained that to meet the need, the PCC have decided to host a Gift Day in the middle of the year, which has not been done for some years. Saju explained there will be teaching on generosity in the church and about money.

Saju asked if there were any questions. Andrew Mann said that the Church Trust could give grants for general accessibility and asked if GA had considered this. Glyn explained that it is rather late to look for grants, as it is not possible to get funding. Andrew Mann explained that the project, being active, will be in a better position. Glyn said he would consider this. Suzanne Wilkins asked if there had been consideration into tithing the income. Glyn explained it is St. Mark's policy to give

10% of its voluntary General Fund income, and there is no reason as to why it couldn't be different, and this could be considered.

Saju asked if there were any other questions, none were raised. He thanked Glyn for his work.

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

GA suggested using Rob Trice as the Independent Examiner.

Motion: Rob Trice is used as Independent Examiner. Proposed by Terry Whittaker, seconded by Graham Wilkins. Motion passed 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.

a. Electoral Roll Officer's Report (Statutory Report)

b. Report on the Proceedings of the PCC (Statutory Reports)

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

Saju asked if there were any questions on the Churchwardens report. None were raised.

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

Good News Stories

Pre-school

Saju explained that he would start with the Pre-School report. Lance Hanning explained that there were some issues with the Pre-school last year, as there were resignations in the Committee, the introduction for 30 hours support for three year olds, and finances were tight. The good news was that a new Committee was formed in September, and there was a surplus last year, and with the 30-hour contracts for 3 year olds, they are trialling doing Pre-school for two full days a week, and the other three as half days as usual.

The Pre-School had a good report from Ofsted. Julie Hanning, the Pre-school Manager, has had a lot to contend with, and since the Pre-school is a St. Mark's venture, the vision of the Feed the 5000 has been put forward and this will take place on 30 June. This will involve all those associated with Pre-school, and it is expected that 150 people will be there. The fact that some of the staff are not Christian would add to the event. Lance Hanning said he will be asking for help nearer the time. He gave thanks to God about the Pre-school and asked for prayer about the Pre-school in general.

Saju said this was really good news.

Food Bank

Paul Smith had planned to give some good news stories to the APCM, as the Food Bank is one of the largest Food Banks in Medway. Unfortunately, Paul was unable to give the report as he was unwell.

Faith and Light

Karen and Trevor Dyer were asked to come up to give a good news story of the Faith and Light Community. Karen explained what Faith and Light do. Faith and Light got involved in Feed the 5000. Many adults who go to Faith and Light donated items to the Food Bank. For the birthday of Faith and Light a party was put on, and people who may be interested to come to Faith and Light were invited. Karen thanked the team. Trevor Dyer also thanked the team, as there are other churches being linked with Faith and Light.

Reach at Gillingham Pier

Saju invited Terry Whitaker to come up and talk about Reach at Gillingham Pier. Terry explained that the team are now in a position where four times a week, a meeting is held with those in the Gillingham Pier area, and prayer takes place. Some people who are ill are visited and prayed for, and bible studies have now been asked for. On the 26 March, the Reach Community will meet together, and this will mean the community will be coming together as a body. Terry asked for prayer, and thanked Jo Whitaker for supporting him.

India

The final news story from Saju was that in a few days, 19 people will be going to India, and this is about making partnerships, one with a Faith and Light Community, and the Music Man Project. This is only the beginning of the partnership, as the church is hoping to ask some of the Indian partnerships to come to Gillingham. Saju finished with prayer.

Meeting concluded at 12:36.

Closing Prayer

Statutory Reports

Treasurer's Report 2018

Note 2018 Annual Financial Statements are subject to Independent Examination approval.

General Fund

At the beginning of 2018 financial year, we forecast a budget deficit on PCC unrestricted General Fund of £14,925, which included transfers between Repair and Pre-school Funds. Following Gift Day, £14,068 was allocated to General Fund from the total Gift Day donation to give a near 'break-even' year-end forecast. In September the PCC agreed to transfer £25,000 from General Fund reserves to the Development Fund as a provision for planned future costs related to the church building. Although with this transfer the General Fund shows a deficit in the accounts of £17,894, we give thanks to God that, excluding the transfer provision, the General Fund finished with a surplus of £7,106. Overall, compared to budget and excluding the provision, our income was approximately £23,100 higher and our expenditure £1,100 higher than forecast.

Donations (Voluntary Income) increased to £174,552 from £158,858 in 2017 being higher than budget by £14,552. Excluding Gift Day, voluntary giving amounted to £160,484, almost matching the planned budget. Gift Aid tax recovered, including that received for Gift Day, amounted to £32,237 - a very significant sum.

The Pre-school funds transfer to General Fund, for the daily use of the Vicarage Hall, was £3,500 and although £1,500 less than previous years is a useful contribution towards the fixed costs for the building. Income continued to be supplemented by rental for the Garden House of £10,370 for the year, paid by the Diocese to provide housing provision for the Medway Campus Chaplain. Wedding and funeral fees, at £5,110 were £2,444 higher than last year. We were reimbursed by SMI Church for Jonica Thomas as SMI Administrator.

For expenditure, staff costs were lower than budget by £7,249 impacted by the departure of the HYCFM and vicar's PA. Church running and maintenance costs were higher than budget by £10,147, mainly due to sound, visual and lighting improvements and increased worship activities. Youth and children, students and evangelism expenditures were all lower than budget. Mission Giving was £14,820 compared to an amended budget figure of £15,900. The balance of £1,080 was transferred to the Mission/Reach Funds as carry over to 2019. Our total Away Giving paid out was £16,858. Based on 10% of donations received in 2018, our General Fund Away Giving in 2019 will be budgeted at £16,050, with Gift Day giving excluded in the calculation as is PCC policy.

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 £73,500 - a 5% increase on 2017. This was apportioned £58,800 for St Mark's and £14,700 for St Mary's Island - i.e. 80%/20% split. During the year there have been consultations with the Diocese on a new method of Offer calculation known as an Indicative Offer. While a figure for 2019 has now been agreed, the method of calculation is likely to

change again, using a percentage of unrestricted income plus some fixed costs as bases.

The General Fund cash at bank and in hand at 31 December 2018 was £57,640. After debtors and creditors adjustment the net current asset was £64,919. This represents a 'reserve' of 35.6% of our 2019 forecast expenditure. The PCC agreed to a minimum Reserve Policy for 2018 of £55,000, allowing £25,000 to be transferred to the Development Fund. The Reserve Policy will be reviewed by the PCC annually.

| General Fund Highlights | 2018 | 2017 |
|--|-------------|-------------|
| Donations (Voluntary Income) | £174,552 | £158,858 |
| Total Income | £202,173 | £192,935 |
| Total Expenditure | £192,550 | £160,526 |
| Surplus (Deficit) | £9,623 | £32,409 |
| Net Surplus/Deficit after transfers | (£17,894) | £38,292 |
| Net Surplus/Deficit excl. £25,000 transfer | £7,106 | - |

Gift Day

We give thanks that In June a total of £35,953, including Gift Aid tax, was donated for Gift Day. £21,885 was allocated to the Development Fund to meet the £20,000 construction cost shortfall and the balance of £14,068 to General Fund. This was in line with the needs that were presented to the congregation and we are grateful for the generous response.

Other Funds

The total year-end balance in our Repair Funds was £28,717. We deposited a total of £5,225 and transferred £10,000 from the Church Repair Fund to the Development Fund.

During the year, we settled costs for the church toilet project of £100,946 from the Development Fund, which includes a snagging retention of £2,336. The fund now has a balance of £32,512, which has been earmarked by the PCC towards the planned costs for replacement church boilers and improvements to the heating system.

The balance in the Mission Fund is £6,394, which includes £80 unallocated transfer from General Fund Mission Giving. During the year we donated a total of £2,308 to various mission causes from this fund.

The Vicar's Discretionary Fund received donations of £200 with discretionary spending of £2,240. The fund current balance is £1,956.

Donations of £19,552 were received for the India Fund with an expenditure of £22,993 in connection with the India 2018 Mission Visit. The year-end balance of the fund is £10,836.

The Reach at Gillingham Pier Restricted Fund is to support management of income and expenditure for this venture until it is more established. Income received during

the year was £3,391, with expenditure of £596. £1,000 was transferred to this fund as part of mission giving. The fund balance is £3,870.

Our applications for grants from the Diocese Children and Young People (CYP) were successful and a total of £5,250 has been placed in the HYCFM Fund. During the year £898 has been spent, leaving a balance of £4,351.

With the former Faith and Light group becoming Peace and Hope and a PCC regulated activity, a new restricted fund has been established with an opening transfer from Faith and Light of £1,394. With expenses of £59, the fund balance is £1,336.

Pre-school income from all sources was £93,615 and expenditure £66,812, giving a surplus for the year of £26,803 and a net surplus of £23,015 after transfer of £3,788 to General Fund. This compares to a net surplus of £4,435 in 2017. The Pre-school Fund balance is £46,569. I would like to acknowledge the Pre-school team for achieving this outstanding financial performance this year – 43% increase in income.

| Fund Balances | Closing 2018 | Opening 2018 |
|---|---------------------|---------------------|
| General Fund | £64,919 | £82,813 |
| Development Fund | £32,512 | £68,947 |
| Mission Fund | £6,394 | £7,558 |
| Repair Funds | £28,717 | £33,390 |
| Small Funds | £500 | £500 |
| Vicar's Discretionary Fund | £1,956 | £3,996 |
| Pre-school Fund | £46,569 | £23,554 |
| HYCFM Fund | £4,351 | £0 |
| India Fund | £10,836 | £14,277 |
| Reach at Gillingham Pier Fund | £3,870 | £75 |
| Peace and Hope Fund | £1,336 | £0 |
| Net current assets less current liabilities | £201,960 | £235,109 |

The PCC has approved the final 2019 V2 budget, with a year-end forecast surplus of £4,786, which includes provision for youth, children and families staffing for part of the year.

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 of cash and management of Pre-school accounts. I also thank the PCC Finance Task Group for their support and guidance throughout the year.

Approximately 85% 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.

Premises Task Group

This sub-committee of the PCC meets every 2-3 months 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 well maintained and in good running order. We would like to thank the members of this group for their diligence, and in particular Jonathan Mann, Graham Wilkins, Mic Aldington, Paul Smith and Siju Adeoye who continue to make themselves available to respond to emergency repairs and generally serve in a selfless manner.

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 also 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 August 2018 and the report received in October, which found the building in good overall condition, and mainly had a few issues relating to brick and stonework. These will need to be dealt with in the coming months.

The Church

The year 2018 finally saw the completion of the new toilet accommodation including an accessible toilet along with a new meeting room and a new vestry. A new central heating system was installed for the vestry and assessable toilets. A special thank you to all involved in the buildings team and in particular Peter Guinness and Glyn Allen who oversaw the whole project from start to finish.

The Audi Visual team changed our church lights from halogen to LED warm lighting earlier in the year and it has added to the ambience of the church. A big thank you to Chris Banner, Mic Aldington and Chris Blewett for installing the lighting system. In 2018 the Audio Visual team also drew up plans for better quality speakers and a truss system and continue with the running replacement of items needed to support our activities.

Significant repairs were undertaken to the Church roof and guttering as a consequence of storms; these costs were mainly met by our insurers leaving us to pay the excess but still saved us a 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 concerned about the boiler and the heating capacity as it is under powered to heat the Church. A group led by Glyn Allen have obtained quotes and very soon we will be awarding the contract to start work on the installation of a new boiler and upgrading the capacity of our heating system within the Church. We aim to get this work done by June 2019.

The Premises Task Group is looking into replacing the current chairs in the Church with lighter ones. They are also looking to increase the storage in the Church and as a result hope to erect a large steel shed to the rear of the church that will solve most of our storage issues in Church, and help us to keep it tidy and uncluttered. Finally, we would like to particularly thank the small team - who know who they are - but especially Barry Hills and Dammy Oyinloye for their ongoing commitment to caring for the building and for keeping the Church and its surroundings clean, especially on a Sunday morning.

Thanks also to Stan Brown who has 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.

The partially collapsed boundary wall on the site still has not been replaced, as we have been waiting for joint action with the owners of the Doctor's surgery. There are significant repairs required to some structural parts of the Old Vicarage, and we hope to identify these and seek estimates in 2019. The Premises Task Group will be looking to update the Church Office later this year.

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

Vicarage Hall

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

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

The Garden House

The Garden House has continued to be rented to the Diocese, and occupied by Lynne Martin who moved in in April/May 2017. The Garden House is regularly maintained as and when required. The Premises Task Group would from 2019 be carrying out regular checks every 6 months to make sure that the Garden House is kept in good state of repairs and is fit for purpose.

The Vicarage

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

Request by the Premises Task Group

The Premises Task Group are always looking for volunteers to serve in different aspects of maintaining the Church buildings. If you are trained in a specific trade or would like to help out then please feel free to talk to the Churchwardens or the Vicar and we will be more than happy to include you in our team.

Helen Towers and Raymond Shergill (Churchwardens)

Proceedings of the PCC

The PCC meets monthly except in August. Each meeting begins with the Chair of the meeting bringing a Bible Reading and thought followed by prayer.

The Chair of the meeting is Saju, and Raymond Shergill and Helen Towers are Vice Chairs and both have chaired meetings in the year. In April it was proposed that Vicky Allen would be appointed as PCC Secretary and Samuel Wilkins would become the Minutes Secretary.

The Standing Committee, which consists of Saju, the Churchwardens, the Treasurer, the PCC Secretary and two members from the PCC, these being Rob Byles, and Keith Sheepwash along with Amanda Maskell. For time to time during the course of the year the Standing Committee have met together to make decisions on behalf of the PCC when there have been time constraints. All decisions have then been ratified by the PCC.

The Treasurer gives a financial update each month. This keeps the PCC aware of our financial position.

There are a number of Task Groups, Finance, Property, HR, and MLTG which all members of the PCC are asked to be a part of at least one. Three times a year the PCC meetings are shorter to enable Task Groups to meet after the PCC meeting, to deliberate. It has been decided that, in future, the Tasks Groups will meet on a different evening to free up time for PCC business.

During the year Group Leaders are invited to present to the PCC. The Leader is given a number of questions to answer and asked to outline their challenges, goals

and resources needed to carry out their ministry. We have been pleased to welcome a report from Shane Cordle about the Youth Children and Family work. Also Lance Hanning sent thoughts to the PCC regarding Pre-school, this was followed up in 2019 with a report from the Pre-school.

A good period of time has been allocated during the year to discuss and agree a Staff and Volunteer Handbooks and updating all St Mark's Policies. This piece of work has taken a lot of time and patience and I would like to especially thank Helen Towers and Luke Prankard who have undertaken a large percentage of the work that this has entailed. We are now at a position where the Staff Handbook has been issued to all staff members and the Volunteer Handbook is nearing completion.

In May the PCC was asked to consider support of Simon Morbey who has been working with the youth in St Mark's for some time and had applied to undertake an Applied Theology Course, which focuses on youth and community work. He has asked that his placement should be at St Mark's and he will volunteer for 12 hours a week as part of his course. In June the PCC were happy to ratify this placement.

The PCC, having been circulated with the proposal from Emily Mann to set up a Cinema Club, were happy to agree to her going ahead and setting up this initiative which has proved to be very successful in making contact with people from the community in a non-threatening environment.

Following the difficulties that Faith and Light had incurred with the Faith and Light Association, the PCC supported Faith and Light to becoming a St Mark's activity, changing their name to Peace and Hope. This group continues to thrive under the leadership of Karen and Trevor Dyer.

The work of the PCC requires a lot of commitment from its members, all of which is undertaken on a voluntary basis, and often requires a good deal of proficiency and time. We appreciate your prayer support as we take responsibility for the mission and ministry of St Mark's.

Vicky Allen PCC Secretary

Electoral Roll

The Electoral Roll for St Mark's Church is as follows:

The Electoral Roll has been completely revised in 2019 and the number on the Roll at 28 April 2019 is 165. This included 43 people who are new to the Roll.

It is worth noting that the figure for April 2018 was 217. There were 95 people who did not apply to join the new roll. Of these around 10 worship at Reach, 33 as far as we know have not attended St Mark's in the last four years, 28 are regular attenders but have not re-applied, 21 have either moved from the area or left to go to other churches, 1 is deceased and 2, as far as we know, are not attending a church.

The Electoral Roll for St Mary's Island is as follows:

The Electoral Roll for April 2019 was 70 – 1 addition during the year (total of 69 for 2018)

Vicky Allen PCC Secretary

Gillingham Deanery Synod

The Gillingham Deanery Synod meets three times a year with representatives from St Mark's Church Gillingham as follows.

Keith Sheepwash

Siju Adeoye ~ Deanery Synod Treasurer and Standing Committee.

Terry Whittaker

The Deanery has a host church focus and St Mark's has hosted in the past year and was able to highlight some of our missions.

The main focus of this year have been on Gillingham Mission and Ministry Plan with achieved outcomes such as Growing Leaders Course in final phase, Growing Disciples celebrating Adult and Children Confirmations, Growing Communities had the Archbishop of Canterbury visit the Medway Winter Night Shelter.

The Deanery Synod also had a collective response to the Diocese Indicative Offers to the Diocesan Finance Team.

Bishop James will be visiting the Deanery from Sunday 29th September to Sunday 6th October 2019. Members of the meeting were encouraged to think about how we could make best use of this time.

Siju Adeoye

Additional Reports

ALPHA – An Introduction to the Christian Faith

This year we had our Alpha course in the Autumn, after Just One, hoping to get a good number of participants from that event. This was not the case, but we did have a small group of great people who were very open to hearing about the Christian faith.

Over the weeks people found a closer relationship with the Lord and a number committed their life to Christ, PRAISE THE LORD.

Our thanks to the wider team, cooks, set up, washing up etc. etc., without these great people we could not do Alpha.

We look forward to a new Alpha course in the Autumn 2019.

Keith Sheepwash - for the Alpha Team

Audio Visual and Technical Report

This year has seen more improvements to the AV system, and the lighting in Church. The AV system has seen a new projector and screen together with an upgrade to the infrastructure to allow high definition video distribution throughout the building, including a link into the new crèche room. This allows the service to be seen and heard in there.

There has also been an upgrade of all the lights in church to low power LED units with remote switching capability. In conjunction with this, coloured LED lights have been installed to light the front area, all this came into its own quite spectacularly over the Christmas services, especially the Follow the Star Service.

Much of the above has been funded through specific donations, thanks are therefore due to those members of the congregation who value what this adds to our corporate worship.

Once again thanks to all those who volunteer not only on Sunday services but all other events in church or the Vic Hall, to set up and operate our AV systems.

Mic.Chris, and the AV crew.

Baptism Visiting

We seek to visit all parents seeking baptism for their children either in their home or at the Old Vicarage whichever is appropriate.

Myself or Katie Jenkins discuss what is required of the parents and promises they will need to make we show the DVD called "First Steps". This makes it easy to talk about the video they have watched, and the parents easily understand the process of baptism and promises they will be required to make and the roles of God Parents etc.

We give them the "St Marks Baptism" which will give them more information and at a later date we can confirm the dates available usually the fifth Sunday of the month.

Keith Sheepwash on behalf of the visiting team

Catering and Hospitality

2018 was a great year for hospitality and catering in St Marks due mostly to Feeding the 5000, which the whole congregation was involved in. The Indian lunch in January started the year off, followed by the Tear Fund bread and cheese lunch in February.

March saw Home Groups serving soup and rolls on the coldest days in church and on the High Street, plus the Easter Passover Meal.

In May we had a wonderful farewell lunch for Pauline Jackson, followed by the magnificent Kings Banquet in church.

June held two buffet evenings in the Old Vicarage for new church members, Lucy Haslam's wedding to Joel and the Pre-school lunch, and not forgetting the weekly service of nibbles to the Mum's and Toddlers group.

July was the fourth successful Let Loose Concert in Gillingham High Street on one of the hottest days.

September started the Alpha Course with some wonderful meals prepared by members of the congregation, Fusion Lunch, Amanda's Ordination Barbeque and Mayowa Oyinloye's worship evening.

In October tea, cake and coffee for Tear Fund, and a Home Group Leaders breakfast.

December the Empty Chair Service, the fabulous Follow the Star Service and the year ending with Watch Night Praise Service. I am sure there was a lot more going on in homes through the whole year that we were unaware of, and we apologise if we have left anybody out.

I know this is supposed to be the Hospitality Team's report but with all of St Mark's being involved they deserve the praise and the catering team are so few on the ground with a just a few faithful members left from the "Splat" days and members from my Home Group, so if there is anybody who would like to join us there is always room for new blood and idea's.

So, thank you to the faithful few and a huge thank you to all the congregation who baked cakes, cooked curries, dinners, and supported all the hospitality and catering events of 2018 which made the year so successful.

Lynda Smith and the catering team.

Church in the Pub

Church in the Pub is a discussion group that meets on the fourth Sunday of the month at the King George V in Brompton, breaking for the Summer Holidays. With a venue equidistant from both churches, it is targeted at St Mary's Island's at St Mark's congregations. Topics are selected from the card game 'Table Talk', which is produced by the Christian Charity 'The Ugly Duckling Company' (see the link <http://www.table-talk.org/>), and include 'Soul', 'Planet Earth', 'Journey' and 'Big Questions'. Our December session was replaced by a Carol Service.

Taking place on a Sunday evening, attendances are influenced by people's social plans for the day, whatever is taking place at St Mark's that afternoon and to what extent the event is advertised in each congregation – sometimes we attract 10 people and sometimes twice that, while the Carol Service packed out the venue with well over 40 people (providing the landlord's second best takings of the year!).

As well as hosting some stimulating conversations, Church in the Pub provides a useful opportunity for fellowship and future planning between different parts of the parish. Should you be interested in coming along please speak to Matt Keeler.

Matt Keeler

Cinema Club

Having commenced Cinema Club in October 2018 we have seen a massive growth in the number of people who have attended. All together we have had around 50-60 attend in the past few months, most of which are members of our local community as opposed to people who attend St Mark's. This is a fantastic achievement for having only been running for around 6 months, however we would love to see this grow to over 100 people by the end of the year and eventually have some of the people who attend frequently become part of our team!

Developing a 'grown up' stream of Cinema Club is something that we would like to do once this family one has been established further- this is an opportunity that would bring more chances to show films that have differing themes, for example

showing The Shack and then having a discussion after the showing to allow people to ask questions about faith and struggles.

Prayers for deeper relationships to be formed between us and the people coming to Cinema Club, allowing opportunities to talk about faith would be very much appreciated. Prayers also regarding God's guidance as to where to take Cinema Club next, including who to ask to be part of the team both in the church and in the community.

Eventually, it would be great to start to see these people start to attend a church and develop a faith of their own, even if that isn't at St Marks.

We do however need more people to join the team (it's very easy- we turn up, set up, serve refreshments, chat, watch a film, clear up and go!!), so if this is something that interests you or you would like to find out more please feel free to speak to myself (Emily Mann), Martha Prankard or Simon Morbey about it.

Emily Mann

Cricket Team – for St. Mark's & St. Mary's Island

We made a rather late start to the 2018 season, because unfortunately a mix up of dates caused the first game to be cancelled! However, the late start showed that the team's talent was still in evidence and our game against Old Roffensians was a well contested affair. Our opponents had a strong batting line up, but good individual performances from some of our players kept us in touch and we only just fell short of the required total.

In the second game against the Mosque our bowlers had a hard time against some really powerful batting and our opponents easily overhauled the target we set.

Our third and final game against a side from Rainham was evenly contested and we eventually got our win with just an over to spare. The pre-season nets have just taken place and have revealed some extra talent and we look forward to an enjoyable and entertaining Summer for 2019. Do come and watch us. We enjoy having your support.

Guy Jackson.

Elderly Care

Charing House Care and Residential Home

Christmas 2018 saw seven years of Christian ministry at Charing House since when monthly services have taken place in the main lounge except on the very few occasions when health precautions prevented us.

Inevitably members of the four teams drawn from seven churches in the north Gillingham area, change over time but the four teams have maintained, by and large, a remarkable consistency and commitment. Their monthly visits are looked forward to by the residents whom for many it serves as their church. There is a small core of regulars who are supplemented by others as health, mood and visitors allow numerically being as low as 5 on a poor month and as many as 12 on a good month. Team members chat and get to know the residents after the service which helps to establish rapport and builds up relationships.

The Carol Service in December attracts the most where we encourage attendance by other team members to make it a bigger than normal occasion. The Remembrance Service which always coincides with the November visit shows signs of growing both in numbers and significance.

The monthly services are supplemented by a monthly Communion Service on the last Monday afternoon of each month, Bank Holidays excepted, now serviced by a team of three operating in pairs on an inter-changeable rota basis. A core of 5 to 6 regulars come to this with an additional visit taking communion to a bed-bound resident in her room.

Halfway through the year, the personnel at Charing House changed. The new Activities Manager and her assistant have injected a pro-active approach into ensuring all residents who wish to are brought to the services and they give them intermediate reminders as well. Although not a confessing Christian, she sits in on all services and is in no hurry to return the residents to their rooms if they wish to talk or pray afterwards. The working relationship with the staff is very good and the new Activities Manager comes up with suggestions and practical help on how the church experience can be enhanced for the residents. She has also summoned me at other times to see residents asking for spiritual support as when a 99 year old resident unable to travel to her son's funeral wanted prayer at the time of the funeral and to pray for a very unwell resident just before Christmas who died an hour after I left. I understand that the relatives were very appreciative of the visit thus bringing glory to God.

The ministry is consistent rather than spectacular but nevertheless appreciated by residents and staff alike as we seek to pitch it at a level suitable to their age. It is the biggest residential home in Medway by far and it still remains a privilege to minister God's love to those in the latter stages of their lives, bearing in mind that it was they, rather like Paul's vision of the man from Macedonia, who requested our presence there.

Personally, I would like to express my grateful thanks to the team members and team leaders who organise their teams for each month's service. Just as a plug; if anyone is interested in joining a team please speak to me for more information. The annual commitment is three occasions of about 1 and a quarter hours each.

Graham Davis, Co-ordinator

St Mark's House

On the second Sunday of each month a short church service is held at St Mark's House, Residential Care Home, lasting about 30-40 minutes. We aim to provide the elderly residents with happy and relaxed fellowship and spiritual refreshment with prayer, praise and worship. A short talk of about 10-15 minutes is provided for the purpose of sharing and teaching God's Word and a very important part of the event is the informal chatting that takes part after the service with a cup of tea and biscuits.

The meetings are organised by St Mark's 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 and we would like to thank all those who regularly agree to help with this. There are periodic Holy Communion Services throughout the year which sometimes include prayer for healing and anointing with oil.

Generally, we have four elderly residents who attend but a few more came for the Christmas Carol Service at which we were joined by Kathryn Thom and the choir from St Mark's. We all had a joyous time praising God so thanks to all involved. There were over twenty people filling the lounge and we were all treated to mince pies to complete the festivities.

Richard and Jane Tolhurst

Eritrean Church

The Eritrean Church no longer meet on Tuesday evenings as many of the community have moved beyond Medway for better prospects and life chances. I'm in regular contact with most of them and it is with joy to share some of them have been able to regularise their stay in the UK and settling well. Also, St Mark's has a regular Sunday attendee from Eritrean Refugee Community as their preferred mode of Worship and we continue to provide ad-hoc support to those remaining in Medway.

Siju Adeoye, Refugee Advocate

Flower Arrangements and Displays Team

The Flower Team continues to create and maintain arrangements in the church on a rota system, with everyone helping at special Events. We are sorry have lost Jenny White from the team this year,

Jenny is very gifted in many artistic ways (and humble with it) and we will miss her – not forgetting Rod, whose assistance was much appreciated. (they have moved to a church nearer their home).

As always, we welcome anyone who feels called to join us in this work, which is (as Graham Wilkins said recently about music worship leading) our duty privilege and joy.

Janet Waters for The Flower Team.

The Gathering

This group no longer meets.

His Majesty's Gospel Choir

His Majesty's Gospel Choir has been inactive for a while but was rebirthed as St Mark's Christmas Community Choir in the year 2018. The choir had its first presentation during the St Marks FOLLOW THE STAR Christmas Festival. It consists of over 40 members, with various members from within the community. We have a professional Music Director who brings lots of musical finesse to the song arrangements.

We plan on presenting a song or two during the Easter period if time permits. We have had invitations to sing outside of the church, we sang during the switching on of the Christmas lights on Gillingham High Street. Although life gets in the way of getting everyone involved together, we try our best to make it work.

Mayowa Oyinloye

Medway Campus Chaplaincy

For those who are new to St Marks, my role covers three university institutions at the local Medway campus; approximately 10,000 students, plus staff.

Chaplaincy is involved from the initial point of welcoming new students right the way through to graduation ceremonies. Together with a trusty team of helpers from St Mark's and other local churches we run a weekly World Café on campus each Wednesday, providing free coffee & cake, and giving students a place to step back from studies, socialise and relax for two hours. *If you enjoy baking and would like to help us once a month, we would love to hear from you.*

Each Thursday evening, we hold an event called TABLE *talk*, which is primarily for International students; this is a great place of community, making friends and improving their English level. We also hold regular Bring & Share Lunches, tasting food from all around the globe.

Chaplaincy runs a Bargain Corner on campus, and we are always looking for donations. We sell warm clothing, kitchen items and bedding. All money raised goes back in to chaplaincy-run student activities. *If you wish to know more, please ask.*

Throughout the year, we also run several day-trips for students to popular destinations, such as Cambridge, Oxford, Brighton, Dover Castle, Hever Castle, etc.

On a personal note, I believe God has called me to be 'one who comes alongside'. I spend a large portion of my time meeting pastorally with students (and occasionally staff) who might be experiencing stress, mental health challenges, disability issues, housing or financial challenges, and so the list goes on. There are many times every week when I say a quick prayer asking God for wisdom, words of life and encouragement. There are also many times that I have the privilege to share something of my faith, and to pray for believers and unbelievers alike.

I would like to thank Frank, John, Denise, Mandy, Pauline, Jon, Lesley, Wayne and Sue for their faithfulness in volunteering.

Please continue to pray for this ministry.
Facebook: Medway Campus Chaplaincy
Blog: medwaystudents.blogspot.co.uk

Lynne Martin

Medway Foodbank Centre for Gillingham

St. Mark's Foodbank has been running well throughout the period 2018/19. From the 1st April 2018 to 31st March 2019 we have distributed 25% of all Medway Foodbanks Vouchers, making us one of the busiest centres in Medway, supporting more than 1300 clients with over 500 of these being children.

The vouchers were issued by a variety of referral agencies across the Medway Towns these include, Age UK, Support Services, Schools, Academies, Children's Centres, Health Care Professionals, Mental Health Professionals and Churches.

From 1st January 2018 to 31 December 2018 Medway Foodbank honoured 4,888 vouchers from these 2,935 were adults 1,953 were children.

The top four reasons were:

- 1. Low income 1,473**
- 2. Benefit changes 1,003**
- 3. Benefit delays 901**
- 4. Debt 648**

There has been a steady increase in food donations being brought to us, both from the public and from other churches; this food is then forwarded to the warehouse for weighing sorting and re-distribution.

We continue to offer prayer to our clients with a 95% uptake; we also invite them to our Church services.

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) a money course for people with debt problems.
- ALPHA Course for those who would like to go further in exploring Christianity.
- THE NIGHT SHELTER for people who are sleeping rough.
- RECOVERY Course for people with alcohol, drug or gambling problems.
- Housing & Homelessness Organisations for people facing eviction.
- Anyone who is suffering domestic abuse.

Sometimes a friendly face and the 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 an initiative called: Medway R.E.A.P (Restoration-Empowerment- Action- Purpose) Medway REAP is a partnership of Medway Charities and organisations that are committed to helping anyone who is in a hardship crisis.

They include

- All Saints Community Project
- Home Start
- MEGAN (Medway- Engagement-Group-And-Network)
- MRS Letting (MidKent-Residential-Services)

Our project manager Ian Childs sadly left us due to personal commitments, but happily a new Project Manager was appointed her name is Lorraine Schulze she's been worshipping at St Marks church for approximately eight years and volunteering at St Marks Foodbank for around two years.

Paul Smith

Men's Group/Curry Nights

It has been a great honour been leading the Men's Group. Men's Group popularly known as the men's curry night, is an initiative that brings the men together to discuss matters informally over a good array of food. We have men that are not members of St Marks participating too. This year I introduced a Men's Breakfast, just to find a way to include everyone.

We meet every 2 months, to eat out or we make the food ourselves. We share stories, encourage each other, exchange banter and look forward to the next meeting.

We sometimes have invited guests that motivates us by sharing uplifting words. We have a good number of between 21-28 men that take part in the group.

Damola Oyinloye

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.

We have continued to support Katy Barnwell (Wycliffe), Tim and Tricia Barrow (SIM), Carrie McFarlane (Mission India), Francis and Diane Dognon (France), Hyndman's Trustees (our Patron), Tearfund Connected church Sahara Project and Family Trust.

We also made a one-off donation to support the Night Shelter (Medway) the 'Let Loose' Concert (Gillingham), The Christian Union at the Universities (local), The Bishop's Poverty and Hope charity, REACH, Toilet Twinning and to The Fishermen Trust.

We gave to 3 individuals who requested support to do a summer mission.

Our financial support for Lucy Haslam finished when she got married in June to move north with her husband after completing her degree at Oak Hill College.

A team from St Mark's went to India in April 2018 to visit our mission partners The Fishermen Trust and the TEARFUND Connected Church, Saharra India Project.

When MLTG met in September there was still a sum of money to be allocated so it was decided to ask PCC members and Home Groups to submit suggestions of people or charities they prayerfully felt we should support. As a result, we made donations to:-

- Food Bank for van deliveries
- The Fishermen Trust towards a vehicle
- Street Kids Direct a charity working in Guatemala
- El Campello church in Spain,
- Jon Friday's short-term mission to India and
- Tim and Tricia Barrow's trip to Namibia.

We continue to be grateful for the support and advice from Tim and Tricia Barrow, members of MLTG, with their many years first hand mission experience in the field.

It is good to receive prayer letters, emails, newsletters and WhatsApp messages from our mission partners some of which can be found on the notice board in church, on our website and in Marktime. We can let you know how to receive updates from our mission partners direct, particularly if Home Groups or individuals would like to support a mission partner.

If you are considering short- or long-term mission work do speak to us as we would love to hear from you.

Please continue to pray for our Mission Partners and if you would like to join MLTG, please speak to one of us.

Denise Young on behalf of the team

Glyn Allen, Keith Sheepwash, Saju Muthalaly, Amanda Maskell, Tim and Tricia Barrow.

Music Worship

This year has been difficult for the worship teams, as it has for the whole church. Sarah Mann and Lorraine Schulze have stepped back from their involvement in worship, and I know we would all like to sincerely thank them for their massive contribution to the weekly worship at St Mark's.

It's not that long since we had 30 people regularly involved in our Sunday worship, but now the number is nearer 10, and most of us have significant commitments to work and/or other areas of church life. This means that the worship teams will often be smaller for the time being.

This is now a time for us as a church to focus on the heart of worship – it comes from within ourselves as a response to who God is, and what He has done for us. We should not allow our worship of God to rely on who is leading us in our singing, or how good the band is. For our part, as sung worship leaders, we are under a duty to give of our best for God and to God as we have the privilege of leading in the services at St. Mark's.

We would love to have more worshippers to join us in leading the congregation, and we particularly need band instrumentalists. For those who may consider joining us, we will arrange an easy-going time of playing songs with everyone together rather than an audition style of assessment. We hope this will encourage the more timid to put themselves forward.

Please pray for us.

Graham, Kathryn, Mayowa, Emily and JT

Peace & Hope (formerly Faith & Light)

In October, due to issues with insurance, we were unable to meet as Faith & Light, so up until December we met as 'Differently Able' with the support of St Mark's Church.

Peace & Hope is a church community for adults of any age with a learning disability and their families and carers.

We are a community 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, interactive way. We regularly have between twenty and thirty people at our meetings and all are encouraged to take an active part.

We led the All Age Service in June; visited Aylesford Friary in July and some of us went to visit Minister Abbey to spend time with the Benedictine Nuns in August.

From January the Faith and Light Junior community has stopped meeting due to only one family attending, although the families were all invited to join the Adult group for the Summer BBQ, and a joint Christmas party in December which included a special appearance from the Family Trust puppeteers.

We were privileged to work in conjunction with the Music Man Kent project and participate in the 'Follow the Star' celebration on Christmas Eve in church

Karen and Trevor Dyer

Prayer Ministry Teams

The prayer teams are available both during Communion and after our main services. We seek to have a listening ear and offer prayer as required whilst sensing what God is saying and praying appropriately.

The team may use anointing oil, laying on of hands (with permission) or share a verse of scripture or maybe a Word. We will always seek to encourage or strengthen in whatever you are going through, don't forget to share with us when you want to praise and thank the Lord too.

Please come and find us in the Side Chapel or during communion or just when we meet for that prayer or praise.

Keith Sheepwash on behalf of the team.

Prayer Stream

Prayer Stream was birth out of our mission statement as a church where we desire to be a praying church. Our vision is where prayer is not an event but a lifestyle.

There are numerous prayer devotional tools and prayer partners available from the Prayer Stream Team. We desire to Live for Jesus, Love Gillingham and Learn Together through active prayer life. Despite these deep desires, the Prayer Stream has not been without its challenges particularly on low attendance some evenings. Many prayer schedules are prayerfully put together monthly by the Prayer Stream Leaders to encourage a praying church and a renewed community.

Rev David MacInnes (Curate 1957 - 1961 under Rev John Collins) recently had a prophetic word for St Mark's Gillingham at New Wine Regional Leaders Conference.

*David MacInnes recently met up with John Collins. We've been praying for you
(Then there was a long pause)*

Don't lose heart

(Another long pause)

Don't be afraid of having to go on praying

It's very easy to get discouraged (An example of young people's centre in Birmingham was used. It was set up with no money, but two old ladies gave set of silver because they've been praying for a youth centre for 40 years. It may sound a little discouraging but the principle, he said, was they didn't give up) The Lord has had his hand on that place for a long long time.

John Collins had said to him he had never had strong calling to any work as strong as the one in Gillingham.

Siju Adeoye - Prayer Stream Team

Reach at Gillingham Pier

It has been a truly extraordinary year, filled to the brim with emotional and spiritual highs and lows but through it all God has been there for me and for the team at Reach. Often it is only when you look back that you truly recognise the extent of the journey. Just over a year ago Reach was formalised at law by being granted its Bishops Mission Order, effectively that was our launch point.

Since then we have visited countless people, cemented a pattern of meeting and worship at both Prospect Place and the Premier Inn with numbers attending ranging from 9 to 47. We have run a number of trips for those who are unable to get out on their own and are known now for our meetings on a Sunday morning in the Asda café, just for breakfast and fellowship. We have started a Bible Study group that meets at the Prospect Place Café twice a month and we have 12 attending this, it's called Reach In and is labelled as a safe space to explore. It amazes me to see some of the residents wearing Reach fleeces, in their own way proclaiming the presence of Church and as a consequence the presence of God.

I do not take for granted the amazing support of so many in getting us to this place. My family at St Marks have nurtured and encouraged me and it is through my years of fellowship there that my faith has developed to the point of stepping out in this way. I thank the PCC for their provision of practical support in accessing the photocopier, admin support and agreeing for us to align from a safeguarding perspective. I also thank them for being willing to host the Reach account so that things like treasury and Gift Aid can be managed well. In this regard I am particularly grateful to Glyn Allen, a man that has served us, and you, beyond the understanding of most of us and always doing so with immense skill, commitment and humility.

You will be aware that my line management has changed, the new Archdeacon deciding to free Saju from the burden of managing me and placing me now answering to the Area Dean. Saju has plenty of good things to focus on and I want to record my gratitude for his fundamental part in supporting me and the creation of Reach, it has been a great start. From the unusual place of being an onlooker into

St Mark's it feels like you are on an amazing journey, echoed by similar journeys in a number of our local churches. This I suspect is not a coincidence but rather an encouraging sign that God is actively at work in our towns.

And what of the future? More of the same for Reach, finding ways to portray our faith through authentic living, to the point when people ask why we do it, just loving them into the Kingdom. We will be looking to create structure during this next phase, our hope being that we can become independent, possibly even adopting charity status. There is so much to do the work is only limited by our discernment of what God is calling us to and the time that we can commit. I would hope that my role as Chaplain to the Medway Police will be formalised a little after Easter and it will be interesting to see where God takes that role. I have a sense it will be supportive of our work at Reach. I am also close to finishing the second year of my MA studies and with only one more assignment to write followed by my dissertation. It has been a great experience and I have learnt so much.

So thank you St Mark's, from the Reach Team and from me. Your prayers and support are part of the foundation of our work.

In all things let God be glorified.

Terry Whittaker – Leader, Reach at Gillingham Pier

Small Groups

Small Groups have flourished this year with the addition of members to many existing groups and the addition of a weekly Thursday evening group ably led by Ben and Nicola McGowan.

Small Groups are essential in the life of the church and we would encourage everyone to become a member of a group. Small Groups are the place where friendships are developed, pastoral and prayer support happens, where we can be intentional about developing our relationship with Jesus and becoming better disciples. They are safe places to work out our gifts and learn to share them to build up the body of Christ. Finally, they are a place where we can intentionally invite others, and put into action activities that reach outside of our small groups to those who don't know about Jesus.

Graham and Suzanne Wilkins who have lead Junction, (fortnightly on a Wednesday at the Old Vicarage), for many years and done an outstanding job have given up that leadership role but are still part of the group. We would like to publicly thank them for all their hard work in building and supporting that group over many years. Both Graham and Suzanne are involved in many other areas of St Mark's so will still be very busy! Leadership of the group now falls to the Byrne family – Jackie, Don and Rob.

There is a new 'Small Group' information leaflet available from the Welcome Desk if you would like to find out more about what happens and when, and both Amanda

and Pauline Jackson are more than happy to talk to you about joining a Small Group and finding a best fit for you.

Amanda Maskell

Tear Fund

St. Marks Church associated itself with a project in India led by Tear Fund Sahaara in improving life for woman and children being trafficked for sex in the red-light district of Mumbai.

Earlier in the year Leslie Boast came on board to join the team as a Tear Fund representative for St. Mark's Church. In February 2018 we had a Tear fund Sunday, the director of Tear Fund Sahaara India project was our guest speaker. The Tear Fund Sunday was a success and people donated generously towards this cause a light lunch was served and people were inspired by the stories and the way Sahaara India was saving the lives of woman and children in Mumbai India.

In April a team led by our Vicar Saju Muthalaly went to Mumbai India to visit and help out Sahaara India and to see how Tear Fund Sahaara India was working on the ground. The team came back with some amazing stories and were inspired by the work done by the staff of Sahaara India to change the lives of woman and children. In October we had a Big Bake Sale and Quiz on a Sunday and it was well attended. People prepared cake and snacks and donated to the cause of changing woman's lives in Mumbai India and by the grace of God it was a successful event.

As every year in December Tear Fund kept the Christmas card tradition alive and people donated generously towards this and all money raised was sent to Sahaara India.

We would like to thank each one of you for your support and generous donations towards this cause. We all have a right to live and to live freely. Please keep the team in your prayers and especially the woman and children who are manipulated for different reasons.

Many thanks.

Monica Shergill

Youth, Children and Families Ministries

St. Mark's Pre-School

In the last 12 months the Pre-school has continued to grow in Children's numbers, and this has also brought financial stability for the setting.

The Pre-school has gone from operating five sessions a week to seven, and there are no available spaces in these seven sessions.

We prayed for growth, but never quite expected to see it so quickly and consistently. The Pre-school has attracted above average numbers of new children, the ethnic mix is varied, as is the learning capabilities. A major challenge for the Pre-school has been the high numbers of children new to Pre-school that have severe learning/capability issues. Julie and her team have had to work very closely with Local Services and support agencies to deliver the right learning packages and support for these children. Paula Crust is now the full time SEN for the setting.

The introduction of two extra afternoon sessions per week has been a great success, and we are now planning to add a third starting with Thursday afternoons after Easter 2019.

As I write this report, we are in the process of employing another Practitioner for the Pre-school, to support with additional needs children and the onset of extra sessions.

The Feed the 5,000 summer event was an amazing success, attracting almost a 100 people; an event for this year is now being developed by the Parent Committee Representatives.

Julie and the staff have worked extremely hard to maintain the high standard of teaching and learning through play approach, and I believe this can be supported by the high numbers of new enquiries and very positive comments from visitors and Agencies to the setting.

Weekly visits from Amanda into the setting, bringing Bible stories to the children has also been very positive and a welcome addition.

Lance Hanning - Pre-school Chair

Parent and Toddlers

The Parent and Toddlers group meets once a week in the Vicarage Hall on Wednesday afternoons during school term time.

This provides an outreach into the community where parents with their children can meet in an informal social atmosphere to enjoy free play with the toys provided, as well as organised craft activities and refreshments.

During the past year there has been a change of leadership with the departure of Shelagh Graves who organised the group for many years.

Ruth Howard stepped into the leadership role. A big thank you to Katie Muthalaly who stepped up to assist in leading the group. Katie has since moved on and we have been joined by Martha Prankard, Simon Morbey and Frank Howard. Highlights of each meeting are the refreshments provided by Terri Thom, Kath Bertrum and Vanessa Beck. A special thanks to all those who step up at short notice

to fill gaps in staffing when needed, and a big thank you to Saju for leading much appreciated music and song when he is available.

With up to 18 adults and 28 children attending, although numbers fluctuate widely from week to week, the doors are open to many who would not normally enter church premises and has led to some parents becoming regular church attenders.

Ruth Howard

Crèche (up to 3 years)

The area at the back of church has continued to be used for crèche throughout the year on Sundays when the children's Sunday morning groups are running. Crèche is for children under 3 years old and their parents/carers; it provides a small, protected area where parents/carers can keep an eye on the service at the same time as their children play with the toys provided.

There continues to be a few regular children whom we welcome to the small area provided. Thank you to those of you who recognise the importance of keeping the area clean, tidy and safe for Sunday mornings. We understand there are challenges of sharing spaces within the building but we do appreciate your vigilance in ensuring that anything accessible (toys, resources, furniture) in this area is suitable for under three's. Now that the building work is complete, we are looking forward to moving the crèche to the old choir vestry next to the kitchen. This will be a much safer, warmer and more relaxed space. Please help to let parents/carers with young children know about the availability of crèche in this new space.

Thank you for your understanding in recognising and valuing the youngest members of the church family. Please pray for these children and their parents/carers that they will experience God's love through the services. Thank you to Natasha McCready and Katie Blewett who faithfully continue on the crèche rota.

Chris Atkins

Gems: years (1 - 6 years)

We relaunched St Mark's children's programs in September. Christine Cordle took over as Head of Children's Ministry. We renamed our children's classes Pebbles and Gems based on the truth that Jesus is our rock, and we are called to build our life upon the rock. The aim of the children's ministry is three fold.

1. To teach the children that Jesus loves them unconditionally.
2. To teach the children the bible so they develop a solid biblical foundation, and love for God's word.
3. To teach the children to love God and love and serve others as God has commanded us to do.

We started using a new curriculum, "The Gospel Project," which teaches the bible from Geneses through Revelation over a 3 year time period. We teach the same lessons in different formats in both Pebbles and Gems so that there is continuity when children graduate from pebbles to Gems.

We currently have between 10-15 children who attend regularly on a Sunday morning.

Christine Cordle

Pebbles – (3 – 5 years)

Pebbles is a new group which started in September to cater for 3-5 year olds. We have started a new programme with them called the Gospel Project. We currently have between 2 - 6 children who attend the group and we meet every week apart from the 1st Sunday of the month. Pebbles have currently been looking at the Old Testament covering Genesis and Exodus. We ask for continue prayer for the group and that they get closer to God and grow in faith.

Please pray for the following leaders.

Poppy, Mandy, Katie, Sui, Becca, Niamh

Rock Ministry

Rock ministry, previously Pathfinders, we changed the name in September to go with the new vision set out for Children and Youth Ministry. As a group we meet every week apart from the 1st Sunday of the month.

At the beginning of the year we started with a series on the Old Testament, we looked at Moses, Noah, Job and Jonah. We discussed what they did in the bible and the importance of them and how we can use their actions to implicate our ministry today. The next series we looked at was "How was Jesus", this series looked different names for Jesus describing who He is. This series came with lots of discussion around the topic of Jesus and why he had many names i.e., Bread of Life and The Light of the World.

As of September, we had a change in the structure of the ministry and we now meet in church in the 3rd Sunday of the month. This was to give the young people the opportunity to praise and worship God in church and to get them ready for when they step up into the next group.

Next year we still plan to meet at church but still have our normal sessions in the Old Vicarage, we plan to look at the following series Jesus at the Table, and Christian Characters.

We ask for your continued prayer for the young people, as they transition from the young groups into the next stage of their spiritual journey and pray for all the leaders who volunteer their time to minister to our young people.

Simon, Trevor, Alice, Charmaine.

Summit Group

Summit group, formally Landmark. We meet on a regular basis. We have 3 young people who attend on a semi regular basis. This past year we have been looking at the following topics, LGBT, Politics in Church and Mental Health. We have also looked at Abraham and the Sermon on the Mount. The young people in the group have become more confident with each other and are willing to express their opinions on pressing issues and feel free to do so.

In the upcoming year we plan to expand the group and look at an outreach project, changing the age range to 11-18 years and become a Youth Group.

As from Christmas, Luke and Martha stepped down as the Group Leaders and I will like to take some time to thank them both for all the work they have done over the years supporting and leading our young people. I ask for you to continue to pray for them and their new season ahead, also to pray for the leaders who are still currently involved Simon, Poppy, Lucy, Chris and Ben.

Who Let the Dad's Out

This group runs on the third Saturday of each month and is aimed at Fathers, Grandfathers, uncles, carers etc and their children aged 0-6. The aim is fellowship by creating spaces where Dads, Father Figures and their children can have fun together. We are able to share food and drink together; children happily play together and the men are able to chat with each other building friendships.

We have been fortunate to have some grants that will enable the group to expand the offering of toys and games for the children to enjoy.

We continue to pray that this group expands, and more fathers hear about the group and enjoy fellowship together.

Please pray for the Dads and young people who attend and for the new Dads who will start to attend in the future and for the future of the ministry. Please pray for all who is involved Simon, Chris, Amanda and Alistair.

Alistair Williams

Kids Klub

This year has seen some changes within the leadership of the team and some new team members coming on. We are currently seeing about 18 children on a weekly basis. We have set crafts per week, and we try and follow the Christian calendar. We actively encourage the children to play games together which may include football, rounder's or just playing pool together and some of the children have become good friends.

At the end of each session we have started a lesson activity which we show the children how God can impact their lives and we have had a good response with this and the children will now ask if we are going to have the lesson.

Kidz Klub is roughly made up un- churchd children who now come to other events held by church.

Please pray for the children who attend Kidz Klub and all the Leaders who are involved: Simon, Chris, Mandy, Josh, Andrew, Jon and Mariam

St. Mary's Island Church (SMIC)

The Electoral Roll for 2018 was 70 – 1 addition during the year (total of 64 for 2017). There were 4 infant baptisms and 0 Thanksgivings.

The average Sunday attendance was 42 adults (43 in 2017) and 21 children (19 in 2017) although this average does not reflect that on many Sundays the attendance is much greater requiring the use of 2 chalices for communions.

Outreach

We continue to be mindful of – and deliver- our reviewed Mission Statement: **'Creating spaces for our community to encounter Jesus'**.

The Mission Action Team (MAT) and also a Marketing and Communication Team (MARCOM) meet to plan, review and recommend actions to the DCC or to receive a brief from the DCC. It was felt communication paramount if we are to deliver the new mission statement.

Within the community a core of people help with the Island Youth Club, three people help with the joint churches venture of Night Shelter (at St Barnabas) and teams help lead a service at Charing House three times a year.

Yet again there have been two carol singing events outdoors –outside The Ship and Trades (supported by the Salvation Army) and also the Community Centre. This time we were pleased to welcome the school choir who participated in the service outside the Community Centre.

The Dragon Boat Races had a good team from SMI – who came 6th overall and achieved their best time yet. Well done to the team!

Together with St Mark's, people lead and support a service at the King George V pub in Brompton. This is held once a month at 5.30 pm. and there have been up to 30 people in attendance.

Messy Church continues to attract families, several of whom see Messy Church as their worship time. This year we were delighted when a 9 year old decided to be baptised as a direct result of his attendance at Messy Church. Stars were knitted this Christmas to hand out to all the families at the Messy Church Crib Service. There is a loyal team of helpers at this service.

Our involvement with the school is via helping/leading Revolution and Kings Squad aided by The Family Trust. John Bloor, Carolyn and Saju all lead worship at the school on a weekly basis.

Three people now link with Lower Stoke Primary School and have helped with two R.E. days – for Easter and Christmas. This is ably led by Wendy Drobka. The Ladies group maintains a varied programme and attracts non church attendees as well as some of our church regulars.

The Welcome Packs and leaflets were re-designed and Fray Fryatt delivers these to the residents of the new build dwellings. The church also uses these to hand out to new comers as a welcome.

A very successful venture of the painted stones last year was repeated for this Christmas – this time with an angel on each stone together with the words 'Faith, Hope, Love and Peace'. These were distributed around the island for three weeks in December for families to find and take home.

Café style services continue on the 4th Sunday of the month but a new team now organises these All Age services – co-ordinated by Revd Amanda Maskell. More people have been DBR checked and people are in post. All posts required for safeguarding are filled.

Leadership

The Lay Leader of the church is John Bloor as Focal Minister who is responsible to Revd Saju Muthalaly. Various teams operate under John's leadership. Three members embarked on the Growing Leaders this year with others becoming mentees.

| | |
|---------------------------------------|---|
| Focal Minister: | John Bloor |
| Ministry Team: | John Bloor Carolyn Facey and Janet Adkin who meet occasionally with Revd Saju Muthalaly. |
| Preaching Team: | Revd Saju Muthalaly, John Bloor, Carolyn Facey, plus Bernie Pinner, Mike Worthing, Roy Facey |
| In training: | Andy Ward, Matt Keeler, Sally Bloor and Fray Fryatt. |
| Youth Work team: | Kids For Christ (K4C) Cheryl McMillan, Trailblazers – Carolyn Facey, Children of God (CoG) – Katy Muthalaly Revolution – John Bloor, who helps also with Kings Squad (The Family Trust). |
| Family services: (All Age Worship) | Revd Amanda Maskell, Chris Pinner, John Bloor, and Carolyn Facey, Jan Williamson and Sally Bloor.. Luke Knott and Sathish Narayanan have now joined this team. |

Prayer team (Powerhouse) Sally Bloor

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

District Church Council: Deanery Synod rep: Eve Martin

PCC rep Carolyn Facey

Clergy (ex-officio) Revd Saju Muthalaly and Revd Amanda Maskell

Deputy Church Wardens: Kathy Hurst and Sathish Narayanan

Elected members to 2019: Matt Keeler, Janet Adkin, Andy Ward

Elected to 2020: Sally Bloor, Fray Fryatt Carolyn Facey.

Elected to 2021: Roy Facey, Sandi James, Luke Knott

Safeguarder: Sandi James

Verifier & Appointer: Jonica Thomas

Responsibility for the Vulnerable and Elderly Janet Adkin

Data Compliance Officer Jonica Thomas

Data Controller Saju Muthalaly /John Bloor

The Life and Work of the Church

There were several meetings at the beginning of the year in order to ensure we were addressing and meeting the legal requirements for the introduction of GDPR in May 2018.

We continue to have our links with St Mary's Island Primary School and there are representatives on the Governing Body as Foundation Governors. A team of three are on a weekly rota to lead school worship.

The building works for the school extension have been a bit of a challenge and it has been necessary for John Bloor to liaise frequently with school personnel in order to ensure the church service can be led in safety and reasonable comfort due to almost weekly changes as work progressed.

The introduction of new system for locking and unlocking the school and the new electronic and computer controlled gates required a degree of training for key holders.

God's Powerhouse (Prayer) is held twice a month and is seen as the key to moving the church forward. Prayer is offered to those who request it at the end of the church service each week.

We have experienced an interesting 'problem' to address – in that children's attendance has risen to 30+ on a Sunday. We are very fortunate in having some highly skilled people come forward to lead or help with these groups. It was necessary to split and age group and we have a new 'Trailblazers' group on a Sunday.

We welcomed the introduction of a Youth Band who now play for our All Age Worship / Family services on the 4th Sunday each month. The Music Group covers the remainder of the services grouped in teams.

Families and individuals attended Spring Harvest again in 2018 and is a great support to spiritual development and refreshment.

The four Home Groups meet on a regular basis and their studies are co-ordinated by Mike Worthing.

We continue to look at our giving – with increasing demands on our financial resources, which will need careful consideration in 2019.

We were saddened when our dear friend Leslie James aged 98, who needed to be looked after in a Nursing Home, passed away on 11th December.

There has been a degree of movement within the church membership and adherents – 4 adults and 1 child moved away and 4 adults and 2 children moved to another church. However, we welcomed 7 adults and 11 children into the church.

May we continue to be richly blessed.

Janet M Adkin (Church Secretary)

St. Mary's Island C of E (Aided) Primary School (SMIS)

St Mary's Island Church and St Mary's Church of England School share the same building. The church uses the School Hall on Sunday for worship and some of the rooms are used for the Sunday School classes. The church furniture is stored in a cupboard in the Hall, this is used to set up the space for worship. Sometimes this is done during the week for the school children to experience a visit to a church and to understand the significance of the various items of furniture. As part of the RE curriculum the children are taught about the various services that are held in the church.

The school follows the three-year timetable for Collective School Worship that is prepared by Rochester Diocese Board of Education.

Daily worship services are held for the school community, attended by both children and staff. These services are led by the teachers and members of the church, including Rev Saju Muthalaly. The children enjoy the visits from Rev.

Children take an active part in the services, offering up their own spontaneous prayers, reading scripture or assisting the worship leader. They are confident and enjoy participating in the programmes. Christian festivals such as Christmas and Easter are recognised and celebrated with the children and their families. A Remembrance Day service is held in conjunction with representatives from the Royal Engineers attending. Children from Scouts, Cubs, Brownies and Rainbows are encouraged to wear their uniforms and a wreath is presented to the Royal Engineers to be taken back to be laid at the War Memorial at the Royal Engineers base.

Worship plays an integral part in both the children's lives and that of the school. Fiona Farrin is the RE leader and she works closely with Carolyn Facey. Together they plan services and displays around the school.

The school has recently undergone an extensive building programme to extend the school capacity by a third. A nursery and a third class in Reception are now well established and the school numbers will increase in the coming years.

As a church we are welcomed into the school by the Head, Christine Easton. We have an amazing opportunity to witness to the children and establish relationships with them. We pray that they will carry what they have learnt and experienced with them as they grow up and mature into adults.

Carolyn Facey

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