



St Mark's Church, Gillingham

'Living for Jesus, Loving Gillingham, Learning Together'

AGENDA

for the meeting on 18 May 2025

MINUTES

of the last APCM on 19 May 2024

plus

STATUTORY AND ADDITIONAL REPORTS

for the year ended 31 December 2024

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Agenda for the Annual Parochial Church Meeting

Sunday 18 May 2025

- (1) Prayer
- (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 3 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 Members – no election this year.
 3. Report on the financial affairs of the Parish (*2024 Annual Report and Accounts, 2025 budget*) (GA)
 4. Choosing of an Independent Examiner of the Accounts for the current year (GA)
 5. 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) Report on Fabric, Goods and Ornaments (*Statutory Reports*)
 - d) Proceedings of Deanery Synod (*Statutory Reports*)
 - e) Receiving the Reports from Church Ministries given in the Additional Reports
 6. Activities Update
 7. Vicar's Update Report/update/vision - Catharina Olsson Gisleskog (COG)
 8. Closing Prayer (COG)

Minutes for the Annual Parochial Church Meeting Sunday 19 May 2024

The APCM for 2024 was in church at 12.30 pm on Sunday 19 May 2024

The meeting was chaired by Revd Catharina Olsson Gisleskog

(1). Worship

Catharina welcomed people to the meeting and read from Acts 2. This was followed by prayer.

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

It was reported that Karen Dyer and Frank Howard had been churchwardens over the past year. Neither of them was at the meeting. Frank had said that he would not be standing again. Catharina thanked both Karen and Frank for all they had done over the past year.

There were two nominations for the two positions, Karen Dyer and Colette Wentzel. They had been proposed and seconded. Colette addressed the meeting and told them about herself, and Catharina spoke about Karen.

The meeting unanimously agreed to Karen Dyer and Colette Wenzel being elected as Churchwardens.

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 Jane and Richard Tolhurst, Ann and John Townsend, Val Flick, Pauline Jackson, Janet Waters, Lynda Smith, Margaret Green, Mike Aldington, John and Vanessa Beck and Lucy Williams.

Suzanne Wilkins asked for an up-date on the non-alcoholic wine that was discussed in Any Other Business. Catharina said she had spoken to the Diocese and looked at the Canon of the Church of England, and she has found that we can serve de-alcoholised wine. In regard to children and communion she reported that there is currently a study going on in the Church of England on how we can make communion more accessible to children. This has not been discussed further at the PCC or any decisions made.

The meeting accepted the minutes of the last year with a few abstentions.

Regarding tellers for possible elections of PCC members. Vicky Allen explained that as we had fewer people nominated for positions on the PCC than spaces we would not need to have a ballot, but she thanked those people she had asked to be tellers for their willingness to undertake this task.

2. Elections

Vicky Allen explained to the meeting how many vacancies there were this year for election.

Those coming to the end of their three-year term were Vicky Allen, Janet Mann, Alastair Williams, and Paul Smith. Paul Smith had indicated that he does not wish to stand again for election this year.

One other PCC member had stood down from the PCC, Ed Wenzel, leaving another place available for one year.

a. Election of Electoral Roll Members to serve on PCC

There were the following spaces: -

4 spaces for 3 years

1 space for 1 year

Four people had been nominated for PCC. Vicky Allen asked the meeting if they would be happy to proceed to election with the four people nominated. The meeting agreed. Those people nominated for election or re-election were Vicky Allen, Janet Mann, Alastair Williams (for re-election) and standing for the first time to the PCC was Cindy Reeve-Vigour.

All nominees spoke to the meeting giving a brief description of their involvement in St Mark's and reasons to consider them for election to the PCC.

Catharina thanked Paul Smith for serving on the PCC and Ed Wenzel who were standing down.

The meeting voted and unanimously agreed that Vicky Allen, Janet Mann, Cindy Reeve-Vigour and Alastair Williams be elected to serve on the PCC for three years.

b. Deanery Synod

There was no election for Deanery Synod this year. Our current Deanery Synod representatives are Glyn Allen, Jess Mahdavi-Gladwell from St Mark's and Sally Bloor from St Mary's Island Church.

3. Report on the financial affairs of the Parish Church (Annual Report)

The Treasurer said that he hoped that people had been able to look at the Annual Reporting and Accounts for 2023 and also his Treasurer's Report which brings out the key points in the accounts.

The Treasurer shared a summary of the reports.

He reported that the Financial Statements are at the moment with the Independent Examiner and have not yet been signed off, so everything is subject to that examination although he was not expecting any changes.

Highlights for the year:

General Fund	2023	2022
Total Income	£149,014	£151,829
Total Expenditure	£149,064	£147,038
Surplus (Deficit)	£50	£4,791
Net Surplus/Deficit after transfers	£7,072	(£4,180)
Budget forecast Surplus/Deficit	(£19,195)	£7,859

Donations (Voluntary Income)	£127,783	£120,124
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GA said we ended with a surplus of £7,072. This was a great figure as we forecast in our budget originally a loss of just over £19,000. This was because we budgeted a larger amount for our energy costs which we built into our budget and we were able to obtain more favourable prices. He thanked all who had contributed to the income during the year.

GA explained that apart from the General Fund we hold other designated funds the largest of these are as follows:-

Development Fund -	£71,709
Pre-school Fund -	£16,370
Repair Funds –	£31,653

The total in all our funds is £244,876, which is our current assets.

Glyn Allen ran through the financial highlights of 2023.

Financial Highlights

- Year End General Fund net surplus of £7,072 compared to budget forecast deficit of £19,195.
- General Fund voluntary giving increased to £127,783 compared to £120,124 in 2022.
- 86% of General Fund Income came from Voluntary Giving.
- Designated Away Giving maintained at 10% of 2022 voluntary giving.
- £23,362 net Gift Aid tax recovered for General Fund, after accrual adjustments. This includes Gift Aid processed by the Parish Giving Scheme.
- £35,850 (incl. Gift Aid) donated to the Development Fund earmarked for the new kitchen
- 30 people regularly contributed through The Parish Giving Scheme, donating £50,457 plus Gift Aid.
- Parish Indicative Offer to the Diocese, to cover clergy support, was to £73,008 with 19.3% met by SMI Church.
- General Fund net current asst as year end was 33.5% of 2024 forecast expenditure, with cash reserves also at 33.5 %.
- £12,789 rent received for the Garden House.
- Pre-school had a net surplus of £1,962 compared to a deficit of £5,937 in 2022.

Suzanne Wilkins asked what would the surplus for the year be used for. Glyn Allen said that if we look at the budget for 2024 we have a budget with a deficit so there are no plans for that surplus.

Lynne Martin asked about the Parish Giving Scheme and is there a plan to share about this scheme again. Glyn Allen said that there were plans to speak on giving in the future. Glyn Allen explained that 30 people (which could be couples or single people) give via the Parish Giving Scheme where the Gift Aid is claimed once a month for those rather than collectively by the Gift Aid Secretary. This represents about half of the number who regularly give directly each month.

Ernie Mann asked about the income we get for the rental of the Garden House each year, as it appears to be a low rent for the house of that size. Glyn Allen said that there are no fees to pay and we will not have any problems with the tenant. Glyn Allen said the Garden House rental was set originally based on what would be paid for a curate's accommodation allowance, and not dependent on the size of the house.

Suzanne Wilkins asked about there is a cost to the giver who contributes via the Parish Giving Scheme. Glyn Allen said there is not charge for regular givers as the cost is covered by the Diocese. One off givers would be charged. Suzanne thought that she was being charged regularly, and Glyn Allen said he would check this for her.

Budget for 2024

Expected income for the year is £157,718 and expected expenditure is £167,918, giving a deficit of £10,718. This is due to inflationary costs.

Most of our income (80%) is expected to come from Voluntary Giving, and the three largest areas of expenditure are staff, buildings, and Diocesan Offer which amounts to 86% of our total expenditure.

Glyn Allen said we should be able to manage our deficit by using reserves, but we need to ensure we keep control on our spending and spend wisely and also encourage the importance of regular generous giving.

Church Kitchen Project Funding Status

Glyn Allen reported the following figures.

Current status £ (rounded)	£
Development Fund balance	75,000
Keith Sheepwash legacy	25,000
Marshall Charity grant	20,000
Total Funds available	120,000
Total project cost projected	125,000
Shortfall	5,000

Glyn Allen said that the PCC had agreed that we can take £5,000 from the Repair Fund to make up the shortfall if we need to.

The Treasurer said that there is still an opportunity to make a contribution towards the cost of the Kitchen Project if you wish to do so by giving online or using the card machine.

Trevor Dyer asked if the shortfall was due to the additional work for fire protection etc. Glyn Allen said the fire detection equipment and emergency lights come to about £12- £13,000 which was more than we had anticipated, but this was a condition of the building regulations set that our fire protection equipment had to be improved. He said the PCC have known for some time and this was not a new thing.

Glyn Allen said that the PCC are very grateful to the congregation for their generosity. He reminded the meeting that over the last 5 – 6 years, if you take the toilets, boilers and the kitchen project the congregation have given over £300,000 most provided by the generous giving of people at St Marks.

Glyn Allen wanted to remind people that if they are not already giving regularly you can do so by signing up to the Parish Giving Scheme or by Standing Order, which obviously helps with planning if we know what money is being donated.

Glyn Allen said that God has always provided for St Mark's in remarkable ways, and he believed that He would continue to do that through the generosity of people in St Mark's.

Glyn Allen wanted thanks to be recorded to all those who help support with the financial tasks within St Mark's. To Mike Young our Gift Aid Secretary and John Townsend the Payroll Management Officer. This is quite a big job, as although we don't employ many staff in St Mark's itself, about ten people are employed for Pre-school. Also thanks to the office staff, who manage the day-to-day income and expenditure, for those count the offerings, those who do the banking, for Paul Curtis and Alastair Williams who manage the Pre-school accounts, and also the PCC and Finance Committee for their guidance.

Catharina thanked the Treasurer for his dedication and faithfulness and accuracy in all his work.

Catharina prayed and thanked God for His provision.

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

The Treasurer said that last year the meeting agreed to Rob Trice continuing to be our Independent Examiner, and during the year Rob decided he wasn't going to continue with his small business. Rob has joined a Christian Accounting Company called Calendine Ltd, so the PCC agreed that we should appoint Calendine Ltd to undertake the examining for 2023. This meeting needs to appoint an Independent Examiner for 2024, and he proposed that we appoint Calendine Ltd. This was proposed by Glyn Allen and seconded by Lynne Martin. The meeting agreed unanimously.

5. Reports

The following agenda items were all covered in the Annual Report that had been previously available.

- f) Electoral Roll Officer's Report (Statutory Report) - *Report by Denise Young*
- g) Report on the Proceedings of the PCC (Statutory Report) - *Report by Vicky Allen*
- h) Fabric, Goods and Ornaments - (Statutory Report) - *Report by Frank Howard*
- i) Proceedings of Deanery Synod - (Statutory Report) - *Report by Glyn Allen*

Questions on the reports were as follows: -

Ernie Mann asked what was happening about the chairs in the church. He asked that this matter be reconsidered at the PCC. Catharina said that the first priority was to finish the kitchen then we would look at moving forward on this. She said that good church chairs are expensive, and this matter is not forgotten. Glyn Allen said that the Diocesan Advisory Committee recommend that we do not have soft furnishing on the chair, but a wooden design that is light and stackable.

Lynne Martin reported that she was grateful for all the work that had been undertaken on the Garden House over the year.

The meeting accepted the Statutory Reports unanimously.

- f) Other Reports from Church Ministries were included in the Additional Reports and were previously available.

There were no other questions raised about these reports.

Suzanne Wilkins said that in 2022 at the APCM an Environment Policy was presented, and she asked whether there was any progress on this. Catharina said that this was before she arrived, and this will be picked up.

Glyn Allen said that the Church of England's target is that churches should be net zero by 2030. He

said that on the Church of England website there are many documents that can be accessed.

Jane Bannar-Martin asked about people parking in the car park at church and she has noticed that people use the car park if they are late, and this makes it difficult for those who are disabled or who have difficulty walking to easily use the space available. Catharina said this is something that perhaps needs to be managed better.

A question was raised about what is being done about youth in the church as there is nothing for the 11 -18 age group. Catharina said that this was very much on her heart, and she had spent a lot of time trying to get funding for a youth pastor from the SDF Fund but this has not materialised. There is a group that meets once a month with about 16 youth from St Augustine's and St Mark's. There is something but minimal. She thought this is something that we need to keep praying about.

Cindy Reeve-Vigour suggested a Home Group for youth only.

Graham Davis asked about the Vicarage Hall retaining wall and is there any plans to do something about this. Glyn Allen said that it was hoped that this could have been repaired when the doctor's surgery repaired their wall to get the job done together, but they went ahead and did their wall without us. So, this is one of the ongoing pending actions for the buildings committee to look at. The fence is in case the wall should fall but it's unlikely to happen.

Vicki Onitiri asked whether there could be more social events, like games evening and things for youth. Catharina said that there were five summer socials, barbeque, picnic etc. advertised coming up over the summer.

6. Activities Updates

Catharina asked Trevor Dyer to give an update on Peace and Hope.

Trevor said that some people will remember that Peace and Hope used to be called Faith and Light which Rachel Littlewood led for many years. It was decided to pull out of Faith and Light and rebranded as Peace and Hope. Peace and Hope used to meet fortnightly on a Wednesday night but coming out of COVID we now meet fortnightly on a Saturday morning at the Vicarage Hall between 10.30 am to around 12 noon. We try to follow whatever programme is running in the church which isn't always easy as the people coming to Peace and Hope have additional needs, so sometimes how we deliver the message has to reflect their needs, and we want to treat them as adults and not children.

Trevor said if you want to know more then come along when we meet. We average about 15 people and the people that come regard the time as their church.

Vicar's Update

Catharina said that she gave thanks to God for everything that is going on in the church. St Mark's is one of the larger churches in the Diocese of Rochester.

This year has been a hard time, we have been going through grief and with the death of our brother Graham Wilkins who had left a big hole in our church.

Catharina said that our church is growing and that is wonderful and something that we can thank God for. There is a long list of things that we would like to do, and we need volunteers, and many people are giving many many hours voluntarily. God may be asking us to do less in order to grow.

Catharina is encouraged by the:

- number of people come to the monthly prayer meeting.
- two Alpha courses running each year.
- fellowship events, going to New Wine, the Quiz Night, Coronation Barbeque.

Three priorities this year:

1. The Kitchen - and the Bishop will come to inaugurate and bless the kitchen on 16 June.
2. Children and Young People, and we need more volunteers and we need to pray for people for this.
3. Communication

The meeting closed with a reading from John 14:26.

But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you.

The meeting closed at 2.30 pm with prayer.

PCC Secretary -Vicky Allen

Statutory Reports

Treasurer's Report 2024

General Fund

For the 2024 financial year, the PCC agreed that the year end accounts should be prepared by the accountancy company Caladine, who is currently the independent examiner for our accounts. This was to lessen the burden on the church treasurer with the year end workload. Unfortunately, the amount of work involved in making this switch was more than anticipated and at the time of writing the final year end accounts have not yet been finalised. In any event there will need to be reconciliation cross checking before publishing the final examined accounts.

You will see that the accounts details are in a different format to previous years and there are not so many nominal accounts shown for income and expenditure items. The data used in compiling the accounts are available and can be interrogated should you require any specific details. This can be requested from the treasurer.

For 2024 financial year, we forecast a budget deficit on PCC unrestricted General Fund of £10,718, which included transfers between Repair and Pre-school Funds. The year finished with a deficit of £4,225, albeit this included an income accrual of £2,951 for unclaimed Gift Aid tax. Overall, compared to budget, our income was lower by approx. £2,400 and expenditure lower by approx. £8,900. The net surplus to budget was £6,493.

Donations (Voluntary Income) decreased to £125,339 from £127,783 in 2023 being higher than budget by £339. Gift Aid tax recovered amounted to £25,505, including the income accrual. Online and contactless realised donations of £5,539, before Gift Aid tax recovery being applied. Income from the Parish Giving Scheme was £53,284 plus Gift Aid.

The Pre-school funds transfer to General Fund, for the daily use of the Vicarage Hall, was £10,500 and is a useful contribution towards the fixed costs for the building. Income continued to be supplemented by rental for the Garden House of £13,020 for the year, paid by the Diocese to provide housing provision for the Medway Campus Chaplain.

For expenditure, the total running costs for our buildings were lower than budget by approx. £3,422. Youth and children and evangelism costs were both lower than budget. Mission Giving from General Fund was £12,800 and based on 10% of donations received in 2024, our General Fund Away Giving in 2025 will be budgeted at £12,500.

This year the PCC, together with St Mary's Island Church DCC, agreed that the Parish Indicative Offer paid to the Diocese, as a contribution to meet both stipend costs for parish clergy and towards other diocesan support costs, would be £74,499 – a 2% increase on 2023. This was apportioned £59,991 for St Mark's and £14,508 for St Mary's Island – I.E., 80.5%/19.5% split.

The General Fund cash at bank and in hand at 31 December 2024 was £52,015. After debtors and creditors adjustment the net current asset was £52,017. This represents a 'reserve' of 31.1% of our 2025 forecast expenditure. The PCC maintained the minimum Reserve Policy for 2024 of £55,000. The Reserve Policy will be reviewed by the PCC annually. Cash reserves are also 31.1% of 2025 forecast expenditure.

General Fund Highlights	2024	2023
Donations (Voluntary Income)	£125,339	£127,783
Total Income	£143,973	£149,014
Total Expenditure	£152,125	£149,064
Surplus (Deficit)	(£8,152)	(£50)
Net Surplus (Deficit) after transfers	(£4,225)	£7,072

Other Funds

For income, expenditure and transfer details for Other Funds, please refer to End of Year Financial Statements.

Fund Balances	Closing 2024	Opening 2024
General Fund	£52,017	£56,243
Development Fund	£6,186	£71,709
Mission Fund	£9,277	£8,685
Repair Funds	£29,575	£31,653
Small Funds	£76	£76
Vicar's Discretionary Fund	£1,205	£205
Pre-school Fund	£26,430	£16,370
HYCFM Fund	£1,250	£1,250
India Fund	£9,457	£9,707
Peace and Hope Fund	£782	£782
Specific Donation Fund	£8,407	£7,404
Strategic Development Fund	£1,661	£1,630
Community Development Fund	£4,940	£4,940
Legacy Development Fund	£0	£25,000
Legacy Fund	£9,223	£9,223
Net current assets less current liabilities	£160,487	£244,876

The PCC has approved the final General Fund 2025 V1 budget, with a year-end forecast deficit of £10,656 and an assumed voluntary income of £125,000.

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, Church Administrator, 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 87% 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 and the Garden House.

The maintenance of the Vicarage is the responsibility of the Diocesan Board of Finance.

The Church

In accordance with Church of England requirements, the Church building was subjected to a five yearly (Quinquennial) inspection by a Diocesan approved Architect during October 2024. The inspector's report made a number of observations requiring repairs to be undertaken, summarised as follows:

2024-Essential Works within the next two years:

Roofs

- Moss should be cleared from the chancel roof. Branches of the mature tree overhanging the north side of the chancel should be cut back annually and the gutters cleared in this area. Consideration should be given to removal of this tree.

Rainwater Disposal

- Clear blocked downpipe on south west corner of south aisle
- Redecorate fascia, ensure the gutter is laid to correct falls and clear moss from the south side of the chancel when access scaffolding is available
- Decorate fascia at the eastern end of the apsidal sanctuary/chancel within the next 2 years to avoid further deterioration
- Replace section of missing gutter to high level central nave on north elevation
- Clear gutters and re-seal joints on north eastern side of the church
- Replace gutter between the creche and the accessible WC and install flashing in this location to stop rainwater being driven into the masonry in high winds

Walls and Finishes

- Replace bricks to corbelled brick and stone abutment at the west end of the south and north aisles within the next 2 years
- The above corbelled sections should be repointed and possibly have heli-bars added to ensure stability
- Repoint vertical movement cracks at the east end of the sanctuary and monitor every 6 months for the quinquennial period

Windows, Glazing and Doors

- Redecorate external west doors within the next 12 months
- Overhaul metal ventilators

Ceilings, Walls and Floors

- Point up external cracks to the northernmost window at the apsidal end following assessment by a Structural Engineer. Tie restraints may be needed

- Clear drains and gutters in corner below easternmost window of the south aisle followed by repointing of internal crack at the head of the arch and base of the sill, to be monitored regularly thereafter

Services

- Carry out periodic electrical test and report
- Carry out test of lightning protection system

Essential Works within the next five years

Rainwater Disposal

- Redecorate fascia and exposed purlins at the east end of the north aisle within the quinquennial period

Walls and Finishes

- Carry out localised repointing and repair in lime mortar to areas listed in item
- Carry out repointing and repair to the weathering stones of low buttresses on the north west and south west corners of the church

Windows, Glazing and Doors

- Repair/replace broken quarry tile to clerestory windows on the northern side of the nave
- Overhaul metal ventilator to place them back into an openable condition, particularly the one in the choir vestry

Desirable/future Work

- Set up a programme to redecorate the cast iron external saddle bars to ensure future generations do not have to undertake large scale stone repairs to the bathstone if the saddlebars are not maintained.
- Replacement of those bricks with severe exfoliation in the high-level areas is likely to be necessary in around 10 years.
- The string course below the west window has deteriorated in two or three locations. No work is required yet, however repairs are likely to be needed in the next 10 years.

Note: It is intended that work on items identified in the quinquennial inspection should commence after installation of the new kitchen is completed.

2025- The New Kitchen is now completed and has been functioning with few minor issues with the dishwasher.

2025- External west doors were redecorated

2025- The above-mentioned outstanding works should be addressed in the recommended timeframe moving forward.

Church Furnishings

2024- The chairs in the worship area of the church have deteriorated to very poor condition and, as a matter of opinion, urgently require replacement.

2024- The carpet in the church has also deteriorated to a poor condition, being very badly stained.

2025- The chairs that were in a very poor condition were removed and replaced by chairs kindly donated by the Salvation Army (thanks Janet and Ernie).

The Old Vicarage

2024-Some minor maintenance repairs have been carried out during the past year, with nothing of significance outstanding.

2025-The gutter above the parking area at the Old Vicarage where reported, this needs a full inspection to eliminate damp issues

Vicarage Hall

2024- Ongoing minor maintenance work has been completed. A request has been raised by Pre-school for the office to be redecorated.

2024- It is observed that the floor in the hall should be cleaned and re-sealed during 2025.

2025- Plans are underway to clean and reseal the floor in the hall whilst the pre-school is closed for the summer holiday.

The Garden House

2024-The Garden House has continued to be rented to the Diocese and occupied by Lynne Martin who moved in April/May 2017.

2024-Arising from Diocese inspection, some significant repairs were required. This work has been completed.

2025-Currently no significant changes or issues

In conclusion:

It should be noted that this report has not changed dramatically from last year's finding.

Whilst the kitchen installation had been the priority over the last year we can now focus on the outstanding essential work required according to the recommend time scale in this report.

Thank you to the Premises Task Group for their time and input in assisting with the upkeep of St Mark's Church buildings, associated land and other related assets.

And special thanks to Glyn, Trevor and Barry for being available to assist and deal with issues that needs immediate attention.

Colette Wentzel

Proceedings of the PCC

The PCC met monthly apart from February. In October the PCC held an Away Day at St Benedict's Centre West Malling.

The format of the PCC meetings is generally the same, with:

1. Apologies for Absence.
2. Review and approval of the previous month's minutes.
3. Matters Arising.
4. Finance with a run down on the current financial position and projections going forward.
5. Sub Committees (called Task Groups). Each PCC member is assigned to a Task Group which meet and report back to the PCC meeting. These being:
 - **Human Resources** chaired by Vicky Allen.
 - **Premises** chaired by Frank Howard and after the APCM in May by Colette Wenzel.
 - **Finance** chaired by Glyn Allen.

- **MLTG** also chaired by Glyn Allen.
- **Pre-school.** The Chair of the Preschool Alastair Willimas gives updates to each PCC meeting.
- **SMI Church** Carolyn Facey has given updates regarding St Mary's Island Church.
- **Strategic Development Fund**

Updates from these roles, funded by the Strategic Development Fund, have been received by the PCC each month and their own reports can be found under Additional Reports.

Gospel Plant Leader - Mayowa Oyinloye

Community Pastor – Trevor Dyer. This post was reinstated in November 2024 using the SDF money that remained from when Karen Turnbull resigned. This position is now known as Community Pastor/Pioneer Evangelist. Trevor will work in St Mark's and St Augustine's churches.

Community Missioner - (Chris Curtis) who also oversees the work of Mayowa.

Any urgent matters that need to be dealt with between PCC meetings are considered by the Standing Committee, and their recommendations put to the PCC. The Standing Committee is made up of the Vicar, Churchwardens, Treasurer, PCC Secretary, and an elected member from the PCC.

Staffing

Jonica Thomas- Part- Time Administrator at St May's Island Church

In January Jonica Thomas, the Part-Time Administrator at St Mary's Island Church, was offered redundancy as the role of Administrator was mostly being covered by other members of SMIC. We wish Jonica well as she continues to serve in an administrative capacity elsewhere.

Stan Brown – Old Vicarage cleaner.

In March Stan Brown, who cleaned the Old Vicarage, retired and the Standing Committee agreed to ask the company that cleans to Vicarage Hall to quote to clean the Old Vicarage. We thank Stan for all that he has contributed over many years and wish him well in his retirement. The company that now cleans the Vicarage Hall and the Old Vicarage has also been in recent months appointed to clean the Church. They have proved to be a very reliable and conscience company, giving good service at all three sites.

Eve Martin – Part-time Administrative Assistant

Early in 2024 Eve Martin indicated that she was thinking of resigning her position as part-time Administrative Assistant and she finished working at St Mark's at the end of July after two years. We were sorry to see her leave and we wish her well.

Careful consideration was given as to what tasks needed to be continued and what additional requirements needed to be covered. These were book-keeping on a day-to-day basis. After consultation, the PCC agreed to Siobhan Bolton in being offered an amendment to her contract to take on all the tasks that the Treasurer needs help with on a day-to-day basis, and also to include the Data Protection Officer role.

PCC business

Some other areas covered during the year:

- Decision to ask the Archdeacon to license Shirley Rogers to the Parish of St Mark's with St Mary's Island as Lay Reader. She would then also go and take assemblies at SMIS.
- Agreement to holding a more contemplative service on Good Friday
- Agreement to appoint Charlier as our CDM Principal Contractor for the kitchen project.
- Appointed the new accountants Caladine Ltd to undertake preparing our year end accounts and Independent Examination.
- Discussed possible use of the remaining money in SDF Fund for a Community Pastor to be relocated to use for a Youth worker. After much discussion, over several months, it transpired that it was not possible to change the usage of the funding and in November we were happy that a new Community Pastor/ Community Evangelist was appointed. (see above under SDF).
- Staff be given increases in line with what the CPI figure was for April.
- Discussion on allowing Step and Learn Charity, who were going to rent the property that Home Start vacated adjacent to the church, to use our car park in exchange for our Children's Church using the premises on a Sunday morning. After much negotiation Step and Learn decided that they would not need the car parking spaces.
- Ongoing discussion regarding the kitchen project, funding and implementation of the kitchen and other essential other works.

The work of the PCC requires commitment from its members of ability and time. Four members of the PCC have attended all meetings during the year, with others not being able to make as many. All the work is undertaken on a voluntary basis, and I want to thank all members for their commitment and prayerful consideration of all the decisions made.

I appreciate your prayer support, as we continue and take responsibility as charity trustees for good church governance.

Vicky Allen - PCC Secretary

Electoral Roll

Electoral Roll Report 2025

The Electoral Roll for St Mark's Church Gillingham on 2nd May 2025 is as follows:

The number on the Electoral Roll is currently **144**.

This year everyone had to reapply to be on the Electoral Roll. This happens every 6 years. There were 167 on the Electoral Roll in 2024 and of those people 120 have reapplied.

I have done my best to contact as many people on the list as possible. Some people have moved, some have gone to other churches, some have chosen not to reapply, one has died. There are 24 new names on the roll this year.

There were 40 applications from people who live in the parish and 104 applications from people who do not live in the parish.

We gave people the option to apply for the Electoral Roll online this year 104 chose to do this online and 40 people chose to fill in a form.

The main issue with receiving applications online was that many people did not know if they live in the parish. A map and a list of the roads in the parish were displayed in church but for those who did their application from home it was difficult to know if they were in the parish. I need to think of some way to address this in future.

The Electoral Roll for St Mary's Island 2025

The revised roll for St Mary's Island 2025 now stands at **58**. (There were 57 in 2024).

Total Electoral Roll number for St Mark's Parish stands at 202. (224 for 2024).

Denise Young - Electoral Roll Officer

Deanery Synod

Gillingham Deanery Synod is convened and normally chaired by the Area Dean – Brian Senior until September and now Mike Nelson. It consists of all clergy licensed to a benefice within the deanery and elected lay members. The Deanery Synod's purpose is to discuss key issues within the church's ministry and mission, being an interface between the PCC and Diocesan Synod.

The Gillingham Deanery comprises eight parishes.

St Augustine's

St Barnabas

St Luke's

St Mark's (and St Mary's Island)

St Mary Magdalene

Holy Trinity

St Margaret's

South Gillingham Team Ministry

St Mark's and St Mary's Island currently have three lay representatives (the number is determined by the size of the Electoral Roll). One of these is taken up by a representative of St Mary's Island and the other two are filled by people representing St Mark's. Glyn Allen and Jess Mahdavi-Gladwell represented St Mark's and Sally Bloor St Mary's Island. Catharina Olsson-Gisleskog was the clergy representative. Gillingham Deanery Synod met three times this year and additionally for the commissioning service of Mike Nelson (Vicar of Holy Trinity Twydall) in September, as the new Area Dean.

In June a Gillingham Deanery General Election Hustings was hosted by St Mark's, with seven out of eight parliamentary candidates participating and answering questions.

Some of the agenda items at the meetings were:

- Election of Deanery Synod Officers, including the Lay Chair and Secretary. Glyn Allen continued to serve on the Standing Committee.

- Safeguarding presentation by Greg Barry the Lead Rochester Diocesan Safeguarding Advisor. This included the report on The Future of Church Safeguarding and the possibility of safeguarding being carried out independently.
- Lay training and how this can be carried out. Jane Winter, from the Mission and Ministry Development Team, gave an overview of content offered, from short courses, often parish based, to longer, more centrally located courses at St Benedict's Centre.
- Presentation on Eco Church and actions to achieve the General Synod's Net Zero Carbon milestones.
- At an open meeting, Brian Senior gave a presentation entitled Whose Land is it anyway? The Land of the Holy One. The presentation was on the Holy Land, with the focus on the ongoing occupation which gave some background to the current tragic situation in Gaza.
- Future plans and proposed structure of meetings. To be facilitated by looking at the six Pastoral Principles.
- Persistent, Unreasonable and/or Vexatious Complaints Policy.

Glyn Allen - Deanery Synod member

Additional Reports

Alpha

St Mark's led two Alpha courses in 2024. From January 2024 to April 2024, the leaders of the youth group at St Mark's ran St Mark's Youth Alpha. Leaders were Alastair Williams, Lucy Williams, Graham Davis and Rev. Catharina.

In the Autumn, The Alpha course was run at church. This was a well attended Alpha course with 14 signed up, and four or some weeks five leaders: Siobhan Bolton, Isaac Obasi, John Beck, Jane Bannar-Martin, and the Vicar. Each Tuesday began with a homecooked meal. Some of the meals were prepared in our new kitchen, some were prepared at home and brought in. After the meal, we watched the video and then had discussions in small groups. All in all this was a lively and engaging Alpha. I am so thankful to our Church Administrator Siobhan for making it happen and preparing every Tuesday so well including lining up individuals to pray for Alpha. We are so thankful to all who cooked delicious meals for Alpha.

Catharina Olsson-Gisleskog

Audio Visual and Technical Report

The main thing that happened this past year was, towards the beginning of the year the Kitchen project started, meaning that we had to have a temporary setup at the front of the church for a few months. As part of the kitchen project the old sound desk was removed and a new one built a bit further forward.

We took the opportunity while this happened to spend some time to get everything setup better when it all went back in.

Apart from that we had the loss of Graham Wilkins at the beginning of the year who, although not part of the tech team, still contributed a lot to the technical side in church. He will be missed greatly.

As I have requested multiple times before. We would welcome more people to get involved with the sound, projection and streaming. Training can be given to willing volunteers.

Chris Blewett, and Mic Aldington

Byron Lodge

Byron Lodge is a care home for the elderly, many of whom suffer with a degree of dementia. Located in the Parish of St Barnabas, it comes under the delegated pastoral care of our former curate, the Revd Amanda Maskell of St Augustine who, in turn, asked if we could conduct services there on a monthly basis.

Started in April 2023, the monthly ministry at Byron Lodge continues with a pattern of four Communion services at quarterly intervals which alternate between an Anglican and Free Church format. For the remainder of the year, there is a simple structured service typically consisting of three hymns, a Bible Reading, a short reflection, intercessions, a confession and an opening and closing prayer and blessing. The team members are willing to take any of these

parts which are allocated on a fairly random basis according to the preferences of the individuals.

The team has increased by one since last year and comprises of four from St Mark's, two from Gillingham Baptist Church and one from the United Reformed Church. Amanda Maskell is invited to preside at the Anglican Communion and speak at the Carol Service. Over the year, the staff and *Team Byron* as they are called, have fused together in a healthy, trusting working, relationship. Any residents who cannot attend the main service can request a visit in their rooms afterwards for a brief chat, a Bible reading and prayer. The December meeting is the Carol Service. At the close of last year's Carol Service, the staff provided some simple snacks and refreshments for the Team as a mark of appreciation.

Much of this ministry is undertaken by faith that in His mercy, God would speak to all the attending residents according to their understanding and perceive His love for them. The numbers attending centre around a core of six supplemented by others according to how they are feeling, so on a good day we have had as many as eleven. There are always various staff around on the sidelines who inevitably hear what is going on and we pray that they too may be drawn to Jesus. Sadly, one regular member passed away just after Christmas.

As co-ordinator of Team Byron, I cannot speak highly enough of the spirit of commitment, co-operation and mutual support the members of the team demonstrate. It is a model of Christian fellowship in action and I would like to renew my thanks to each one for their dedication and commitment to the Lord and to the residents and staff of Byron Lodge.

Graham Davis - Co-ordinator Team Byron

Catering and Hospitality

Due to having a new kitchen installed at the start of the year, there is not a lot to report. The new kitchen was officially opened on 16th June by The Bishop of Rochester, The Rt Rev Dr Johnathan Gibbs.

Now we have a purpose-built kitchen in church we can use it to greater serve our community. It has already been an asset to many of the groups that meet in church and has been used to facilitate a church barbecue and Alpha.

Karen Dyer

Confirmation



On 14th April at 6.30pm the Deanery Confirmation Service was held at St Margaret's in Rainham.

This was pre-ceded by a three-week confirmation course on the meaning of the content in the creeds.

From St Mark's parish, The Bishop of Rochester confirmed: Chris Blewett, Damola Oyinloye, Fi Farrin, Isabella Wentzel, Joshua Oyinloye, Laura Davis, Michael Halpin and Steve Bolton.

Catharina Olsson-Gisleskog

Dementia Cafe

The dementia cafe continues to operate on the 2nd and 4th Wednesday of each month.

Our numbers are small, averaging 10-12 guests although we have seen many more who visit, but don't always remain.

We organise quizzes, bingo, games and singing, along with refreshments and snacks. We had a fish and chip lunch in September, a karaoke session, and a Christmas carol service in December.

We occasionally have visits from social care agencies and the Admiral Nurse.

We have various leaflets and information available about dementia which is available for carers at each session.

We have a good team of faithful volunteers and have forged strong relationships with those who attend. One of the carers volunteered and regularly puts together and presents a quiz on a regular basis.

Paul Harris

Diocesan Synod

The Diocesan Synod is the main policy-making body of the Diocese and the forum for discussion of issues important in diocesan life. It debates matters referred from deaneries, PCCs and individual Synod members and contributes to the General Synod – the policy-making parliament of the Church of England. Each deanery in the diocese elects a number of clergy and lay representatives every three years.

Glyn Allen was elected by Gillingham Deanery Synod in 2020 to fill a casual vacancy, re-elected in 2021 and 2024 for the new triennium. The Synod met three times during the year. From 1 January 2022, Glyn also serves as a member of the Diocesan Advisory Committee (DAC) as a Deanery Synod representative. He has also been elected as a lay member of the Diocese of Rochester Board of Patronage. His board has responsibilities in the appointment of incumbents for those benefices for which it is patron.

The Bishop of Rochester, Jonathan Gibbs, gave the Presidential address at each of the Synods and re-affirmed the three themes of Change, Grow, Serve which he believes to be important in helping fulfil the Diocesan Called Together vision in the coming years.

In his addresses Bishop Jonathan said:

That Change, Serve, and Grow, are the three themes he believes God laid on his heart when he was called to join Rochester Diocese as diocesan bishop in 2022. Alongside these three priorities are the three values of compassion, courage, and creativity. He said, *“three values which I believe are hugely important as we seek to promote a healthy, nurturing culture within the life of our churches and Diocese.”*

Bishop Jonathan went on to explain that objectives emerging out of the developing vision are commitments to grow, Missional Churches, Missional Leaders, and Missional Disciples that are:

Growing Younger and More Diverse.

Growing numerically, spiritually, financially, and in impacting their communities.

In turn, are planting and growing new Missional Churches.

While acknowledging the scale of division and conflict in the world, as well as sadly in the Church, Bishop Jonathan said that he wanted to remind everyone of our fundamental common calling as followers of Jesus Christ. This is to love and serve God and to love and care for our fellow human beings and the rich and wonderful world that God has given to us to inhabit and to pass on to those who will share it next.

Reflecting on some of the practical and financial challenges facing the Diocese, Bishop Jonathan reassured Synod that his, commitment, along with those with leadership in the Diocese, was to supporting parishes. He said:

“I am, and will remain, utterly convinced that the beating heart of the Church of England is in its parishes – in the ministry of clergy and lay people in each and every community up and down this land.”

"And it is that ministry that I believe God wants to grow in this Diocese and across the Church of England.”

Bishop Jonathan reflected on the recent events that had taken place since the publication of the Makin Review into John Smyth. He said:

"That review, along with the other reviews and reports published in recent years, has revealed both personal and systemic failure in the life of the Church at every level.”

"Evil has been covered up, the plight of victims and survivors has been played down or ignored, and this has felt like a betrayal not only of the victims of abuse but also of those countless people, clergy and laity alike, who have been working so hard at diocesan and parish level to improve the quality of safeguarding in the life of our Church.”

He said it made it even more relevant that one of the key priorities of the new diocesan vision and strategy is to grow safe and healthy cultures adding:

“I would like to see the Diocese of Rochester leading our national church in this regard: that we demonstrate that in everything we do we put growing a safe and healthy culture before anything else.”

“This is the only way we can begin to win back people’s trust, and it is also what we are called to do if we are to know God’s blessing on the life of our churches.”

The main agenda items during the year were:

- Presidential addresses from The Bishop of Rochester
- Diocesan vision and strategy
- Bishop's Council reports
- Diocesan budget
- Living in Love and Faith
- General Synod reports
- Safeguarding updates
- Presentation of Annual Reports and Accounts
- The Environment and Sustainability
- Sharing Good News

Glyn Allen - Diocesan Synod Member

Flower Arrangements and Displays Team

We are a group of ladies who very much enjoy doing the flower arrangements in church. We are aware that each year we are that little bit older, and the aches and pains of old age make it more difficult to climb the stairs into the upstairs storeroom to choose something different. Several have had their eightieth birthday, and one is nearer 90 than 80 years! We cannot go on forever. We would love to see some younger members of the church, men included, volunteer to join our team who we would be pleased to teach. My thanks to Angela who has volunteered during the past year. Her enthusiasm is an encouragement to the rest of the team. Thankyou also to Vicky Onitiri who regularly waters the arrangements to help the greenery remain fresh.

We endeavour to do a fresh arrangement every month except during Lent using fresh greenery and silk flowers. I am pleased to be able to report that the Oasis we use is compostable which, although a little bit more expensive than the old Oasis, means we are doing our bit to fight climate change. Every arrangement will be different. Each arranger has their own preferred style of arrangement therefore they will all be different.

The highlights of the year are when we all come together and decorate the church for Christmas, Easter, Pentecost and Harvest. On these occasions we are more than grateful to Ann and John Townsend who come along to clear up behind us and most importantly keep us plied with cups of coffee etc. Back in May 2024 we had the joy of decorating the church for the wedding of Amy and Daniel.

Janet Mann on behalf of Ruth, Pauline, Jane, Janet W, Gaby, Siu King, Vicky, Angela.

Foodbank

Medway Foodbank has been running well over the period of this report, our numbers are fairly consistent with last year.

St Marks Foodbank has moved into the old kitchen and crèche area where we have placed three large cupboards with one large built-in cupboard in the old kitchen.

Here are some brief statistics for St Marks/Medway Foodbank; St Marks Foodbank is one of the nine centres within Medway Foodbank.

Foodbank Centres	No. of Vouchers fulfilled	No. of adults fed	No. of children fed	Total no. fed
Medway Foodbank	4,058	6,371	5,438	11,809
St Marks Foodbank	742	1,107	962	2,069
Totals	4,800	7,478	6,400	13,878

During this period Medway Foodbank fed 13,878 people in Medway. The number from St Marks is 14.91% of the total, which makes us the second busiest Foodbank in Medway.

Throughout this period a local organisation offering free food has worked closely together to support those in need in our communities.

Churches are so well placed to offer clients a warm and loving welcome, as well as being able to signpost to activities going on at local churches.

The ability to offer prayer in person is also a vital part of the work of the Foodbanks across Medway. It is a privilege to be able to offer this to people who may have never been in a church before and who may have never had someone pray with them. It underlines the value of each individual and they are valued by us and by God in the midst of their difficulties.

As an organisation, Medway Foodbank remains so grateful for the support from local churches that help us by hosting foodbank centres, by collecting food for us and by donating finances.

We are facing huge increases in our overhead costs and it is a struggle to keep stock levels in line with the increased demand.

Our project manager is working on linking all churches together in Medway in corporate prayer to support and pray for all clients and volunteers

We look forward to a time when Foodbanks are no longer needed in the UK but until that time we will be in our communities working with those in local churches to support those in need.

Ruth Lindsay: Medway Foodbank Project Manager

Paul Smith: St Marks Foodbank Manager

Ladies Group

We have had a good year, we have new ladies attending which has enhanced the dynamics of the group and it's good to hear new opinions and ideas. We have Zoom for those who cannot make any meetings.

We studied Elijah during the Autumn term and the Beatitudes during winter. All these studies are done in a deep way, learning personalities and how they can apply to our own today. It's been so interesting to see even the amazing prophets have their own difficulties just as we do in a different way.

The Beatitudes have been done two a week and we have learned a lot about ourselves and the way God loves us so much. Some of the group have been taking on the studies and for one lady it was her first time and one gentleman did a study about fasting.

The group are always reminded what is shared on Wednesday stays in confidentiality.

We are completing the term by looking at those around the cross.

We had a very successful wreath making before Christmas to be repeated again this year. We were able to contribute £110 to the chair fund

We have also planned a weekend away in September 2025 to Nutley Edge taking over most of the cottages and husbands are joining us.

Thanks, go to Sandi Chapman for our music and Siobhan for our admin and help.

Jane Bannar-Martin

Medway Campus Chaplaincy

It's slightly strange to think that this is the last report I will write for an APCM, but retirement is on the horizon.

During 2024 we have continued to interact with our students in a variety of different ways. At TABLEtalk we have discussed such topics as: Story Telling, Culture Shock and Death & Dying. In addition, we have celebrated Pongal (*google it!*), Easter, St Andrew's and Christmas, as well as having a Nigerian evening.

Throughout the year we took students to Rochester, Canterbury, Hever Castle (*in the pouring rain*), the Armed Forces Day, and two trips to Lesnes Abbey Woods (*well worth a visit*). If you wish to know more, check out our Blog: www.medwaystudents.blogspot.co.uk

At the end of the 2022-2023 academic year, we made the decision to bring the World Café to an end. Our number of volunteers was decreasing, whilst student numbers were exponentially increasing. It was simply becoming unmanageable to cater for upwards of 200 students in a two hour period. We also felt that it had lost its original purpose of a place of interaction.

In addition to the above, I have engaged in wellbeing events and one-to-one sessions with students, attended open days, and have continued to run our incredibly successful Bargain Corner (*which I am pleased to announce will live on beyond my departure – so, keep the donations coming*).

So now, here I am, in the process of bringing closure to various aspects of my role, making plans for my own future, and praying for the right choice for a new Medway Campus Chaplain.

To say the word **THANK YOU** to my volunteers, simply isn't enough. Chaplaincy genuinely could not have made the impact we have without your help.

THANK YOU to Pauline J, Denise Y, Frank W, Jon D and Barbara S!!!!

Lynne Martin

Men's Fellowship

I have been asked as a representative to write this report for the Men's Fellowship currys evenings and breakfasts.

First, I would like to give a big thankyou to Dammy for having organised many of these events.

The New Year started in January with a men's breakfast of which was well attended on a Saturday morning. We had some testimonies given as well as a talk from a local businessman. February, we had a breakfast open to all, both the men and ladies, but also to include our Peace and Hope group for people additional needs which was a great success.

We further had a successful men's breakfast in June on a Saturday morning.

No further events were organised or took place for the rest of the year.

Trevor Dyer

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 to allocate our Mission Giving (10% of our previous year's voluntary income), and other mission giving from individuals to the Mission Fund.

We continued to meet regularly throughout the year on Zoom.

We have continued to support financially and in prayer Katy Barnwell (Wycliffe), Tim and Tricia Barrow (SIM), Carrie McFarlane (Nehemiah, Mission India), Francis and Diane Dognon, (France), Simeon's Trustees (our Patrons), Tearfund : The Creation Care project, The Bishop's Charity Poverty and Hope, The Mike Campbell Foundation, Fishermen Trust India and the work of Asha and Nelson Arul in Penang, Malaysia.

We supported Family Trust who work in local schools. We supported the "Let Loose Concert" which took place in Gillingham High Street in July 2024. Foodbank uses St Mark's Church on Thursdays from 1-3 pm and Saturdays 10-12. We did not support Medway Night Shelter financially this year as they were more in need of volunteers; we had some volunteers from St Mark's. We made a one-off donation to The Christian Blind Mission, and we gave a donation to Friends of the Holy Land who support vulnerable Christians in the West Bank, Gaza, Israel and Jordan. We responded to a request for support to attend a Christian Summer Camp.

We made regular contact with our mission partners during the year and enjoyed receiving news from them. Using 'Prayer and Praise' we have invited the congregation to pray for our mission partners. We are grateful to Kath Burtrand for facilitating prayer through Prayer and Praise. We had visits from some of our mission partners in 2024, The Family Trust and The Medway Night Shelter.

We are grateful to Colette and her team who raised money in addition to the amount the church gives to TEARFUND monthly by a sponsored walk, and a quiz night and to the Wilkins family who

raised money for TEARFUND by organising a worship event in memory of Graham Wilkins. Over £2000 was raised in total by all events. Thank you to all those who supported these events through giving and attending.

We can let you know how to receive updates from our mission partners direct, particularly if Homegroups or individuals would like to support a mission partner. There is also information and links on the church website.

Please continue to pray for our Mission Partners.

The team in 2024

Glyn Allen chair, Colette Wentzel, Jess Mahdavi-Gladwell, Promise Anga, Catharina Olsson Gisleskog Vicar, (who are also on PCC) Charmaine Jones, Dammy Oyinloye, and Denise Young (secretary)

Music Worship

Ben Maskell and I would like to thank you all for your support this past year. We have continued to mourn the loss of Graham Wilkins at the beginning of the year, he played such a large part in the music life of the church and we miss his leadership and participation in the music team. We are grateful to all those who have joined us in leading worship this year; a special thank you to Mayowa for all she has contributed to the team. It is always a joy to have new people join us and we would be happy to see more people come forward to take part in leading music - do talk to Ben or I if you are interested.

Kathryn Thom

Open Church

Open Church continues serving the community where people can come regularly on Tuesday mornings between 10.00-12.00 to have a chat, tea, coffee and cakes. On a Tuesday the numbers of those attending continues to increase and we now have between 30-35 people who come. We get lots of feedback from both new and existing attendees on how it has blessed them. It has been a privilege to volunteer with the team of which has grown over the past year as they continue to make it a success each week and a blessing to the community.

Trevor Dyer

The Pastoral Team

The Pastoral Team, which was set up in 2021 continues, overseen by Catharina our vicar, who attends meetings and liaises with Denise Young who leads the team.

The members of the team are now Denise Young, Paul Smith, Janet Aldington, Sandi Chapman, Valerie Flick, Vicky Onitiri, Trevor Dyer.

All members of the team had to apply for the role and complete safeguarding training and a DBS check and complete the Caring Concerns training course.

Each member of the pastoral team has between 2 and 7 contacts.

The initial contact is a confidential phone call monthly to offer a listening ear and prayer.

The original vision is that everyone in the church who wishes, would have someone who contacts and prays for them on a regular basis. This can be via a homegroup and/or the pastoral team.

The team members meet about three times a year to discuss matters regarding the running of the team. Team members do not discuss anything discussed with their contacts as that is confidential.

Siobhan Bolton supports with administration. Kath Burtrand still prays for the team.

Val Flick and Ernie Mann take Holy Communion to members of the church who are housebound. This has very much been appreciated by the recipients.

There are 26 people who have a Pastoral Friend. Of those 26 people 12 people are also in a homegroup. A further 12 people who were supported by a pastoral friend are now supported by their homegroup.

If you don't have a pastoral contact yet and would like one, please speak to Denise Young who would be delighted to give you a form.

We are looking to expand the Pastoral Team. If you feel God is calling you to this role, please speak to Catharina.

If you want to contact the Pastoral Team, then please contact the church office, or Denise Young in church or email Denise at denisemaryyoung@gmail.com

Thank you.

Denise Young

Peace & Hope (formerly Faith & Light)



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

As a team we try to share our faith in a relative and multisensory way.

We meet in the Vicarage Hall every other Saturday morning. We take a break at Christmas and in the summer.

This year we have followed the Sermon series from church adapting to suit everyone's needs. We started the year with a catch up and social, had a brunch social in May and another in September!

We finished the year with a Christmas party with a bring and share lunch, plenty of joy and laughter!

Karen and the team

Prayer Ministry Teams

The Prayer Ministry has been running smoothly with nine committed prayers. We could do with a few more volunteers and men would balance the male and female pairing. A couple of people have left due to various circumstances and I would like to thank them in their service in this ministry.

Maybe it could be advertised in Church on a Sunday. If anyone can think of someone they know might be interested please ask them and refer to me.

Thank you to all who give us their precious time to pray for others. They always turn up and are ready to pray for our church family. They listen and are committed. God has blessed them all with prayers and patience.

A few people in the ministry have mentioned the little children playing on the ramp while they are trying to pray for somebody. This is a big distraction especially when they are screaming and getting excited, nice to hear but not while we are praying. The chapel area should be a reasonably quiet area so we are able to concentrate on what God is telling us. I request that we have a sign up saying Silence Prayer in progress. It will also help if Catherina or who is leading the service, mention that prayer is taking place at the chapel and please observe the Silence sign. To ask parents to make sure their children play away from this area.

Cindy Reeve-Vigour- Prayer Ministry

Small Groups

St Mark's three Principles:

1. Living for Jesus
2. Loving Gillingham
3. Learning Together

Small Group's Mission Statement: "Small Groups are at the heart of St Mark's Church. They are the place we are able to learn together, build deep long-lasting friendships, to grow spiritually and to offer pastoral support to one another on a regular basis".

There are four Home Groups with 32 people participating.

Paul Smith

Wigmore - Meet Wednesdays 8pm-9.30pm via Zoom

They have been studying from various studies from Penelope Wilcock's book "100 stand-alone Bible Studies." These have included: Adam, Eve, Abraham, Ruth, Cain, Elijah, Esther, The widow of Zarephath and David.

Steve and Kathy Burtrand

Parkwood/Gillingham - Meet alternate Tuesdays at each other's home 7.30pm-9.30pm
Their studies have included Spiritual Disciplines, Hospitality, Powerful Psalms, Old Testament Characters, The Beatitudes, Looking back & looking forward

Richard and Jane Tolhurst

Old Vicarage, Gillingham - Meet Wednesdays 7.30pm-9pm
A summary of the studies undertaken at Junction over the last year.
The Abrahamic Covenants and timeline of Israel.
Spiritual disciplines, taken from sermons and study book.
Book of Romans, online course by The Bible Society.
The Beatitudes, following the sermon series.
Prayer and praise with sharing evenings, Sharing of our Christian Hero's, Visit by Rev Paul Tolhurst on the work of The Mission to Seafarers.

Frank Howard and Janet Waters

Rainham/Gillingham - Meet Tuesdays 8pm-9.30pm at Janet's home
They have been studying Ecclesiastes, the Bible Society courses 'The Bible' and also 'Romans' with accompanying DVD.

Ladies Group

Jane Bannar-Martin - Old Vicarage Gillingham Meet Wednesdays 10am-12md
See separate report

Men's Group

Dammy Oyinloye

Have had a couple of Saturday morning breakfasts to support each other.

Seniors

Ernie and Janet Mann

North Gillingham

This is an Ad-Hoc group who meet for coffee or a Bible study, such as "A study of Romans" with accompanying DVD.

Peace and Hope

Trevor and Karen Dyer-Church Hall/ Old Vicarage

See separate report.

St Mary's Island Church

Home Group

Ladies Group

See St Mary's Island report.

Trio's

A few people still belong to a Trio. However, this group of people no longer have co-ordinator support.

All leaders encourage their group members to attend the monthly prayer meeting on the first Wednesday of the month. On the social side; Christmas socials have been undertaken and Summer BBQ's. One group have been on a short holiday together.

Regrettably, there have been no new members to any of the Home Groups and unfortunately, there has been no further response to the appeal for new Leaders. A new Home Group is required in the Gillingham area, to accommodate people following attendance at the Alpha course. If you feel that this is your calling please contact Catharina our vicar.

On a personal note, I have requested to relinquish my responsibilities as Small Groups co-ordinator. Effective from our 2025 APCM. I intend to concentrate more on my Pastoral role and that of visiting our brothers and sisters who cannot come to church, to share Holy Communion.

Our Small Group leaders must be gratefully and sincerely thanked for all the work that they do to support "the Heart of St Mark's".

Valerie Flick- Small Group co-ordinator

Tear Fund



Report 2024

We thank God for his Creation and for Tearfund, who does amazing work across the globe and us as a church to be part of changing lives through prayer and giving.

St Mark's church community have been supporting Tearfund for the last 5 decades.

In 2021, The Creation Care Project India was proposed by Tearfund (Sahaara Project India was fully funded at the time) and accepted by PCC.

Tearfund update for St Mark's Church Gillingham in 2023

The Creation Concern Project India reported.

- 1 725 people were directly impacted and an estimated 3 890 benefited indirectly from this project.

Contributions made by St Mark's Church through away giving's and fundraising are valuable for The Creation Care project, we can see firsthand the benefits it provides to communities in need.

Fundraising events 2024

My thanks and appreciation to all our volunteers who joined and assisted in the successful fundraising efforts this year.

Many thanks to our church family who were fully engaged in all fundraising efforts.

Without your participation this would not have been possible.

Everyone at St Mark's Church were instrumental and helped fundraise an amazing total of **£2,509.81**

- ✓ The Creation Care Project Tearfund 5K walk held in Capstone Farm Country Park (07th September 2024) raised a total of **£1,232.39** (Gift aid £112.50)

- ✓ Worship Night at St Mark's Church held on 21/09/2024 raised **£662.31** (Gift aid £105.00)
- ✓ The Big QUIZ night at the Vicarage Hall (16th November 2024) raised **£513.56** (Gift aid £46.25)
- ✓ Christmas Card Board and donations 12/2024 raised **£101.55**

(Tearfund Charity org- Big Quiz Night 2024 churches across the UK raised a grand total of £139,100) visit tearfund.org for more up to date information)

All cash funds are paid directly into Tearfund account by bank transfer and by the JustGiving pages, you are able to scan the QR codes at the back of the church to see more information about fundraising events.

Will Leaf our Church, UK and International Partnerships contact came to St Mark's on the 19th of January 2024 to meet our church family, he managed to have chats with some of us. Will has been invited to come and speak on Tearfund's Creation Care project in May 2024. He accepted and we are looking forward to seeing him again.

Moving forward in 2025

Fundraising events to look forward to:

- Tearfund 5K walk in aid of Creation Care Project Walk at Capstone farm County Park; September 2025
- Big Quiz Night; November 2025

Proposals will be submitted to MLTG for PCC approval within the next few months.

It is a privilege and an honour to be part of a church family who are passionate about helping those in need.

Colette Wentzel -Tearfund Ambassador

St. Mark's Pre-School

St Mark's Pre-School continues to be a busy, happy setting. Pupil numbers continue to be strong throughout the academic year, often with waiting lists for spaces.

The Pre-School continues to be well led by Jo Tilley and she is ably assisted by a strong, experienced team of practitioners. Sadly the team had to say goodbye at the end of the academic year to Carol Pynn, a long serving practitioner who ably supported hundreds and hundreds of students over her career with St Mark's.

The team have also welcomed back Elizabeth Kuperus to the setting but this time returning as Deputy Manager.

Jo and the team continue to strive towards excellence and continue to reflect on changes of expectations for settings as set out by government policy.

Jo and her team work extremely hard and we should be proud to have such a successful setting within the church.

Jo continues to build links with the church through the support of Catharina.

We are thankful for the support of the PCC and wider church community for the on-going contributions in making the vicarage hall a welcoming space for our children.

Please continue to hold pre-school in your prayers as the setting responds to the ever-growing demand for spaces given the changes in government policy around childcare, particularly in the need for places for younger children given the government's support for parents to return to work.

Alastair Williams - Chair Preschool Governing Committee

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.

The afternoons are led by myself, Chris Curtis and Frank Howard. Much enjoyed by parents and children are the refreshments which Frank provides. A big thank you to Ernie Mann who caused much excitement when once more he attended our Christmas party complete with big red suit and curly white beard.

Numbers attending remain steady with toddlers leaving us to start school being replaced with an influx of new parents and little ones. We currently prepare for around 14 children and 12 adults.

The doors are open to many who would not normally enter church premises and has led to some parents becoming regular church attenders. Parents tell us that they enjoy coming to Parent and Toddlers because of the friendly, relaxed, atmosphere which allows them to socialise outside their homes and provides a point of contact where they can share any concerns they may be facing.

Our intention is to share God's love for all.

Ruth Howard

Report for Children's ministry

Children's Church

Children's Church this year has been rewarding and challenging at the same time. Although we have gained more volunteers, we still struggle to maintain safe ratios, which has meant on some occasions having to cancel.

The number of children attending Children's Church still fluctuates from week to week. If every child attended on the same week, we would have 15 - 20 children. As this rarely happens, we usually have between 5 - 14 children each week. Ideally Children's Church would take place in or near the church building - please pray that this will come to fruition. This would increase the

confidence of new families to drop their children off and allow us to contact parents more easily if we needed their assistance.

We would like to thank all those who give up their time to bless our church children with their time, experience and enthusiasm.

Karen & Katie Dyer

Youth Group - Social Activities

Youth Group- Discipleship Group

This year while participating in the Catalyst Course run by Ridley college in conjunction with Rochester Diocese, I felt a call from God to start a group for youth with the aim of encouraging young people to explore their faith, fall in love with Jesus, and see how their faith is relevant to their everyday lives. After prayer and discussion Siobhan Bolton and I started the group in September with the goal of running until Christmas and reassessing thereafter.

The group is a joint group with youth from St Mark's, and St Augustine's Church. We meet monthly to discuss a Bible theme or topic which we explored through a series of ice breakers, 'I wonder' questions, discussion, Bible exploration, and activities. Young people are given an opportunity to ask questions and express opinions.

We have 8-12 young people attend the group regularly.

At Christmas we asked the young people to anonymously answer if they wanted to continue to meet and if so what would they like to study. All the young people voted to continue and wanted to study topics such as how to witness to their friends, how to answer questions people have about their Christian faith and asked to study books of the Bible and how they relate to their everyday life.

We are very encouraged by their desire to own their faith, grow in their faith and witness to their friends.

Christine Curtis

Strategic Development Fund (SDF)

Gospel Church Planter

The Gospel Church continued in 2024 with Kid's choir in schools, filming, recording, and Gospel Nights on the fourth Sunday in the month in the evening and much more.

The Strategic Development Fund has financed the work of the Gospel Plant Leader for a set period of 5 years and this provision came to an end at the end of October 2024.

We thank the Gospel Church Plant leader for all her hard work over the 5 years.

PCC Secretary

Community Pastor

I started this role the beginning of November 2024.

I first visited every group/outreach etc running both within St Mark's and St Augustine's. This was with a view of seeing the aims and objectives of each group and to introduce myself to the leaders and attendees.

I also started meeting with some other church leaders locally to see also what they are doing towards outreach to the local community and if I can link into some of their existing work and to further explore some future outreach plans for the high street.

From here I have now been able to identify what groups I need to be attending on a weekly basis at both St Mark's and St Augustine's and to build trusting and meaningful relationships with those attending. Advent & Christmas was a busy time of attending and taking part in various activities at both St Mark's and St Augustine's.

Trevor Dyer

Community Missioner

2024 has been an exciting year. As my contract comes to an end it pleases me to look back on the achievements of the last year and see the relationships that have been built, relationships between Oasis Skinner Street School and the church, relationships between families who attend groups, relationships between volunteers, relationships between the preschool and the church, relationship between volunteers and group attendees. God's kingdom is built on relationships, and this year has been a beautiful year of relationship building.

It has been a blessing to see distinct communities grow in each Messy Church, and consistent faces every time we meet. One mother with three children expressed to me her love of Messy Church stating it feels comfortable, and she loves that her children are welcomed and can play and make noise without judgement. She also added that receiving dinner was a blessing. Another mum stated when I asked if she attended church anywhere that Messy Church was her church.

Messy Churches have grown as families from Parent/Toddler groups tell other families how much they enjoy Messy Church and bring them along.

Holiday clubs have grown in a similar way. Children from Parent/ Toddler groups are now the age that they can attend Holiday Clubs, and families encourage other families to attend. We also see children from local schools' attend.

Oasis Skinner Street have attended the church multiple times this year both for programs they have led and programs we have led. They are always a time of joy, and my desire is to this relationship continue and grow.

Kingsquad (Bible club) continues to be a popular afterschool club at the school with children from club also attending Holiday Clubs and Messy Church.

Parent/Toddler groups change over time as children start school and move on, but groups have continued to grow with new friendships being built, and new families attending.

It is always a blessing to spend time at St Mark's preschool and I am frequently invited in by Jo to lead the children in a story, craft and song. The dedication of the preschool staff and the wonder and joy of the children makes these times something I look forward to.

If you are interested in the facts and figures of programs I have run, please ask and I will be happy to provide them.

This year has also started the transition from me running programs to volunteers running programs. Volunteer teams have worked well together and are now confident in running activities. I have every confidence that the relationships we have built with the school and local community will continue to flourish.

Christine Curtis

St. Mary's Island Church (SMIC)

Our church paints an inspiring picture of how it fosters spiritual growth, connection, and service in such diverse and meaningful ways. From engaging Sunday worship services to programmes like Messy Church, Little Fishes, and the youth group, it's clear that everyone - regardless of age - is nurtured and valued.

The addition of Shirley Rogers has been a true blessing; it's wonderful when new leaders bring fresh perspectives and energy. Her gifts and skills have already enriched our church community. And our musicians and singers leading worship surely elevate the spiritual experience for all—what a gift to have such talent within our congregation!

Our emphasis on thoughtfully expanding activities while maintaining balance we feel is wise. Growth is exciting, but preserving the essence of what makes our church special is vital.

We love the sentiment of creating spaces for the community to encounter Jesus. It's a reminder of the heart of the church's mission. Truly creating a thriving, God-inspired place!

The lay leadership team continues to uphold the vibrant life and work of our church. We've been blessed to see a growing number of attendees, as several new faces have joined our congregation and made this their spiritual home. Many members actively contribute to the preparation and delivery of our weekly services, and we are truly fortunate to have a talented group of musicians and singers leading us in worship.

In alignment with the principles of Fresh Expressions, which encourage leaders to develop innovative forms of worship to reach a wider audience for Christ, our church has introduced diverse approaches to foster spiritual growth and engage in their relationship with Jesus. In the aftermath of the COVID shutdown, feelings of isolation have progressively diminished through the implementation of various initiatives, including new forms of worship, prayer groups, and activities aimed at spiritual enrichment.

Family services have evolved, now led by different members of the congregation. Additionally, a Worship Sunday has been established on the fifth Sunday of the months, during which the band leads the congregation in a more immersive worship experience. On Easter Sunday, the church celebrated with an Agape Service, which was attended by 88 participants and received overwhelmingly positive feedback.

Earlier this year, the church commemorated 25 years since its founding. As part of the celebration, individuals who were instrumental in establishing the church on the island were invited. On Sunday, 27th January, Bishop Simon led a special service to honour this milestone, marking a momentous occasion in the history of our church.

The enthusiasm of our Sunday School children is heartwarming as they eagerly dive into the activities carefully prepared by Nickie each week. Messy Church continues to be a hit, drawing not only our church and school family but also the wider island community each term. On the same weekend, the youth group gathers for fellowship and study, with the programme evolving to suit their interests and passions.

Little Fishes is thriving, with over 150 children on the register and often more than 70 attending Thursday morning sessions. The positive feedback we receive from participants is truly encouraging. Additionally, some church members dedicate their time to supporting the Scouts group on Thursday evenings and the Youth Club on Friday nights at the Community Centre.

Our monthly Ladies' Evenings, held on the second Friday, are well attended and filled with engaging activities and, of course, delicious cakes! The meetings for fellowship and worship at Atlas Place are greatly appreciated by the residents.

Our church is a remarkable community, offering something for everyone. As we continue to grow, we are mindful of maintaining the diversity and warmth that make us unique. We aim to strike a balance, expanding our activities thoughtfully and preserving the heart of our congregation. It's on Sundays that we truly come alive, with services that are God-inspired, spiritual, and uplifting. We give thanks to the Lord for His goodness and provision, and we pray for His guidance as we thrive as the Church on the Island, creating spaces for our community to encounter Jesus.

Carolyn Facey (Church Secretary)

St. Mary's Island School (SMIS)

We have this hope as an anchor for the soul. Hebrews 6:19

St Mary's Island School is a wonderful cornerstone of the community, deeply rooted in its Christian values and serving as both an educational hub and a place of spiritual growth. Anchored in its vision, the school supports its students and staff to truly thrive. It's evident that the headteacher and staff are clearly dedicated to meeting diverse needs while maintaining the highest standards of education.

The collaboration with St Mary's Island Church and its members brings a meaningful depth to the school's worship and ethos, helping to nurture a strong sense of faith and community among students and families alike. The positive report from the Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools is a testament to their commitment.

Carolyn Facey