



LIVING IN CHRIST, CARING FOR YOU

**ANNUAL EASTER
VESTRY &
PAROCHIAL
MEETING**

on

Thursday 20th April 2017

at 7.30.pm

in the church

Please come along

PARISH CHURCH OF ST MARY, SUNBURY ON THAMES

ANNUAL VESTRY MEETING

**THURSDAY 20TH APRIL 2017 at 7.30 PM
IN THE CHURCH**

A G E N D A

VESTRY EASTER MEETING

- 1) Prayers
- 2) Present
- 3) Apologies for Absence
- 4) Minutes of the Vestry Meeting held on 18th April 2016
- 5) Election of Church Wardens
- 6) Close

ST MARY'S CHURCH SUNBURY ANNUAL PAROCHIAL MEETING
THURSDAY 20TH APRIL 8.00PM IN THE CHURCH

AGENDA

- 1) Minutes of Meeting held on 18th April 2016
- 2) To receive a copy of the Electoral Roll
- 3) To receive a report of the Proceedings of the PCC
- 4) To receive the Annual Report and Examined Accounts for the year ended 31st December 2016
- 5) To receive a report on the Financial Affairs and Management of the Parish Hall
- 6) To appoint an Independent Examiner
- 7) To elect Tellers
- 8) To receive a Report of the Deanery Synod
- 9) To elect 15 Representatives of the Laity to the PCC
- 10) To receive a Report on the Fabric, Goods and Ornaments of the Church

11) To receive Reports of the Various Committees, Organisations and

Groups:

a) Fabric/Fund Raising Steering Committee

b) Stewardship Committee

c) Bells

d) Choir

e) Bible Study

f) Mothers' Union

g) SMCF

h) Prayer Group

i) ALPHA / BETA Groups

j) Safeguarding Report

k) Children's Champion Report

12) To receive the Priest's Report

13) To elect Sidesmen

14) Closing Prayers

PARISH CHURCH OF ST MARY, SUNBURY- on -THAMES
ANNUAL EASTER VESTRY MEETING
MONDAY 18th April 2016 7.30 pm. ST MARY'S CHURCH

Chairman: Church Warden, Mrs K Page.

PCC Secretary: Mrs B Edwards **Assistant PCC Secretary:** Mrs F Yates

1. Prayers: Fr. Peter opened the meeting with prayers.

2. Present: 55

3. Apologies: Mr Frank Brown, Mrs Brenda Cairns, Mrs Elizabeth Young, Ms Janet Tween, Mr John Mold, Mr and Mrs John Lodge.

3. Minutes of Annual Vestry Meeting 20th April 2015: Were approved and signed as a true record by the Chairman Mrs Karen Page.

Proposed – Mrs Gee Mackie Seconded – Mr George March

4. Matters Arising from these Minutes: There were none.

5. Elections of Church Wardens:

Mr John Mold - Proposed Mrs Barbara Storer Seconded – Mrs Karen Page

Mr John Lodge- Proposed Mrs Chris Scott Seconded – Mr George March

Both gentlemen agreed to stand as Church Wardens.

There were no further nominations. Mr John Mold and Mr John Lodge were both elected unanimously to serve as Church Wardens for the ensuing year.

Mrs Karen Page thanked everyone for the support they had given Mrs Barbara Storer and herself during their time as Church Wardens.

Mrs Gee Mackie thanked them both for all their hard work on behalf of St Mary's Church.

6. Close: The meeting ended at 7.35 pm.

ST MARY'S PARISH CHURCH

ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL

MONDAY 18th April 2016 at 8.00 pm in the CHURCH

Chairman: Churchwarden, Mrs Karen Page.

PCC Secretary: Mrs B Edwards **Assistant PCC Secretary:** Mrs F Yates

1. The Minutes of the Annual Parochial Church Council held on 20th April 2015: were approved and signed as a true record by the Chairman, Churchwarden, Mrs Karen Page. Proposed Mrs Rita Hutchison
Seconded Mr George March

2. Matters Arising from these Minutes: There were none.

3. Electoral Roll: Mr Ray Young presented two copies of the new revised electoral roll. There are 174 on roll. One member has left, five have died and there are twelve new applications. That is an increase of six members. Some members have omitted to fill in their email addresses and their telephone numbers when they filled in the form.

Mr Ray Young, after fifteen years as Electoral Roll Officer, decided to stand down last year, but no one has offered to take up the roll of Electoral Roll Officer. He has continued in this post for another year. He has now done sixteen years as the Electoral Roll Officer. An advertisement for this post will go into the next Parish Paper. Churchwarden, Mrs Karen Page, thanked Mr Ray Young for all his hard work over the last sixteen years.

4. Proceedings of the PCC (on file) The Secretary had nothing further to add to her report.

5. Annual Report and Examined Accounts for the Year Ended 31st December 2015: Mr Gavin Stanley, the Treasurer, presented the annual report and financial statements of the Parochial Church Council for the year ended 31st December 2015. They were presented and placed on file. The document had been approved by the Independent Examiner Mr J Edwards, Chartered Accountant.

Proposed Mr Tony Cull

Seconded Mr Alan Worrell

6. To Receive A Report on the Financial Affairs and Management of the Parish Hall:

Churchwarden, Mrs Karen Page, thanked Mr Gavin Stanley for all his hard work in producing the accounts and for all the work he does throughout the year on behalf of the church.

7. Appointment of Independent Examiner: It was confirmed that Mr Jeremy Edwards should be appointed Independent Examiner for the current year. He has fulfilled this role for twelve years and has done a very good job.

8. To Receive the Report of the Spelthorne Deanery Synod (on file) and Election of Deanery Synod Representatives: The Area Dean, the Reverend Andy Saville, wrote the report of the Spelthorne Deanery Synod. It met twice in 2015. There will be two meetings in 2016.

9. To Elect Representatives of the Laity to the PCC: Mrs K Page, Church Warden, read out the names of the people and the following were duly elected; Mr T Cull, Mrs R Horgan, Mrs P L'Angellier, Mrs K Page, Mrs C Scott, Mr G Stanley, Mrs B Storer, Mr A Wood, Mrs M Parr, Mr M Towns, Mrs F Yates, Mrs M Orr, Mrs J Worrell.

Mr C Franklin, Mrs K Mackey, Deanery Representatives.

Mrs B Montague and Mrs J Townsend have retired from the PCC.

There are three new PCC Members; Mrs F Yates, Mrs M Orr and Mrs J Worrell.

Mrs Betsy Edwards is changing roles with Mrs Fiona Yates who will be the new PCC Secretary. Mrs Betsy Edwards will act as her Deputy.

Mrs B Edwards was co-opted onto the PCC.

Mrs Karen Page, Churchwarden, thanked everyone on the PCC for their hard work.

A new PCC Contacts List will be circulated.

Proposed Mrs P L'Angellier

Seconded Mrs S March

10. Church Fabric, Goods and Ornaments of the Church (on file): the Churchwardens confirmed that the goods and ornaments of the Church were in satisfactory order.

11. Reports on Various Committees, Organisations and Groups: Reports were given in respect of Stewardship Committee, the SMCF, the Growth Group, Choir, the Bells and Tower, Bible Study Group, Mothers' Union, St Mary's Church Fellowship, the Alpha Report, the Parish Paper, the PCC Report. Fr Simon's Report, the Spelthorne Deanery Report, and the Prayer Group. Copies of these reports are in the 2016 APM Booklet.

The Choir: Mr Geoffrey Bowyer addressed the congregation and pleaded for new choristers of any age to come forward to join his very small choir. He thanked his choir members for their loyal support.

12. Priest's Report: There is no Priest's Report. Fr Andrew Downes, the new Vicar will be installed and inducted on 4th May 2016.

13. To Elect Sidesmen: There are no new sides men / women this year. 26 names were read out and were duly elected for the coming year.

Proposed Fr Simon

Seconded Mrs B Storer

14. Any Other Business:

1 The poster outside the Parish Hall is incorrect and needs to be changed. Fr Simon is meeting Fr Paul on Tuesday 19th April 2016.

2 The bells will be rung for the Queen's birthday on Thursday 21st April 2016 to mark her ninetieth birthday.

3 Thanks were expressed to the two Churchwardens for opening the church on Wednesdays for tea and a chat.

4 'Long Live Queen Elizabeth' will be played after the Sunday Service.

15. Closing Prayers: The Grace was said and the meeting ended at 8.35 pm.

Spelthorne Deanery Synod Report

There were two meetings of the Spelthorne Deanery Synod in 2016

In May, the Synod met at St. Mary the Virgin, Stanwell. The main speakers were the Ven Stephan Welch and the Rev Mary Spredbury who concentrated mostly on finance. In the medium term the target is for the Kensington Area to meet all its obligations under the common fund. At present Spelthorne Deanery meets about 78% of its costs.

In October, the Synod met at Christ Church, Staines. We welcomed Bishop Graham Tomlin, our Area Bishop. Area Dean Rev Andy Saville interviewed Bishop Graham who told us a little of his background and what had inspired him to become a teacher and priest.

He then explained the long and complex process for selecting a new Bishop of London following the retirement of Bishop Richard. (Note – Spelthorne Deanery will have an opportunity to express its views at the next Deanery Meeting on 11th May).

Bishop Graham then spoke about church attendance, which in Spelthorne is 1.7% of the population compared with 2.3% in the Kensington Area as a whole. We split into groups to consider how we can improve our performance.

The Standing Committee of the Spelthorne Deanery Synod is unchanged as follows:

Area Dean	Rev Andy Saville, All Saints, Laleham
Lay Chair	Mr Stewart Smith, All Saints Laleham
Secretary	Mrs Jo Child, St Nicholas, Shepperton
Assistant Secretary	Rev Michael Burley, Staines Parish
Treasurer	Mrs Betty Sanders, St Mary's, Staines
Lay member	Mr Mervyn Moys, St Mary's, Stanwell
Clerical Member	Fr Stuart King, St Matthew's, Ashford and St Mary's, Stanwell

Diocesan Synod representatives from Spelthorne Deanery are: Deborah Bull, Guy Blythman, Rev Fr Stuart King, Rev Andrew Downes and Stewart Smith.

Deanery Synod dates for 2017.

19th May with the Archdeacon and Area Finance Officer at St Mary Sunbury.

Church Treasurers and Church Wardens are invited too as this will incorporate the Deanery Finance meeting. We will also welcome Debbie Buggs, a member of the Vacancy in See committee who will lead a discussion on the search for a new Bishop of London.

19th October with Bishop Ric Thorpe, Bishop of Islington.

Stewart Smith (Lay Chair) and Rev Andy Saville (Area Dean) 27th February 2017

REPORTS

**PARISH CHURCH OF ST MARY- SUNBURY ON THAMES
ANNUAL PAROCHIAL MEETING
20th APRIL 2017**

The Churchwardens are pleased to report that the goods and Ornaments of the Church are satisfactory.

A separate report on the Fabric of the Church, giving full details of the work carried out in the past year, has been submitted by the Chairman of the Fabric Committee.

**Mr John B Mold
Churchwarden**

**Mr John Lodge
Churchwarden**

**ST MARY'S CHURCH SUNBURY ON THAMES
FABRIC & FUNDRAISING STEERING COMMITTEE
REPORT TO ANNUAL PARISH MEETING
20TH APRIL 2017**

Maintenance

I am glad to say that the Church and Hall are in good health and we have had a reasonably quiet year, from the maintenance point of view. Apart from the usual annual routine maintenance inspections, this was the year that the Electrical Quinquennial inspection became due. The resulting issues have been rectified.

Several snags carried forward from the Architectural Quinquennial inspection were rectified during the year:
The Tower railings were painted, yellow non slip finish applied to the edges of the main entrance steps and the rusting mesh screens on some of the Stained Glass windows replaced with stainless mesh.

In addition rope hand rails have been installed on the balcony staircases and the Ringing Room ceiling painted.

I still have hopes that we will restore the Scrafito and art work – Christos, Angels etc in the Sanctuary but getting a faculty has been somewhat trying. The latest hurdle is that a technical assessment of the condition is required.

Hall: The outside of the Hall has been painted and the central heating boiler has been replaced after we had problems with the fan burning out.

Fundraising:

Our collective thanks are due to the “Fair Team” who organised the Fair in November and Sue March for the Open Gardens. Not forgetting the continued support for the fabric of our Church from Friends of St Mary's.

JOHN MOLD
Chairman

P.C.C. Stewardship Committee

Report to the Annual Parish Meeting 2017

The following members of the P.C.C. were appointed to this committee:- Tony Cull Chris Franklin, Pauline L'Angellier, Kath Sanders and Gavin Stanley. Tony Cull was appointed chairman by the P.C.C. There have been two meetings and Kath and Pauline have taken the minutes.

We were delighted to welcome our new vicar, Fr. Andrew Downes, to the committee.

In April Rev'd Mary Spredbury, who is the Kensington Area Finance Adviser, preached on the subject of Stewardship. A copy of her talk was made available for people to study.

Our treasurer, Gavin Stanley, has kept us up to date with the financial situation. He will be reporting to the A.P.M. regarding membership of the schemes. Sadly we have lost several members, but we have also gained new people.

A letter was sent out to as many as possible thanking them for past support and suggesting an increase in regular giving, or indeed joining one of the methods for regular giving. By using "Git Aid" a significant amount of additional funding is secured and it is hoped that all givers who are U.K. tax payers will do this. Kath worked on the pamphlet "Your Church Needs You" to up-date it and this was distributed with Gavin's letter.

We are grateful to Chris Franklin who has once again taken care of ordering and distributing envelopes for the weekly offers.

The committee would be pleased to welcome new members from the P.C.C. or indeed members keen to help who are not on the P.C.C.

Tony Cull
Chairman

ST MARY'S CHURCH SUNBURY ON THAMES BELLS REPORT 2016/17

I am pleased to report that the 8 bells and associated fittings in the tower are in good ringing condition with no handling problems. The annual careful inspection by the technician from Loughborough Bell Foundry confirmed that all was in order. The bell ropes, provided in year 2000 have recently shown signs of wear getting beyond my normal cutting and splicing. Replacement is an expensive business but, fortunately, I received a gift of a complete new set of 8 ropes from two donors (£1400) – no cost to the Church. Fr. Andrew blessed the new ropes at Morning Service and they are now being fitted. The clock on the tower is operating again after a few problems last year; with a lot of patience we corrected the faults ourselves.

With regard to the ringing of the bells, they have been rung for every Morning service throughout the year and occasionally in the evenings for Festivals and other special occasions. Early in July welcomed we our new Vicar- Fr. Andrew and the Vicarage family to the Parish with a Quarter Peal of 1260 changes prior to his Induction Service; some rings from his former Parish (Chiswick) joined us and one of them conducted the ringing from his wheelchair. During the year we rang several Quarter Peals of 1200 changes. In one of them we were joined by a young lady ringer who suffers from Blood Cancer; she rang our No.2 bell for the best part of an hour in fine style. At the start Fr. Andrew joined us around the Altar for prayers to match the occasion.

Muffled bells were rung before Morning Service in memory of Frank Barnes (FOSM) and Erica Tye BEM (Community work) and also for Henry Boulwood who was a former ringer at St Mary's and lost his life 100 years ago in the Somme Battle – July 1916. There were also muffled bells on Remembrance Day.

In joy we rang at mid-day on 26th April for the 90th birthday of our Queen and in September to welcome Archbishop Walter Makhulu who presided over the Parish Sung Eucharist Service. At the Sermon time, Fr. Andrew called me to the Reading Desk and asked the Archbishop to present me with a Mellitus Medal on behalf of the Bishop of London for my long service to the Church, particularly in bellringing. It was a wonderful and complete surprise to me; a secret well kept, too!

And so, we continue to praise and mark events in our Church and National life with the sound of our fine bells. We are always on the lookout for a few persons to join us and help on our “one-stringed” instruments in the name of Campanology.

With thanks to you all.

**Dennis Brock – Tower Captain
March 2017**

ORGANIST AND CHOIR REPORT 20TH APRIL 2017

ANNUAL VESTY AND PAROCHIAL MEETING

This report is in two halves.

The Organ

St Mary's Parish Church in Sunbury has one of the finest church organs outside London, a Lewis, Compton organ extended by Peter Hammond, Organ Builder, to include a full range of clarinet pipes. A new rank of flute pipes and a digitally enhanced deep 32' pipes to strengthen the pedal organ. It is a delight to play to accompany the voices and a great joy to your organist.

The Choir

Due to the ravages of time our Church Choir is in need of several new members following the sad resignation of three members this current year. David Brown, Elsa Lennie and Lorna Doyle. These stalwart members provided the strength in the voice part to enable a short anthem to be presented before the Communion Hymn. I would like to re-iterate my deep gratitude to them for their selfless support over thirty years in the Choir. Please volunteer for an hour's rehearsal, 7.30-8.30pm on Friday evening if you could support the church music, i.e. hymns, services and anthems. All are welcome!

My deep gratitude to Margaret Kearley, Helen Hadley, Stephen Bently, Catherine Black and Gavin Stanley for their moral support. I would like to see Miranda Parr, Duncan Bell and many others who could come occasionally to rehearse with us on a Friday evening.

Geoffrey Bowyer

BIBLE STUDY ANNUAL REPORT 2016/17

I had a conversation with Fr. Andrew about resuming the Bible Study group. Fr. Andrew called a meeting. Unfortunately I was unable to attend due to ill health.

Leo was appointed to take the group, but then stepped down. Leo and I had a conversation which resulted in my appointment as the leader. Leo is very supportive of this. Start date – 2nd week after Easter.

The new Bible Study will have a very different format:- Reflective music to start each session. The studies will be based on the sermons we have had and also the Collects.

Participants are invited to take a Bible (edition of their own choice). The study for the day will be read (by me) and then open for questions etc.

I realise that many people are fearful of these studies:- fear of failure, wrong answers, showing lack of knowledge. These sessions are run on 'Free to fail' lines. I will encourage everyone to take part and have FUN. God's word is to be enjoyed. It is a joy and privilege which many people do not have.

'Dear Lord, may we move forward together in seeking you through joyful investigation.'

I will sit back and wait ...

Fr. Andrew will oversee from afar.

Jill Townsend March 2017

BIBLE STUDY – APRIL 2016-JUNE 2016

After 40 years history of mainly meeting in private homes and only latterly in the Parish Hall we closed down as the wider interest by the congregation finally dwindled away.

Now the Phoenix is arising again and after Lent a different format and leader is continuing the practice of a laity led group with the clergy support and re starts the practice ...and the old guard wish them well and offer our support and participation.

Leo Pemberton

MOTHERS' UNION REPORT 2017

The Branch has had another active year, meeting every month, with some interesting speakers and activities. We have also had lunch out and attended all Deanery events, as well as the Festival Service at St. Paul's Cathedral. Attendance seems to be falling but illness has played a part and sadly we lost three members this year: Eileen Booker, Audrey Schimmield and Erica Tye.

At the Autumn Fair, MU ran the usual cake stall and hamper raffle. We managed a very successful lunch in August, and MU members carry out a wide range of duties with Church life.

With regard to fundraising the honey tasting afternoon raised £220 for Furnish, we contribute Children's Farm at SureStart in Stanwell, we bought an equipment box for new mothers in Syria and two baptism shawls for our church. We also sent off funds to Mary Sumner House as detailed in the accounts. Members seem to enjoy supporting local projects and we are looking into more possibilities at Deane.

Thanks, as always, to the committee a truly stalwart band who carry on regardless, and to all the other members who support the work of the Branch of the MU. We make an excellent team and achieve a great deal and have some fun along the way. Thanks also to Fr Andrew for his support, which is always much appreciated and for organizing the Deanery Quiet Evening.

FLOWER GUILD

There are three teams who arrange the flowers in Church on a weekly basis, but all join together to arrange flowers for the major festivals. Dennis Van Wonderen now supplies some of the flowers. There are fewer weddings being held in Church than a few years ago, which means that more flowers must be purchased.

Thanks go to the committed flower arrangers, who create some truly wonderful displays.

REPORT OF PROCEEDINGS FOR ST MARY'S CHURCH FELLOWSHIP 2016-2017

The Committee have continued to meet roughly every 4-6 weeks throughout the year and have provided refreshments for all main occasions of the Church. These included, Lent Lunch, Confirmation Reception, Regatta Breakfast, Harvest Barn Dance and Supper, Mulled Wine with Mince Pies for the 9 Lessons and Carols Service. They also erected, decorated and dismantled the Christmas Tree.

The Pancake & Quiz evening was another success as was the Jazz Party which Fr Andrew and Alice hosted in their garden in July. The Open Gardens were well attended and we again served approx. 100 lunches. Huge thanks to Sue March for her hard work and dedication.

Our AGM this year will be on Monday 22nd May at 8.00pm in the Parish Hall. Please come along with your ideas for the Committee and to enjoy Cheese, Wine and good fellowship.

My thanks to all the Committee for their hard work throughout the year and also to those who help now and then behind the scenes!

PRAYER GROUP REPORT FOR ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHURCH MEETING 2017

The Prayer Group continues to meet at the home of one of our group from 8pm to 9pm on the second Wednesday or Thursday of the month.

Our host provides a welcoming cup of tea and often home-made cake before we join together in The Lord's Prayer. We then have open, extemporaneous prayers and close with The Grace.

Anyone and everyone is welcome to join us at any time.

Heavenly Father, we pray for Your blessing on us all at St. Mary's. May we grow in our love of You and for each other, as Your love grows in each of us. In Jesus' name, Amen

Graham Simpson

REPORT OF BETA GROUPS 2016/17

Jayne Taylor's Group

They meet once a month with six ladies alternating homes. They share prayer, scripture and what God is doing in their lives, but no formal study at this point.

Rita Hutchison's Group

They meet every third Monday in her home. There are ten (2 men and 8 ladies). We are currently studying Charles Swindoll's "Improving Your Serve", and share prayer together.

Respectfully submitted,

Rita Hutchison

PARISH OF ST MARY'S CHURCH SUNBURY UPON THAMES

Annual Safeguarding Report 2016/17

INTRODUCTION

St Mary's is committed to safeguarding children and vulnerable adults within the Parish.

SAFEGUARDING

In 2016, Catherine Wood QC agreed to undertake the role of the Parish Safeguarding Officer both for children and vulnerable adults.

In this role the PSO is supported by the Children's Champion, Rosemary Horgan

The details of our PSO and CG and are advertised on posters on notice boards and in the lavatories in both the Church and the Parish Hall. These posters provide information as to how to contact either the PSO or the CG if there are concerns.

REPORTED CONCERNS

There were no reported concerns in 2016/17.

TRAINING

The PSO has attended a day's training session run by the Diocese and a risk assessment course run by Farrer & Co,

2017/8

The PSO will carry out an audit of the procedures that are currently in place in terms of safeguarding and with a view to identifying whether and if so, how our system could be improved. The PSO will report back to Father Andrew before submitting a report to the PC for consideration.

CWQC

27 March 2017.

CHILDREN'S CHAMPION REPORT 2016

As Children's Champion I can report that things are going very well for the children of St. Mary's.

The Children's choir sang beautifully at Christmas. We have had some exciting Puppet Entertainment with children manipulation the puppets.

The Congregation at the 11.30 family service increases every week as more and more young families join us.

Now I would like to report on two projects which have been highly successful in bringing new, you people into church.

Firstly Explorers. This takes place every two weeks at the 11.30 family service. It is very ably run by Martin Town and his band of helpers. (mostly all ex school teachers)

The fifty (yes sometimes as many) children in the 5-11 age bracket with some younger. Unfortunately the older children have hockey, rugby etc on a Sunday morning.

We follow the ROOTS religious syllabus and resources.. ROOTS being a partnership of Christian organisations and denominations.

The older children and the younger are sometimes organised into two groups to cope with the work of that day.

We meet at the back of the church where the teaching and learning is mainly active, but the children are encouraged to think and voice, their own opinions. After the session the children, return and report back to the congregation. The children's work is linked to the main service. They are all accompanied by their parents and no one is left on their own. Supervised in a group at all times.

The second project is "The new Parents and Carers and Cygnet Coffee and play session. This has been organised by Mrs Alice Downes – helped by Rosemary Horgan and parent helpers. This is run on Thursday mornings in the church and is definitely fulfilling a need in the local community.

The children range from three weeks to four years . So far we have had sixteen children and babies and fifteen mums and carers.

A selection of activities both active and sitting down is set up for the children and they are disciplined. The mums are constantly aware that we are in a beautiful church and act accordingly.

Alice has provided most of the equipment but a kind grandmother has given some lovely activity toys.

Two of the children were christened in St Mary's a few weeks ago and now attend church.

There has been an increased number of Christenings in our church and at one five children from one family were christened. This must be a good sign for the future.

Rosemary Horgan

Teachers for Explorers led by Martin Town.

Mrs. Helen Hadley

Mrs. Linda Jones

Mrs. Rosemary Horgan

Mrs. Jennie Crews

And others who come to help.

Vicar's report for St Mary's Annual Parish Report

Dear Friends,

“Therefore encourage one another and build each other up” (*1 Thessalonians 5:11*). One of my favourite verses in the New Testament; a reminder that to be a church is to be part of the Body of Christ, a community and when one of our family is maybe a little flat or down then we are charged with encouragement and lifting them up.

I was chatting with Alice recently and it feels to us that we have been part of St Mary's and Sunbury for much longer than just May last year, when I was installed and inducted as the 51st Vicar of St Mary's by the Bishop of Kensington. Much has taken place over these past few months; particular highlights for me were the Faure Requiem Eucharist for All Souls Day, our Macmillan Service and Coffee morning, the wonderful confirmation service with Archbishop Walter, growing links with our local schools and very pleasing numbers attending our Christmas services. It has been gratifying to see our monthly midweek Eucharist and parish lunch group develop over the past few months and the recent launch of our Cygnets playgroup shows that there is a very real need for this type of offering in our community. Overall, our attendance numbers as a church seem to be increasing and our income is also going in the right direction. This is proof that as a church, as a community, we are offering something not just that people want but they wish to come back to and be a part of. But complacency is a fatal friend and resting on ones' laurels does not for long-term success and happiness make. The PCC held a successful Away Day recently at St Mary's Convent in Chiswick and a number of initiatives were collectively identified - several based on community outreach - that we wish to take forward as a parish. These will be clearly communicated and circulated to everyone after Easter so watch this space...

The pages of this annual report offer something of a glimpse of the tremendous efforts of many in our congregation. I would like to place on record my thanks to so many for all the hard work undertaken this year and to all those who have offered so freely of their time and talents and their money, for the nurturing and development of the ministry and mission of our church community. I would especially like to thank those who worked so hard in the interregnum to keep St Mary's on the road; especially Fr Simon, Cristine our Reader and all the other clergy who helped out including Rev Peter and Fr Stephen. John Mold and John Lodge our church wardens are both stepping down this year after countless years of loyal service. I am very grateful to them both for all their sterling work. The Parish office was reorganised towards the end of the year and our new parish administrator Liz Scott joined us. I am very grateful to Gee Mackie and Fiona Yates and especially to Chris Scott for all their long service in the office. I am also grateful to Ray Young who steps down as Electoral Roll Officer after 17 years and to Tony Cull stepping down as chairman of our Stewardship Committee. To all who serve on the PCC or on our committees, who help out with readings, prayers, lifts to church, parish breakfasts and catering and social events, flowers, purificators, Open Gardens, Mothers Union, organise the sacristy, our Alpha and Prayer leaders, our servers, sing in the choir, cleaning brass, welcomers and sidespeople, Martin Towns and all those who assist with the Explorers, Dennis and all our bell ringers, our Wednesday afternoon refreshments organisers – a big thank you! And thanks too, to our Treasurer Gavin Stanley for his sterling work and to Chris Franklin for all his hard work too. Not to mention Geoffrey Bowyer our long serving Organist and Choir Director.

One of the challenges that all churches face – and St Mary’s is no exception – is to celebrate and cherish and guard our roots and our traditions and yet also be open to as to where the Holy Spirit might be leading us. I hope that we can journey forward together over the next few years as a church and try to increase our numbers across all our services by being open to new initiatives or ideas yet still being rightly proud of our liturgical history and practice. The more people we have coming through our doors; the greater resources we will have to help us to develop this corner of God’s World. As well as trying to cultivate a healthy and growing church, I think we ought to be careful not to neglect our own individual spiritual health and development and I am working on some ideas to share with you all on this theme in due course.

Myself, Alice and the children have been so warmly welcomed over the past few months into the life not just of the church but of the overall parish. I am very privileged to serve as your Vicar with a wonderful team around me in this beautiful corner of God’s world and I am grateful for all who have offered the hand of friendship in our direction and have helped us to settle in. I think God has exciting plans for us all over the coming years! Our beloved Bishop of London, Richard Chartres has recently retired and we wish him and Caroline and the family all the best for a new and different chapter of their lives. When Bishop Richard used to write to his clergy he used the same ending on all his communications; an ending which can scarcely be bettered. And so I close, as he would, by simply saying...

With thanks for our partnership in the Gospel.

Fr Andrew
Vicar.