

St Mary's Church Selly Oak

Parish Report 2019

Contents

ITEM	REPORT	PAGE
1	Altar Servers, Lesson Readers, Intercessors and Lay Assistants	2
2	Baptisms	2
3	Bellringers	3
4	Bereavement chaplaincy	3
5	Book group	4
6	Charitable donations	Separate document
7	Choir / organ	5
8	Church flowers	6
9	Church Hall	6
10	Coffee mornings	7
11	Deanery Synod	7
12	Electoral Roll	7
13	Fabric report	8
14	Health and Safety	9
15	Interregnum status	9
16	Issues Group	10
17	Junior Church	
18	Kids' Club and Pre-school	10
19	Open Church	11
20	PPC Secretary report	11
21	Safeguarding	11
22	Social committee	12
23	Stewardship	12
24	Theological book group	14
25	Treasurer's report	Separate document
26	Way group	14
27	Youth Club	14
28	Website report	Separate document

ITEM 1. ALTAR SERVERS, LESSON READERS, INTERCESSORS AND LAY ASSISTANTS

Altar Servers

Over the last twelve months we have had a further decrease in the number of servers and only have twelve servers available now. Other than special occasions, when there are four servers present, there are only three servers on duty at the 10:00 Parish Communion service. One server assists at the 8:00 Holy Communion service every other week; a reduction from each week that is due to the limited number of servers available. One server acts as the crucifer at the third Sunday Choral Evensong each month and servers also assist at special services such as Ash Wednesday, Maundy Thursday, Ascension Day and the Christmas services.

Incense continues to be used three times per year at the 10:00 Parish Communion on Passion Sunday, Trinity Sunday and All Saints. On these occasions additional servers carry out the duties of thurifer and boat-bearer.

Servers meet with the clergy once a year to discuss issues relating to services and how best they can support the clergy. Following discussions at these meetings, any alterations to procedures are incorporated in the Servers Handbook.

Lesson Readers

We have two teams of eleven people who read the lessons, and, when appropriate, the psalm at the 10:00 Parish Communion, which is a slight reduction of one person in each team. The team that reads the first lesson and the psalm are drawn from the congregation and the team that reads the second lesson is drawn from the servers and choir members.

Intercessors

The intercessions at the 10:00 Parish Communion are led by both lay members of the church and the clergy. We have eight church members and the lay reader who are available to support the service by leading the intercessions.

Lay Assistants

A group of eight church members and the lay reader are licensed to assist with the administration of the chalice at communion services. There is one assistant at the 8:00 Holy Communion and two at the 10:00 Parish Communion. Assistance is also provided at other special communion services such as Ash Wednesday, Maundy Thursday, Ascension Day and Christmas. One church member is licensed to support the clergy by taking home communion to the sick and housebound.

The role of deacon, which includes leading the prayers of preparation during the first part of the Parish Communion and of assisting the celebrant in the preparation of the bread and wine, is carried out by two lay members of the church and the lay reader as well as members of the clergy.

Three lay members of the church or the lay reader take the 6:30 Sunday evening service, except for the third Sunday Choral Evensong which is taken by one of the clergy.

Richard Edmonds, March 2020

ITEM 2. BAPTISMS

Demand for baptisms continues to be healthy. During 2019 a total of 17 children were baptised by St Mary's clergy in 14 separate services. Of these baptisms, 3 were performed during the 10am service. In addition, one baptism was performed in St Mary's by Revd Fiona Harrison-Smith for a member of her St Gabriel's congregation, because her own building was closed. The clergy are most grateful for the support of the baptism teams in preparing the church and welcoming guests, and to Angela Lidgbird for organising the teams.

David Parker

ITEM 3. BELLRINGERS REPORT

The band has started to grow in experience thanks to the support from Moseley, Kings Norton, and Northfield ringers.

Skills have developed in call changes, ringing rounds, plain hunt, plain bob doubles and grandsire doubles.

We were contacted last year by Jonathan, his daughter Susan had heard the bells ringing and asked if she could visit. She was recommended to join the Brumdingers in Moseley where she was taught how to handle a bell. She has since joined the band for our weekly practice, her passion for ringing has inspired Jonathan to learn.

In Jan 2020 we advertised for new ringers in the weekly sheet, we were joined by Terry who has shown a keen interest.

The band has been able to ring for most Sunday services with the Peal of eight bells being rung. In addition we rang in celebration for the Carol service, Christmas morning, six weddings, and tolled the bell in solidarity with France after the tragic fire at Notre Dame. We would like to acknowledge and thank visiting band members from Moseley, Kings Norton and Northfield who rang and called during these Celebrations.

A quarter Peal of Grandsire Triples was rung prior to the Collation and Induction for Reverend Hazel White as Vicar on Sunday 09 Feb. We would like to acknowledge and thank the Moseley band and the visiting ringers who rang for the occasion.

The band have supported Sunday ringing at St Nicolas Kings Norton where the Peal of 10 bells have been rung alongside Kings Norton & Northfield ringers.

The Tower has had requests this year to ring for 4 1/4 Peals and 4 Peals. All 1/4 Peals were successfully rung, Grandsire Triples, Grandsire Doubles, Steadman Triples, and Plain Bob Doubles. From the Peal attempts 2 were successful Yorkshire surprise Major and Steadman Triples.

The annual service of the bells recommended monitoring and replacing the ropes of the seventh and Tenor. The ropes need to be looked at with a view to replace some or all in the coming year.

The annual dinner this year was due to be held at the peacock Inn, due to the Covid-19 outbreak the decision was made to cancel with a view to reschedule once it is safe to.

My personal thanks is extended to St Mary's band Russell, Gill, George, Paul, Alex, Holly and Ann for their service to the church and weekly commitment to ringing.

We thank the clergy Hazel, Jayne, David and the congregation for their support. We look forward to serving the community of Selly Oak in 2020 with the selfless commitment from the band and the ringing community.

Joanne Goodall March 2020

ITEM 4. BEREAVEMENT CHAPLAINCY

St Mary's Bereavement Chaplaincy has continued to be an important part of our ministry, with Revd. David Parker and Revd. Jayne Adams being alongside those who are preparing for the funeral service of a loved one.

We are indebted to some members of our congregation, who as members of the Bereavement chaplaincy team make phone calls to bereaved families several weeks after the funeral service, and offer their time and listening skills to those whom they have called.

Sometimes the bereaved family member will spend considerable time talking and sharing something of their experience of loss, pain, and grief. Other phone calls might be just someone saying they are "fine", but however much or little anyone wants to talk with one of our team, it is fine; because the contact has been made and our bereaved families know we still think of them and care for them.

The bereavement chaplaincy team has met once every 4 months and we have been made welcome at the home of Gill Edmonds. The chaplaincy team has also welcomed Revd. Hazel White to join us, as our new Vicar.

We have discussed funeral services conducted by clergy, pastoral care phone calls made by members of the team and any concerns arising from these. Crucially, each member of the team has had the opportunity to share anything that has challenged them spiritually, mentally or emotionally as this ministry can be difficult and can touch any of us deeply with the pain from others or disturb within us any personal loss and sadness. Finally, we used one meeting to discuss and plan St Mary's Church Annual Memorial Service, which was held in church on November 3rd, 2019.

Bereaved families, whose loved one have had their funeral service taken by a member of our clergy during the previous two years, were invited and the service in 2019, was extremely well attended. During the service of hymns, readings, prayers and reflections, families hear the name of their loved one read out and are invited to come forward, each light a candle in their memory, hang a leaf with a prayer or message on our memorial tree and take a small pebble to hold and save as a memory of the service.

Members of the bereavement chaplaincy team are present to offer support over refreshments after the service, and some will stay to talk, whilst others are content to return home.

Nationally, there has been a noticeable fall in the number of funerals for which Clergy are asked to officiate. This is primarily due to the increase in numbers of Civil Celebrants, who are self employed and take funeral services, both religious and secular. Jayne is beginning to discuss this with Revd Canon. Janet Chapman, the Vicar of St Laurence church, Northfield, as Janet is already in discussion with other senior clergy about this change of use from clergy to civil celebrants for funerals. This discussion will hopefully resume soon.

I would like to thank on behalf of everyone at St Mary's Church, those who share in Bereavement Chaplaincy, and those who help with refreshments at the memorial service. All of this is invaluable ministry that touches the life of everyone.

Revd. Jayne Adams May 2020

ITEM 5. BOOK GROUP

Book Group has met more or less monthly at Sheila Skeeles' flat in Bridgewater Court. It continues to broaden our horizons, with suggestions for the next read coming from different members of the group. It would be fair to say we have not all enjoyed all of the books all of the time (!) but I think we are agreed that we like having a reason to read books we might not otherwise choose. The group is not exclusive and we don't all attend every month; if anyone is interested in coming along, please have a chat with David. Many thanks to Sheila for her very generous hospitality.

Books we have read since the last APCM:

May: *Phoebe* – Paula Gooder

June: *How To Be Good* – Nick Hornby

July: *The Choir* – Joanna Trollope

August: *The Power and The Glory* – Graham Greene

October: *In This House of Brede* – Rumer Godden

November: *The Pianist of Yarmouk* – Aeham Ahmed

January: *The Second Sleep* – Robert Harris

February: *Emma* – Jane Austen

April – Postponed: *A Single Thread* – Tracy Chevalier

Kate Cheyney March 2020

ITEM 6. CHARITABLE DONATIONS

SEE SEPARATE DOCUMENT

ITEM 7. CHOIR AND ORGAN REPORT

If we thought that last year was a period of momentous change for us all at St Mary's, we had little anticipation of the extremes that 2019/2020 would bring. The interregnum during which we were so well served by David and Jayne. Initial interviews for a new incumbent being unsuccessful, with the next interviews coming to a successful conclusion with Hazel being appointed and installed as our new Vicar. In 2019 before Hazel was appointed, we were in the very safe hands of David and Jayne, both giving the Choir a lot of support and ensuring that the church continued to flourish in such an efficient way.

There weren't many changes in the choir this year. Grace Kendrick joined the sopranos for a few weeks before Christmas, but caring for her terminally ill mother who has since sadly died meant that she was unable to be with us for long. She does hope to join us again when the virus lock-down is eventually lifted. Just before the virus struck, we were sorry to lose Chris Richards from our Tenors, who found it was no longer possible to travel from his home in Bromsgrove. It would be good to welcome new members into the choir, to strengthen all the voice parts, but inevitably our aim to recruit students to join the choir must now wait until the next academic year. We then hope to publicise St Mary's and the Choir into student accommodation.

There were two highlights during the year. On Sunday 27th October, the Choir sang the *Faure Requiem* and his *Cantique de Jean Racine*. With Chris Stormont at the organ plus Josie Brannon as Soprano soloist and Oliver Neale as baritone, it was a moving act of worship with great support from the congregation. The only distraction during the event were the loud fireworks celebrating the Hindu Festival of Diwali. The other occasion was the Annual Carol Service, one of our best in recent years. It was good to welcome Duncan and Jan as occasional visitors to help strengthen our numbers. This service again attracted a large congregation.

Inevitably, the end of this 12 month period has been dominated by two opposites. Firstly the rejoicing at the appointment of Hazel White as our new Vicar, and her inspiring and joyful Collation & Induction service on Sunday 9th February. Then the trials and tribulations brought about with the arrival of the Corona virus and the consequent closing of the churches and services held therein. The choir has responded well to this with the introduction of 'Friday News', a weekly bulletin with contributions by most of the choristers, and also learning some new music using on-line technology.

Especially during the interregnum time, with the support of our Clergy, David and Jayne, we have been fortunate to be able to continue our monthly Choral Evensong services with Chris Stormont as visiting organist who helps to ensure that a very high professional standard in the music and worship is maintained. In addition, of course our regular duty is still to sing for the Sunday Morning services with our Friday Choir Practice being an important part in maintaining standards. I thank all the choristers for their loyal and regular attendance, especially to Kate Cheyney and Josephine Brannon for the support they give me.

The Organ continues in the care of Paul Daly, Pipe Organ Maintenance and Tuning Services, and is in excellent condition. With the generous bequest arising from the deaths of Bill, Pat and Margaret Burcham the three-manual keyboards have been replaced, and the computerised memory and setter systems updated through another generous donation from Chorister, Richard Lambert.

It is encouraging that St Mary's PCC judges the upkeep of the organ to be important in its many other priorities. In due course a schedule of cleaning and dust removal from the interior of the organ will need to be carried out by the organ builders, but this is not currently an urgent issue.

John Stormont. Organist & Choirmaster. March 2020

ITEM 8. CHURCH FLOWERS

This past year has seen some changes to the church flower provision. We have said goodbye to Patricia & Liliana & thank them for their dedicated service. We welcome Kirsty to the team & we're looking forward to seeing more of Kirsty's displays in the future.

Due to Lent, the closure of the church, no weddings etc. the floral displays have ceased for the time being & we eagerly await the time when we can get our scissors snipping again.

The flower fund exists entirely on weddings and donations. We are always open to donations either by placing money in the box on the pillar by the front door or by handing it to a member of the team.

You may have noticed that food prices have increased during the lockdown, I expect flower prices to rise also. Thousands of pounds/euro worth of flowers have been thrown away (in one weekend) as flower growers across the world experienced a disastrous UK Mothering Sunday.

In the past members of the congregation have 'sponsored' a floral display for birthdays, anniversaries, memorials etc. this is something I am keen to promote more of & will gladly chat to anyone who wishes to mark a special occasion in their family.

I would like to thank everyone for their kind words for our festival displays last Easter, harvest & Christmas. It's always a pleasure to decorate the church & bring a bit of joy to people's day.

Finally, I would like to thank the ladies of the team for their dedication, creativity & support. Without you, our church would not be so beautiful.

Lorraine Basford March 2020

ITEM 9. CHURCH HALL REPORT

The Hall has continued to be used by Church and outside organisations during the past year. In particular this year we have welcomed GBNFC-Children's Centre, who provide support to new mothers and babies. As a result of this and the income from the Kid's Club and Pre-school group, the income of the Hall has shown an improvement to the extent that we have started to undertake an improvement programme.

As a result of this, there has been an improvement to the lighting outside the Hall, as well as new doors and windows to the sports hall, with a new roller shutter, and a new ramp to the sports hall. The CCTV has been upgraded to provide better coverage with improved picture quality and we have been able to replace the kitchen furniture courtesy of the donation of the units by Howdens Storchley.

Because of the increased income, and because we are not currently planning any significant building work, it was considered inappropriate to seek money from the various groups who we have previously approached for charitable donations, and the Hall has finally paid off all monies owing to the PCC for the building of the extension which is now completed.

It has been a busy year and I am grateful to Gerald Fage for his services as Hall Manager and continuing supervision of contractors working on the site and to the whole committee for their contribution to the running of the hall.

The most significant change to the Hall Management Committee this year has been the resignation of the Chairman, Alan Westwood, who has served in this capacity for 20 years. I wish to pay tribute to the considerable length of service that he has provided not only to the Hall but to St Mary's in general, and it is fitting that the PCC has agreed to name the extension to the Hall "The Westwood Room"

George Harrison March 2020

ITEM 10. COFFEE MORNINGS

During 2019 a number of coffee mornings were held to raise funds for Christian Aid. A total of £1,3031.19 was raised including gift aid. These gatherings were held during the week, usually Tuesday or Thursday mornings and have always proven to be very enjoyable social occasions. Thank you to all who have held these events and to those who attended, without whom we would not have raised such an impressive amount.

If you would like to host one of these coffee mornings, please contact me on 0121 472 2877, or speak to me in church.

Sue Wiltshire March 2020

ITEM 11. DEANERY SYNOD

The main focus of Deanery Synod over the last 12 months has been the proposed merger with Warley Deanery. After numerous meetings and discussions regarding the proposal a vote was taken and as of

1 March the 2 deaneries were merged into the new deanery of Warley and Edgbaston. This now means that we are in a bit of a limbo, not least because the time for new elections to Deanery Synod approaches. There will be a joint meeting to get to know each other but due to the current health situation this is to be arranged at a future date.

The current Lay Chairs will remain in post until the inauguration of the new Synod, which should be in July and will therefore be involved in the interview process for a full time Area Dean. There will be profile and recruiting process for the new full time Area Dean and recruiting was to have taken place before July. The 2 current area deans are working together at this moment looking after the existing 2 patches.

As you all can imagine, due to the current situation that we all find ourselves in. There has been a time delay in this process and I am awaiting more information and dates regarding the next Synod meeting .

Simon Charlwood March 2020

ITEM 12. ELECTORAL ROLL

The total number of persons on the St Mary's Church electoral roll for 2020 is 99. The total number of joiners is zero and the total number of leavers (including those who have died) is 4. The total number on the Roll last year was 103 so there has been a decrease of just under 4%. 47% of the congregation live in Selly Oak and Selly Park, 19% live in Northfield, 9% live in Bournville, Cotteridge or Stirchley and the remainder live in other parts of Birmingham. The furthest parishioners in the surrounding area live in Bromsgrove and Stourbridge and the very furthest are in Stoke-on-Trent and Bristol.

The list has stayed somewhat static and the number of joiners may have been depressed somewhat by the difficulty caused by the lockdown owing to the Coronavirus outbreak, so hopefully in the following year the number of joiners may increase.

Suzanne Johnston March 2020

ITEM 13. FABRIC REPORT

A summary of work since APCM 2019

1. External church building and grounds.
 - a. Routine maintenance carried out by volunteers included hedge cutting, strimming of drive, sweeping leaves from drive, pruning of plants, nettles, ferns, grass against church walls, weeds on hall drive and mowing of lawns.
 - b. Lighting on driveway. Western Power has accepted responsibility for supplying electricity to the lights and has registered the lights with the appropriate authority. Malfunctioning lights have been repaired.
 - c. Guttering has been cleared.
 - d. Parking on church driveway. The driveway has been used by cars not on church business. The churchwardens have reminded relevant local residents about the parking regulations.
2. Internal Church work.
 - a. Contracted church cleaning, organ tuning, photocopier and alarm system service.
 - b. Volunteer maintenance of flowers, floor polishing, silverware, altar dressing and kitchen equipment.
 - c. Purchase of materials to construct staging for performances in the church.
3. Church tower. Corrosion of internal supports had caused masonry to fall off the tower. During the inspection of the spire it was noted that the poise weight system was potentially at risk of corrosion and that this should be replaced by a lock down system. The costs of undertaking necessary work was approved by the PCC, and a Faculty Application was submitted by the Churchwardens Repairs were approved by the Diocesan Advisory Committee as being urgent and Faculty was approved without requiring the statutory period of notification. This work has been undertaken and completed. As this work was funded in full by the bequest of Margaret Burcham, it is intended to erect a plaque near the base of the tower to record the gratitude of the congregation for this help to undertake the repairs.
4. Heating system. Extensive research was carried out into refurbishment of the Church heating system. Quotations were obtained for all aspects of the work and the possible schemes discussed by the PCC. The following decisions have been made by the PCC:
 - a. Replace the oil boiler with two gas boilers in a purpose-built building. Install gas supply.
 - b. Clean and refurbish current pipes and radiators. The possibility of replacing the current radiators was discussed but rejected in favour of cleaning and flushing the current ones.

In view of the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic it has not been possible to advance this further at the present time and Faculty Approval has to be sought and received before further work can be done. Therefore, the present heating system will have to continue to be used to heat the church for the coming year.
5. Windows. Permission was given by the PCC for small repairs to be made in the ringing chamber whilst the steeplejacks were on site, and for a quote to be obtained for secondary glazing.
6. Pending work. A number of matters were discussed but no decision taken as the input of the new incumbent was considered vital. These include:
 - a. Provision of further toilets for the church congregation and visitors.
 - b. Clearing of books in the loft.
7. Other matters
 - a. There is a fabric committee which is answerable to the PCC and looks at various issues in relation to the maintenance of the fabric of the church. The Chair of the Fabric Committee, Stephen Constable, has indicated his wish to stand down from the post at the 2020 APCM. His replacement is yet to be confirmed.

George Harrison

ITEM 14. HEALTH AND SAFETY REPORT

Accidents reported:

- None known

Work regularly carried out to prevent accidents includes:

- Gritting/clearing of paths during icy conditions
- Checking on loose masonry after storms
- Regular fire extinguisher checks; extinguishers fitted correctly in new places
- Loose tiles checked and re-mortared where required
- Sidespeople (first point of contact in case of accident or emergency) easily identifiable by badges on ribbons
- CCTV cameras checked periodically
- Walk around church at least once (ideally twice) annually by church warden and health and safety officer performing overall H and S audit of premises (*took place 16.4.19*)

Future improvements/things to note:

- External lighting further improved with Western Power taking responsibility for restoring power to the lamps nearest the Bristol Road
- Lectern being used with bell-ringer's box, avoiding need for steps
- Further lighting of pathway down to Lodge Hill Road to be investigated and hopefully upgraded

Kate Cheyney March 2020

ITEM 15. INTERREGNUM STATUS REPORT

With the de-commissioning of the Rev J Cox, the church entered a period of interregnum. The Parish was fortunate in that the liturgical ministry continued to be provided by the Revs J Adams and D Parker almost entirely, although the Churchwardens are grateful to the additional support from Rev Dr S Jones, the Area Dean, the Archdeacon and Bishop Anne to officiate at communion services and the support of the Reader, Mary Cutler. The taking of evensong and evening prayer was supported by Richard Edmonds and the Churchwardens, with one of the priests leading Choral Evensong once a month. As a result, two communion services and an evening service were provided each Sunday, as well as morning prayers during the week and Wednesday morning communion.

The Parish was able to start the process of appointing a new incumbent, with meetings held to develop the Parish Statement, led by Martin Sorby. The Bishop assented to the appointment of a new incumbent and eventually the job was advertised. Martin Sorby and Laura Hart were appointed as the Parish Representatives by the PCC. However, although two people applied for the post when initially advertised, the interviewing committee felt that they were unable to appoint either of the candidates, and therefore the job was re-advertised. As a result, there were six candidates selected for interview, and the interviewing panel were pleased to be able to agree with the appointment of the Rev. Hazel White, and the decision of the panel was confirmed by the Bishop.

It was with great pleasure that the PCC were able to welcome Bishop Anne on the 9th Feb 2020 to perform the service of Collation and Induction to welcome Rev Hazel White as the new incumbent of St Mary's Church, Selly Oak.

G Harrison

ITEM 16. ISSUES GROUP

After a successful lottery of a Trade Craft Hamper just before Christmas 2018 it seemed appropriate for the Issues Group to learn more about Fair Trade and Tradecraft especially as Carrs Lane is an important local agency and shop. Thanks to Pat Finney's connections, Joan Davies, who heads up the shop, kindly agreed to come and speak to the group in January. Joan spoke about the ethical and moral issues relating to trade, social and environmental justice and the way these are disregarded and exploited by international conglomerates to the detriment of vulnerable and marginalised people. She demonstrated the variety of articles available and inspired the group consider a more serious involvement in tradecraft when preparing for Christmas, Easter and family festivities. Pat Finney made Tradecraft catalogues available for circulation at St. Mary as a way of showing our solidarity with farmers and crafters around the world.

The interregnum and the search for a fulltime incumbent at St. Mary's was a natural topic which brought out some interesting issues but left many questions unanswered in view of the People and Places reorganisation within the diocese. In the light of the role of the PCC and other groups in the parish the question of a meaningful role for the Issues Group was raised. The PCC and most groups are concerned with practical aspects within the parish, would there be a place for the Issues Group to consider spiritual and theological issues?

Issues relating to local socio-economic developments within the parish became a topic when major student accommodation plans for the "Sainsbury Triangle" and Elliott Road became known. These developments would have a serious effect on family housing and social homogeneity in the area. Individual submissions were made to the local MP, Local Councillors and the City Planning Board. Concerns were shared with the local churches for their consideration.

The group considered whether the current style of communication via the weekly TWS was still relevant. As part of their consideration, the group reviewed the monthly magazine from the URC and the weekly service booklet from a US Episcopal church. Further discussions on this were placed on hold until such times as a new incumbent was in place.

Until a decision about the new incumbent had been made it seemed appropriate to suspend the meetings of the group until new vicar was in place.

Sigvard von Sicard March 2020

ITEM 17. JUNIOR CHURCH

ITEM 18. KIDS CLUB & PRE-SCHOOL CLUB

Kids Club

Over the last 12 months Kids Club has continued to serve our local community and school, it was nice to see in September some of our Preschool children going to school and staying with us at Kids Club, showing that the Preschool will feed kid club. We have two patios fitted one at the front and one at the rear so children can still play outside when the grass is wet. The front has plants that encourage the children to smell different smells. We invested in two of our staff who both have just qualified in level 3 childcare.

Strange times are upon us as I write this in lockdown all our futures are uncertain but will be reading this the other side of Covid 19 with goals hoping we will be back together.

Preschool

Preschool continues to flourish preparing the children for life at school, from time to time it can be quite challenging but over all it is very rewarding for me and my staff. The children really like circle times, and the outside play has been a great opportunity to explore their environment and to challenge them self's. We are unsure if we will be able to hold a graduation this year due to the covid 19 outbreak which is a great shame as the group of children and parents have been a pleasure to work with.

Gerald Fage March 2020

ITEM 19. OPEN CHURCH

“Open Church” has now become a fixture on Wednesday mornings from 10.30am (following the midweek communion) until 12 noon. We serve tea, coffee, biscuits and toast to encourage people to drop in for fellowship. We always seem to attract a good number, and although these are mostly existing members of our congregations we have had a steady smattering of visitors, ranging from casual passers-by wanting to look round the church to persons in distress wanting prayer ministry.

David Parker

ITEM 20. PCC SECRETARY REPORT

During 2019, the following meetings (with numbers attending) were as follows:

- 22 Jan 2019: 16 present
- 19 March 2019: 12 present
- 21 May 2019: 17 present
- 17 July 2019: 17 present
- 18 August 2019 (extraordinary meeting): 10 present
- 8 October 2019: 15 present
- 3 December 2019: 14 present

Reports taken at every meeting include Treasurer, Fabric, Church Hall, Deanery and Clergy items, Health and Safety, Safeguarding. Notable items of discussion during 2019 were:

- Interregnum services and appointment of new incumbent
- Preparation of Vision Statement
- Preparation of new Electoral Roll
- Decisions regarding installation of gas line and new boiler and renovation of the church heating system
- Other issues connected with church building: lectern, floor tiles, organ, tower, outside lighting.
- Making St Mary’s available to St Gabriel’s for baptisms
- Frequency of Family Service (once a month)
- GDPR statement
- Adoption of Parish Giving Scheme
- Deanery mergers
- Recruitment of new servers
- Recruitment of new Junior Church leaders
- St Mary’s School: change of status to Voluntary Aided, appointment of parish governors, presentation by Head Teacher to a PCC meeting
- Prayer Space for local schools during Advent

Susan Hunston March 2020

ITEM 21. SAFEGUARDING

The PCC has complied with its duty under section 5 of the Safeguarding and Clergy Discipline Measure 2016 to have due regard to the House of Bishops’ guidance on safeguarding children and vulnerable adults. The Safeguarding policy has been approved and is displayed in church and on our website.

ITEM 22. SOCIAL COMMITTEE

Getting together for social events has always been one of St Mary's strong points and although the social committee has not met as often as it might have done, this year has not disappointed. Looking at the list of what we have done, I suggest that we may in future want to be mindful of trying to space events out a bit (see October!).

I would usually write about plans for future events this year, but in the light of the country's current unprecedented lockdown situation, all plans are on hold. In hindsight, we were very lucky to get the pantomime in before the corona crisis really started affecting things. It is at times like this that we really notice how much we need and miss the social interaction church events can provide, and also how much we appreciate the continued friendship and support we are all giving each other.

Events in 2019 since last report:

June – Car Boot Sale

September – Meal at The Country Girl

October – Car Boot Sale

Ramble (Hanbury – possibly one of the wettest walks imaginable – but followed by a fantastic lunch at Hanbury Wharf, where we were joined by several sensible non-walkers!)

Choir performance of Faure Requiem

December – Christmas Tea Party

Events so far in 2020

February – Pantomime (*Puss in Boots*)

As well as the above, many of the church's other activities also constitute social events; coffee mornings, children's activity mornings, knit and natter group, book groups and working parties are all ways of getting together and strengthening our community. The Wednesday *Open Church* coffee mornings, after the 10am service, continue to be very well-attended (apparently nothing to do with the introduction of toast!).

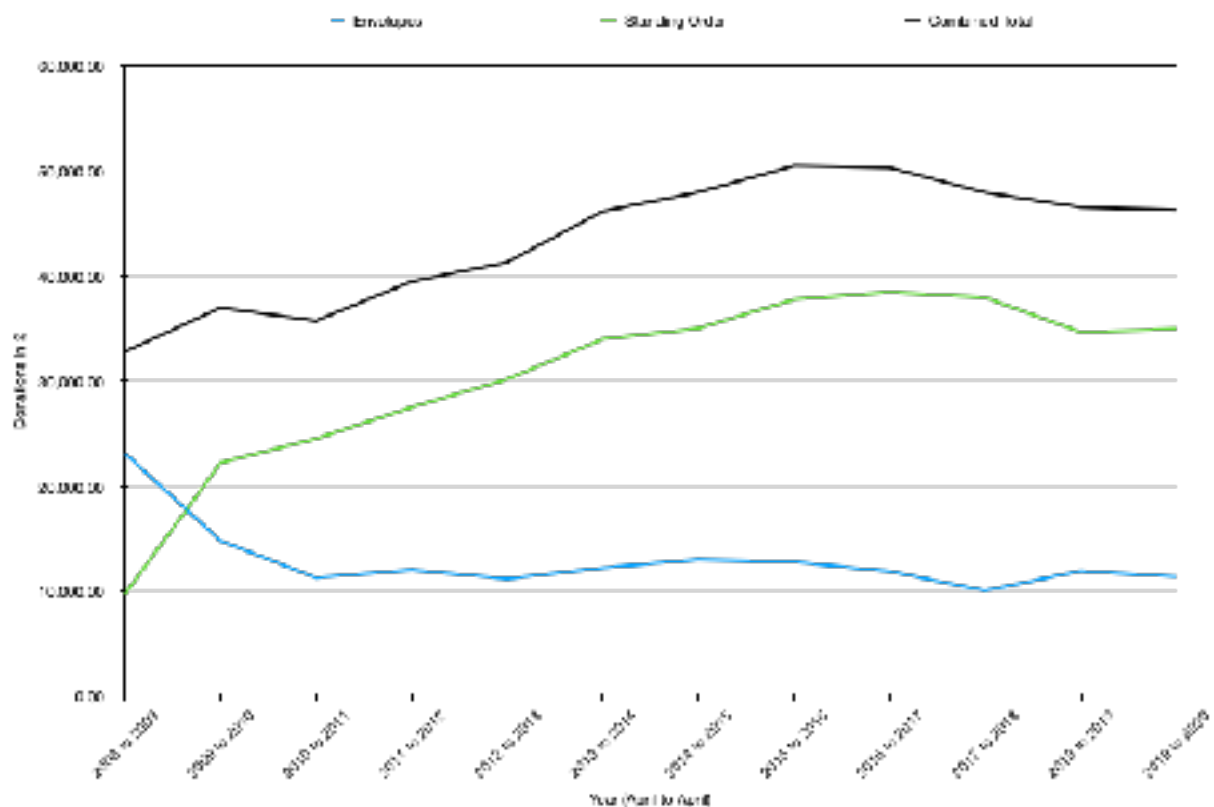
Kate Cheyney March 2020

ITEM 23 STEWARDSHIP

In the last three years, very little has changed. We have received, on average, £3921.31 per month from the stewardship scheme (with the best month, July 2017, getting £350 more, and the worst month, February 2019, getting £290 less).

Standing orders generate about £3000 per month and the envelopes get £1000 per month.

In February 2020, we had 41 people giving by standing order and 20 donating by envelope (although we tend to get about 13 envelopes per week) and we received a total of £3945.



Name	2008 to 2009	2009 to 2010	2010 to 2011	2011 to 2012	2012 to 2013	2013 to 2014	2014 to 2015	2015 to 2016	2016 to 2017	2017 to 2018	2018 to 2019	2019 to 2020
Envelopes total	23,096.95	14,769.90	11,244.20	11,991.69	11,143.35	12,190.37	12,970.17	12,742.90	11,863.33	10,001.84	11,889.23	11,335.70
Standing order total	9,653.00	22,177.04	24,460.04	27,454.24	30,134.04	33,952.50	34,975.50	37,725.00	38,429.00	37,930.00	34,634.00	34,932.50
Combined total	32,749.95	36,946.94	35,704.24	39,445.93	41,277.39	46,142.87	47,945.67	50,467.90	50,292.33	47,931.84	46,523.23	46,268.20
Donors	87	84	80	73	72	73	78	74	74	68	64	62

In March 2020 we announced that we had joined the Parish Giving Scheme with the hope and intention that those who give by standing order or by envelope will change to this tax-efficient and time and cost-saving way of donating to St Mary's; and that individuals who do not currently give a regular amount will consider doing so by joining the Scheme.

As of April 2020, 22 donors had joined the Scheme, 6 of whom had previously given by envelope, 14 had previously given by standing order, 1 of whom was anonymous and 1 of whom was new to planned giving.

Ben Reeves, John Surtees and Laura Hart will continue to promote the Parish Giving Scheme to current and potential donors with the intention that this method of planned, regular giving will become the main, and the largest, pillar of the financial stewardship of St Mary's.

Laura Hart March 2020

ITEM 24. THEOLOGICAL BOOK GROUP

A small group met twice during the first half of 2019 to review a theological book. In January 2019 we considered Augustine's "Confessions" (which provided a lot to discuss in a single session), and in May were very appreciative of Francis Spufford's "Unapologetic". On both occasions we were very grateful to Sheila Skeeles for her hospitality.

Sadly this group seems to have lapsed. We did agree to read "The Cloud of Unknowing" but I confess I have struggled with this, perhaps because my copy is in archaic English.

David Parker

ITEM 25. TREASURER'S REPORT

SEE SEPARATE DOCUMENTS

ITEM 26. WAY GROUP REPORT

The Way Group was founded as a Spirituality Group. We meet on the second Monday of the month 7.30- 9.15 pm at the house of one of the members- whose may vary. We have 10-12 people on our books but average attendance is more like 6-8 so we are happy to have new members. Our members are mainly, though not exclusively, drawn from the congregation. David and Jayne usually join us for one session in the course of the year.

We start each meeting was short prayer and or period of silence and end in the same way. These were our topics for discussion in 2020:

January	Planning meeting for the year
February	The Challenges of Christian Life
March	Lenten Practices
April	Introduction to the Gospels
May	Grave talks
June	How we pray
July	House communion and summer party
August	Break
September	Study of a book; this year, The God Of Surprizes by Gerald Hughes
October	Music that inspires me
November	A Person that inspires me
December	Christmas readings, reflections and nibbles.

Clearly with lockdown we haven't met since March but hope to maybe reconvene in July weather permitting in someone's garden though the communion may not be possible.

If anyone is interested in joining the group, or simply would like more information, please contact me.

Mary Cutler(Reader)

ITEM 27. YOUTH CLUB

Youth club continues to meet on Wednesday evening 6pm to 7pm for our young group and 6.30 pm till 8pm for the older group. The times changed for our older group as numbers have reduced, the younger group is thriving and hoping over the years the young group will fill the older group. We have also been waiting for the new appointment of a vicar to see if the youth work will continue. I have spoken to Hazel and she is very keen on us continuing this work and looks forward to helping from time to time. This is great news for the staff and has reinvigorated to continue.

Gerald Fage March 2020