

St John the Baptist Parish Church
Crowthorne

Annual Report 2019 - 2020



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CROWTHORNE PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL

Notice is hereby given of the ANNUAL MEETING OF PARISHIONERS to be held on Sunday, October 18th 2020 in the Parish Church following the 10 a.m. service.

AGENDA

1. Opening Prayers
2. Apologies
3. Minutes of the Vestry Meeting of Parishioners 2019
4. Election of Churchwardens

Notice is hereby given of the ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHURCH MEETING of the CROWTHORNE PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL to be held immediately following the meeting of Parishioners on Sunday, October 18th 2020 in the Parish Church

AGENDA

1. Minutes of the 2019 Annual Meeting of the Parish
2. Matters Arising from the Minutes
3. Approval of the Annual Report and Accounts
4. Report on changes of numbers on electoral roll.
5. Presentation of Parish Reports
6. Elections
 - (a) Parochial Church Council
 - (b) Deanery Synod
7. Appointments
 - a. Hon Secretary
 - b. Hon Treasurer
 - c. Hon Independent Examiner
8. Notices
9. Closing prayers

CROWTHORNE PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL

Rev'd Dr. Lisa Cornwell (Chair)
Rev'd David Ramsbottom (Associate Minister)
Anna Pearce (Churchwarden)
Les Richardson (Churchwarden)
Mary Harwood (Hon Secretary)

Meeting of Parishioners held after 10.00am service on Sunday 7th April 2019

Opening prayers The meeting opened with prayer

Apologies for Absence

Apologies for Absence were received from Beccy Al Jadir, Tracy Perrett, Penny Rickards, Laszlo and Gillian Gyenes, Bob and Maggie Wade, Julia and Mike Warnes, Margaret Barnes, Sheila Stickland, Steve and Jill Pope, Irene Simmons, Grant and Sue Robertson, Maureen Raybould.

Minutes

After amending the spelling of Colin Nicholls' name on page 4, approval of the minutes of the Parishioners meeting held on Sunday April 29th 2018 were proposed by James Laverick and seconded by Mike Thackray.

Lisa signed the Minutes as a true record.

Election of Churchwardens

Anna Pearce had been Churchwarden for five years and had fulfilled her duties with great diligence - we were immensely grateful to Anna for her support. Lisa presented Anna with a gift in recognition of our gratitude. There was a round of applause for Anna.

Les Richardson Lisa thanked Les for his service as Churchwarden. Les was elected two years ago and was in the middle of his term of service.

Les was proposed by Doreen Norfield and seconded by David Butler

All were in favour, there were no abstentions.

There was a round of applause for Les.

Leigh Welham has agreed to be our Churchwarden

Leigh was proposed by Hazel Berry and seconded by Carol Frost

All were in favour, there were no abstentions

There was a round of applause for Leigh.

David Rance has agreed to continue as Deputy Churchwarden. David was proposed by Jenny McKeever and seconded by Jean Butler. All voted in favour there were no abstentions

A round of applause was given to David.

Minutes of the Annual Parochial Church Meeting held on Sunday April 7th 2019

1. Minutes of the Previous Meeting

Acceptance of the minutes was proposed by Shirley Mather and seconded by Leigh Welham and agreed by all. They were signed by Lisa as a true record.

2. Matters arising

There were no matters arising.

3. Parish Vision Update

Lisa had reported fully in her Vicar's Report of the Parish Vision Priorities for 2018. Lisa mentioned that there are some Parish Vision bookmarks available and full details can be found on our website.

This year the PCC are focusing on:

Becoming an eco-friendly church Anna steered us through an eco-church questionnaire and we plan to work on that and to work towards a low carbon footprint.

We want to appoint an "Eco-Warrior" to investigate and liaise with outside agencies and other churches. Someone who has a passion for encouraging our responsibility as a church and as individuals.

We are collaborating with CROW (Crowthorne Reduce our Waste). We want to think about waste production. Sue Burrow will speak at our PCC meeting on 3rd July. This will be an Open Meeting and all are welcome to attend.

We will also have other speakers on the environment.

Deepening Discipleship We will invite Tina Molyneux to speak for half a day on developing a Personal Discipleship Plan, covering our whole life and what God is calling us to do in every area of our life.

We have been involved in setting up the Lent Study Groups for Churches Together in Crowthorne. Our thanks to Ken Perrett for co-ordinating this.

The Adult Emmaus Course is planned for after Easter and leaflets are available at the back of the hall. Please encourage people to come to this.

Our House Group is going well thanks to Julie and Les Richardson. We would like to have more House Groups

Sustaining Spirituality: We are planning an Autumn Christian Spirituality course and a Quiet Day - date to be decided - this may be an Advent Quiet Day.

Greater investment in Youth Work: Try to expand Pathfinders and increase attendance. Investigate practice at other successful churches. Explore the viability of appointing a part-time children's worker or to share with another parish.

Continue to support *Hope Zone and Zone 6* and to support the work of *Soulscape*, to get involved in PAUSE, multi sensory prayer space and Mind the Gap, transition from primary to secondary school projects.

New Housing Developments - support CTC involvement in community: As a result of a Deanery Day in December Leigh Welham had attended a New Communities prayer day. Another meeting has been planned to discuss what we are going to do.

Leigh said the CTC also deal with the new communities and cake bombing took place yesterday at Oakham Park. A new cake bombing is planned in September for Buckler's Park. Leigh will be asking for cakes for this, for people to deliver cakes and take part in prayer walks. The prayer walks take approx. one hour; they bless the people who work there and the people who live there as they walk around.

At the end of May they are opening a new play area at Oakham Park.

Leigh said some people were reluctant to open their doors. It was suggested that children be involved in calling on new homes.

Investigate viability of church flooring project.....

4. Renovation Projects updates

Church Flooring Mike Thackray, Chair of Fabric Committee, spoke about the church flooring which they were now looking at.

The brown carpet has been down for many years and has a rubber back. As well as this backing starting to disintegrate, it has trapped damp rising up through the ground and floor and through the existing tiles and that damp has not been able to get out, so the existing tiles have perished as a result. The Fabric Committee would like to replace the affected tiles and to restore the church floor.

The church architect has looked at this thoroughly and there is no dry rot under the wooden flooring. There is concrete in the centre aisle at the front of the church.

When work is carried out on the church flooring the organ will have to be sealed off and the organ maker must do this.

The North and South aisle floor tiling are not as badly affected as they have not had this carpet placed over them, so apart from the edging tiles, less is needed to be done on those areas. The necessary work could be done in phases.

Phase 1 would be the centre aisle, screen the organ off and push the pews aside.

Phase 2 would be the chancel area, grind down the concrete and tile, or a cheaper option might be to leave it as it is and re-carpet. This to be discussed.

The church architect is very capable and would do things properly. We need professional advice and we are a listed building. We will need a faculty and DAC approval from Oxford. To re-tile the centre aisle will be a great improvement.

After recent thorough opening up and surveying a proper budget estimate has been obtained from a very reputable contractor that the Architect has recommended (who will be included on the final tender group of contractors). He has anticipated it could cost £50 - £60k. The tiles alone would be £16k.

Mike replied to questions from the floor:

David Butler asked what was under the pews and if it was deteriorating under there too. Mike replied that they had taken a section of flooring up and it was all right. Mike said some edging tiles were missing in the North and South Aisles and we would finish those areas off with bronze strips to make the edges better. David asked about the condition of the brown carpet and did it need replacing. If it didn't need replacing we should leave it as it is. Mike said we could not replace the brown carpet with another carpet as any new carpet would simply rot from damp coming up through the floor.

June Todd said the brown carpet can never be cleaned properly, she has tried over the years.

Shirley Mather said our floral décor is always magnificent, but those who do the flower arranging always despair of the brown carpet.

Anne Mohan speaking as our Health and Safety officer said the carpet will only get worse, the foam backing had disintegrated and she had in the past tried sticking it down.

James Laverick said you could feel the loose tiles under the carpet when you walked on it. It may be dangerous for people with a walking stick or wheelchair.

It was decided to take a straw poll vote of those present who would be prepared to go ahead with replacing the tiles on the church floor – 21 voted in favour.

A vote was taken for carrying out all the work in one phase rather than splitting it into phases – 23 voted in favour of carrying out the work in one phase.

A vote for carrying out the work on the church floor in phases – no votes.

The majority of those present at the APCM were in favour of going ahead with the project as laid out by Mike Thackray

Lisa said the PCC now need to think about this and what is the best thing to do, finances permitting.

Lisa thanked Mike and Les – a round of applause was received for Mike and Les

Stained Glass Windows.

Anna Pearce reported that the repairs to the east window and lady chapel had been completed and the blanked out window in the lady chapel had been removed for re-leading. Remedial work was still needed to the work to the rest of the windows on the south side. They will finally remove the bars in the baptistry window. Lisa thanked Anna for her hard work on this project, also Anne Mohan and Steve Pope who had been involved. Finally she thanked the Mothers' Union and all who had been involved in fundraising for the windows.

5. Approval of Annual Report and Accounts

The Financial Statements for the 2018 year were presented to the meeting by Richard Ireson. He opened by saying what a pleasure it was to present these statements and stressed that all the hard work had been done by Beccy Al-Jadir assisted by Julie Sharpe. Richard expressed thanks to both Beccy and Julie and said that Beccy had been Hon. Treasurer for 12 years and would now like a replacement to be found for her.

Richard then handed out an Accounts Summary and spoke to that with the aim of providing a picture of the financial position.

Income

Total Income for the year was £151,000 of which £121,000 was voluntary income. Of the £121,000 voluntary income £111,000 was unrestricted income which meant that the PCC could decide how to spend it and £10,000 was restricted which meant it was given for a specific purpose and had to be used for that purpose. Most of the restricted income comes from the Trust Fund which arose originally from the sale of property.

Of the £151,000 total income £138,000 was unrestricted income and £13,000 restricted income.

Planned giving increased by 10% to £77,000 which shows the success of all the stewardship work.

Restricted income was fairly flat. An anonymous donation of £7,500 for the unexpected electrical work largely equated to the £6,300 of funds raised for the organ fund in 2017.

Activities generating funds such as the May Fair and Advent Fair are very important to the finances of the Church and Richard urged everyone to continue to work hard on these events.

Most investment income is restricted income.

Other incoming resources showed little change overall from last year because whilst hall lettings were up by £2,000 fee income was down by £2,000.

Expenditure

The Parish Share is £80,000. This is paid to the Diocese of Oxford and covers clergy salary and accommodation costs plus other Diocesan and National Church costs.

We have maintained our 12.5% expenditure on Mission Giving.

The remaining expenditure is day to day running costs which appear to have fallen.

We have come to the end of major works which largely explains the £20,000 drop in Total Expenditure.

Excess

The Accounts show an overall excess of income over expenditure of £4,500 split almost equally between unrestricted funds and restricted funds.

Reserves

Our reserves suggest we are well protected. As at 31 December 2018 the reserves stood at £192,000 of which £63,000 is unrestricted and £129,000 restricted. £192,000 represents a fall

in reserves from 2017 but Beccy believes that, with the rise in the stock market since the year end, they now stand at £210,000.

£63,000 of unrestricted reserves covers approximately 6 months of normal Church expenditure which is a reasonable position given the Charity Commission's suggested cover be 3 months.

Conclusion

Richard concluded by saying that the finances have been managed well and we have come out of 2018 with a slight surplus. Overall it is a good report however, we should not be complacent and must not take our 'eye off the ball' when it comes to fund raising for the Church. He then commended the Parish Giving Scheme and finally pointed out a small mistake at the bottom of Section 1 page 8 of 10 in the Report and Accounts where 'decreased' should read 'increased'.

As there were no questions, Richard recommended we adopt the accounts and this was seconded by David Rance.

Lisa thanked Richard for presenting the accounts and huge thanks went to Beccy. We are also grateful to Julie Sharpe for the help she gives to Beccy and Laura Myers for auditing the accounts for us.

6. Report on Electoral roll

In accordance with the Church Representation Rules, 2019 is a year in which an entirely new church electoral roll had to be prepared in advance of the APCM in every parish in the Church of England. Anyone wishing to be enrolled on the new roll had to complete a fresh form of application, whether or not their name was on the previous electoral roll. This process has been completed and I can now report on the new roll.

At last year's APCM it was reported that the Church Electoral Roll figure stood at 235. During the year this figure dropped to 230.

The total number of names entered on the new electoral roll is 185. 32 people who applied for inclusion on the new roll were not on the previous roll. 77 people whose names were on the previous roll did not apply for inclusion on the new roll. The majority of those people had stopped attending services at St John's. Anyone who failed to enrol during the preparation period and still wishes to do so, can apply at any time following the APCM.

Tracy Perrett
Electoral Roll Officer

Lisa thanked Tracy for her report. There was a round of applause for Tracy.

7. Presentation of Parish Reports

Lisa said a huge thank you to everyone for all their support on various committees for the hard work from everyone. She would not comment on each report this time and we would take them as read. A lot of effort had gone into them. A collective thank you to everyone who submitted a report and to all the groups represented. However, she wished to highlight the following:

Thanks to Katherine Bond Smith, our *Choir Director* for her inspirational leadership in the choir. Richard Seaton our organist will be retiring at the end of this month. We are grateful for the time he has given us. We have advertised this position and offers of help have been received to help us in the meantime. Good Friday meditation will be a choral one this year.

Church Cleaning – there are gaps in the rota. If you can help please speak to Jenny McKeever.

Churchyard – David Bainbridge stepped down as leader during the year although he is still part of the team. We are grateful to him for many years' of service and to his wife Pam who has stepped down from the team. Our thanks to the dedicated churchyard team who continue to work together and maintain our lovely churchyard.

The two *Leylandii Trees* at the front of the church have overgrown on to the path. These will be removed in the near future.

The *Church Notice sheet* - grateful thanks to Sarah Dewson, Sarah Spring and Lenka Butterworth who have taken t

his on and to Ken Perrett who helped in the interim.

Minus 5's Katherine Bond Smith stepped down during the year and Maggie Woodage stepped up. However Maggie has a new job and cannot be there every week. Grateful thanks to other mums have been helping.

May Fair It is only a month until the May Fair, please support it.

Advent Fair – a new organiser is needed to co-ordinate the Advent Fair.

The adoption of the reports was proposed by Mike Thackray and seconded by Anne Mohan. All were in favour, there were no abstentions.

8. Elections

Lisa thanked all those who serve on the PCC and to those who are stepping down. There are 5 vacancies on the **PCC for terms of 3 years**. There were 2 names on the list for these vacancies.

Julie Richardson **Proposed: Carol Frost** **Seconded: Julie Sharpe**

All were in favour. There were no objections.

Sarah Dewson **Proposed: Hazel Berry** **Seconded: Carol Frost**

All were in favour. There were no objections.

There was a round of applause for these two nominations

9. Appointments

Honorary Secretary, Mary Harwood was proposed by Hilary Burton and seconded by Richard Ireson. All agreed and was so appointed.

There was a round of applause for Mary

Hon. Treasurer, Beccy Al-Jadir was proposed by Doreen Norfield, seconded by David Butler. All agreed and was so appointed.

Beccy has expressed her desire to step down after 12 years, or at least take more of a back seat, but would continue for the handover period.

There was a round of applause for Beccy and our grateful thanks recorded

Julie Sharpe has agreed to continue the role of *Assistant Treasurer*, proposed Ken Perrett, Seconded Jean Butler and was so appointed.
There was a round of applause for Julie.

The *Hon Independent Examiner* Mrs Laura Myers, was proposed by Julie Richardson and seconded by Anne Mohan. Agreed by all and was so appointed.
There was a round of applause for Laura

10. Welcome Teams

Doreen Norfield requested the existing members as listed in the Annual Report and who serve at the 8.00 a.m. and 10.00 a.m. services be approved en bloc. Doreen said she was pleased that Mike Frost had joined during the year. They have a need of more strong men (or women) to help move furniture.
Their appointment was approved by the APCM.

11. Notices

Les Richardson thanked Lisa on behalf of the congregation for the tireless way she works for us and said we were all very grateful to her. There was a round of applause for Lisa.

Lisa thanked the Social Committee for the refreshments at the meeting.

Hilary Burton thanked the Lay Team who give such support to the church. Lisa added her thanks also and to our Assistant Priest, David Ramsbottom.

Lisa brought the meeting to a close with the Leading Your Church into Growth prayer:

*God of mission, we are your Church,
Christ's body on earth,
Your holy people for your needy world,
In our thinking, give us wisdom,
In our planning, give us faith to move mountains,
In our action, give us the power of your Spirit,
That all we do and think and say may be for your glory
And for the growth of the kingdom of your son,
Our Saviour, Jesus Christ.*

Amen

The meeting ended at 1.15 p.m.

Vicar's Report

Like other churches up and down the country, necessity dictates that we will be meeting later in the year for the APCM than previously planned but these reports still span the original time period. Each year the PCC identifies certain priorities to focus on for the year which are reviewed at the end of the calendar year. The priorities for 2019 are as follows, with the links shown to St John's overarching vision:

Becoming an eco-church

[Concerned for the whole of **Creation**: passionate about global justice, peace and the sustainability of our planet.]

Given the climate crisis we are facing this has become a pressing priority for the Church, globally, nationally and locally. We completed an Eco-Church questionnaire to establish priorities we have been endeavouring to address, following the action plan generated. We are indebted to Anna Pearce for driving this forward. An energy audit was carried out on the church building and the Fabric Committee are working on the things highlighted. Our church toilets have now been twinned.

There have been various articles in St John's News and weekly eco tips in the notice sheet encouraging church members to make lifestyle changes. Sue Burrow came to speak at an open PCC meeting in July and her talk was made available afterwards. The May Fair Committee collaborated with C.R.O.W. (Crowthorne Reduce our Waste) to reduce our use of single use plastics and increase our use of compostable products at the May Fair. The list of recycling options compiled by CROW is available in church.

We have woven the theme of Creation-tide into our worship, notably, for the CTC Evensong we hosted prior the AGM in September and for Harvest. This important priority is continued into 2020.

Deepening Discipleship

[As the **Church**, the body of Christ: ...We encourage and nurture Christian discipleship and maturity. All are called to share the work of God's mission and ministry and collaborate together to foster growth.]

Tina Molyneux, Vocations enabler, facilitated a PCC session on *Personal Discipleship Plans* and a small number were able to attend a deanery training evening on this but it was deemed insufficient as mentor training. The opportunity to have a Personal Discipleship Plan was offered to the congregation but there wasn't any take up.

The CTC Lent Programme was organised by Ken Perrett using CTC in Britain and Ireland materials on The Mystery of God. We were disappointed, however, that the Emmaus Groups didn't get off the ground last year. We were all set to run them this year, with viable numbers, before social distancing measures came into force and the July confirmation was cancelled.

Sustaining Spirituality

[Centred on **Christ**: worship of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit, energises and sustains all that we are and do.]

The St John's home grown *Christian Spirituality Course* was a winner in the Autumn. The seven sessions were well attended and received, drawing an audience from other churches in Crowthorne and the deanery. Thank you to the Ministry Team for their efforts in preparing and delivering this.

At the end of November, we welcomed Tim Stead, a qualified mindfulness practitioner, to deliver a *Mindfulness & Spirituality* Quiet day, which was valued by those who signed up for it.

Greater investment in Youth Work

[**Church**: Expand and maintain work with children and young people.

Community: Work in partnership with CTC to identify and serve the needs of our community.]

Find appropriate ways to share the love of God and good news of the gospel with those on the fringe or outside of the church.]

This covers our work with the Pathfinder group and our commitment to CTC youth work. We are still endeavouring to progress the former. We have been investigating practice at other successful churches. Carol Frost was able to observe the youth work first hand during her placement at St Sebastian's Church. We had speakers from Hartley Wintney at our November PCC meeting to share their experience of running their Youthquake youth club.

The successful churches in this area tend to have qualified youth, children's or family workers to support and resource volunteer leaders. We are getting the message that these roles cannot easily be conflated and we need to investigate this further. Youth work remains a priority for the current year.

We have continued to support Hope Zone and Zone 6, both financially and with volunteers. PAUSE did not run last year. *Mind the Gap* has separated from Soulscape and now comes under the umbrella of Hope Zone. It has been renamed *It's Your Move*. The CTC Summer activities successful despite poor weather.

New housing developments – Support CTC involvement in discussions with planners and local council

[**Community:** Find appropriate ways to share the love of God and good news of the gospel with those on the fringe or outside of the church]

A "cake bombing" finally took place at Bucklers park, once a critical mass of residents had moved in. There was another afternoon tea at Birch Place in November.

Leigh Welham continues to participate in the deanery New Communities work group and CTC prayer meetings and walks. St John's hosted a new communities workshop in January this year, although we were not convinced that it really "did what it said on the tin" as it seemed to be more focused upon fresh expressions of church. Involvement with this priority is ongoing.

Church flooring restoration: viability of project to be assessed

[Centred on **Christ:** worship of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit, energises and sustains all that we are and do. Maximise the use of our sacred space as a means of engaging with God. Respect and maintain our church building.]

Church members were informed of possible project at last year's APCM. Following a good discussion and Q&A, there was unanimous straw poll support to progress this at later stage when sufficient funds in place. It is not being treated as an urgent priority at present.

This is not a comprehensive list of church activities but areas that the PCC chose to develop over the past year. Read on in order to learn more about the breadth of church life at St John's and how you can get involved. I hope that by the time you read this, we will be getting back into the swing of things again. I continue to be enormously thankful to all who contribute to mission and maintenance of St John's. It is a shared undertaking. At the end of 2019, we said a fond farewell to Revd David Ramsbottom as he officially retired from his post as Associate Priest at St John's. David is sorely missed by us all. He has been a huge asset to our ministry team, getting involved in the life of our church in his self-effacing, caring fashion. As a gifted singer, David has often stepped in to enhance our choir. He has been involved with the Pathfinders, and in the wider community as Padre to the British Legion. We are very grateful to David for the blessing he has been to this parish and wish him and his wife Julie all the best for the next phase of their lives.

Due to the Coronavirus, as I write, we are currently living through strange and unprecedented times and having to learn new ways of being church. The Communications Group has come into its own, currently the most active church committee, enabling us to maintain contact with our congregation. We have been having weekly meetings via Microsoft Teams and generating newsletters to over 250 church contacts. I am immensely grateful to Ken Perrett for the time and effort he has devoted to this. Other church groups have been invaluable too: the Pastoral Visiting Group and the Mothers' Union have been doing a wonderful job ringing around church members, checking people are ok and helping to stave off feelings

of alienation. Additionally, the whole body of Christ continues its caring function with folk looking out for their church contacts and neighbours.

Corporate worship in the church building may have been put on hold but worship continues as “Church at Home”. We come together to worship through a different media, more conscious than ever of the church community, now dispersed, united in prayer and by the Holy Spirit. I have just recorded a service to be broadcast on Easter Sunday. This will be the third of St John’s virtual services. The viewing figures have been amazing, with more people tuning in than the average numbers present in the pews on a Sunday morning. We are indebted to James Laverick for his technical knowledge and specialised equipment in putting these services together. Many other worship resources have been made available on the church website to sustain us through these testing times.

As we look back on this period of our lives, we want to be asking ourselves what we have learnt and how we have been transformed for the better. We will have changed; society will have changed. Keeping in mind the diocesan overarching vision, I pray that we may have become more Christ-like; more contemplative, compassionate and courageous.

Rev Dr Lisa Cornwell

Churchwardens’ Report

The start of the Churchwarden year begins at the Archdeacon’s Visitation. This year, the service incorporated a reading from Colossians 3:12-17 which includes the lines ‘*Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for men.....*’. It’s sometimes difficult to balance the demands of a busy working life with the tasks of a Churchwarden, but through prayer and God’s grace, it is a true pleasure and privilege to begin another year of being Churchwarden at St John’s.

Who would have thought that we would be writing our Annual Report in such strange times where our church is closed and church services suspended. Our Vicar and Church Office team has done a great job in keeping the services going on-line. Whilst not everyone may have been able to access the on-line material, I’m sure you will all join us in thanking Lisa and the team for their hard work in putting it together.

One of the challenges we currently face is communicating with all parishioners. With the recently introduced data protection regulations, we need to ensure that we comply by seeking permission from every parishioner regarding their preferred method of communication. What would be really helpful, as exemplified by the current covid-19 crisis, would be for you to give your permission to have paper communication replaced by email. Do let the churchwardens know if you want to change your communication preferences.

We are delighted to have had the stained glass window repair and restoration work completed. We would like to repeat our thanks to everyone who contributed to the cost of this project, and to Anna Pearce for managing the whole process. It truly is a wonderful result.

Work on the tasks identified in the last Quinquennial report has continued. Many thanks to the Fabric Committee for their continued hard work on this.

The major project for the year ahead is to update our Audio Visual System. This has become necessary for a number of technical reasons. We are also taking the opportunity to add an additional camera to the system, covering the prayer desk ‘blind spot’ which currently exists and which can cause an issue for the organist. Our thanks to James Laverick for managing this project.

A future project which we described in the last Annual report, relates to the restoration of the original tiled floor in the Nave. The tiled floor, currently hidden by the brown carpet, has been severely damaged by the carpet over the years, and your PCC has agreed that the tiles should be restored. We sincerely hope the church family and wider community will be able to support this endeavour, although it is unlikely to start in the immediate future.

We are pleased to report that a majority of parishioners have now changed their method of giving to the 'Parish Giving Scheme'. This is an initiative from the Church of England, already widely adopted in our diocese. In summary, the scheme requires us to move from our traditional methods of giving, the envelope scheme, standing order, or cash, to a new direct debit scheme. The benefits to St John's are considerable, in particular reducing administration and ensuring that Gift Aid is returned to the church much more quickly. If you haven't yet switched to the PGS, please do consider it. There is information and appropriate forms on the information table in the church hall, or ask either of the churchwardens for a more detailed explanation.

In keeping with our initiative to become an 'Eco-church' the church has undertaken an energy audit which has highlighted various ways in which we can become more energy efficient. The PCC has also had a presentation from Sue Burrows who spoke to us about why we should all care for the world that God created for us. She also spoke about the organisation, Crowthorne Reduce Our Waste, and the need to recycle as many items as possible and reducing our use of plastic and non-recyclable items. There is a list in the outer hall of the church showing where many items not currently collected by the local Council's can be recycled rather than being put in the general waste. As a church, we are using as many environmentally friendly cleaning items as possible and wherever possible refilling containers and therefore cutting down on our use of plastic. Anna Pearce has attended a couple of eco-church days and reported back to the PCC and also completed an Action Plan for the church which highlights various ways in which we can all improve our awareness, as a church and as an individual. Each week, whenever possible, we also publish an item on the pew sheet to help the congregation become more eco aware.

Outreach to the new communities within and around Crowthorne has continued this year with a cake bombing coffee morning at Birch Place and on Bucklers Park. There was also a carol singing evening on Bucklers Park to entertain the residents. At the beginning of this year we hosted a meeting for the Deanery where all interested members of the churches in the Deanery and other church denominations came to hear a speaker from Church House. We look forward to being out in the new communities again when circumstances allow.

Finally, we continue to be thankful to the entire congregation for all of their time, talents, and financial support in ensuring that the life of our church continues to go from strength to strength, and that the fabric of our beautiful building is maintained.

*Les Richardson
Leigh Welham
David Rance*

Befrienders/Baptismal Support

The baptisms continue to be held on the second Sunday in the month and the preparation evenings on the first Wednesday of the month, when parents are familiarised with the service.

They are given copies of the baptismal service which they may like to pass on to the godparents to read through to enable them to have an understanding on how the service proceeds. The godparents are expected to have been baptised.

We continue to give the parents a booklet from the Mothers' Union entitled "Your Babies Baptism". Mothers and Fathers are encouraged to come along to Minus 5's on a Wednesday morning 9.30 a.m. – 11.30 a.m. in the church hall. It is often through this fun supported group that parents request a baptism for their child.

Once again I would like to thank those members of the congregation who have befriended families. They are encouraged to deliver the St. John's News to the families to make them aware of future "All Age Worship" dates taking place.

We had a church member's baby baptised in February 2020 and this always makes us feel as if we are all God's family together.

We were to have two further Baptisms in May and August, however due to the current Coronavirus lockdown, the church, as other public meeting places, are all closed down.

My thoughts are with you all as we live in these unprecedented times.

June Todd

Book Club

The book club meets just 3 times a year. At each meeting, we discuss the selected book over a glass of wine and some nibbles.

On the 15th May 2019 we met to discuss **“A Lineage of Grace” by Francine Rivers.**

This book is the fictional account of five women who appear in the Bible: Tamar, Rahab, Ruth and Bathsheba from the Old Testament and Mary the Mother of Jesus. The author says in her introduction that she has “attempted to remain true to the scriptural message in all points, adding only what is necessary to aid our understanding”. After each account, there is a “Seek and Find section” which is a study section.

The group were divided in their opinions about the book, some really liked it but others were irritated by it to say the least. The one man in the group expected it to be a “girly” novel but was surprised that he enjoyed the read. Most of the group thought that it was very readable. Some people read the stories and then read the relevant Bible passage (which were referenced in the “Seek and Find” sections) and were surprised by how similar the story was to what was in the Bible. People thought that the questions in the “Seek and Find” sections were trite and the some thought those sections were cringe worthy.

It is a rather long book so we concentrated in particular on 3 of the women; Tamar, Rahab and Mary. Some people felt that these biblical characters were brought to life by the book and that it was therefore helpful. If you don't know about the people mentioned that are mentioned in the Bible it is a worthwhile read. About half of us would recommend the book. There is a copy in the church library if you would like to read the book.

Then on the 25th September 2019 we met to discuss **“God doesn't do waste”
By Dave Bookless**

Revd. Dave Bookless PhD felt challenged by God to do a total rethink about his lifestyle. This led to major changes, not only in his family's lifestyle but also in his career: from vicar to full-time involvement in the global “A Rocha” movement that aims to care for God's fragile world.

As the cover of the book says it is “a personal account of a life lived in relationship. It's about roots and belonging, suffering and healing, identity and meaning, faith and doubt. It's about how in God's economy nothing need be wasted”.

The book which is both very frank and honest gave us masses to talk about. There is a lot in it about Dave's family and suffering; his wife, Anne, had “M.E” and quite a few miscarriages before she was healed of her “M.E” at a special healing service.

What also comes across in the book is Dave's view of God micro-managing his life, that God would provide what was needed. Alongside this Dave also thought that the devil was getting at him and his family. It was felt that maybe Dave saw the attacks by the devil as a badge of honour.

Dave also writes that the vicarage, the Bookless family's home, became a community living space where different people from all over the world stayed for days or weeks at a time. This led to a discussion on the early church and everyone sharing all they had.

Dave gradually becomes more involved with “A Rocha” and committed to a very “green” lifestyle, including the development of an urban wasteland near where they were living, into the 90 acre Minet Country Park, which is in West London. In summary, we felt that it was a good book and very well worth reading. Do look for the book in the Church library.

Finally on the 21st January we discussed “Luminaries: Twenty Lives that Illuminate the Christian Way” by Rowan Williams.

The book has 20 short chapters which start with Saint Paul in the first century and end with St Oscar Romero in the twentieth century. Rowan Williams invites the reader to reflect with him on one aspect each of the lives and legacies of these twenty great Christians – saints, martyrs, poets, theologians and social reformers.

We found parts of this book difficult to understand. In the later chapters, on the more contemporary lives it was easier to grasp what was being said. Someone, who had read other books by Rowan Williams that this was the easiest of his books to understand.

However, there were very interesting nuggets to be found in some of the chapters. For instance; his chapter on Charles Dickens was the idea that Dickens used exaggeration to tell the truth about human beings. Another nugget was that “caring changes you as a person”.

People liked the chapters on St. Teresa of Avila, Bonhoeffer and Tyndale.

This is not a book that we would whole heartedly recommend; but I think everyone found something worthwhile or new in the twenty lives included in this book.

Anne Pelham

Choir

The choir has enjoyed another good year enhancing the worship at St John’s.

Richard took some time away from us, but we remain thankful that he eventually arrived at the decision to return as our regular organist. He is now taking one Sunday a month off. Our thanks to Jennifer White for stepping in to cover on most of these occasions so far.

We are all immensely grateful to all the organists who stepped in to play the organ in Richard’s absence: Linda Atkinson, Penny Bagshaw, Richard Lloyd, Janet Rogers, Jennifer White. They all slotted in beautifully, and we enjoyed working with them. Huge thanks also to Lisa for coordinating the organists’ rota for those months.

We have enjoyed tackling plenty of varied repertoire this year. We always welcome feedback from the congregation, and have received many positive responses and suggestions from them during the year.

The choir for Nine Lessons 2019 was fantastic. Again, many extras joined us, including some new faces, and we were all on a high afterwards.

We were all sad to be saying farewell to the Rev. David Ramsbottom at Christmas. He has been a much loved and valued honorary choir member, and will be greatly missed by us all. It was wonderful to be able to thank him and give him a good send-off at our special Candlemas Evensong. Everyone in the boosted choir really worked hard for this, and the sound they produced was incredible. Thank you, everyone!

As I complete this report during unprecedented times, choir rehearsals and church services have ceased in their usual form. I have been choosing hymns each week and recording myself singing them to be inserted in the video services prepared by Lisa, Mike, James, Ken and the Ministry team. St John’s Choir has paused, but we remain in touch with each other; supporting one another online and in prayer.

Katherine Bond Smith

Christian Discipleship

In the Autumn of 2019, we ran a course on 'Christian Spirituality'. It was an opportunity to discover and engage with a rich variety of Christian Spiritual traditions and was well attended. Following the lecture and coffee, questions could be asked and this was readily taken up. Many of us widened our knowledge in each of these subjects and overall, the course provoked a good deal of interest with the possibility of further individual study. The seven topics were as follows:

1. An Introduction to Christian Spirituality
2. Eco Spirituality/St Francis
3. Benedictine Spirituality/*Lectio Divina*
4. Ignatian Spirituality/ Imaginative Contemplation
5. Reformed Spirituality/ John Calvin
6. Spirituality of Compassion/ The Gospels and Jean Vanier
7. Spirituality of Cynthia Bourgeault/Centering Prayer

In November, we held a day exploring 'Mindfulness'. This was led by Tim Stead, a mindfulness teacher and author of *Mindfulness and Christian Spirituality*. There were guided meditations and an opportunity to explore our experience of these, followed by reflections on how these practices might relate to the Christian tradition of prayer and spirituality – especially the Christian contemplative tradition.

We have now kept Lent and celebrated Easter 2020. About two weeks after Ash Wednesday, we became very aware that there was to be a major change in the way we 'did' Church with Church buildings closed and online services etc. All this was due to the coronavirus pandemic. One Lent study group ran (organised by the Crowthorne Council of Churches) and continued virtually. This was based on Reflections from Iona. There is some interesting and different material here and it may be possible to run it as a lecture course/study group in the Autumn. The first two Lent lectures at St. James', Finchampstead ran as planned but then the remainder of the series had to be discontinued, as did the Christian Meditation Group and Stations of the Cross at the Catholic Church.

Our Emmaus course was also due to begin after Easter for adults and young people. These are Christian basics courses and open to anyone to come along. They can lead on to Confirmation and/or they provide an excellent opportunity for learning and discussing more about our faith. We hope to resume them as soon as we can. All the Confirmation dates will also have to be rescheduled.

There is a House Group run by Julie and Les Richardson which meets fortnightly at Oak Lodge and a Book Club (see separate report) run by Anne Pelham. Hopefully, this period of staying at home will have afforded us some time to read more widely and to learn more about various aspects of our faith.

Gillian Gyenes

Church Cleaners

It was very fortunate that the annual spring clean took place on Saturday, 14th March just two weeks before we were advised that the building had to be closed due to the Covid19 pandemic. At least the church was left in as clean a state as possible before lockdown. Thank you to all those who took part in the that spring clean, and especially to Mike Thackray and the fabric committee, not forgetting Maggie Wade and Anna Forbes for the coffees and treats to keep us motivated.

A very big thank you is due to everyone on the cleaning rota. Your willingness to do your share of dusting, vacuuming, sweeping, polishing and mopping keeps our church in a fresh and welcoming state throughout the year. You have certainly deserved the break in cleaning still in place as I write.

Two cleaners had to retire this year. Thank you for all your work over the years. We have gained two new volunteers so our overall number of volunteers on the church cleaning rota remains at 41, as last year. Consequently there are still gaps on the weekly cleaning schedule and we are generally only managing to clean overall on two out of every three weeks. If you feel that this is a way of contributing your "time and talents" to the church, please talk to Lisa or Jenny McKeever to add your name to the list. The church is divided into five cleaning areas so that each cleaning session should only take 1 to 1½ hours (the nave and hall are often cleaned by a couple either with a spouse or with a friend). Generally cleaners take on to clean four times a year, so it is not such an arduous chore.

By the time you are reading this, I do hope that we are able to open up the church again. We may find that another "Spring Clean" is required as dust and cobwebs may have accumulated or we may find that all is well. Whatever the future brings it should be a comfort to all to know that St John's has a stalwart band willing to give their time to ensure that our place of worship is fit for use.

Jenny McKeever
771379

Church Flowers

The Church Flower arrangers continue to arrange flowers for the Sunday services, except during Lent and Advent. The whole Church is decorated for the festivals of Easter, Harvest and Christmas, with special arrangements for the Patronal Festival, the Confirmation, if it is at our Church and Remembrance Sunday.

I am very pleased to say that our team of 16 Flower Arrangers has remained the same this year with no-one leaving us. We are a happy bunch of colleagues who work together well and support each other when necessary. For example, it can be quite a daunting prospect doing a special arrangement for a wedding! We are very fortunate to have so many talented flower arrangers in our church family.

This year we had a wonderful lunchtime party to celebrate Mary Wards 100th birthday. Mary has been an amazing and very talented member of our team for many, many years. We have all learn a lot from her and she is not ready to completely give up yet!!! She did a beautiful pedestal arrangement for our Christmas celebrations.

If any new members of the congregation would like to join us you would be most welcome. Most of us are self taught and there are plenty of us to help if you have no experience but would like to give flower arranging a try?

Looking back over the year I feel we have had a busy year of fantastic flower arranging! We have had one wedding and some stunning arrangements at the various festivals. Of course earlier this year we arranged beautiful flowers for the funeral of our dear and much loved friend and church colleague Irene Simmons.

The Mothers' Union continue to donate money for the Lady Chapel flowers, Julia Warnes organises the rota for the Lady Chapel and the flowers are arranged by Mothers' Union members. I would like to thank Mothers' Union and all the church Flowers Arrangers, for their time and talents, in producing such beautiful arrangements throughout the year, for us all to enjoy and enhance our worship.

If you would like to remember a loved one on their anniversary, birthday or other special date by having flowers arranged either at the Remembrance Table or Altar please contact me (01344 776738) or Doreen Norfield (01344 774801).

We have found that the increase in the price of flowers this year has been causing us a problem and some discussion has taken place about reducing the amount of flowers we have in church. A few more donations would be very welcome in an attempt to avoid this situation. I would very much like to thank

those people who have made a donation this year particularly the flower arrangers, who I know often give generously with extra flowers.

Carol Cain

Church Office

We have been blessed with a great team of willing and able people during the past year. We have five people who take turns to manage the office each Wednesday morning, between 9:30am and 12:00. It is always lively with Minus Fives and the 10am service, plus people calling in with requests.

We generally have at least three people in the office to undertake a variety of tasks, such as copying orders of service, printing the notice sheet, St Johns News, and "Praying for Streets" leaflets. We deal with any incoming post, emails and phone messages, and update the burial records and automatic door settings.

Anne Pelham is one of the team and she has now taken over as Bookings Secretary, which helps us coordinate the times for the automatic door opening. The full team is Carol Frost, Caroline Grist, Sue McIntosh, Anne Pelham and myself.

As with all Church life, Coronavirus has changed everything. We can no longer meet at the Church. However, we have access to church email at home, so can continue to communicate. We have also adapted and migrated to on-line circulation of news.

Who knows where this will lead?

Ken Perrett

Churches Together in Crowthorne

The Churches Together in Crowthorne group consists of seven churches who work with each other for the benefit of the residents of Crowthorne. The seven churches are St John the Baptist, Crowthorne Baptist Church, Crowthorne Methodist Church, Holy Ghost RC Church, St. Sebastian's Church, St James in Finchampstead and the Vineyard Church.

Janet Rogers from St Sebastian's is the Chair, Barry Rogers from The Vineyard is Vice Chair and Jenny McKeever from St John's is the Treasurer. Carla MacLachlan started the year as Secretary but stood down at the AGM in September, at the moment the post is vacant but the committee are hoping to elect a new secretary at the next meeting which is scheduled to be in mid-May. At the time of writing this report we wait to hear whether this will be taking place, it may be postponed, or we may embrace the new technology and hold an online meeting.

St Johns have 5 lay representatives, Jenny McKeever, Sue Rance, Anna Pearce, Sue Hester, Leigh Welham and Reverend Dr Lisa Cornwell.

Funding for the CTC comes from the coffee shops which were being held weekly at the Baptist and the Methodist Churches. With the Baptist Church now undergoing building works the Methodist's are hosting all coffee mornings.

The funds raised cover the costs of the CTC – insurance and membership of Churches Together in Berkshire, printing costs of the Christmas Poster's for the services held over the Advent period, all associated costs of the 'cake bombing' initiative welcoming the new residents into all the new properties being built in the village. The CTC also gives funds towards other events or initiatives which benefit the

local residents such as the Summer Activities, HopeZone, Mind the Gap and the CAP course run at Edgbarrow School.

This year the CTC held two welcome events for New Communities, one at Bucklers Park and one at Birch Place. Thank you for all the cakes provided by members of the congregation. The CTC also sang Christmas carols outside the sales office on Bucklers Park for the residents, accompanied by Breakaway Brass. This year for the first time we also 'Angel Bombed' the High Street whilst carol singing outside the Co-op in mid-December, thank you all the people that provided the Angels, I hope you saw the pictures in the local press. The CTC also took part in the turning on of the Christmas Lights in November and the Late Night Shopping at the beginning of December.

Once again, the summer activities were a big hit on the Morgan Rec. The activities run for the first four Friday's of the school summer holidays. We are always on the look out for willing volunteers to help erect and take down the activities or run the activities. If you feel you may be able to help on one of the days please see one of the representatives.

The CTC also have joint services with the other churches throughout the year and you would be welcome to join us.

Unfortunately, this year the Lent Courses were cut short by the Corona-virus. The house group managed two meetings before we were cut short but we did finish the course thanks to Nina Preston for providing us with notes to aid study and Jenny for delivering these notes to those who were not on e-mail during her daily exercise. Although the Agape Supper did not take place we do hope to meet, when we can, to discuss what we learnt. I know the first lectures were also well received.

Crowthorne Food Bank has continued to be run from the Vineyard offices on Wellington Business Park and your donations are always gratefully received I hope you were able to continue this support during the pandemic.

Leigh Welham

Churchyard

The grass keeps growing and the leaves keep being produced and falling! The hedges need maintenance.

The upkeep of the churchyard is a never ending task and quite a challenge.

The present team alphabetically include Jean Butler, Philip Foster, Andrew King, David Lynch, Anne Mohan, Anna Pearce, Jill Pope. They have done very well – and continue to do so but not as a full group for much longer. They hope to tackle the grass but by leaf-fall several wish to retire so there will be a very diminished team.

We have met usually once a week to keep the churchyard attractive by tidying up, raking leaves, cutting grass etc and enjoying each other's company, fresh air and exercise. A much cheaper work-out than the gym! It also helps to make the churchyard a special place for not only the church but the community too. There are all kinds of ways to help. The October hedge cutting group contributes much towards the attractive appearance.

This is a plea for more volunteers. Please contact any of the team to find out more. The work is rather addictive as there is a good feeling if a section can be managed in a session and it can be fun to work together. Grass growing time is often holiday time too so help to cover these periods is always welcome.

Churchyard Team

Communications

During 2019 our Communications Group met occasionally to coordinate the various media used by the church. St Johns News, the Weekly News Sheet, the Website, plus twitter and Facebook were updated by members of the team.

Then suddenly, in March 2020, we were all in lockdown. The Church Office was closed, there were no services and the then website could have been seen as irrelevant to the new situation.

As we write this just four weeks later, our services are being recorded every week and streamed on YouTube and Vimeo, our news is being broadcast each week by email to 220 parishioners, we are delivering to 40 more by hand, organised by Julie.

The weekly email gives pointers to the revamped website which has been expanded and now gives more material including a Vicar's column, worship and prayer information. We have created a Parish support network and communicate each week using video conferencing. The team comprises our Vicar, Richard Ireson, James Laverick, Julie Roberts and Ken Perrett and all have learned a great deal in the process. It has been an amazing experience.

One of the most rewarding aspects has been the feedback and communications from people around the parish. And each week the learning continues as we are just starting coffee on-line after Sunday worship.

Who knows where we will be by the time of the APCM. It will be good to look back to this time to see how far we have come. The Group thank all those in the parish who have supported these changes in communications and worship delivery, their contributions have been appreciated.

Ken Perrett

Deanery Synod

St John's is part of the Sonning Deanery which includes our neighbouring churches from Finchampstead, Wokingham and Sandhurst. The current Area Dean is Rev. Richard Lamey of St Paul's Church, Wokingham and the Lay Chair is John Smith from All Saints, Wokingham. They take turns to chair the four Deanery Synods held quarterly. Bridget Crossley is retiring after many years of service as Deanery Secretary. The post of Deanery Treasurer is currently vacant. The Deanery Synod representatives from St John's who have been in place for their full term of three years are Gillian Gyenes, Carol Frost, Leigh Welham and Jenny McKeever. It will be necessary to elect or re-elect new representatives at the APCM for the coming three-year term of office.

The March 2019 Synod concentrated on sexuality and the Church of England. We were advised that this was to be a listening exercise and following short talks by three members of the clergy, including Lisa, we broke up into small groups to listen, talk and pray with each other. The idea for the session was not to "correct" other peoples' viewpoints but for us all to be more understanding of each other and to share Jesus's primary teaching of love for all.

The Deanery Synod Plan which had been two years in preparation was passed at the June Synod. It is in place until 2021 at which time it will be reviewed. It covers four areas – Discipleship, New Communities, Training and Relationships. The objectives concentrate on working together and supporting each other within the deanery to as great a degree as possible. At St John's we have not taken up the personal discipleship plans but we have been pleased to welcome many participants from neighbouring churches to our various courses and to the New Communities Day held in January 2020. The Deanery now have a Church Treasurers' network in place and at the beginning of each Synod the representatives from each of two or three of the member churches introduce themselves and share something they are excited about within their church communities.

The September Synod concentrated on the Development of Discipleship and New Communities which were introduced by Judith Scott and Tonia Elliott respectively. Judith spoke about enabling Christians to

expand their faith from weekly Sunday worship into everyday living at home, at work, in the neighbourhood and social life. Tonia spoke about the need to make contact with every resident of the new building developments throughout the deanery and welcome them with a personal invitation on behalf of the local churches. There is a deanery working group with Jane Kraft as the chair and Hannah Higginson as the prayer co-ordinator. It is hoped that each area of new development will have a local representative who will be supported by the working group with facilities and ideas to help the newcomers settle into existing communities.

The main speaker at the meeting on November 25th was Bob Symonds, Head of Spirituality, Healthcare and Senior Chaplain of the Royal Berks Foundation Trust. Bob divided his talk into three parts: Chaplaincy; Spiritual Care; Our involvement.

1. He gave the background for a new initiative; 'No one dies alone' and introduced the idea of compassionate companions (someone to sit beside the dying). Some people don't have relatives or friends or, if they do, they may live at a distance or for various reasons are unable to be at the bedside. They are asking for volunteers to sit with the dying. As he said "No one should die alone"

2. He went on to talk about Spiritual Care. He said his ministry is to people of any faith, but he is not allowed to pray with a patient unless specifically asked to. He emphasized that his ministry was to share his faith in silence and be a listening ear and just be there alongside those of faith or no faith.

3. He commented that in prison the chaplain had the right to come in, but this is not so in the NHS. He is there if spiritual care is requested for patients, relatives or staff. The important thing was to try to be a healing presence: just simply to be there.

We also had a power point presentation on Our responsibility for the Environment given by Rev David Hodgson. He talked about what scripture says about caring for creation and introduced discussion in three. This was just to whet our appetites! Further discussion was to take place at the Deanery Standing Committee meeting and the March Synod.

Unfortunately, the March Synod scheduled to take place at St John's had to be cancelled due to the shut-down brought about by the Coronavirus pandemic. As the General Synod has already voted in favour of the Church of England becoming carbon neutral by 2030 "Our responsibility for the Environment" is a particularly pressing topic.

Gillian has decided that this is to be her final year as a rep on the Deanery Synod. As she was first elected to that role in 1972 (there may have been a gap of a year or two along the way) she is entitled to enjoy her retirement and has earned the grateful thanks of our parish for all her work linking St John's and the Sonning Deanery.

Jenny McKeever

Gillian Gyenes

Fabric Committee

Work done through year Apr 2019 – Apr 2020

This is new list of work done through the year:

- Removed bushes/leylandii in front of ramp to front entrance. Faculty obtained to put a wooden seat there.
- Completed stained glass repairs (Repainted face of Madonna, holes in Lady Chapel and East windows repaired, exposed stained glass windows by font) – thanks to Anna Pearce!
- Contractor unblocked drain under East block paving path. This, together with repointing top of cellar steps and wall, has stopped the boiler room getting flooded in heavy rain.
- Replaced heating controls in the hall. We continue to monitor the success of the solution installed.
- Changed company that services our boilers to Accurate Mechanical Services Ltd. We are pleased with their work so far, and their fees.

- ECO audit carried out for the church. Several recommended actions have been implemented.
- Churchyard – removed a self-seed tree and several bushes that were growing too close to or on memorial stones. Continual effort through the year to keep on top of the grass cutting and leaf clearing; the team urgently need more members to help regularly.
- Repair to box housing the gas meter on outside of vestry wall.
- Maintenance of broken downpipes fixings as reported by the quinquennial inspection.
- Repainted front barge board over front entrance (kitchen door still outstanding)
- Bench of Garden of Remembrance given a protective coat of wood preservative.
-

These points were in last year's report and still apply:

- Continual monitoring of dawn-to-dusk and outside spotlights.
- Annual fire extinguisher servicing and maintenance
- Boilers serviced
- Annual Spring Cleaning
- Annual Hedge Cutting
- Rota for setting the heating controls for Church, Vestry and Hall
- Procuring the start of a floor tile restoration project when funding permits
- Careful monitoring of the Hall Boiler as it reaches the end of it's life

Many thanks to the Fabric Committee team:

Anne Mohan, Lewis Simmonds, Les Richardson, David Chater-Lea, Laszlo Gyenes and Chris Watson

Mike Thackray

Fairs

May Fair

Despite a rather chilly day there were spells of sunshine and with the whole field in use this year Crowthorne villagers flocked to the event and dispersed across the full site. At 2 o'clock the venue was brimming with residents eager to enjoy another village favourite event.

The local publicity achieved through another immense programme creation team was supported superbly by local High Street stores, with much gratitude from everyone in the village and at St. John's. It was also great to have the Crowthorne Carnival team on site to get everyone prepared for next year's carnival.

Attractions this year included the usual but revered Fire Engine and crew, local Community Police liaison team, Bucklers Cars and Arborfield Bouncy Castle company. We also had Pop up Mini Golf, Sam the Engine and our superb local Scout, Guides and Brownies. The Scouts cooked delicious burgers and Hot Dogs and brought with them their rope bridge climbing apparatus, another annual firm favourite with many youngsters.

The St. John's team delivered fantastically, warmly welcoming punters on arrival with advice if needed from our CAP initiative or just information about our super church and the worship it offers the village. The finance team performed outstandingly in providing floats and working out how much we will have raised. We delivered an over flowing White Elephant stall, a superbly stocked and managed Plant Stall,

wonderful Tea Tent and MU cake stall. The beer tent was much more visible and very well attended! The hot dogs flew off the griddle and even catered for the gluten free locals this year!

We supplied a wonderful Book Stall with CDs and DVDs, a dazzling jewellery and Indian Handicrafts stall, with some fun games like 'Find a Fiver' and Pick your Prize Voucher Raffle. We sold tickets for our annual main raffle, sited a very well organised Tombola within the Tea Tent and offered little ones the chance to buy a vast array of soft and cuddly bears.

To entertain all that were present we scheduled a fabulous line up, ably started by St. John's hidden pearl singing group GLorEE, followed by the ever confident EBOS operatic singers. As we enjoyed a nice cup of tea we were once again calmly serenaded by the Sandhurst Community Brass Band. We had real moment of fun with Yateley Morris Dancers and a Villagers Tug of War.

On top of all this we managed to sell ice creams, organised our favourite wooden horses to be enjoyed by many and had an incredibly popular Mr Men and Pineapple Shy which must have cornered the local market supply of pineapples for villagers to win.

Another key Church Vision priority was to up our involvement in attempting to do our bit to save the environment and so this year we teamed up with the superb CROW action against plastic team to vastly improve the way waste was disposed of and recycled on the day. We had recyclable waste bins delivered from Wellington College and R Collards. We used biodegradable beer and wine cups, eco plant based paper coffee cups and even supplied degradable carrier bags. We banned the sale of plastic water bottles and offered water dispensers for people to use on site.

I'm sure we may have missed someone or something from this review and apologise profusely if you've not been mentioned.

The committee and overall support from everyone involved in bringing this huge event together and in setting up and dismantling the site was exemplary and achieved despite many volunteers missing this year.

All that remains is for us to thank each and everyone that has contributed and participated through this review. So to all of you involved in making the 2019 St. John's Church May Fair a wonderful success.

Mike Thackray

on behalf of the May Fair Committee

Mini Advent Fair

The mini Advent Fair was held on Advent Sunday in the Church Hall following the 10.00am service. This is the first fair I have had to organise so would like to thank Gillian Geynes for her help and guidance and all the stall holders, many who had done this before and organised themselves with minimum interference from me. It was also nice to be able to welcome back some stall holders who had had some time away from the fair. As always, the Refreshments were a hit so thank you for all those that made cakes to sell and to the Mothers Union for their stall and the Cake Raffle that ran for several weeks. Again, we managed to raise over £700 which again went to the R&R Fund. We are always on the lookout for some new ideas, if you have an idea for a new stall or would just like to help at a future event please let me know.

Leigh Welham
Church Warden

Fair Trade

Traidcraft, the company that we buy most of our fair trade goods from continued to trade in a slimmed down form during this last year after having a particularly bad time the year before. Traidcraft was started by 6 people in Newcastle in 1979 based on Christian principles. In an article in the Church Times (28.9.18) the chief executive said "We need the Archbishops to say that trade justice is part of the mission of the gospel, and here is an organisation that is raised on Christian principles that we support - not out of charity, but because it is the right thing to do".

There were difficulties in getting some of our regular goods from Traidcraft this year. However we sold about £720.00 worth of goods during the last financial year. Which is good as it is up on the previous year. I would like to thank all of you who bought fair trade goods from the stall.

Anne Pelham

GLorEE

GLorEE has been involved in the musical life of St John's for almost 10 years, singing in services, at the Reading Choir Competition, the May Fair, the Flower Festival, Late Night Christmas Shopping and in a number of the care homes in Crowthorne and at Holme Grange each Christmas.

Sadly after months of painful consideration, we have decided that we no longer have enough members to operate GLorEE as the pop-choir it once was.

We have not had as many events this year - partly, in late, due to the Covid-19 epidemic, but also due to the availability of enough singers to deliver.

The last appearance was at the crib service which will be a sweet happy memory for us all to hold dear, along with the many other times over the years we have enjoyed bringing a different type of worship to the table.

Zellah Barrett

House Group

St John's Housegroup continues to meet at Oak Lodge on alternate Mondays between 7.30pm and 9pm. We have seen a further growth in numbers over the last year, with an expanding group, now typically 15 or so regular participants. It's hard to believe that Housegroup has now been meeting at Oak Lodge for over five years, something which we all enjoyed celebrating at the start of the year.

We begin in the traditional way of refreshments followed up by a time of worship. We use a variety of hymns and worship songs with the aid of Alexa, who accompanies the singing. Then move on to a bible study and with a time of prayer to finish up.

Topics covered in the last year are 'Daily Life in Bible Times' which was an in-depth delve into what daily life was like in biblical times, exploring different themes and looking at how life has changed. Having finished this, we are now looking at 'Women in the New Testament' from the Life Builder study guides. This includes some studies of less well known women in the bible. As we look at the lives of these significant women we compare this with our whole life discipleship to expand our faith. We observe those who believed God when everything around them looked impossible. Jesus reached out

to comfort and give hope to women. He honours their faith and defends their acts of worship and gratitude. Jesus holds these women in esteem and allows them to play a vital role in His life, death, burial and resurrection. The women in the New Testament are as diverse as we are today. It is great to unpack these and look at what we can take away and apply to our thinking and attitudes underlining it with biblical truth.

We very much enjoy meeting together. It is a time to learn in a very informal and friendly way as the group are able to encourage one another by sharing their experiences and knowledge. Everyone is able to contribute and it is wonderful that we can learn from each other.

New members are always welcome, each study session is specific and can be completed in an evening so you can dip in and out as your diary allows. Just turn up with your bible if you would like to join us.

Julie & Les Richardson

Library

Our library which is located in the entrance hall behind the white board is full with books on a wide variety of subjects. There are books on prayer, Bible study, church architecture, the Saints, pastoral care to ecology, and novels. Then there are books for specific times of the year, such as Advent and Lent or for specific age groups. The books cover all levels for those new to church and those who would like to delve deeper into faith.

There are some members of the congregation who regularly take books out of the library. A few more people have started to use this valuable resource. I would urge everyone to browse the library to see if there are any books that may be of interest. Books are added to the library stock including the books we read for Book Club. It is simple to borrow a book; just record the details in the log book on the top of the main book case and then on returning it just complete details against the same entry. There are no time limits on how long you can take a book out for.

Many thanks to all those who has donated books to the library.

Anne Pelham

Messy Church

We started Messy Church in September 2014 with a Saturday morning session on Messy Harvest. We are now into our 6th year having held more Messy Harvests and Christingles as well as a Messy Easter and two Messy Mothering Sundays, which were all very enjoyable. The children were engaged on various crafts and a large group from MU made the posies. A much appreciated lunch is now organised by an MU team. Numbers vary, but it is good to see so many young families there, including the Dads, as well as the rest of us of all ages! Our 'social media' PR seems to be working and families are saying they are looking out for the next one, which is encouraging.

There are many different craft activities each time, together with icing messy biscuits and cakes, which is very popular. We have a short time for worship in church, including stories and songs, with Zella and her guitar, and Lisa on our theme of the day. Then comes lunch, coffee and drinks having been served throughout the morning. Our thanks are due to all the 'teams' involved in the organisation of the event and especially to Anna Forbes who has supplied many of the craft ideas and materials with the help of others.

In October, we held a second Messy Science as part of our Messy Harvest morning, thanks to Tom Burrell and his assistant. We thank Tom for providing such an interesting and challenging morning.

Unfortunately, we were unable to run our Messy Christingle this year but, by Mothering Sunday, we were up and ready to run again only to be forced to cancel at the last minute.

We aim to meet 3 times a year, so please look out for the publicity and come and join us if you can, when we are able to meet again.

We give thanks to Zellah, as she steps down, for all she has contributed over the last 6 years and wish her well in her new venture.

Gillian Gyenes

Minus Fives

Our weekly toddler group has seen many changes in the past year with both Katherine and Maggie leaving us to take up new work commitments. We have a fantastic group of children and their carers joining us, but we have noticed that increasingly there are more grandparents and childminders, rather than mums, bringing children. Whilst we still have a happy group coming each week, the change in dynamics does bring some challenges with it.

Significantly there are no young mums from St John's to help out with running the group. We are very grateful to Naomi Page for all her hard work in helping to organise our weekly get-togethers. Naomi, who attends Finchampstead Baptist Church, found some different stories from the bible and some new craft for our weekly get-togethers, as well as using some of the old favourites. However Naomi has other commitments and is unable to attend every week. We therefore muddle along on the weeks she can't be with us. Between us we have introduced some books and jigsaws, and now use some of the toys from the creche as well.

We are so fortunate to have the support of Jean and Sue every week helping to set up and clear down, providing coffee and biscuits for the adults and healthy snacks for the children, and offering a listening ear to any and all who love to chat away to them whilst the children are playing.

Thanks also to Ken and the office staff for all their support. And special thanks to Sue Edwards and Pat Steer for playing the piano during our little service each week.

Tracy Perrett

Missions Committee

The Missions Committee is responsible for co-ordinating our support for the seven Christian missions to which St John's contributes on a regular basis. These missions and their representatives for the past year have been, Church Mission Society (CMS) – Claire Taylor, The Leprosy Mission - Wendy Allerton; The Corrymeela Community – Diana Gray; Church Army - Gini Cope; Bible Society - Julie Richardson; Embrace the Middle East - Ken Perrett and Hopezone – Jenny Mckeever.

In 2019, St. John's donated £1,830.81 to each of the seven missions a total of £12,815.67 which represents 12½ % of the planned giving by church members.

Historically in addition to those seven Missions we have supported a local hospice, currently Alexander Devine Hospice for Children in Maidenhead and Carol Frost keeps us informed about their work. Our speaker on Christ the King Sunday 2019 was Anita Weare from the Hospice and the collection following the service raised £375.36 We hope that Carol will be able to arrange a visit to the Hospice for members of the committee.

While it does not receive a direct donation from the Church, Tracy Perrett represents the Children's Society on our committee. Please see her separate Children's Society report.

This year Tracy did not sell Christmas cards for The Children's Society, instead sold cards for Embrace the Middle East. The profit of £165 was made on the sale of these cards which was sent to Embrace.

We again had a 'Christmas Giving Tree', to raise money for the Bracknell and Wokingham Night Shelter. This raised £687 not including some gift aid to be claimed by Pilgrim Hearts Trust who operate the shelter. The Night Shelter runs on a weekly programme in a different Church in Bracknell each night of the week from December to the end of March and hosts a Drop-In Centre at St Andrews Church Priestwood twice a week throughout the year. The new Wokingham Night Shelter opened for January and February and was used by 28 homeless people.

The Lent Lunch was held to raise money for a Leprosy Mission project to assist "Leprosy affected farming communities out of Poverty". The members of the committee provided the food for the lunch so that all donations go to the cause. In 2019 £391 was raised.

Our Annual Lent Lunch planned for Sunday 29 March 2020 had to be cancelled due to the lock down.

We have Missions preachers at the 10am and sometimes the 8am services on a two-year rolling programme from all the Missions we support. During the year 2019 – 20 we had visits from, Ruth Sayers – Church Mission Society, Tim Hyde – Church Army, Elaine Chalmers-Brown – Bracknell Night Shelter, Anita Weare – Alexander Devine Hospice for Children, Chris Stratta – Leprosy Mission

The members of the committee contribute articles to St John's news and put up a display in the foyer to coincide with the visits of the mission's preachers, giving more information about that mission. Further information about the missions we support can be found on the Parish Website and in our Missions booklet (please do ask me for one).

The committee is a hard-working and dedicated group and I would like to thank them for all they have done in this past year to support their own and the other projects mentioned in this report. They will always be pleased to tell you more about the societies we support, so please ask them.

Hazel Berry

Children's Society

Once again, a big thank you to everyone who supports the work of The Children's Society at St John's whether through direct giving, prayer or helping in our church fund raising activities. This all goes to help in the work of The Children's Society with the country's most vulnerable children and young people.

Fundraising in the 12 months to end of January 2020 at St John's has been achieved as follows:

| | |
|-----------------------------|------------------------|
| Box collections | £373.10 |
| Christingle service | £239.75 |
| Donations | £ 78.26 |
| Christmas Card Sales profit | £ 0.00 |
| Total raised | <u>£ 691.11</u> |

This is a substantially lower figure compared to recent years for two main reasons. Firstly, it was decided not to sell Christmas cards on behalf of The Children's Society because of their policy (or rather lack of policy) regarding environmentally sustainable Christmas cards. Since St John's joined the Eco Church initiative, we, as a congregation, have made great efforts to improve our environmental care for God's creation. Unfortunately, many of The Children's Society cards had glitter on them which meant that they could not be recycled in this area. I know that some members of our congregation were very disappointed that they were unable to buy cards from The Children's Society, and I have had discussions with The Children's Society about this. It is hoped that we will be able to return to selling

cards on behalf of The Children's Society in 2020 when their eco policy will ensure that the majority of their cards are recyclable.

The second reason that the fundraising amount is lower this year is due to a decision by The Children's Society to not gift aid any of the amounts raised at any Christingle Service in 2019. The decision was made on the basis that in previous years, more money was spent on the administration of the scheme than they received in gift aid.

The Missions Committee, in agreement with the Vicar, had decided that, in order to increase funding to The Children's Society, all proceeds from the 2019 Lent Lunch would be made to The Children's Society. Unfortunately, due to the coronavirus lockdown measures, the Lent lunch had to be cancelled.

Box collections are continuing although many of our collectors tell me that they have a lot less change these days due to the increasing use of debit cards. Whilst it is certainly becoming increasingly challenging to raise funds in traditional ways, the invaluable work of The Children's Society continues, and our efforts to support them here at St John's continue.

If you would like to find out more about the work of The Children's Society, please go to their website at <http://www.childrensociety.org.uk> .

Tracy Perrett

Mothers' Union

The Mothers' Union at St John's continues to hold two meetings a month as well as a prayer meeting and we remain involved in various activities centred on the church. These have included running cake stalls at the May and Advent Fairs for church funds, providing lunches for Messy Church, making posies and Simnel cakes for Mothering Sunday, setting up and maintaining the Children's Corner at the back of the church and arranging the flowers in the Lady Chapel on a weekly basis. We also have representation on the Pastoral Committee and help with Baptismal visits.

Our meetings have been well attended and everyone is welcome, members and non-members alike. Our speakers have been varied and interesting. These have included a personal view on adoption and a fascinating insight into the life of a Muslim bride. We were given a demonstration on the use of the models for Godly Play, heard about the true meaning of depression and mental illness and the wonderful work of the Sebastian Action Trust here in Crowthorne. Christmas began early with local author Nicky Bevan reading some of her seasonal poetry and carols from the C of E school choir. Roy Burgess talked about his work as chaplain to the emergency services and John Ledger on the fantastic work of Mission Aviation Foundation. We have also learnt about the work of the Family Courts. The Revd Rosie Webb took Evensong for us and Revd Dr Lisa Cornwell took our Lent Eucharist as the Revd Hannah Higginson was unwell on the day.

We have made donations to the Church of £200, another £200 to Mothers' Union special appeals, £67 to the Balsam Project based in Oxfordshire to support families in need and £300 to the Away From It All holiday scheme. We continue to collect and supplement toiletries for the John Radcliffe Children's Hospital and provide and write Christmas cards for the chaplain at Bullingdon to give to the prisoners.

We were privileged to be asked to provide refreshments after the funeral services for two of our members, Audrey Hooper and Irene Simmons. We took part in the Wave of Prayer to remain united with the worldwide fellowship of the Mothers' Union when we thought especially of our link dioceses in Tanzania, Nigeria, the Democratic Republic of Congo and Papua New Guinea. We attended the Women's World Day of Prayer service at the Methodist Church in Crowthorne and hosted an Ecumenical Meeting on behalf of their committee.

Penny Rickards
Branch Leader, Crowthorne

New Communities

This year St John's have joined with the CTC on a number of occasions to pray for and welcome the new communities. There was a second coffee morning at Birch Place to welcome the new members to that community and also a 'cake bombing' at Bucklers Park where we had hoped to present the Perrett's with a cake, unfortunately they were not at home when we knocked so their cake was enjoyed by the congregation with coffee on the following Sunday – sorry Ken and Tracy. We have also joined the Deanery New Communities meetings discussing the best ways to welcome people and sharing best practices and they also held a number of prayer meetings. St John's also hosted an open meeting held by the Deanery Committee where C of E church members were joined by other denominations to hear Will Donaldson, Director of New Congregations for the Oxford Diocese speak and to share ideas. We look forward to being able to meet again and if anyone would like to join any of the activities please let me know. I will publicise the next cake bombing session so you can either bake me a cake or join me knocking on doors to say hello to our new neighbours.

Leigh Welham
Church Warden

Pastoral Visiting Group

As the body of Christ we are urged to care for one another and it is the role of the Pastoral Visiting Group to help the Vicar in this ministry. The Pastoral Visiting Group tries to look out for any in the congregation who may need visiting or other pastoral care. Some of the members of the Pastoral Visiting Group and others in the congregation welcome newcomers Sunday by Sunday and try to integrate them more fully into the life of the Church, if they so wish. It is helpful if you have any pastoral concerns for others or yourself, to let us know. We send pastoral cards on special occasions, happy or sad, but of course, we have to know about these in order to do so.

The current members of the Pastoral Visiting Group are: Lisa Cornwell (Vicar); Jean Butler (Minus Fives/10am); Carol Cain (10am); Julie Cavell (Choir and 10am); Ann Cottrell (MU & 10am); Carol Frost (MU); Gillian Gyenes (LLM and Children and Young People/ Safeguarding); Julie Richardson (Housegroup & 10am) and June Todd (MU & 10am). Willoughby Jones (8am) has had to step down during the year. We are very grateful to him for his wise contribution to this group. We continue to meet three or four times a year for supervision.

At the time of writing, the PVG is playing a pivotal role in keeping pastoral contact with our congregation whilst we are required to self-isolate.

Revd Dr Lisa Cornwell

Pathfinders

During 2019/20 we endeavoured to have Pathfinder sessions at every service during term time, however some weeks this was not possible as a leader was not available. On those occasions any Pathfinders attending were invited to join the Net or the main service. On occasion if there was a visiting speaker who we felt that Pathfinder members would find interesting then we would all join the main service that week.

This year has been challenging with low numbers of both Pathfinders and Leaders but we continue to value our worship opportunities. We also said goodbye to David Ramsbottom recently which means

that there are now only 2 leaders, David Rance and myself, and as we both have other commitments from time to time it means we are not always available to lead.

If you are able to help us out by leading from time to time it would be very much appreciated. Perhaps some older Pathfinders would consider joining the leading team as leader or co-leader? Please do talk to us if you are interested and would like to find out more about what is involved, we would love to chat with anyone who is interested. We look forward to hearing from you.

Leaders

Carol Frost

David Rance

Prayer Groups

Mothers Union Prayer Group

The Mothers' Union holds a Prayer Meeting every month except August. During these meetings we start by reading and praying for the people named on the board in the Lady Chapel and pray for the Seasons and our Future Meetings. We then continue by joining with the Wave of Prayer set up by the Mothers Union with dioceses from all round the world that have Mothers' Union branches. These are named in our booklet, Families Worldwide and change every three days so everyone is included at some point. We are thus able to explore the environment and some key events in the lives of other members here and abroad which helps to cement our ties one with one another.

We meet on the third Monday in the Lady Chapel at 10.00 during the Summer and Autumn months and in the Choir Vestry whilst the weather is cold. Everyone is welcome whether a member or not.

Penny Rickards

Prayers for Healing and the Sick

This group meets every Friday from 5.30 – 6.00 in the Lady Chapel or Choir Vestry, (dependent on the weather!) We pray for those on the Prayer Board in the Lady Chapel, on the notice sheet or for any others known to us and for their families. Anyone is welcome to join us from time to time or as a regular member of the group. Since we have all been at home, we have continued to pray each Friday at 5.30 in our own homes, lighting a candle to remember God's presence and loved ones. Requests have continued to come in via the enewsletter or by phone or email. Please continue to send them. We know the prayers are valued and perhaps you might like to join at that time to pray for someone special to you, as we pray for the parish and beyond. An update of prayer requests is always appreciated.

Gillian Gyenes

Praying for Streets

We leaflet a particular street or a few streets and then mention them during our prayers of intercession on Sunday the following week. It takes just over a year to cover all the streets, although with a lot of new building in the area, it is now taking a little longer. This is part of our outreach to the community.

Some people in the community have got in touch with us after receiving these leaflets to ask us to pray for specific situations or general situations. They have thanked us for praying for the streets.

We thank all of you who kindly delivered the leaflets throughout the year.

Obviously in the middle of March this year we stopped delivering these leaflets due to coronavirus. As I write this report, it is to be hoped that we will be able to re-start printing the praying for streets leaflets and putting them through the post boxes in our parish. It may be that as you read this report we have been able to resume this outreach activity.

Mary Harwood and

Anne Pelham

Safeguarding

Over the last few years or so, Oxford Diocese, in line with the National Church, has taken a new look at many aspects of Safeguarding, as the Church has very much needed to update its practice here. Most importantly, we should all now be more aware of each other's safety within our Church community, irrespective of age or our role within the Church. It is no longer solely the responsibility of one or two named individuals or even of a committee.

To this end and at the request of the Diocese, we have compiled a very comprehensive audit, listing all those whose role requires/invites them to attend or complete online, the relevant Safeguarding course, provided by the Diocese. I should like to thank the very encouraging number of people who have taken part in these courses and who have had their DBS checks renewed, thanks to Anne Mohan. It was also heartening to realise, in carrying out this exercise, what a great number of people volunteer in so many different ways, contributing overall to the smooth running of our Church.

The Safeguarding Committee have been discussing a 'Promoting a Safer Church Action Plan' which will be reviewed annually and which acts as a checklist for all aspects of Safeguarding.

All training courses are on hold for the time being, but if you have not yet attended a training course and would like/need to do so, please let me know. We have had several communications from the Diocese regarding Safeguarding at this time of crisis, relating e.g. to volunteers offering help to those who are vulnerable.

Should you want further guidance over any matter, please do contact myself or Lisa, if that would be helpful. We have a model Safeguarding Policy which has been approved by the PCC and there is a contact list of Who's Who (regarding Safeguarding) on the Church website.

Gillian Gyenes

Servers

A huge thank you to every member of the Serving team for their continuing contribution to our worship during this last year.

We continue to be a small team, and are always on the lookout for new Servers and Acolytes. This year, we have lost two younger members from the team, due to educational commitments. We do however

have two new servers, and they are a very welcome addition to the team. I am grateful to the whole team for continuing to help on the rota whenever they are able to do so.

Our team currently consists of 12 servers/acolytes. Due to several members of the team having conflicting commitments in some months, this means that, on average, everyone on the team serves two or three times in any month. Although we all believe that serving is a privilege, and a way of giving back just a small measure of thanks for all that God does for us, nevertheless a few more volunteers would be hugely appreciated.

Anyone who would like to serve at our 8 o'clock Sunday service, or the sung Eucharist at 10 o'clock, or indeed at our occasional weekday evening celebrations, would be very welcome. As always, full instruction will be provided to anyone who is interested in joining the team.

Les Richardson

Social Committee

The Social Committee's raison d'être is to arrange events which create a welcoming atmosphere for a cohesive community to which people want to belong.

The first event in the social calendar for 2019/20 was the '8 meets 10 @ 9' breakfast which was held as a Christian Aid Big Breakfast in May 2019 and raised over £300 for Christian Aid.

The Patronal BBQ celebration held in the vicarage garden courtesy of Lisa and Mike took place as usual at the end of June. Numbers were reduced on previous years with around 50 joining us. However this allowed for lots of second helpings of strawberries! Thank you again to Les and Simon for doing the cooking, to Roland for the baps, to the Scouts for the use of their BBQ, to Richard, Jim and Steve for manning the bar, to all who brought salads, erected gazebos, helped on the day and joined in the event and, not least, to Lisa and Mike for the use of their garden and kitchen.

Teas, coffees and biscuits were served at the Meraki concert held on 13th July. As several committee members were away, the team for this event was augmented by help from the PCC.

The Harvest Supper was held on 28th September. The social committee numbers were rather depleted again for this event as were participant numbers nevertheless the baked potatoes with a variety of fillings followed by the apple puddings were all well received. Thank you to all who lent a hand with the washing up!

The Social committee served tea, coffee and biscuits during the interval at the Crowthorne Orchestra Concert on 14th December and were very grateful to Mary Harwood and Maureen Dale for their help with the raffle. All together £175 was raised for the church funds.

The committee also served the mulled wine and mince pies after the Carol Service on 22nd December.

It was decided that instead of another pancake evening we should ask Roland Fruin to prepare a Fun Quiz for the last Saturday before Lent began. On 22nd February 50 parishioners put on their thinking caps and were engagingly tested and entertained by Roland. Food was ordered (in advance) from the Beijing Chinese Takeaway in Crowthorne and enjoyed by all. Altogether a fun evening.

The committee procured the muffins/buns/cakes and, where necessary, helped with the teas and coffees for the Café Eucharists held through the year.

The current members of the Social Committee are: Jill Pope, Sue Sumner, Leigh Welham, Les Richardson, Richard Ireson, Lia Davies, Nigel Cavell, and Jenny McKeever and a big thank-you to everyone for their work throughout the year. The committee always welcomes any new ideas for social events and new members who would like to take part in promoting the social life of our church family.

As I write this with the church and halls all closed and church and village events cancelled or postponed due to the Covid-19 virus we look forward to a big celebration together when we are allowed to leave our homes and mingle with our church family friends again.

Jenny McKeever

Stewardship

On Sunday 23rd April Stewardship Sunday the Rev. Canon John Edwards delivered an interesting and thought provoking sermon about Christian giving.

He told us that in Biblical terms we would be tithed to give 10% of our wealth to the Church.

Fortunately for us 5% is now considered a more acceptable target. However in the Church of England actual giving is calculated as only between 1&2%. The question is “What proportion of our wealth are we prepared to give?”

The Stewardship letter we all received spells out what our money is spent on, and as we are not able to hold the May Fair this year it will be a challenge to make up the lost revenue.

The Committee would like to thank everyone heartily for their existing contributions and invite us all to think prayerfully about the amount we give and consider that if we can afford to give more then we should do so, not because we have to, or are compelled to but because we want to- “ For God loves a cheerful giver”

Steve Pope

St John's News

SJN was produced for 11 months of the year (except August). The Parish has been wonderfully supportive in providing copy and the editor tries to ensure that all in the Parish who wish to use its pages are given ready access. Each main edition tends to run to 8-10 pages. The editor coordinates with the producers of the weekly news sheet and the PCC Communications Group. We have tried to make SJN GDR compliant.

We are grateful to Hilary Burton who has continued to taking a thoughtful and distinctive approach to the task of producing the **Prayer Diary**. She has worked hard to ensure that the events of the Church's year and current issues are spiritually reflected in the diary and shows imagination and diligence in reflecting the prayer needs of the parish and the people in it!. The Vicar adds a strong spiritual note with her monthly column and this gives a significant leadership to the development of the parish. We are also grateful to parish leaders, organisers and members who continue to provide interesting and relevant event details, news and articles generally.

The volunteers in the Parish Office have worked hard to print SJN and their efforts are greatly appreciated. The content is also helpfully repackaged by Ken Perrett to support the information on the website it also feeds into Facebook.

Richard Ireson
Editor

editor@crowthorneparishchurch.org.uk

Welcome Team

8 a.m.

Andrew King, Sally King, Alan Jackson, Wendy Jackson, Tom Burrell,

Vanessa Burrell, Mary Clark, Barry Brewster, Richard Ireson.

Ian Lobley, Louise Lobley.

10a.m. and extra services as required

David Chater-Lea, Doreen Norfield, Sheila Stickland, Ann Cottrell,
David Rance, Sue Sumner, James Laverick, Grant Robertson,
Susan Robertson, Tom Lewis, Brian Turner, Kathy Beard, Daphne Bass,
June Todd, Chris Watson, Ken Perrett, Shirley Mather, Leigh Welham,
Jenny McKeever, Pat Steer, John Lindsay, Philip Foster, Carol Frost,
Mike Thackray, Carol Cain, Jill Pope, Julie Sharpe, Keith Wilkinson,
Nigel Cavell, Mike Frost.

Carol and Mike Frost are standing down from their Welcome Team duties, we thank them both - especially Carol who has been one of the four Team Leaders for a number of years. Mike Thackray will take over as Team Leader and Liz Martin will join that Team. It would be good to recruit three more men to join the 10 a.m. rota. (I suggest men as the job involves moving chairs and tables when setting up for The Net)

Thank you to all Welcome Team members for their commitment during the year. The Welcome Teams continue to play an important part in Church life in helping the services to run smoothly and particularly in welcoming people who are new to the Church.

Doreen Norfield

Website

We have been blessed with a great team of willing and able people during the past year. We have five people who take turns to manage the office each Wednesday morning, between 9:30am and 12:00. It is always lively with Minus Fives and the 10am service, plus people calling in with requests.

We generally have at least three people in the office to undertake a variety of tasks, such as copying orders of service, printing the notice sheet, St Johns News, and "Praying for Streets" leaflets. We deal with any incoming post, emails and phone messages, and update the burial records and automatic door settings.

Anne Pelham is one of the team and she has now taken over as Bookings Secretary, which helps us coordinate the times for the automatic door opening. The full team is Carol Frost, Caroline Grist, Sue McIntosh, Anne Pelham and myself.

As with all Church life, Coronavirus has changed everything. We can no longer meet at the Church. However, we have access to church email at home, so can continue to communicate. We have also adapted and migrated to on-line circulation of news.

Who knows where this will lead?

Ken Perrett – website editor.