



# **St Mark's Church, Gillingham**

*'Living for Jesus, Loving Gillingham, Learning Together'*

## **AGENDA**

for the meeting on 25<sup>th</sup> March 2018

## **MINUTES**

of the last APCM on 23<sup>rd</sup> April 2017

**plus**

## **STATUTORY AND ADDITIONAL REPORTS**

for the year ended 31<sup>st</sup> December 2017



# **Agenda for the Annual Parochial Church Meeting**

Sunday 25<sup>th</sup> March 2018

- (1) Worship (SM/RS)**
- (2) Meeting of Parishioners for the Choosing of Two Churchwardens (SM)**
- (3) The Annual Parochial Church Meeting of St Mark's Electoral Roll Members (SM)**

*Members may ask questions or raise relevant matters at any time during the meeting.*

- 1.** Apologies for Absence and Minutes of the previous year's meeting (SM)
- 2.** Elections
  - a) Appointment of 5 tellers for the election (*chosen warden*)
  - b) Introduction of each candidate standing for election (SM)
  - c) Election of Electoral Roll Members to serve on PCC (*chosen warden*)
  - d) Election of Sidespersons or Approval for the Churchwardens and PCC to appoint suitable Electoral Roll Members as Sidespersons (*chosen warden*)
- 3.** Report on Buildings Work (RS)
- 4.**
  - a) Report on the financial affairs of the Parish Church (*Annual Report*)
  - b) Examined Accounts for the previous calendar year (*Annual Report*)
  - c) Examined statement of Funds and Property for 2017 (*Annual Report*) (GA)
- 5.** Financial Needs of the Church – Gift Day 2018 (SM/GA/LP)
- 6.** Choosing of an Independent Examiner of the Accounts for the current year (GA)
- 7.** The following agenda items should all be covered in the Annual Report or the Additional Reports; if not they will be provided at the meeting by the officer responsible.
  - a) Electoral Roll Officer's Report (*Statutory Reports – KS*)
  - b) Report on the Proceedings of the PCC (*Statutory Reports*)
  - c) Churchwardens' report on Fabric, Goods and Ornaments (*Statutory Reports*)
  - d) Proceedings of Diocesan and Deanery Synods (*Statutory Reports*)
  - e) Receiving the Reports from Church Ministries given in the Additional Reports and Good News stories (SM)
- 8.** Closing Prayer (SM)

## **Minutes of the Annual Parochial Church Meeting held in Church on Sunday 23<sup>rd</sup> April 2017**

### **(1) Worship:**

- Saju (SM) opened the Service and spoke about belonging and gifting. Multiple God-given gifts can make our Church diverse. Prayers and the Reading followed.
- Before the APCM began, SM commented that Church happens due to people giving their time, resources and skills. He then asked all attendees to take some time to thank each other for things they have done to bless one another. Following this, SM took the opportunity to thank 3 people in particular: Rebecca England, standing down as PCC secretary, and Deano Standing and Terry Whittaker for being outstanding Churchwardens for 3 and 11 years respectively.
- Deano and Terry have provided a very high level and standard of support, going the extra mile for the wellbeing of the church. Prayers of thanks were given.

### **(2) Meeting of Parishioners for the Choosing of Two Churchwardens**

- SM was delighted to announce two new Churchwardens. Raymond Shergill (RS) and Helen Towers (HT). It was proposed they be appointed for the coming year. This was unanimously agreed.
- RS and HT joined the meeting at the front of Church.

### **(3) The Annual Parochial Church Meeting of St Mark's Electoral Roll Members: the meeting commenced at 11.30am**

#### **1. Apologies for absence**

- 19 apologies for absence were given

#### **2. Minutes of the previous year's meeting, held on 17th April 2016**

- There were no questions, so minutes were approved.

#### **3. Elections**

##### **3a) Appointment of 5 tellers for the election:**

- Jane Bannar-Martin, Michael Young, Andrew Mann, Vince Allen and John Beck were appointed.

##### **3b) Introduction of each candidate standing for election**

(see 3c, d and e below)

##### **3c) Election of Electoral Roll members to serve on Deanery Synod**

- TW stood for election and was appointed.

### **3d) Election of Electoral Roll members to serve on PCC**

- 7 individuals stood for election with 6 vacancies.
- SM thanked Andrew Mann for managing the voting forms and proposed that the additional person be co-opted to PCC due to their skills and experience. This was agreed with 3 abstentions.
  - 3 years on PCC: Jo Whittaker, Siju Adeoye, Paul Smith, Jonathan Mann
  - 2 years on PCC: Glyn Allen
  - 1 year on PCC: Luke Prankard
  - Co-opted for a year on PCC: Keith Sheepwash
- SM thanked those standing down from PCC, in particular Graham Davis who served for many years.

### **3e) Election of Sidespersons or approval for the Churchwardens and PCC to appoint suitable Electoral Roll Members as Sidespersons**

- SM read through a list of 16 names and asked if all were happy for those to be appointed. This was agreed unanimously.

## **4. Report on Buildings Work**

- DS provided the update. As a Church we have 4 buildings we are responsible for: The Old Vicarage, Church, the Garden House and the Church hall.
- During the last year, structural repair work on the Church building has been required. This was partly covered by insurance. CCTV has also been fitted at Church.
- The project for accessible toilets at Church is ongoing. The DAC have approved plans and a structural engineer is being appointed. There will be some fine tuning done by the architect and Peter Guinness will then submit drawings to the Faculty. Work may commence in September 2017. DS advised he intends to remain on the PCC's Property Task Group to support this work.
- Some external work has been completed on the Garden House and internal decoration in advance of Lynne Martin moving in.
- There was a question from Chris Tozer on The Old Vicarage boundary wall. DS explained that we share responsibility with the Diocese and Doctor's Surgery. Work was completed to make the wall safe and the Task Group is now looking at the most cost-effective way to get this fully fixed – sharing cost with the other two parties.

- There was a question from Mike Haslam on church tiles - would there be less storm damage if the tiles were replaced with pinned tiles. DS advised that since insurance covers repairs (but not replacement) this is the best solution for now in terms of cost.

## **5. Report on the financial affairs of the Parish Church**

### **5a) Report on the financial affairs of the Parish Church (Annual Report)**

- Glyn Allen (GA), Treasurer, advised the Financial Reports have been sent to the Examiners and published on the Church website and in Church.
- He talked through a summary of the General Fund of total income and expenditure, with a net surplus of GBP 4,117. The expected budget was a deficit of GBP 19,506.
- Significant voluntary giving (95%) makes up the Church General Fund, and GBP 29,089 was recovered by Gift Aid.
- The key reasons for the difference in budget for the year were the Head of YCF not being appointed and less spent on general building repairs.
- GA talked through the other funds and net assets of GBP 179,559. This includes funding from the Diocese for the Head of YCF role.
- The General Fund balance is currently 24% of expected 2017 spend, so continued regular giving is essential. The current 2017 forecast budget is expected to break even.
- GA then invited any questions. Mandy Tozer asked whether the current forecast budget included all permanent members of staff. GA confirmed yes.

### **5b) Examined Accounts for the previous calendar year (Annual Report)**

- Accounts have been approved by the Independent Examiner and PCC, so no approval required.

### **5c) Examined statement of Funds and Property for 2016 (Annual Report)**

- No questions or objections to accepting this report.

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

- It was proposed that Rob Trice be again appointed as Examiner of the Accounts. This was agreed by the majority.
- SM prayerfully thanked GA for his considerable work as Treasurer.

## **7. The following agenda items were all covered in the Annual Report or the Additional Reports:**

### **7a) Electoral Roll Officer's Report (Statutory Reports)**

- Kelvin Summoogum (Electoral Roll Officer) updated that we have grown as a Church, having seen an increase in those on the Electoral Roll. SM agreed that the Lord is adding to our number, but we need to be vigilant in discipleship and welcome.

### **7b) Report on the Proceedings of the PCC /Church Members (Statutory Reports)**

### **7c) Churchwardens' report on Fabric, Goods and Ornaments (Statutory Reports)**

### **7d) Proceedings of Diocesan and Deanery Synods (Statutory Reports)**

- No questions were received on the above reports, they were therefore adopted by attendees.

### **7e) Receiving the Reports from Church Ministries given in the Additional Reports and Good News stories:**

- Paul Smith - Foodbank: Foodbank offers us the opportunity to pray for people who wouldn't usually be prayed for. Paul told the story of a young man with addiction struggles who received food, prayer and an invitation to join Alpha. He came to church the following Sunday and noticed the impact of the Holy Spirit on his life. SM thanked Paul for excellent leadership of our Foodbank centre.
- Keith Sheepwash - Alpha: Keith provided an overview of the Alpha course; the most recent group had just finished with attendees from different walks of life. There were 12-15 people in each session with a fantastic atmosphere for sharing and teaching. Most committed or re-committed their lives to Christ at the close of the course. The group are using WhatsApp to continue to pray for one another. SM thanked Keith for the blessing and humour, growth and life he brings to the church.
- Siju Adeoye - Our Eritrean congregation: Gillingham is becoming an increasingly diverse community, and our Church is also becoming more diverse. Celebrating diversity and welcoming strangers is something the Church can do. The Eritrean Church meet each Tuesday evening, our congregation has been interested in and supportive of the group. SM advised that Siju has been a true advocate for this Eritrean group and encouraged Church that how we treat a stranger is

very important and based in Scripture. God often comes to people through a stranger.

- Charlie Burston – SOS Club: SOS see approximately 20 children come along each week, aged 3-11. This is a wide range of ages that mix well together. SOS have a good range of talented leaders with different skills, who are excited about the new Head of YCF and including more worship and prayer.
- Trevor Towers – Pathfinders: The Pathfinders group is for 11-14 year olds and has been relatively small in number but is growing. The group spend time on Bible reading, asking questions, and having open discussions. This is an important group in church as it's the age group where many people create their Faith. Trevor gave thanks for this fantastic group.
- The above reports and updates were received with no questions. There were no formal motions.

### **8. Closing Worship.**

The APCM concluded at 1pm

## **Statutory Reports**



### **Treasurer's Report**

#### **General Fund**

At the beginning of 2017 financial year, we forecast a break-even budget on PCC unrestricted General Fund, which included transfers between Repair, Pre-school and HYCFM Funds. This was subsequently revised to a surplus of £21,125 reflecting the departure of the Student Coordinator and a delay in the appointment of the HYCFM. We give thanks to God that at the year end the forecast surplus was significantly higher than our final V3c budget revision, finishing at £38, 292. Overall, compared to budget, our income was approximately £8,200 higher and our expenditure £9,000 lower than forecast.

Donations (Voluntary Income) decreased slightly to £158,858 from £159,271 in 2016 and were higher than budget by nearly £4,000. Gift Aid Tax recovered amounted to £30,873 - a very significant sum.

The Pre-School funds transfer to General Fund, for the daily use of the Vicarage Hall, was £5,000, which is a useful contribution towards the fixed costs for the building. Income continued to be supplemented by rental for the Garden House of 12,200 for the year, paid by the Diocese to provide housing provision for the Medway Campus Chaplain. Wedding and funeral fees, at £2,666 were almost the same as last year. We were fully reimbursed by the Diocese and for the secondment of the Student Coordinator at the beginning of the year and by SMI Church for Jonica Thomas as SMI Administrator.

For expenditure, staff costs were lower than budget by £2,232 due to the HYCFM commencing employment a month later than originally forecast. 92% of Shane's salary cost was met by the £10,000 grant we were awarded last year from The Bishop of Rochester's Fund for Mission. The cost of running our buildings (excluding Garden House) was £5,384 lower than budget. Youth and children, students and evangelism expenditures were also lower than budget. Mission Giving was £12,008, compared to a budget of £15,900. The balance of £3,892 was transferred to the Mission Fund as carry over to 2018. Our total Away Giving was £14,008. Based on 10% of donations received in 2017, our General Fund Away Giving in 2018 will be budgeted at £15,900.

This year the PCC, together with St Mary's Island Church DCC, agreed that the Parish Offer paid to the Diocese, as a contribution to

meet both stipend costs for parish clergy and towards other diocesan support costs, would be £70,000, which was £14,000 less than 2016. This was apportioned £56,000 for St Mark's and £14,000 for St Mary's Island – I.E. 80%/20% split. We need to be mindful that we will be expected to increase our contribution in future years as the Diocese is facing a significant year on year deficit which needs to be addressed.

The General Fund cash at bank and in hand at 31 December 2017 was £75,869. After debtors and creditors adjustment the net current asset was £82,813. This represents a 'reserve' of 41.9% of our 2018 forecast expenditure.

<b>General Fund Highlights</b>	<b>2017</b>	<b>2016</b>
Donations (Voluntary Income)	£158,858	£159,271
Total Income	£192,935	£167,604
Total Expenditure	£160,526	£161,664
Surplus (Deficit)	£32,409	£5,940
Net Surplus/Deficit after transfers	£38,292	£4,117

### **Other Funds**

The total year-end balance in our Repair Funds was £33,390. We deposited a total of £5,225 and made no withdrawals.

During the year, we settled architect's fees of £7,781 from the Development Fund, which now has a balance of £68,947.

The balance in the Mission Fund is £7,558, which included £3,892 unallocated transfer from General Fund Mission Giving. We donated £500 to Medway Winter Night Shelter, £500 for the Let Loose concert and £1,000 for Just One at Priestfield from this fund.

The Vicar's Discretionary Fund received donations of £2,850 with discretionary spending of £500 giving a surplus of £2,350. The fund current balance is £3,996.

Donations and fund-raising income in connection with the India Mission Visit were put into a new restricted India Fund. The total received was £17,473, with expenditure of £3,196, giving a year-end balance of £14,277. A Reach at Gillingham Pier Restricted Fund was also formed to support management of income and expenditure for this venture until it is more established. The current balance is £75.

Pre-School income from all sources was £65,571 and expenditure £56,132 giving a surplus for the year of £9,439 and a net surplus of

£4,939 after transfer of £5,000 to General Fund. This compares to a net deficit of £3,482 in 2016. During the year £4,674 was transferred from the current account to the deposit account to increase the contingency reserve. The Pre-school Fund balance is £23,554.

<b>Fund Balances</b>	<b>Closing 2017</b>	<b>Opening 2017</b>
General Fund	£82,813	£44,522
Development Fund	£68,947	£70,700
Mission Fund	£7,558	£5,006
Repair Funds	£33,390	£28,072
Small Funds	£500	£500
Vicar's Discretionary Fund	£3,996	£1,646
Pre-school Fund	23,554	£19,114
HYCFM Fund	£0	£10,000
India Fund	£14,277	£0
Reach at Gillingham Pier Fund	£75	£0
<b>Net current assets less current liabilities</b>	<b>£235,109</b>	<b>£179,559</b>

After some iterations, the PCC has approved the final 2018 V2c budget, with a year-end forecast deficit of £14,925, which includes provision for an additional member of administrative staff from April 2018.

I would like to again record thanks to all those who help and support the financial tasks within St Mark's - the Gift Aid Secretary, Payroll Management Officer, the office staff, the offering counting team, banking of cash and management of Pre-School accounts. I also thank the PCC Finance Task Group for their support and guidance throughout the year.

Approximately 82% of our General Fund income is from voluntary giving and we thank God for the sacrificial giving of so many that His work may continue and grow here and beyond.

*Glyn Allen, Treasurer*



## **Fabric, Goods and Ornaments**

The following buildings, associated land and other related assets are entrusted to us and it is our corporate responsibility to care for their upkeep led by the Churchwardens and PCC. Our responsibility relates to:

**St Mark's Church**  
**The Old Vicarage**  
**The Vicarage Hall**  
**The Garden House**

The maintenance of **The Vicarage** is the responsibility of the Diocesan Board of Finance and minor works have been undertaken by them during the year.

### **Premises Task Group**

This sub-committee of the PCC meets every 2-3 months to ensure that our various buildings are fit for Christian mission and activity as well as to oversee the work necessary to keep our buildings in good running order. We would like to thank the members of this group for their diligence, and in particular Graham Wilkins, Mic Aldington and Deano Standing who continue to make themselves available to respond to emergency repairs and generally serve in a selfless manner.

Some members of the Task Group, as well as Peter Guinness and Glyn Allen, Deano Standing and Graham Wilkins continue to meet as a specific Buildings Development Group to oversee the Accessible Toilet project.

### **Quinquennial Inspections**

The Church building is inspected every five years by a Diocesan appointed surveyor - this is known as the Quinquennial Inspection (QQ). The report makes recommendations on short, medium and long-term issues and assesses the amount to be contributed to the Diocesan Repair Fund which will assist in the financing of such works. The Church was last inspected in October 2013.

Most matters associated with that inspection have now been dealt with, especially given the significant work on the Church roof during 2017. The Buildings Development Group are looking to address the balance of the issues at the same time as the work being undertaken for the accessible toilets.

## **The Church**

We hope, in 2018, to finally start work on the accessible toilet project; the plans have been agreed by the Diocese, faculty received, building plans passed by the council therefore giving us a green light to proceed.

The AV team are in the process of drawing up plans for better quality speakers and screens and continue with the running replacement of items needed to support our activities.

We will soon be undertaking significant repairs to the Church roof and guttering because of storms; these costs will be met by our insurers where the cost will exceed our policy but will still save us in significant expense. The tiles on the roof are not nailed down so unless something is done to rectify this long term, we will inevitably continue to face a problem each time the wind blows hard. Obviously, to nail them all down now would have a large cost implication which wouldn't be covered by the insurers.

We have not lost sight of the fact that one of the two Church boilers remains out of commission. We are concerned about the boiler and the heating capacity as it is under-powered to heat the Church. The Premises Task Group will be discussing this issue shortly and will be obtaining quotes. The boiler in the vestry had to be condemned as it had a major leak in the heat exchanger and was unrepairable. The new boiler for the vestry and accessible toilets will be installed along with the toilet project.

Finally, we would like to particularly thank the small team - who know who they are - but especially Barry Hills, for their ongoing commitment to caring for the building and for litter-picking around the Church and Old Vicarage sites, especially on a Sunday morning.

Thanks also to Stan Brown who has cleaned the church building during the year.

## **The Old Vicarage**

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

Still of concern is the partial collapse of one of the boundary walls on the site, in an area of wall that is St Mark's responsibility. The Premises Task Group will look into this once the Church accessible toilet project is completed later this year. We will continue to be looking at repair/rebuilding options with the other parties responsible for sections of the boundary wall on this site.

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

### **Vicarage Hall**

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

We are grateful to Deano Standing and Graham Wilkins for polishing the Hall floor over the Summer as well as Steve and Lynn Trebill for their diligence in cleaning the Hall week by week.

### **The Garden House**

The Garden house has been occupied by Lynne Martin who is the new Universities Campus Chaplain (a Diocesan appointment) and she moved into the house in April/May time. The house was cleaned and painted, the garden trimmed and made fit for purpose. The GRP fascia and the rainwater goods have been repaired. A special thank you to Deano Standing and the team for carrying out all the work in the Garden House to get it fit for purpose. The Diocese continue to pay us rent for its use by their University Campus Chaplain.

### **The Vicarage**

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

*Helen Towers and Raymond Shergill (Churchwardens)*

### **Proceedings of the PCC**

Following the APCM in April, the PCC has met ten times. Samuel Wilkins was welcomed as the new PCC secretary, taking over from Becky England who had been holding the post for the previous three years. Saju Muthalaly, Helen Towers and Terry Whittaker have taken turns as meeting Chair and Raymond Shergill and Helen have been working hard in their new roles as Churchwardens.

Standing Committee members were elected, or re-elected, along with other Officers of the PCC. Ian Graves stood down as assistant Churchwarden and was replaced by Deano Standing. St Mary's Island Church is represented on the PCC by Carolyn Facey (one of their Licensed Readers). St. Mark's Pre-School continues to be managed by a separate committee answerable to PCC and, in the Summer, the Chair, Suzanne Wilkins, and others stood down to be replaced; Lance Hanning was elected as the new Chair. It was

decided in July that Lance should therefore be co-opted onto PCC to represent the interests of the Pre-School.

There have been several changes in staff throughout this year: Lynne Martin left the employment of St. Mark's to become full-time Medway Campus Chaplain but still has pastoral oversight from Saju; Shane and Chris Cordle joined the Church in August with Shane being appointed as Head of Youth, Children and Families; and Amanda Maskell joined us in September as our Curate.

Pauline Jackson will be stepping down as Office Manager in April 2018 and it is hoped that, by the time of the APCM, we will have appointed an Operations Manager and Administrator, both working part-time.

Each PCC meeting opens with the Chair bringing a Bible verse and thought with prayer, and every meeting has a financial report from the Treasurer and Gift Aid secretary. There are usually 12 to 15 documents to read before meetings and three meetings a year are short to allow for Task Groups to meet afterwards.

This has been a very busy year for the PCC with many decisions which often had major financial and resource implications. Throughout the year, St Mark's has struggled with issues of deteriorating sound, vision and building maintenance and much work has been put in to enable the provision of an accessible toilet, where we are very close to building work starting.

There was an away day on Saturday 10 June where we looked at opportunities and challenges for St Mark's in the coming years. We also heard about the Bishop's Mission Order for Reach at Gillingham Pier and Terry Whittaker's potential future.

Through year the PCC received reports which included St Mary's Island Church, Small Groups and Deanery Synod.

The PCC regularly receives proposals for new initiatives to consider from the congregation as well as the Diocese and outside bodies. This year, two of the approved proposals are "Who Let the Dads Out" and Just One.

The work of the PCC requires a lot of commitment from members and we do appreciate all possible prayer to support us as we take responsibility for the mission and ministry of St Mark's.

*Samuel Wilkins, PCC Secretary*

## **Electoral Roll**

The two tables below provide a breakdown of the movements recorded during 2017-18 for St Mark's and St Mary's Island Churches.

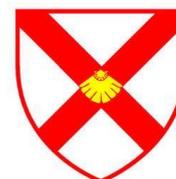
St Marks	Activity	Qty	Qty
	Total in 2017 report		202
	Left	4	
	Deceased	0	
	Joined E/Roll in 2017/2018		19
<b>Total in 2018 Report</b>		<b>217</b>	

St Mary's	Activity	Qty	Qty
	Total in 2017 report		64
	Left		
	Deceased		
	Joined E/Roll in 2017/2018		5
<b>Total in 2018 report</b>		<b>69</b>	

*Kelvin Summoogum, Electoral Roll Officer*

## **Rochester Diocesan Synod**

Comment /History: I know many of you probably find the thought of Synodical Government in the C of E boring and you probably think that it is irrelevant to what happens at St. Mark's week by week. But in fact, in my time as member of the congregation at St. Mark's it has changed our life together out of all recognition.



I have been involved in the various levels of Synodical Government for well over 30 years. In the 1990's I represented the Diocese of Rochester as an elected lay member of General Synod; I am a member of the Rochester Diocesan Synod and was, for a time, Lay Chair of the Diocesan Synod and Lay Chair of the Bishop's Council; I am a member Gillingham Deanery Synod of which I was one-time Lay Chair. I have been a member, on and off, of St. Mark's PCC since the 1960's and a founder member of St. Mary's Island Church DCC. So, I have experiences in all the parts of the Synodical process from the top to the actual coal face. Topics are discussed at all levels and passed backwards and forwards up and down the chain before becoming incorporated in Canon Law. Bishop Michael Nazir Ali was pleased to acknowledge my contribution to the local and national church by conferring on

me the title of Honorary Lay Canon of Rochester Cathedral (There are only ever 4 lay canons of Rochester Cathedral at any one time).

I have been privileged to see many changes that have affected us here at St. Mark's. Just to mention a few: - Ordination of Women to the Priesthood, Common Worship Services which has produced much more freedom in our Worship, Woman Bishops, the need for lay involvement and leadership and so many more other areas that have affected us in the local Church. Prominent has been the many changes in Safeguarding brought about by changes in our understanding, as a nation, of child protection and safeguarding of vulnerable adults. Several cases of the laity, clergy and Bishop misconduct that have been featured in the national press have highlighted our various problems as a national Church. So, although, we may not think it, our life together here at St. Mark's has been dramatically changed by the Synodical Government of the C of E. And I am sure there are many more changes to come in the years ahead, perhaps one of them being Lay Presidency at Holy Communion?

Annual Report for the year ended 31<sup>st</sup> December 2017: There have been three meetings of the **Diocesan Synod** this year, as usual, held in March, June, and October. The major item was a discussion and consultation on the Diocese's Strategy for the future with the "**Called Together**" day at Rochester Cathedral on November 4<sup>th</sup>. The Reach Project headed up by Terry Whittaker being part of this strategy. Other items raised during the year were a policy for Laity and Clergy, called "**Dignity at Work**", which highlighted some bullying in the Church and was adopted as a policy for good working practice in the Diocese. A review was set in motion on the deployment of clergy in the Diocese and, of course, discussions on the Diocesan Budget and the general Diocesan financial situation.

At the October Synod, five projections for future Diocesan Budgets were put forward. The only one to produce a possible small surplus after five years was a 2.5% increase in the overall increase in Parish Offers each year. It also required a reduction in Stipendiary Clergy – three posts in 2018 and five posts in 2019 and 2020. A considerable challenge to us all as some congregations are declining. But the good news is that there is an

air of optimism coming from the Bishop and Diocese about the future and our message of Good News in the Gospel is as relevant today as it ever was.

***Let us go on loving Gillingham and its people as God loves them.***

*Canon Ernie Mann, Diocesan Synod Representative*

### **Gillingham Deanery Synod**

Deanery Synod has met three times during 2017. The meetings are hosted at different locations throughout the Deanery with the host Church giving a short update on their Parish at the meeting. The meetings have been dominated by ongoing work to create and adopt a Deanery Mission and Ministry Plan. The plan is intended to be a realistic blueprint to identify and enable areas of work where the Deanery churches can work together for the benefit of all. As it stands, it has four sections: Growing Disciples; Growing Leaders; Growing Resources; and Growing Communities. The plan also has three stages, Exploration, Implementation and Review and Reshape with the current thinking being that it will start to deliver value in 2019.

The Deanery reps. starting 2017 were Jo Whittaker, Graham Davis and Luke Prankard. All three stood down at the APCM and we thank them for their service. The current Deanery Synod reps. are Siju Adeoye, Keith Sheepwash, Terry Whittaker and Eve Martin (representing St Mary's Island) who were all appointed for a three-year term.

*Terry Whittaker, Deanery Synod member*

**Gillingham Deanery Synod Churches:** St Augustine; St Barnabas; St Luke; St Mark (including St Mary's Island); St Mary Magdalene; Holy Trinity, Twydall; St Margaret, Rainham; South Gillingham (St Matthew, Wigmore – All Saints, Hempstead – St Paul, Parkwood – St Peter, Bredhurst)



## **Additional Reports**

### **ALPHA – An Introduction to the Christian Faith**

We held an Alpha Course in January which went very well. As always, it was a blessing to be a part of this and see God working in people's lives.



Due to the 'Just One' event at Priestfield Stadium to be held in June 2018 and the associated training required for this, we decided to hold off hosting another Alpha until this has taken place. It is our intention to host a three-session taster course in July 2018, followed by a full Alpha course in September.

*Keith Sheepwash, on behalf of the team*

### **Audio Visual Equipment**

This year's biggest change has been the introduction of a fully digital vision mixer and two 40" monitors on the second pillars. This is all in preparation for the replacement of the projector. On that note, watch this space!



Not quite the normal tech report but just to mention we have installed a security camera system in Church, following several thefts last year. This is a 24/7 recording system which meets police evidence criteria.

We would still welcome more volunteers to help us run the sound and video systems, even though we are currently training a couple of people.

Once again, many thanks to all the team for their dedication and all members off the congregation who give of their time to assist in the maintenance of the system.

*Mic Aldington and Chris Blewett*

### **Baptism Visiting**

We have had a larger number of baptisms during this past year, some from within the Church family but most from the wider parish area. We still visit all candidates in their homes and show them a short DVD called "The First Steps" which is an overview of the Christian faith explaining what it means to be baptised, the process of the baptism service and the responses the parents and god-parents will be asked to make.

We also give the families a copy of the St Mark's baptism booklet and talk with them about the church's expectation of them and answer any concerns or questions they may have.

*Keith Sheepwash, on behalf of the visiting team*

## **Catering and Hospitality**



With the absence of SPLAT! events this year, 2017 was a quiet start for the catering team, however the later part of the year offered opportunities for the St Mark's folks to offer hospitality for Lynne Martin's licensing as the new Medway Campus Chaplain, followed very quickly by the licensing of Terry Whittaker as Lay Worker and Leader of Reach at Gillingham Pier. In the lead-up to Christmas we also celebrated the Carer's Carol Service in church and the Empty Chair Service. This was followed by the SPLAT! Christingle service which far exceeded our expectations with many new non-Christian people attending from the Gillingham community. This gave all the members of St Mark's the opportunity to show off all their wonderful cooking and baking skills!

We look forward to this coming year especially with the 'Feed the 5000' project, looking at ways to extend our hospitality to reach the lonely, homeless and lost in our Gillingham community.

So, a big thank you to all the members of St. Marks who baked cakes, served teas/coffees, cleaned up and washed up, without whom, none of these events could have taken place. THANK YOU.

*Lynda Smith, on behalf of the teams*

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



The Summer of 2017 saw the cricket team of St Mark's and St Mary's Island in action once again, buoyed by some encouraging performances during our first year (2016). The cricketing talent we have was in evidence once again to prove our capability in this great game. Our batting was built mainly around the abilities of Saju, JT and Des with the rest of us chipping in to lift our total to respectable levels. Bowling and fielding were enthusiastic, ensuring that the opposition had to work for their runs. The diversity of our team provided a useful mix of exuberance of youth and the experience of age. And, of course, we were indebted to our meticulous scorer, John Beck, whose accurate management of this aspect of the game was particularly

important for two of the games when the result was decided on the last ball. (Take note those who think that cricket cannot be exciting)! Thank you to those who came to watch, for this makes such a contribution to the family atmosphere, and we hope to see more of you supporting us for the games this coming Summer. New players always welcome.

*Guy Jackson*



## **Elderly Care:**

### **Charing House Care and Residential Home**

We have continued throughout 2017 to provide Christian ministry to the residents of Charing House twice a month.

**The Monthly Service:** Four teams drawn from local churches take the monthly service on a rota basis which means each team operates three times a year on the second Sunday of each month. Although each team is free to organise the service as they feel pastorally helpful to the residents, certain core items always feature such as, hymns, a Bible Reading, a reflection (as distinct from a sermon) and prayer. Residents appreciate these services which has also drawn a small core of regulars.

The December service is always the Annual Carol Service at which other team members are encouraged to attend to make it more of an occasion and this past year we were led in the singing by a small choir arranged by Kathryn Thom. This was particularly enjoyed by the residents.

Inevitably with the elderly, attendance fluctuates due to health issues and visitors but two members of the Activities Team there remind the residents and fetch them to the main lounge where the services take place. A cup of tea is always provided after each service which affords the opportunity to chat and get to know the residents.

I would like to offer my grateful thanks to all team members and especially the team leaders who have the additional responsibility of organising their team and the service when their team's turn comes around.

**Monthly Communion Service:** The first paragraph made mention of *twice* a month visits. The second service we have, also monthly but on the last Monday of each month, is Holy Communion but no team accompanies the person taking it.

One of the regular retired clergy developed mobility problems so has withdrawn leaving only Revd Mike McLaughlin and myself to alternate each month. Canvassing for a replacement, or more, has not yielded any volunteers from the local ordained retired clergy.

This service was principally offered to former church members who did not have their priest available to give them Communion. However, it is open to anyone who wishes to receive Holy Communion with numbers varying from three to seven. More recently, a resident confined to bed long-term has also been visited with Communion in her room after the service which she appreciates.

**Overall:** Our main contact in Charing House is with the two ladies who form the Activities Team, with whom we enjoy a very good relationship, backed by their willing co-operation.

Whilst we enjoy a large measure of stability with our resources, inevitably some people drop out for a variety of reasons so there is always capacity to bring in new volunteers and, especially so, if you can play a musical instrument. Anyone feeling the Lord moving them in that direction, please speak to Graham Davis for more details.

Ministry to the elderly is yet another part of the wide range of Christian service provided by members of St Mark and, in this case, with other churches as well. To offer the peace of Christ, assurance and comfort to those in the latter stages of their lives as well as receiving their wisdom is a great privilege.

*Graham Davis*

## **St Mark's House**

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

The meetings are organised by St Mark's with help and support given by loyal representatives from several other Churches. Numerous speakers are invited throughout the year, chosen mainly from lay readers and other willing volunteers, and we would like to

thank all those who regularly agree to help with this. There are periodic Holy Communion Services throughout the year which sometimes include prayer for healing and anointing with oil.

Generally, we have five elderly residents who attend but a few more came for the Christmas Carol Service at which we were joined by Kathryn Thom and the choir from St Mark's. We all had a joyous time praising God so thanks to all involved. We had almost thirty people filling the lounge – maybe it was the mince pies that were the attraction!!

*Richard and Jane Tolhurst*

## **Eritrean Church**

The congregation are mostly young men age 16-20 living in Medway. However, Holy Week attracted young ladies from their community too, in the daily worship. The atmosphere of worship during the Holy Week echoed exhortations, solemn prayers, native spiritual songs, percussion sound of Kebero Drums and clapping of hands.



Earlier in the year, the lads had their first ever public presentation at the Holocaust Memorial Day at Rochester Cathedral presided by The Bishop of Rochester, Bishop James Langstaff. The Bishop encouraged the attendees on the importance of Welcome, Tolerance and Mutual Respect for all.

In the mid-year, the entire Eritrean congregation joined us and several other Churches in Gillingham for the United Pentecost Service in the final leg of "Thy Kingdom Come" prayer movement. It was a night where 'The Lord's Prayer' was chanted in 14 different languages and the Eritrean language was one of them. What was more moving was the harrowing account of Simon's journey to England, a spellbinding moment of heroism not to be forgotten. The Archdeacon of Rochester, The Ven. Simon Burton-Jones was so moved that he requested their story to be featured in October's Rochester Link.



The year ended with a proposal to the PCC to take on 'The Hub' - a language, life skill, business support and signposting service.

*Siju Adeoye*

## **Faith & Light**

After many years of leading the **Faith and Light Adult Community**, Rachel Littlewood stepped down in 2017 and handed the baton to Trevor and me; we appreciate all her input and value her continued expertise on our leadership team.

Faith and Light is a Church community for anyone of any age with a learning disability as well as their families and carers. We have a community for adults that meets fortnightly on Wednesday evenings, 6.30pm–8.30pm, in the Vicarage Hall (except for August). Our evenings are spent learning more about our Christian faith together in a fun and relevant way. We regularly have between twenty and thirty people at our meetings and all are encouraged to take an active part.

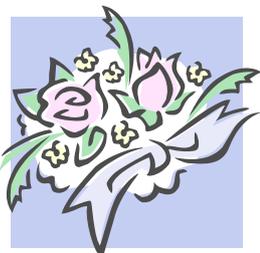
We visited Aylesford Friary in July and many of us went to visit Minister Abbey to spend time with the Benedictine Nuns in August.

We have a separate **Faith and Light Junior Community** for those aged 16 and under, which meets every second Saturday of the month, 10.30am–12.00 noon, during term-time. A small number of families attend regularly. There is a mixture of games, craft, messy play, story, song and prayer led by a dedicated team, all with experience of working with children with additional needs.

Again, this year, the Adult and Junior communities came together in July for a BBQ and a joint Christmas party in December. We were also privileged to work in conjunction with the Music Man Project Kent and share 'Peace and Hope' at both Green Street Baptist Church and St Mark's Church Carol Services.

*Karen Dyer*

## **Flower Arrangements and Displays Team**



A team of church members arrange the flower displays each week on a rota basis. Fresh flowers are used in the arrangements, usually on the second Sunday of the month, and artificial flowers in between. When there are specific Christian festivals, e.g. Christmas, Easter, Harvest, we usually have extra displays and the whole team work on them together. Since September, experienced team members have paired with those less experienced which is working well; several have now gone on to arrange displays individually.

We do hope you enjoy the arrangements.

*Keith Sheepwash on behalf of the team*

## **The Gathering**

A group for young adults was reformed in October 2017 and has met monthly ever since.

*When?* Meetings take place at 8pm on the second Sunday in the month.

*Where?* Venue is slightly flexible, often Saju and Katy graciously open their home to the group, when this is not possible we meet at the Old Vicarage.

*Who?* The group is self-regulating in that if you consider yourself a 'young adult' then this group is for you! There are around 40 members from churches around Gillingham although not all make it every time.

*What do you do?* We generally start by gathering around food and drink before moving into a teaching/discussion-based format. Topics so far have included, what it means to be hospitable, fasting, prophecy and other gifts of the Holy Spirit. We are happy for members to suggest subjects to study and generally the teaching is geared to enable us to live out our faith in a positive way on our front lines.

*How do I get involved?* Let Saju, Lynne Martin, Shane or Amanda know that you want to come along - we will add you to the WhatsApp group for communication and just come along to the next meeting.

*Amanda Maskell*

## **His Majesty's Gospel Choir**

Sadly, the group has been inactive during 2017 as lots of our members now have different responsibilities. There is nothing yet planned for 2018; hopefully something will arise before the end of the year. It is well.

*Mayowa Oyinloye*

## **Ladies Group**

2017 was an interesting year for ladies group, supporting each other through some difficult times such as changing schools, illness and family bereavements. Some members have returned to work or moved away during the year, but we hope they will stay in touch.

During the year, we followed the church-led small group Bible studies; Amanda cooked us an amazing fried breakfast when she led her study! We held one small social event - a pot luck family lunch which was very much enjoyed by those who attended.

Sadly, Mo stepped down from leading so Kamilah and Lucy have taken on leadership of the group, with support and prayers from the rest of the ladies.

We continue to run our Facebook prayer and praise group and see lots of answers to prayers - sometimes in God's timing not ours! We welcomed lots of new members too, including four new-born babies - God's family continues to grow.

We continue to look into if/how we can restart a creche, however our numbers of able-bodied ladies have dropped so it's not been feasible in 2017; hopefully we can in 2018.

*Lucy Day*

## **Medway Campus Chaplain**

As many of you will be aware, I took on the post of Medway Campus Chaplain early 2017 and I'm currently in the middle of my first full academic year. Whilst the post itself is not hugely different from what I was doing, it has become much bigger and consequently, more demanding. My role now covers all three university institutions at the Medway Campus; a total of some 10,000 students and several thousand staff.

As part of my role I manage a multi-faith Faith Space on campus. This is a new venture and comes with its own unique set of challenges. In addition to finding myself on more committees than I can name, my role continues to include TABLEtalk, the World Cafe, our Bargain Corner and Bring & Share Lunches. I am grateful to all those who help to make these events possible.

One highlight of the past year was a very successful World Mental Health Day which was a joint venture between the institutions and earned us a 2 1/2-minute slot on KMTV 😊

Please pray for the amazing opportunities I have to support students and staff; often offering them a word of prayer.

*Lynne Martin, Medway Campus Chaplain*

## **Medway Foodbank Centre for Gillingham**



St. Mark's Foodbank has been running well throughout the year 2017/18. From January to December 2017 we distributed 767 food vouchers to people in crisis; from these vouchers, 1,041 were adults, 615 were children, totalling 1,656 people fed.

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

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

We continue to offer prayer to our clients with a 90 - 95% uptake and also invite them to our Church service on a Sunday. We are not here just to offer food - a big part of what we do is to signpost people to organisations that can help, for example: CAP (Christians against Poverty) Money Course for people with debt problems; ALPHA Course for those who would like to go further in exploring Christianity; Housing & Homelessness for people facing eviction; The Night Shelter for people who are sleeping rough; and also for those suffering domestic abuse, alcohol & drug abuse. Sometimes a friendly face and a telephone number of an organisation that might be able to help will be all it takes to really make a difference in someone's life.

We are also involved in an initiative called Medway R.E.A.P (Restoration- Empowerment- Action- Purpose). Medway REAP is a partnership of Medway Charities which include Strood Community Project, All Saints Community Project, Home Start, MEGAN (Medway-Engagement-Group-And-Network) who offer help for people who have mental health needs and MRS Letting (Mid-Kent-Residential-Services). All these charities are committed to helping anyone who is in hardship crisis.

During 2017 Medway Foodbank honoured 2,739 vouchers; from these, 3,859 were adults, 2,431 were children, totalling 6,290 people fed. The top four reasons were:

- 1/ Low income
- 2/ Benefit delays
- 3/ Benefit changes
- 4/ Debt

Ian Childs, Project Manager of Medway Foodbank, says "I am simply overwhelmed by the generosity of those who donate their food, money or time to Medway Foodbank. Without them it would simply not happen. I am particularly grateful to those who are able to meet people at their point of need and to reveal the love of God, through His local Church. The team at St Mark's are a vital part of the work of Medway Foodbank - my deepest thanks to you all."

*Paul Smith, Medway Foodbank Co-ordinator*

### **Men's Group/Curry Nights**

The baton for organising the Men's Curry Night was passed to me in August and it has been a great honour to continue to organise these over the past months.

The aim of this group was established to encourage the men to let their guards down and engage with other men that they don't necessarily mingle with during a Sunday service.

The previous curry night took place in the Indian curry restaurant, The Bollywood Buffet; the turnout of 27 men, both young and old, was very encouraging and it was a relaxed evening.

Another curry night is planned for March 2018. The food will be home cooked by men in church and the venue will be at the Old Vicarage. Men will be encouraged to give a donation towards this in order to cover any cost incurred.

*Damola Oyinloye*

### **Mission Links Task Group (MLTG)**

The Mission Links Task Group (MLTG) is a sub-committee of the PCC responsible to oversee support of our Mission Partners through prayer, pastoral care and financial support. MLTG recommends to the PCC how we allocate our Mission Giving (10% of our previous year's voluntary income), and other Away Giving.

There were some changes in our Mission Partners portfolio in 2017. With its closure at the end of March, we stopped our support of Word on the Street. We also switched our Tearfund Connected Church regular commitment for the Change a Nation project to the Sahaara India project, where some of the India 2018 team will be visiting in April 2018. We commenced supporting The Family Trust,

a local Christian organisation, reaching children by visiting schools and churches to support their children's activities.

We have continued to support Katy Barnwell (Wycliffe), Tim and Tricia Barrow (SIM), Lucy Haslam (UFM), Carrie McFarlane (Mission India), Francis and Diane Dognon (France), Hyndman's Trustees (our Patron) and Tearfund. We also made one-off donations to Night Shelter (Medway), Just One at Priestfield with J John (Kent) and the 'Let Loose' Concert (Gillingham).

We are grateful for the Support of Tim and Tricia Barrow as members of MLTG, with their many years first hand mission experience in the field.

It is good to receive news updates from those we support and these are published on our website. Please continue to pray for our Mission Partners and if you would like to join MLTG, please speak to either of us or Tim and Tricia.

*Keith Sheepwash and Glyn Allen*

## **Music Worship**

*No report submitted*

## **Prayer Ministry Teams**

Members of the prayer teams are always available to pray with you or lend a listening ear, in the strictest confidence, after a Sunday morning service. Occasionally, they are also available after Communion or as a response to God's Word depending on the service.



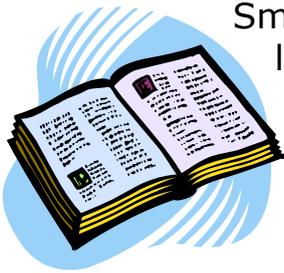
Team members have all been trained and may offer prayer, anointing with oil, laying on of hands, or a combination of all three. If you:

- are seeking God's healing
- are needing prayer for an interview or hospital appointment
- are seeking God's leading or direction
- need help in coming to faith
- want to know Jesus as your personal Saviour

then please come and find us in the side chapel at the front of church.

*Keith Sheepwash on behalf of the team*

## **Small Groups**



Small Groups have continued to meet in a variety of locations and times to suit their members. Some groups meet weekly, others once a fortnight. Membership remains static with some new members of the congregation having joined groups, but others having left for different reasons.

The focus of the small groups this year has continued to be linked to the Sunday sermon themes, allowing people opportunity to discuss further and pray through the Bible passages and teaching. Alongside the small group discussion and Bible studies, some groups spend weeks in praise and prayer or in social events that further support getting to know the members and sometimes their wider families.

We continue to be extremely grateful to those who have worked hard to make the small groups happen, encouraging and building up the members through their planning, prayer and support. Please pray for our small group leaders as they continue this role, often busy with other responsibilities, family situations, illness themselves. We are especially grateful to them for carrying on through 2017 with very little support from ourselves. For several reasons, we have decided that, after 7 or 8 years, it is time for us to step down from coordinating the small groups. Thank you so much to Pauline Jackson for stepping in for a season.

*Gary and Chris Atkins*

***Pauline writes:*** "The home group leaders met for breakfast in November where I took on the baton as small group coordinator. Please do come and talk to me if you would like to be part of a small group or start a new one! At the start of 2018 there will be a small group review, led by Amanda, to find out what we want from our small groups and what their future could look like".

## **Winter Night Shelter**

Starting as a brand-new initiative in 2016, the Medway Winter Night Shelter is run by volunteers from across the churches, each playing roles in a variety of different capacities, with the aim to support the homeless and needy of Medway throughout the cold months of winter.

Joyce writes: "This is the first time I've volunteered locally at the MWNS. Considering I'm a local person I'm amazed and delighted at

*the amount of Churches there are in Medway. I get the opportunity during quiet time, before "lights out", to read an array of literature and have met two lovely female Christian volunteers.*

*I can't explain the immense joy at seeing a full shelter on a really cold night, or indeed any night. Also, any donations of warm clothing I take in are gratefully received".*

The guests have ranged from being new to street-homelessness to long-term on the streets. Most of the EU guests have not continued returning to the shelter and instead, have returned to street homelessness making use of the Emergency refuge when it's open.

Referrals have been sent in equal numbers through Caring Hands and Medway Council. Registration has been opened every day for at least an hour each day.

Medway Council visited each Thursday, Pathways have been in, the Stride Clinic has visited on three occasions and several guests have had their feet seen to and ill-fitting shoes replaced. A hairdresser has been on call and hair has been plaited; laundry is done on a rota basis - guests do appreciate the nice smelling duvets and pillows.

The transport has gone relatively well given the technological difficulties and all help is much appreciated. Fantastic meals have been served - always 2 courses, with a veggie option, and a good supply of tea, coffee and cold drinks. The Homeless Church service went well, and a dedicated group of pray-ers hold the shelter before God each week. Funds are coming in well, as are items for the shelter. All donations appreciated.

*Joyce McEvoy*

## **Youth, Children and Families Ministries**

### **Children:**

**Crèche** (up to 3 years old, meeting on a Sunday morning)

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



The numbers vary each week but there are a few regulars who seem to feel at home in the small area provided. Thank you again to

those who have helped to keep the crèche area relatively clear and clean ready for Sunday mornings. We would appreciate your continued vigilance in ensuring that anything accessible (toys, resources, furniture) in this area is suitable for under 3's. The reason we ask for under 3's and their parents/carers only is because sometimes we get quite busy and, as the area is small, we need to make sure it is safe and not overwhelming for our youngest members.

Thank you for your understanding in recognising and valuing the youngest members of the church family. Please pray for these children and their parents/carers that they will experience God's love through the services.

Thank you to Natasha McCready who faithfully continues on the crèche rota and to Alastair and Lucy Williams for their support – their twins have now moved on to SOS, so they are stepping down from the rota. We are grateful to Katie Blewett who has recently joined the crèche team.

*Chris Atkins*

**St. Mark's Pre-School** (for 2 to 4-year olds, Monday to Friday during term-time)



Throughout the first half of 2017 the Pre-School ran with uncertainty over its future. Threat from changes in hours available for children (30 hours), tight finances/budgeting restraints and Committee resignations all added to concerns over the Pre-school continuing.

Fortunately, having managed to find replacements to the retiring Committee members, this gave the Pre-School a platform, in September, to continue the Pre-School practice and look to manage the issues that remained outstanding. New to the Pre-School Committee is Lance Hanning - Chair, Alastair Williams - Finance, Suzie Humphries - Secretary, Shane Cordle - general member and Assistant Chair. New to the Practice Staff was Andrea Benford, who replaced Andrea Cross as Healthy Eating Co-ordinator.

Whilst the uncertainty and issues were still live, the Pre-School continued its great work and high quality of learning experience for the children, and on the visit of Ofsted, gained the mark of "Good" from the inspectors.

From January 8<sup>th</sup> 2018, the Pre-School will operate two full days a week as a trial, with the view to monitor the extended Pre-Schools hours to 30 hours for 3-year olds (note: currently the trial is proving successful).

The Pre-School is no longer supported by the Local Authority funded Early Years Team (support from Local Agencies disbanded from December); instead a new independent agency has formed to which funding has been allocated by the PCC to join this new practise.

Julie and her team run the Pre-School with the intention that it should be a fun place to be, with an emphasis on learning by playing and doing.

Numbers of children attending have been steady and it has been pleasing to see the take up for the extra sessions on a Monday & Tuesday.

Planned for the future is a "Summer Pre-School" event embracing the "Feed the 5000" challenge, with personal invites to Pre-School Mums & Dads, Carers, their children and the Pre-School staff.

*Lance Hanning, Chair of St. Mark's Pre-School Management Committee*

**SOS Club** (for 3-11 year olds, meeting on a Sunday morning)



SOS Club continues to be run by a volunteer team of leaders and helpers. During 2017, we met most Sunday mornings on the Old Vicarage site from 10.20am-11.40am to learn more about Jesus and how to grow in faith whilst playing, making, creating, reading the Bible, singing, praying and sometimes eating! The first Sunday of each month was All-Age worship in Church and each Fifth Sunday an All-Age friendly baptism service where we joined with the rest of our St Mark's family. As reported in previous years, numbers have continued to fluctuate week by week but, averaged out to 20 plus each Sunday.

During the first quarter of the year, we finished off the Christian Foundations course that was started in September 2016, using material from Urban Saints (Energize), looking at the Bible, Church, the Trinity and Worship. We then spent time considering the meaning of Easter and whether God really created chocolate eggs!? The team were then keen to look at some of the more well-known Old Testament characters and stories in the Bible as it became clear that, for many of the SOS children, these weren't quite as well-known stories as we thought! So, Adam & Eve, Noah, Moses,

Esther, Abraham, Solomon and Daniel all made an appearance. The term finished with some 'Summer Fun' in the Old Vicarage garden with a bouncy castle and water fight!!

In August, it was great to welcome Shane as the new Head of Youth, Children and Families, as well as Michelle Saunders to the team.

With the start of a new school year, we introduced a new format to SOS with each session starting with a time of praise and worship, using the AV facilities in the Hall, before heading off to smaller groups in the Old Vicarage to look at that week's teaching. This was all about worship with resources provided by Shane from Hillsongs. The last session of the year is always one of the leaders' favourites – the SOS Christmas Party! Sadly, we also said goodbye to Jo Whittaker and Sheena Davidson who have both been involved in youth and children's work at St Mark's for many years. Sam Richardson also has had to reduce his time at SOS due to work commitments.

***Big thanks go to:***

- all the parents/carers who entrust us with their children and with whom it is a real joy to spend time
- Dan Saunders and his guitar for some great live worship
- Conor Whittaker and his AV skills
- Jo, Sheena and Sam for all their hard work, commitment and enthusiasm
- The team for their support and nurturing of the children

**TEAM:** *Caz and Stuart Read, Charlie and Des Burston, Sheena Davidson, Jo Whittaker, Lucy Day, Claire Banner, Sam Richardson, Niamh Cooper, Conor Whittaker, Shane Cordle, Michelle Saunders.*  
*Jo Whittaker on behalf of the team*

**Kidz Klub** (for 7-11 year olds on Friday nights during term-time 6.15pm – 7.30pm)

Kidz Klub continues to be the highlight to so many children's week! Every Friday we have approx. 30/40 children turn up ready to have fun, 95% of whom are non-church families. We have, in the past year, seen a few more children from Church join us which has been lovely to see. The children come from so many different local schools, some of them not knowing anyone, but it's lovely to watch as they build relationships with other children and look forward to seeing each other on a Friday. A few of the new children are also children that used to attend Parents & Toddlers and have returned

some 3 or 4 years later still feeling they have a link and wanting it to continue.

All these children need somewhere safe to come and have fun knowing that they are loved unconditionally; so, week by week we continue to show God's love to these children by just being us!

Our main highlight for last year was our end of year summer party, 40 children plus their parents & siblings filled the Old Vicarage garden for a BBQ. We had music, games, giant inflatable, face painting, laughter and, most of all, we had some fantastic conversations - the children all had such an amazing time. We will definitely be doing the same again this year!

There are so many memories from a year at Kidz Klub with our 'Food from around the World' evening, our 'party in the dark', which involved lots of glow sticks, the Christmas party with our very own version of the nativity, pancakes and national popcorn day to name just a few. We also welcomed Shane with our famous Kidz Klub hot seat evening.

We very sadly said goodbye to Lesley recently who, after 12+ years has stepped down from being part of our regular team; we will miss her so much, but she will be back to help from time to time - so Lesley don't worry we can still do pancakes by torch light!! ☺

The children amaze us sometimes with what they say and even some of the little things we do have such an impact on their lives.

***Prayers for the future would be:***

- We have over 60 children on our books; we really need some more leaders going forward. It doesn't need to be every week; could Kidz Klub be for you?
- What happens after Kidz Klub is still an issue - we have another large group of year 6's that will sadly be leaving us in July. They are already saying they don't want to leave but there still isn't anything to offer them... is this another group of young people we are going to lose ☹

Jason and I would really like to say a massive thank you to such a fantastic team. We really couldn't have done it without you!

**TEAM:** *Jason & Nat Read, Stu & Caz Read, Lesley Boast, Lorraine Schulze, Darren Thom, Lucy Wheatley (JT Mann who kindly helps us if we are short), James Higgins & Josh Read our 2 helpers*

*Nat Read on behalf of the team*

## **Families:**



### **SPLAT!@St.Mark's**

SPLAT!@St.Mark's (aka SPLAT! Saturday's) met only the once during 2017 for our annual Christingle festivities.

We were amazed by the response to the invitations that were sent to past contacts, families from Parent & Toddlers, Kidz Klub and Pre-School especially given we only had limited contact with some of these families during the year, but the day brought around 180 children and their families to join in with our Christmas themed games and quizzes, finding the carrots for the donkey and the various crafts and activities on offer: tree decorations, jelly baby Jesus, tea light holders, 'Shooting Stars' with Nerf guns, face painting, biscuit decorating, flower table decorations.

We were also able to share the Christmas Story, which the children acted out, using the Bible Society version 'The Longest Journey' emphasising the love that Jesus has for each one of us.

The afternoon finished with the Christingle itself, prayer and singing. A massive thank you to everyone who helped in so many different ways - the techie team, serving refreshments, baking cakes, preparing crafts, manning craft tables, chatting to all those who came along, clearing up, washing up, helping to move chairs.....! We couldn't have done it without you.

**TEAM:** Jo Whittaker, Nat Read, Helen Towers, Mike Aldington, Lorraine Schulze, Caz Read, Chris Blewett, Martha Prankard and many others who helped on the day!

*Jo Whittaker on behalf of the team*

## **Parent and Toddlers**



way.

We have continued to provide a safe fun afternoon for pre-school children, their parents and carers every Wednesday afternoon during term-time. We play, paint, glue, sing, listen to a story and have snack time together. We also celebrate special times of the year such as Christmas, Easter and Mother's Day in our own particular child friendly

This past year has been an exciting one in terms of numbers of children, and therefore families, coming to the group. We have

regularly had over 30 children attend, and we have been able to get very close to many of their respective parents/carers. It has been a privilege to listen and help families as they share situations in their life with us. They really are thankful for our support and encouragement, sometimes in difficult and personal times.

A real encouragement for us was the number of our mums who brought their whole families to the 'Christmas Splat' event. This proved to be a great opportunity for conversations both before and after the day. It is also an encouragement for us that many of our children and families go on to treasure the 'Kidz Klub' group and so, continuing St. Marks' link to the local community.

We continue to struggle some weeks with setting up and putting away but are thankful to God for always sending someone along!! It would be lovely though if someone could join us at:

- 1) 12.45 to help set up.
- 2) 12.45 to 3.00pm to set up, talk with our mums and tidy away.
- 3) 2.30pm to put away – especially now that Ian is no longer able to help.

This really is an important ministry within our local community and would be sorely missed if we had to give up through lack of leadership.

A special thank you to all the Mums who do come early or stay late to help us, to Ian for giving up valuable Dockyard time to help us put away and also to Vanessa, Terry and Kathy who continue to be our ever-reliable kitchen team, providing everyone with vital refreshments.

Please pray for everyone involved in Parents and Toddlers, especially the whole leadership issue.

*Sheelagh Graves and Ruth Howard*

## **Youth:**

### **Pathfinders** (school years 7 to 9, 11-14 year olds)

So, what's happened this year in Pathfinders? Firstly, we successfully moved into the Old Vicarage which has been amazing for the young adults to be able to express themselves more openly and have a space to call their own. Secondly, we have had a change in leadership with Katie Byles setting down and Simon Morbey taking over from where Katie left off; we also have had some new leaders, Alice Digman and Chris Cordle, come in to help.

At the beginning of term, we looked at the Nature of God, as someone who is merciful, faithful and forgiving. We then moved on to 'Influences' and how marketing and advertisement influences us but also how Jesus is a positive influence and can change peoples' minds. In September, some new Pathfinders joined the group, having moved up from SOS, and they have settled into the group very well becoming more confident and happy to express themselves within the group. During this term, we looked at worship and how it helps connect us to God and gave the young people time to be able to express themselves; this led to some great discussions on how the children think they fit into church. We finished the year off with a series called 'A Saviour is Born' which was led by a series of short videos - it helped us capture the events surrounding the birth of Jesus.

In the upcoming year we plan to hold a joint social with Landmark, hopefully at Laser Tag, and plan to look at some of the minor prophets from the Bible and how they carried out God's work.

**Please pray** for all the leaders involved at Pathfinders: Chris Cordle; Trevor Towers; Alice Digman; Charmaine Robertson Jones; and Simon Morbey. **Continue to pray** for Pathfinders as a safe place for the young people to come, meet God and continue to explore his greatness; also pray for them to know God's love.

*Simon Morbey*

**Landmark** (school years 9-13, 13-18 years old)

*No report submitted*



***Shane writes:***

"Hello Everyone. Since arriving in August, it has been great to meet and get to know the leaders of the various groups as well as the children and young people themselves, along with their parents and carers. Being around and seeing what's happening in the many different strands of youth and children's work has been amazing and I am really grateful to all the leaders who put in so much time, effort and commitment.

In line with the Church's purpose of living for Jesus, loving Gillingham and learning together, going forward I believe our mission statement for youth, children and family ministries should be to:

*"Support families in raising Godly children and youth through discipleship and sound biblical teaching and to reach out to the families (children and youth) of Gillingham".*

Since September, we have made subtle changes to SOS, such as having a time of praise and worship and splitting into school year groups. We are continuing to make changes and find ways to help parents interact with their children at home. Going forward, with a strong biblical knowledge and a personal relationship with Christ, we look forward to the younger children continuing their growth through Pathfinders and Landmark and growing these two groups as well.

Some of the outreach ministries such as the Parent Toddler group and Kidz Klub continue to reach children in the community, with amazing opportunities for growth and for sharing of God's word. In 2018 we will also be trying to create new outreach ministries for the youth in the community (11-18 years) and become their church.

We have an exciting year coming up and moving forward with new groups starting, such as 'Who Let the Dads Out', as well as other clubs and groups in the planning! As new groups are forming I hope to bring new leaders in to lead and develop the ministries while supporting and encouraging them through the entire process. I ask that we continue to pray for all of the youth, children, families and leaders both in the church and in the community".

*Shane Cordle, Head of Youth, Children and Families*

# St Mary's Island

## St. Mary's Island Church (SMIC)

The Electoral Roll for 2017 was 64 (also 64 for 2016). There were 11 infant baptisms and one Thanksgiving. The average Sunday attendance was 43 adults (43 in 2016) and 19 children (17 in 2016).



## **Outreach**

- During 2017 the Church changed its Mission Statement to: '*Creating spaces for our community to encounter Jesus*'. This decision was made after meetings by a newly formed Mission Action Team (MAT) and also a Marketing and Communication Team (MARCUM). These teams meet to plan, review and recommend actions to the DCC or to receive a brief from the DCC. It was felt communication paramount if we are to deliver the new mission statement.
- Within the community a core of people help with the Island Youth Club, three people help with the joint churches venture of Night Shelter (at St Barnabas) and teams help lead a service at Charing House three times a year.
- There have been two carol singing events outdoors –outside The Ship and Trades (supported by the Salvation Army) and the Community Centre.
- The Dragon Boat Races had a good team from SMI – who reached the semi-final and gave a very creditable performance.
- A new venture together with St Mark's has been the introduction of a service at the King George V pub in Brompton.
- Messy Church continues to attract families, several of whom see Messy Church as their worship time.
- Our involvement with the school is via helping/leading Revolution and King's Squad aided by The Family Trust. John Bloor, Carolyn and Saju all lead worship at the school on a weekly basis.
- Three people now link with Lower Stoke Primary School and have helped with two R.E. days – for Easter and Christmas. This is ably led by Wendy Drobka.
- The Ladies group maintains a varied programme and attracts non-church visitors as well as some of our church regulars.
- The Welcome packs and leaflets have been re-designed and have been delivered to the new sector behind the school as well as the church having an updated leaflet to hand out to new comers as a welcome.
- A very successful venture with positive feedback this year was the painting of 275 stones with a representation of Jesus as a

swaddled baby. These were distributed around the island for three weeks in December for families to find and take home.

- Café style services continue on the 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday of the month.
- More people have been DBS checked and people are in post as Safeguarder - Elgar Curling (until 22.1.18 when Sandi James will take over), Verifier and Appointer (Jonica Thomas) and Safeguarding for the Elderly and Vulnerable (Janet Adkin).

## **Leadership**

The lay leader of the church is John Bloor who is responsible to Revd Saju Muthalaly. Various teams operate under John's leadership.

<u>Focal Minister:</u>	John Bloor
<u>Ministry Team:</u>	John Bloor, Carolyn Facey and Janet Adkin who occasionally meet with Revd Saju Muthalaly
<u>Preaching Team:</u>	Revd Saju Muthalaly, John Bloor, Carolyn Facey, plus Bernie Pinner, Mike Worthing, Roy Facet, Andy Ward, Matt Keeler, Sally Bloor, Jayne Shillito and Fray Fryatt
<u>Youth Work teams:</u>	
Kids For Christ (K4C):	Carolyn Facey
Children of God (CoG):	Marilyn Watson
Revolution:	John Bloor
Kings Squad:	The Family trust and John Bloor
<u>Family services:</u>	Chris Pinner, John Bloor and Carolyn Facey with occasional help from Jayne Shillito and Sally Bloor
<u>Prayer team:</u>	Sally Bloor
<u>Home Group Leaders:</u>	John Bloor, Janet Adkin, Roy Facey, Matt Keeler and Mike Worthing.
<u>District Church Council:</u>	
Deanery Synod rep:	Eve Martin
PCC rep:	Carolyn Facey
Clergy (ex-officio):	Revd Saju Muthalaly and Revd Amanda Maskell (Sept '17)
Deputy Church Wardens:	Kathy Hurst and Sathish Narayanan
Elected members (to 2018):	Luke Knott, Sandi James and Elgar Curling
Elected members (to 2019):	Matt Keeler, Janet Adkin and Andy Ward
Elected members (to 2020):	Sally Bloor, Fray Fryatt and Carolyn Facey
<u>Safeguarder:</u>	Elgar Curling
<u>Verifier &amp; Appointer:</u>	Jonica Thomas
<u>Responsibility for the</u>	

<u>Vulnerable and Elderly:</u>	Janet Adkin
<u>Data Compliance Officer:</u>	To be nominated
<u>Data Controller:</u>	Saju Muthalaly /John Bloor

### **The Life and Work of the Church**

- We welcomed Revd Amanda Maskell in September and look forward to working with her. She has joined us for some of our Christmas services and outreach work and has conducted one baptism to date. We welcomed also Shane Cordle, who is based at St Mark's Church to lead work with youth, children and families
- A new venture this year was the appointment of a Church administrator, Jonica Thomas
- We continue to have our links with St Mary's Island Primary School and there are representatives on the governing body as Foundation Governors. A team of three are on a weekly rota to lead school worship
- God's Powerhouse (Prayer) is held twice a month and is seen as the key to moving the church forward. Prayer is offered to those who request it at the end of the church service each week.
- We welcomed two new members to the Music Group to help lead our worship, Hazel and Rob
- The Mission Action Team (MAT) and the Marketing and Communication team meet as and when appropriate to help us to deliver the mission statement and to not lose sight of our vision. These meetings are open to all within the church.
- We have 'grown' another Home Group and were pleased to welcome Jan Williamson into our fellowship and she has become host to the group – led by Roy Facey (now anchored more firmly in the UK!)
- Families and individuals attended Spring Harvest again in 2017 and is a great support to spiritual development and refreshment.
- We have looked at our giving this year – with increasing demands on our financial resources.
- We were saddened when our dear friend Lesley James needed to be looked after in the nursing home and it has been humbling to visit him and to witness the grace he displays at the circumstances thrust upon him due to health issues.

At a recent DCC meeting we talked about the fact that we are one church operating by means of several cogs and springs – although sometimes these operate in different directions (a bit like the faces of Big Ben) but all are helping to make the church 'tick'. We recognised that prayer provides the 'glue' in order for us to be that

one church. John reiterated the words Saju shared with us that we need to think of God as the audience, the congregation as the players and the leaders are the prompters. May we continue to be richly blessed.

*Janet Adkin, DCC Secretary*

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

Church services at St Mary's Island are held in St Mary's Island School Hall. Each week a dedicated team of people set up the hall ready for worship. However, sometimes this also happens during the week. Staff at the school help put out the various items that are stored during the week such as the chairs, altar table, font, lectern and provide juice and biscuits. This time is for the children from the school to experience what a church is like and is part of the RE curriculum. Carolyn Facey, who is in the school every day, leads them through a short service and talks about the various articles of furniture and items that they see presented.

Staff and children alike, daily enjoy a close relationship with the church. St Mary's Island Church leaders lead worship for the children at least once a week and assist at the termly RE days that are arranged by the teachers. Special festivals are celebrated and led or assisted by Saju Muthalaly whom the children call Rev! Rev is a frequent visitor to the school and speaks at the various Christian festivals that are held with the children as well as their parents and families who also attend.

St Mary's Island School is surrounded by prayer as the children have written their prayers for the community and these have been attached to the outside fences, a real witness to the community we live in.

*Carolyn Facey*

