



St Mark's Church, Gillingham

'Living for Jesus, Loving Gillingham, Learning Together'

AGENDA

for the meeting on 30 May 2021

MINUTES

of the last APCM on 18 October 2020

plus

STATUTORY AND ADDITIONAL REPORTS

for the year ended 31 December 2020

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Agenda for the Annual Parochial Church Meeting Sunday 30 May 2021

- 1) Opening Prayer
- 2) Meeting of Parishioners for the Choosing of Two Churchwardens
- 3) The Annual Parochial Church Meeting of St Mark's Electoral Roll Members
 1. Apologies for Absence and Minutes of the previous year's meeting
 2. Elections
 - a) Appointment of tellers for the election
 - b) Introduction of each candidate standing for election
 - c) Election of Electoral Roll Members to serve on PCC
 - d) Election of Deanery Synod Member
 3. Fabric Goods Ornament
 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 2019 (*Annual Report*) (*GA*)
 5. Choosing of an Independent Examiner of the Accounts for the current year (*GA*)
 6. The following agenda items should all be covered in the Annual Report or the Additional Reports; if not they will be provided at the meeting by the officer responsible.
 - a) Electoral Roll Officer's Report (*Statutory Reports*)
 - b) Report on the Proceedings of the PCC (*Statutory Reports*)
 - c) Churchwardens' report on Fabric, Goods and Ornaments (*Statutory Reports*)
 - d) Proceedings of Deanery Synods (*Statutory Reports*)
 - e) Receiving the Reports from Church Ministries given in the Additional Reports and Good News stories (*SM*)
 7. Closing Prayer (*SM*)

**Minutes for the Annual Parochial Church Meeting
Sunday 18 October 2020**

The APCM for 2020 was held virtually with only people attending in the church who were needed for broadcasting reasons.

(1). Worship

Saju Muthalaly thanked everyone for joining online and led in prayer. Saju asked people to use the chat feature on Zoom to thank people who had made an impact on them during the past year.

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

Saju thanked Raymond Shergill for his outstanding work as a Churchwarden fulfilling his duties with wise judgement. and he thanked Monica and Mariam for their support, and he was given a leaving gift.

Saju said he was thankful that Helen Towers had agreed to re-stand for election for Churchwarden.

Two people had been nominated for Churchwarden, these were Helen Towers and Seun Adigun who had both been proposed and seconded.

The meeting unanimously agreed to Helen Towers and Seun Adigun being elected as Churchwardens.

Saju said he was thankful for Helen Towers, who will be continuing her work as Churchwarden. Saju thanked Damola Oyinloye, Amanda Maskell especially while he was on sabbatical, Vicky Allen, the preachers, service leaders, Readers, and Barry Hill. He thanked Luke Prankard for his work on the technical side during the pandemic.

The Annual Parochial Church Meeting of St Mark's Electoral Roll Members

1. Apologies for Absence and Minutes of the previous year's meeting.

There were no questions asked about the previous year's minutes. There were no amendments.

Apologies were received from Rob Byrne and Rebecca Cooper.

Saju thanked John Beck who would be standing down as Gift Aid Secretary also Paul Smith and Glyn Allen who and completed their time on the PCC. Paul Smith would not be re-standing.

2. Elections

a. Election of Electoral Roll Members to serve on PCC

Vicky Allen said that there were four spaces on the PCC for three years and only two people have been nominated to stand, so there would be no need for tellers or voting.

The two people nominated were:

Chris Blewett proposed by Helen Towers and seconded by Suzanne Wilkins and

Rob Byrne proposed by Damola Oyinloye and seconded by Mike Aldington.

Chris Blewett said that he looks after much of the technical side of things in church. Rob Byrne was absent but he had been co-opted to the PCC last year and wanted to stand as a PCC member so he could use his skills to aid the decision making of the church.

Vicky Allen said if anyone had any objections or abstentions to the appointments, they should indicate this. There were no objections raised so both Chris Blewett and Rob Byrne were duly elected to serve on the PCC for three years.

This leaves two spaces for three years to be filled.

Saju thanked those people whose time on the PCC had come to an end, Glyn Allen and Paul Smith.

b. Deanery Synod

Vicky Allen said there three spaces for Deanery Synod, and only one person has offered to stand. Glyn Allen was proposed by Raymond Shergill and seconded by Trevor Towers.

Glyn Alen said he has been in St. Mark's for 50 years and has served in many capacities. He would like to serve as a Deanery Synod member because he feels it is important that St. Mark's is represented in the Deanery. There were no objections or abstentions.

Glyn Allen was duly elected to service on the Deanery Synod for three years.

This still leaves two positions to be filled.

c. Election of Sidespersons

It was reported that Sidespeople have been appointed, in the past, at the APCM but that the new rules set that these are agreed at the PCC meeting following the APCM.

3. Fabric Goods and Ornaments

Saju asked if there were any questions regarding the Fabric Goods and Ornaments report. None were raised.

4. Vision for Kitchen

Saju said that he thought that pretty much everything that is done in the church is connected with a desperate need for a kitchen in the church. He said he would be sacrificially giving towards it in 2021, and there will be a Gift Day for the kitchen, and he will be encouraging people to also be giving sacrificially to the kitchen development so that we can focus on nurturing a sense of belonging.

Chris Gladwell presented his report. He said that the congregation has said that a kitchen is needed, and the current kitchen is not designed as a food preparation area, its original function was to be a flower room. A kitchen is needed for the congregation to allow us to share food together; also we need a kitchen to be able to provide for the needs of the community. Life revolves around food, and this can be delivered in several ways.

One place for the kitchen could be next to the toilets, with a serving hatch being placed into the church. Another option would be to have it in the back of the church where the Foodbank currently is. The kitchen should be seen as the first step to a greater improvement of the church. The Diocese needs to give permission, and Medway Council Planning also needs to approve it. He said that prayer is also important to seek God's guidance and support for this vision.

This project will require a significant amount of money which we will need to be raise, with a considerable amount of it coming from the congregation. Other ways of raising the money will also be investigated.

Saju thanked Chis Gladwell for all the thought he has put into this and stated that he thought this was the right thing to do for the church.

Pauline Jackson asked if an option would be monthly giving for the kitchen as well as having a Gift Day. This would be possible.

David Wilkins said that a new kitchen has been talked about for a long time, and he asked how long they would envisage the kitchen taking. Chis Gladwell said the honest answer was that it was all reliant on funding, and it could take a period of up to 18 months to go through the planning permission and other official requirements.

Karen Dyer asked if any costings had been completed. Chis Gladwell said it depends on how elaborate the facilities would be, and this is the next step.

5. Good News Stories

Children's Ministry

Chris Cordle shared regarding how the children's ministries have grown, and how the children have flourished. They now know how to find books of the bible, and how to apply the bible into their lives.

The Kid's Klub contains mostly children who are unchurched, but they look forward to the 10-minute God slot.

Pre-school

Lance Hanning said that Pre-School continues to thrive, and the numbers have grown to the point that they are full. Many positives have come up during Covid, and it would have been easy to close completely due to lockdown, but the Pre-School has been able to restart. He said that God has blessed the Pre-School, and they are around 80% full. Saju said that there was a very positive feel to Pre-school and he asked people to remember to pray for them.

Open Church

Damola Oyinloye said that Open Church had been going well before they had to close because of lockdown due to Covid. People who are not Christians have been coming in and asking for prayer and asking questions. Damola said that there was a need for more volunteers and Jane Banner-Martin said she would like to volunteer.

Peace and Hope

Karen Dyer she said that although they lost Rachel Littlewood, Peace and Hope have come through this very well. Trevor Dyer said that everyone accepted Rachel's passing very well, and they are back meeting after lockdown. It has been a blessing, despite all the restrictions.

Saju said he missed Rachel and that Karen and Trevor have done an extraordinary job,

Parent and Toddler Group

Martha Prankard said that they have been able to partner with the Pre-School to share equipment, which has been a benefit to the children. They have built so many relationships, and people have been feeling that the relationships have deepened. They have been able to help people through some tough times, and some parents have been coming to Sunday services, particularly as some of them attend the Cinema Club.

Youth Work

Simon Morbey shared by pre-recorded video. He said 23 people had gone to the Hillsong Carol service, and four of the people were unchurched. Everyone had a great time.

Saju said that everyone is part of a missionary team and are helping to fulfil our mission of Living for Jesus, Loving Gillingham, and Learning Together.

6. Report on the financial affairs of the Parish Church

Glyn Allen presented his reports. He said the main fund is called the General Fund. In 2019, there was a surplus of £1,558. This did not include transfers between funds which, if included, would show a deficit of £3,518. 85% of the income was from Voluntary Giving. Glyn said that it is because of the generosity of the congregation that the church is able to run.

The accounts are made up of a number of funds, the largest is the Pre-school, followed by the Repair Funds.

The Development Fund has been in place for a long time and we draw on that fund for major projects such as the church refurbishments and the new toilets.

A new Specific Donation fund was set up for specific expenditures and also a new Strategic Development Fund for SDF projects.

Most of the funds are restricted, so they can only be used for certain expenditures.

The 2019 year end deficit was £3,518 compared to a budget forecast surplus of £4,786. In 2018, there had been a net surplus, due to having a Gift Day. In 2019 voluntary giving had reduced, due to a number of long serving members of St. Mark's leaving the church.

Designating Away Giving was maintained at 10% of the 2018 voluntary giving figure. £26,260 was received from Gift Aid, and £28,376 was claimed overall.

The Parish Offer to the Diocese to cover clergy support increased by 6.5% to £78,299, with 20% of that being covered by St. Mary's Island church.

The staff costs were lower than budget by £11,847 due primarily to a head of Youth, Families and Children's Ministry position not being appointed, and during 2019, a grant of £1,600 was received from the Diocese for the church's youth work.

£43,731 was spent on new church boilers and improvements to the heating system. £11,522 was received for the Garden House rental. Pre-School had a net surplus of £15,239.

Lynne Martin asked why so much money is being held in the Mission Fund, because she thought there was an agreement that only a certain amount of money should be held. Glyn Allen said that a proportion of this excess was provision for identified mission giving.

Next year's budget

Glyn Allen said the budget for 2020 showed that there was a deficit forecast of £4,040. 81% of the income was from Voluntary Giving, and the three largest expenditures were for buildings, staff, and the offer to the Diocese. These costs are mainly fixed costs. The budget was approved by the PCC. Because of Covid19, both income and expenditure have dropped, and a deficit of almost £13,000 has been forecast. Glyn said that this yearly level deficit cannot be sustained.

Glyn thanked John Beck who had stepped down as Gift Aid Secretary, John Townsend who looks after our Payroll Management, those who count the offering, Keith Sheepwash and others who had

helped recently, who banked the money given, Alistair Williams for managing the Pre-School accounts and everyone in St Mark's for their sacrificial giving.

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

Glyn Allen said that we needed to choose an Independent Examiner, and he proposed using Rob Trice as we have done in the past. No one objected or abstained, so Rob Trice was duly chosen. Saju thanked Glyn for his work.

8. The following agenda items were all be covered in the Annual Report or the Additional Reports

- a) Electoral Roll Officer's Report (Statutory Reports)
- b) Report on the Proceedings of the PCC (Statutory Reports)
- c) Churchwardens' report on Fabric, Goods and Ornaments (Statutory Reports)
- d) Proceedings of Deanery Synod (Statutory Reports)
- e) Receiving the Reports from Church Ministries given in the Additional Reports

No questions were raised about the Reports that had been previously circulated.

The meeting was asked to accept the Statutory Reports.

The meeting accepted them unanimously.

Vicky Allen thanked Samuel Wilkins for his work as PCC Minutes Secretary.

Graham Wilkins asked what is happening about the church's section of the surgery wall in Vicarage Road. Chis Gladwell said that the surveyors had written to St. Mark's, giving details of the contractors that were dealing with the surgery part of the wall but it was too close to them starting the work for us to be able to get quotations for our part of the wall. The church will leave it as it is for the present, as it is not unsafe.

The meeting closed with prayer lead by Saju.

Vicky Allen PCC Secretary

Statutory Reports

Treasurer's Report 2020

Note 2020 Annual Financial Statements are subject to Independent Examination approval.

General Fund

At the beginning of 2020 financial year, we forecast a budget deficit on PCC unrestricted General Fund of £4,084 which included transfers between Repair and Pre-school Funds. The year finished with a deficit of £6,779, albeit this included an income accrual of £16,000 for unclaimed Gift Aid tax. Without this accrual applied, the deficit would be £22,779. Overall, compared to budget, our income and expenditure were both lower than budget by approximately £6,200 and £3,500, respectively. We were reimbursed by the Diocese for Council Tax and water charges that we had paid for almost three years in respect of St Barnabas Vicarage (property used by curate Amanda Maskell). These costs, which amounted to £9,127 should have been the responsibility of the Diocese. This reimbursement has had a significant positive impact on our year end deficit.

Donations (Voluntary Income) decreased to £125,705 from £139,076 in 2019 being lower than budget by £14,295. The large drop in voluntary income was largely due to a reduction 'loose offerings' as a result of the church being closed for worship services, due to Covid restrictions, combined with a number of givers leaving the church for various reasons during the year. Gift Aid tax recovered amounted to £22,503, including the income accrual, with £6,503 actually claimed and received. This was lower than recent years, reflecting the reduction in voluntary giving. Online and contactless giving was introduced during the year, realising donations of £4,698, before Gift Aid tax recovery being applied. We received Job Retention Scheme payments of £1,734 in respect of some of our church staff who were put on furlough due to Covid.

The Pre-school funds transfer to General Fund, for the daily use of the Vicarage Hall, was £5,500 and is a useful contribution towards the fixed costs for the building. Income continued to be supplemented by rental for the Garden House of £10,895 for the year, paid by the Diocese to provide housing provision for the Medway Campus Chaplain. Wedding and funeral fees, at £1,538 were only a third of last years receipts due to fewer weddings and a proportion of funeral fees are now being paid to the Diocesan Board of Finance. We were reimbursed by SMI Church for Jonica Thomas' salary as SMI Administrator.

For expenditure, staff costs were slightly lower than budget by £2,746. The total running costs for our buildings were £3,651 higher than budget. Youth and children, evangelism and office costs were all lower than budget. Mission Giving was £9,500 compared to an amended budget figure of £13,900. The balance of £4,400 was transferred to the Mission Fund as carry over to 2020. Based on 10% of donations received in 2020, our General Fund Away Giving in 2021 will be budgeted at £12,600.

This year the PCC, together with St Mary's Island Church DCC, agreed that the Parish Indicative Offer paid to the Diocese, as a contribution to meet both stipend costs for parish clergy and towards other diocesan support costs, would be £75,000 – a 4.2% decrease on 2019. This was apportioned £61,859 for St Mark's and £13,141 for St Mary's Island – ie, 82.5%/17.5% split.

The General Fund cash at bank and in hand at 31 December 2020 was £38,320. After debtors and creditors adjustment the net current asset was £54,623. This represents a 'reserve' of 31.9% of our 2021 forecast expenditure. The PCC agreed to retain a minimum Reserve Policy for 2020 of £55,000.

The Reserve Policy will be reviewed by the PCC annually. It should be noted that cash reserves are 22.4% of 2021 forecast expenditure.

General Fund Highlights	2020	2019
Donations (Voluntary Income)	£125,705	£139,076
Total Income	£159,727	£164,284
Total Expenditure	£162,683	£162,725
Surplus (Deficit)	(£2,956)	£1,558
Net Surplus/Deficit after transfers	(£6,779)	(£3,518)

Other Funds

The total year-end balance in our Designated Repair Funds was £34,357 with a total of £5,225 transferred in during the year.

We paid architect's fees of £4,143 from the Development Fund for carrying out a feasibility study on potential future development of the church and Vicarage Road sites. The Development Fund now has a balance of £7,315.

The balance in the Mission Fund is £13,309, which includes £1,400 unallocated in 2020 and £3,000 earmarked transfer from General Fund Mission Giving. During the year we donated a total of £1,350 from this fund. Of the total in the fund, £8,000 is designated.

The Vicar's Discretionary Fund received no donations with discretionary spending of £347. The fund current balance is £739.

The India Fund had no income or expenditure, and the year-end balance of the fund is £10,492.

The Reach at Gillingham Pier Restricted Fund is to support management of income and expenditure for this venture until it is more established. Income received during the year was £2,293 with expenditure of £1,749. The fund balance is £7,254.

During the year £936 has been spent from the HYCFM Fund, leaving a balance of £3,094.

£600 was spent from the Peace and Hope Fund towards the purchase of new chairs for the Vicarage Hall. The current fund balance is £704.

The Specific Donation Fund is to receive designated donations. Income of £7,525 was received, with an expenditure of £4,290. The fund balance is £5,055.

The Small Funds balance is £76.

The Strategic Development Fund is for the income and expenditure management of SDF projects. SDF funding can be drawn down periodically from the Diocese of Rochester. To the year-end expenditure was £1,261, with a drawdown of £1,851, giving a fund balance of £529. Further funds will be drawn down in 2021.

Pre-school income from all sources was £111,209 and expenditure £103,495 giving a surplus for the year of £7,714 and a net surplus of £1,910 after transfer of £5,803 to General Fund. This compares to a net surplus of £15,329 in 2019. The Pre-school Fund balance is £63,808. The income included £2,091 Job Retention Scheme funding for a member of staff who was furloughed. Given the constraints of Covid this is an excellent result. I would like to acknowledge the Pre-school team for

maintaining a good financial performance again this year, especially given the exceedingly difficult circumstances.

Fund Balances	Closing 2020	Opening 2020
General Fund	£54,623	£61,401
Development Fund	£7,315	£7,808
Mission Fund	£13,309	£10,190
Repair Funds	£34,357	£29,036
Small Funds	£76	£76
Vicar's Discretionary Fund	£739	£1,086
Pre-school Fund	£63,808	£61,897
HYCFM Fund	£3,094	£4,030
India Fund	£10,492	£10,492
Reach at Gillingham Pier Fund	£7,254	£6,710
Peace and Hope Fund	£704	£1,304
Specific Donation Fund	£5,055	£1,820
Strategic Development Fund	£529	(£61)
Net current assets less current liabilities	£201,354	£195,750

The PCC has approved the final General Fund 2021 V1 budget, with a year-end forecast deficit of £8,923, with an assumed voluntary income of £132,500.

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 79% 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.

Premises Task Group

This sub-committee of the PCC consists of Chris Gladwell, Seun Adigun, Luke Prankard and Chris Blewett. The sub-committee meets approximately every 3-4 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 well maintained and in good running order. This year the meetings have been held virtually.

We would like to thank the members of this group for their diligence, and also to Raymond Shergill who was the chairman up until October, Glyn Allen, Damola Olinloye, Barry Hills, Graham Wilkins and Mic Aldington who continue to make themselves available to respond to emergency repairs and generally serve in a selfless manner.

Quinquennial Inspections

The Church building is inspected every five years by a Diocesan appointed surveyor - this is known as the Quinquennial Inspection (QI). The report makes recommendations on short, medium and long term issues and also 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 August 2018, which found the building in good overall condition, and mainly had a few issues relating to brick and stonework. These repairs have now been carried out to the brickwork and stone window surrounds on the East elevation.

The Church

This year has presented us with challenges in how to maintain services and deliver God's message. For the majority of the period the buildings have been closed for public worship, with the exception of a brief period in the summer.

We have invested in significant audio visual equipment and have been successfully broadcasting services on Facebook. We have also installed further improvements to the lighting system.

Thanks must be given to Luke Prankard, Chris Blewett, Mic Aldington and others for their hard work in installing the equipment and managing the weekly transmission of our services.

A team has been set up under the guidance of the Vicar Saju Muthalalay and chaired by Chris Gladwell to look into a better use of the Church buildings and making them more friendly for the community. In the period we engaged an architect to produce a feasibility study and draw up an options appraisal document setting out ideas for how we can make better use of our buildings. We are in the process of fund raising for a new kitchen and hope to be able to deliver this project within the next year.

Finally, we would like to particularly thank the small team - who know who they are - but especially Barry Hills and Dammy Oyinloye for their ongoing commitment to caring for the building and for keeping the Church and its surroundings clean.

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. The partially collapsed boundary wall on the site still has not been replaced, although the section to the Doctors surgery has been repaired. Unfortunately, we found out this was to happen with insufficient time to include our section.

The plaster ceiling in the church office has been made safe, and we have commenced work to the damp affected walls in the downstairs meeting room. This will be completed in 2021.

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. It has not been used as much during 2020 due to periods of closure of the Pre-school during the pandemic.

The Garden House

The Garden House has continued to be rented to the Diocese and occupied by Lynne Martin who moved in April/May 2017. The Garden House is regularly maintained as and when required. The Premises Task Group carries out regular checks every 6 months to make sure that the Garden House is kept in good state of repairs and is fit for purpose. The Premises Task Group are fully aware that the boiler system in the Garden House is over 15-20 years old and would need replacement with a more efficient system at some point in the years to come. The electrical system is also outdated and the fuse board ideally would be replaced.

The Vicarage

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

Request by the Premises Task Group

As we look to embark on some major projects to enable our mission and provide improved facilities for the community and congregation, we need volunteers to assist with grant funding applications and community engagement surveys. If you feel called to this please contact Chris Gladwell

Chris Gladwell

Proceedings of the PCC

The PCC meets monthly. Each meeting begins with the Chair (usually Saju Muthalaly, but while he was on sabbatical Amanda Maskell took the Chair), bringing a Bible reading or a thought which is followed by prayer.

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

1. Apologies for Absence.
2. Review and approval of the previous month's minutes.
3. Matters Arising.
4. Finance with a run down on the current financial position and projections going forward.
5. Sub Committees (called Task Groups). Each PCC member is assigned to a Task Group which meet and report back to the PCC meeting. These being:
 - **Human Resources** chaired by Helen Towers.
 - **Premises** chaired by Raymond Shergill (later in the year Chris Gladwell took on the role of chairman of this group).
 - **Finance** chaired by Glyn Allen.
 - **MLTG** also chaired by Glyn Allen.
 - During the year we introduced another group, called **Structures Building and Fabrics** to look at better use of church buildings and specifically looking to facilitate a workable kitchen in the church.
 - Carolyn Facey has given updates each month regarding St Mary's Island Church.
 - **Strategic Development Fund**

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

Gospel Plant Leader – (Mayowa Oyinloye)

Community Pastor – (Karen Turnbull)

Community Missioner, (Chris Cordle) (who began in early 2020) and oversees the work of Mayowa and Karen.

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

In March 2020, the PCC meeting was held in church socially distanced and from April onwards all meetings have been held online.

Other areas covered during the year were:

Staffing

Rob Byrne's employment as Operations Manager came to an end at the beginning of September and it was decided to advertise for a Digital Lead/Vicar's PA which would cover some of the Operation Manager's role. This position was filled by two people, Hannah Whittaker as Digital Lead and the Vicar's PA role being undertaken by Vicki Watson. Also, during the year Lynn Trebill resigned as Vicarage Hall cleaner and Karen Garnett was the successful applicant to fill this post.

Quite a lot of the PCC time has been obviously taken up with things relating to continuing to engage with people with restrictions in place because of the Covid pandemic.

With the help of the technical team, we have able to offer Sunday services and reflections and evening prayers six days a week throughout the difficult time, when we have not been able to meet physically.

It was agreed to upgrade the TalkTalk broadband and telecom package that we had in church and at the Old Vicarage so that we would get a more reliable Wi-Fi which was essential for the online streaming.

Strategic Planning

A group of people have meet very regularly to look at the Government and Diocesan guidelines relating to what can and cannot be done during lockdown. This group of people have spent endless hours reading the guidelines and agreeing on how to implement them. Thanks should go to the team, who under Saju's chairmanship have worked hard to look at all that needed to be done to ensure safe opening of church.

It was agreed that during the first lockdown our cleaning staff would be furloughed as none of our building were being used. Also, one pre-school staff member was furloughed.

The team Risk Assessed our buildings prior to them re-opening ensuring that all the guidelines were put in place to enable people to safely return to church (and the cleaners were unfurloughed to thoroughly deep clean the buildings as per government guidelines). This was short-lived as we soon came into another lockdown at the end of the year.

However, thanks should be given to the team, Saju Muthalaly, Amanda Maskell, Dammy Oyinloye, Katie Skinner, Raymond Shergill and Vicky Allen have worked hard to understand and implement all the guidelines and put them into practice.

Other areas covered during the year were: -

Agreeing to purchase stackable e chairs on a trolley for use in Vicarage Hall.

Medway wide Deanery -we looked at a proposal from the Archdeacon to employ, on a half time basis, an Area Dean who would cover the three deaneries of Gillingham, Rochester and Strood into one Medway wide deanery. This proposal was later withdrawn and did not proceed.

Community Fridge – the PCC were asked to consider the placing of a Community Fridge inside of St Mark’s church. This was to be initially open for two sessions per week which would coincide with Foodbank opening times. This proposal also did not come to fruition due to the pandemic.

The work of the PCC requires commitment from its members of proficiency and time. All of the work is undertaken on a voluntary basis and I want to thank all members for their commitment during this difficult year.

We appreciate your prayer support as we co-operate with Saju in the mission and ministry of St Mark’s and take responsibility as charity trustees for good church governance.

Vicky Allen PCC Secretary

Electoral Roll

The Electoral Roll for St Mark’s

Last year the Electoral Roll was revised in October 2020 due to the pandemic.

There were 170 on the Electoral Roll in October.

Since then, two people have died, and four people have left or moved away. No one has applied to join.

The number on the Electoral Roll is currently 164.

The Electoral Roll for St Mary’s Island 2021

The total number of people on the Electoral Roll for 2020 was 58.

Five people have moved out of the area and two have ceased to worship at SMIC. There are two new applications that have been included on the Electoral Roll for 2021.

This makes this total for 2021 to be 53.

Total Electoral Roll number for St Mark’s parish stands at 217.

Deanery Synod

Gillingham Deanery Synod normally meet three times and year but due to Covid 19 this year have only met on two occasions, in February and December.

The Gillingham Deanery is made up of 8 parishes.

St Augustine’s

St Barnabas

St Luke’s

St Mark’s (and St Mary’s Island)

St Mary Magdalene - Gillingham Parish Church

Holy Trinity Church – Twydall

St Margaret’s Rainham

South Gillingham Churches

St Paul's Parkwood
St Peter's Bredhurst
All Soul's Hempstead
St Matthew's Wigmore

St Mark's and St Mary's Island have four lay representatives to the Gillingham Deanery Synod. One of these are taken up by a representative from St Mary's Island and the other three should be filled from people representing St Mark's. Glyn Allen represented St Mark's (elected at the APCM meeting in October 2020) with two spaces not filled. Saju and Amanda both served as House of Clergy.

In February the Revd Dylan Turner, Growth Enabler for Rochester Archdeaconry, gave a presentation about his role and how his work can support parishes. Coming out of the Called to Grow element of the Called Together initiative, Dylan highlighted the fact that Called to Grow was a permission giving framework for parishes. The three key words "review, plan, act" provide an encouraging framework and toolkit for any parishes or groups wishing to undertake a project, however big or small. His role is as a human resource to help parishes reach their potential in each individual context.

Claire Boxall, the Called Together manager, and Vanessa Curtis gave a presentation about the SDF funding. The SDF is funding by Church Commissioners for targeting specific growth initiatives which parishes can apply for. The diocese has been given £1.38 million over 5 years for urban, deprived parishes with potential for growth. The projects are different in each area. These are Anerley – Christ Church for a boxing club for ex-offenders and a church plant onto an estate, Erith and Slade Green - Christ Church and St Augustine's (two separate but similar projects) for work with children, young people and families and building their faith, Strood – St Francis for an evangelism enabler to encourage those outside of church in and Gillingham – St Marks with ripples into St Mary's, St Augustine's, and St Barnabas. In Gillingham this will fund a gospel congregation plant, community work and work with children, young people and schools. Each project has particular targets and milestones to meet. These are reported to Diocesan Synod, Bishop's Council, and the Bishops' Leadership Team.

The meeting continued with a parish round up where parishes gave information about upcoming events.

In December, Caroline Clarke – Community Engagement and Social Action Lead for Rochester Diocese – gave a presentation regarding the Hope into Action initiative. Hope into Action is an award-winning Christian charity which enables local churches to provide Hope in Action for their local communities. There is a franchising model which is replicated across 20 towns in England with 80 homes open. It is hoped that with a secure home and positive relationships, those housed through the initiative will go on to make positive life choices in the future.

The aim in the diocese is to introduce this initiative and to start by opening one 3-bedroomed home in Medway, followed by one in West Kent and one in Bromley. The team will work with Hope into Action to purchase a house in the local community – there is currently £250,000 worth of investment to buy a house in Medway. Then, several smaller, church-based teams will get involved to transform it into a home. After that, people will be referred to the house via the usual referral methods used by Medway Night Shelter (Caring Hands and Medway Council). Belinda Beckhelling will be the Empowerment Worker who will coordinate all of the work which needs to be done. The local churches will be called upon to provide befriending teams to offer whole person care for those living in these homes and this will need to be tailored to the individuals. Each tenant has two trained befrienders who stick with the tenants all the way through their time in that home. Caroline Clarke answered questions from members.

Again, the meeting continued with Parish round ups including news that Holy Trinity has a new vicar whose first Sunday was the Sunday before the second lockdown.

St Mark's is currently represented on the Deanery Synod by Glyn Allen and Saju Muthalaly. There are currently two lay vacancies to be filled for a two-year period.

Vicky Allen
PCC Secretary

Additional Reports

ALPHA - An Introduction to the Christian Faith

No ALPHA was held during 2020.

Audio Visual and Technical Report

The most important change this year has been the advent of video streaming of services during lockdown! This has posed some interesting challenges and steep learning curves for the team. Very quickly a basic system was assembled and this has been greatly improved as the months went on. This has also meant that there are now three technical posts each service, ie sound, projection and video streaming. As it is proposed to continue streaming even when restrictions on congregations are removed, future improvements in video technology will continue to be investigated. The impact of streaming on the audio system was minimal, as such this has continued to be operated almost as previous. The most obvious change to the physical setup of the audio system has been to fit equipment at the front of Church into a smaller equipment cabinet. There has been no important changes to the video projection system within the Church.

As always we are very grateful for all the behind the scenes work conducted to ensure both live and streamed worship is part of St Mark's outreach.

Chris Blewett, Luke Prankard and Mic Aldington

Baptism Visiting

In 2020 we had two adult baptisms and two adult reaffirmations.

We were due to hold a baptism of a child in November but this was then unable to take place due to covid-19. I do not have anything to really report due to how last year took shape.

Katie Skinner

Catering and Hospitality

No report for this group.

Church in the Pub

Church in the Pub has not met in 2020.

Cinema Club

There is no report for Cinema Club.

Cricket Team – for St. Mark’s & St. Mary’s Island

This has not been a great year for our cricket team, primarily because lockdown almost completely prevented us from actually playing! Just one practice net session took place before the Covid restrictions prevented any more. It seemed that there would be no games at all during the season, but a relaxation of the restriction rules in the late summer allowed us to get one game in August. This was against a team from Rainham Cricket Club. Our batting managed to put up a reasonable score thanks mainly to a good knock from Saju. However, the opposition batting was very strong and they easily chased down the target.

The lifting of the restriction rules should allow us to get back into the field once again and already one game has been arranged for May 2021.

We are an enthusiastic bunch, especially when you come along to support us.

Guy Jackson.

Dementia Cafe

The Dementia Cafe met perhaps on five or six occasions before the lockdown. We met fortnightly and received 3 or 4 people with Age Concern sometimes joining us. There are 3 of us that support the café - Pauline, Anne and myself. We serve hot drinks, cakes and biscuits. We have a variety of games and activities available, and we have got to know the few people who regularly attend quite well.

Pauline and myself will hopefully be meeting with one of the Admiral Nurses in the near future to talk about restarting and promoting the cafe so that it becomes a regular spot on people's calendar. I think having professional health and social personnel involved is necessary to enable the cafe become woven into the fabric of people's lives.

One suggestion which I understand Saju supports, is transferring the cafe to church. We hope to discuss this possibility in the near future.

Paul Harris

Elderly Care

Charing House Care and Residential Home

In common with all activities, the ministry at Charing House during 2020 ceased after March with the rising spread of the Coronavirus pandemic.

Before the pandemic took hold, there were scheduled Sunday Services in January, February and March although the February service was cancelled due to a birthday celebration of one of the residents which proved to be a stronger magnetic attraction than our service. The March service went ahead albeit late with very few people due to the on-going problem of getting residents assembled for the service.

The monthly Holy Communion services took place in January and February although in the shadow of the looming pandemic, the February service had to be conducted in accordance with Church of England guidelines restricting communicants to just the wafer bread.

As co-ordinator, I have kept in touch from time to time with the two members of the Activities Team letting them know that we are thinking of and praying for them.

In late August I received a request to re-start services in September which would have to be outside. After consultation with the teams we decided that all the practicalities of setting up sound, electrical supply, a visible screen for the words of hymns plus the likelihood of cooler weather as autumn approached made it to be a non-starter. This was accepted by Charing House without question so maybe they were responding to residents' requests and wanted the answer to come from us.

During the suspension of services, I have started to check on the safeguarding status of team members since this has become integral to voluntary work in the care sector. With volunteers coming from different denominational churches, there are varying procedures for achieving the common end objective causing the exercise to be less straightforward.

Whilst the teams have been remarkably stable over the years, a few have dropped out. Applications are welcomed from about up to four people to join one of the teams but this will mean undertaking the first two levels of safeguarding which, if you are on-line, can be completed by that means.

I cannot finish without paying tribute to Colin Haggart of the Baptist Church who has been a reliable support behind the scenes and providing musical input for his team. He and his wife removed to Cumbria in November so we wish them God's blessing in the next phase of their lives.

Keith Sheepwash departed from us in August to be with the Lord and his reliability and caring contribution to the work at Charing House will be greatly missed. We remember Keith with affection for all he did at St Mark's, not least, at Charing House.

Graham Davis, Co-ordinator

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 happy and relaxed fellowship and spiritual refreshment with prayer, praise and worship. A short talk of about 10-15 minutes is provided for the purpose of sharing and teaching God's Word and a very important part of the event is the informal chatting that takes part after the service with a cup of tea and biscuits.

The meetings have been organised by St Mark's with help and support given by loyal representatives from a number of other churches. Two of those are Eddie and Kathy Brooker of Twydall Evangelical Church who have selflessly always provided the refreshments after the services and it was with great sadness that, during 2019, we heard about the sudden death of

Kathy and due to this we have understandably not seen Eddie since. Two other stalwarts, Colin and Shiraltee Haggart, from Green Street Baptist Church, have recently moved away from the area so we are now left without a keyboard player as Colin had performed this function for several years,

Generally, we have had four elderly residents attending the meetings but, needless to say, there have been no services at all during the pandemic. With Richard and Jane also leaving St Mark's Church, serious consideration needs to be given to this ministry for the future.

Richard and Jane Tolhurst

Funeral Ministry

There was no report for this.

Flower Arrangements and Displays Team

2020 was a year when the coronavirus pandemic meant that for much of the year there were no services in church, but once services were streamed live from the church in September we were able to use our rusty skills to create arrangements. We much appreciate the comments that church members made online drawing attention to them. Because of the pandemic we were not able to decorate the church in the way that we have done in previous years to celebrate Christmas. We love 'going to town' decorating the church for weddings but our services were not called upon in 2020.

The team has grown by one person during the year (Ruth Howard is a brilliant addition). Unfortunately our team was depleted by one person – namely Keith Sheepwash – his encouragement to each one of us and his 'critical eye' and his own particular style is much missed.

The highlight this year 2021 was getting together in church on a Friday morning in March (all masked and socially distanced) and making up bunches of daffodils which we then distributed to most of the female members of the congregation on the Saturday to celebrate Mothering Sunday.

The Team members are: Janet Mann, Jane Banner-Martin, Siu King, Pauline Jackson, Mayowa Oyinloye, Monica Shergill, Ruth Howard, Gabrielle Goddard and Janet Waters, occasionally assisted by Vicki Onitiri.

We would love new people to join us. If you are interested please contact Janet Mann.
janetmann@blueyonder.co.uk

Janet Mann

His Majesty's Gospel Choir – Community Choir

Members were encouraged to participate by submitting videos of themselves singing which was then merged with others to create an online virtual choir; some choristers found it difficult to record or sing by themselves.

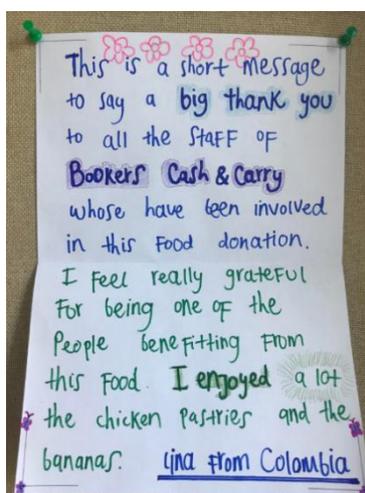
Mayowa Oyinloye

Medway Campus Chaplaincy

It goes without saying that this last year has brought many challenges. Almost 95% of my role on campus is face-to-face but March 2020 saw all our regular activities stripped away. Week one of lockdown I had never heard of Zoom or Teams and now these are the ways I regularly connect with students and colleagues.

During the spring and summer months of 2020 we ran a Virtual Café which provided good support for a number of students who remained in halls; some by choice, many because their own countries had already closed their borders.

Throughout those months we were also able to support students with free food (*with the help of Simon Morbey and the generous donations from Bookers Cash & Carry*). See image for the thankyou note one student wrote.



The autumn term was semi-normal. I spent most of my time on campus, even though there were fewer students around. In September I partnered with a colleague to run TABLEtalk online and that has proven quite successful. From September 2020 until now we have hosted 47 students from 27 different nationalities at TABLEtalk.

In addition, I began posting a weekly reflection on a YouTube channel (Take Ten with Lynne), which has received positive feedback.

At time of writing, we value your prayers for the new academic year this September and all that it might hold.

Lynne Martin

Medway Foodbank Centre for Gillingham

No report was submitted for Medway Foodbank.

Men's Group/Curry Nights

No report was received for the Men's Group.

Mission Links Task Group (MLTG)

The Mission Links Task Group (MLTG) is a sub-committee of the PCC responsible to oversee support of our Mission Partners through prayer, pastoral care, and financial support. MLTG recommends to the PCC how to allocate our Mission Giving (10% of our previous year's voluntary income), and other mission giving from individuals to the Mission Fund. We continued to meet regularly throughout lockdown on Zoom.

We have continued to support Katy Barnwell (Wycliffe), Tim and Tricia Barrow (SIM), Carrie McFarlane (Nehemiah, Mission India), Francis and Diane Dognon, (France), Hyndman's Trustees (our Patrons), Tearfund, The Sahaara Project India, Family Trust who normally work in schools locally but who have had to work mostly online this year when pupils were in school and The Bishop's Charity Poverty and Hope; The Mike Campbell Foundation, Fishermen Trust and more recently we have supported the work of Asha and Nelson Arul in UAE and China.

Locally we donated to the Night Shelter, providing a place to stay overnight, food and support for the Homeless in Gillingham from January to March. The "Let Loose Concert" did not take place in Gillingham High Street but online this year due to Covid. We supported Foodbank by allowing Foodbank to use the church as one of its centres twice weekly until the end of a very busy April when Foodbank went to delivery only and all the centres were shut due to Covid restrictions.

We made regular contact with our mission partners during the year and enjoyed receiving news from them. Saju has interviewed some of our mission partners online during the services. Using 'Prayer and Praise' we have invited the congregation to pray for our mission partners including REACH and El Campello Christian Community. We are grateful to Kath Bertrand for facilitating this.

We spent some time exploring the possibility of appointing a person to work cross-culturally through the charity that Tim Barrow works with "Serving in Mission" (SIM) and his project ENGAGE.

Our thanks go to Tricia Barrow for her contribution to MLTG. Tricia stepped down in October. It was sad for us all when Keith Sheepwash died, we are grateful to Keith for his heart for mission and the way he served on MLTG for many years.

We can let you know how to receive updates from our mission partners direct, particularly if Homegroups or individuals would like to support a mission partner.

If you are considering short or long-term mission or if you feel God is calling us, the church of St Mark's, to mission in a particular field we would love to hear from you or if you would like to join MLTG, please speak to Glyn or Saju.

Please continue to pray for our Mission Partners.

Denise Young on behalf of the team

Music Worship

My last report to APCM covered the period up to May 2020, and very little has changed since then.

The main difference has been that since easing of lockdown in June we have mostly stopped doing video recordings and led from church as solos with a backing track, or for myself leading a small one or two household band.

As has been happening for the last few years, we have continued to shrink in numbers leading worship, with Emily Mann leaving St Mark's.

On behalf of you all, I would like to thank everyone who has been involved in the worship music ministry over this last year, for the hard work, commitment and service they have been, and still are, giving. We always appreciate prayer for this ministry with its many challenges.

Graham Wilkins

Peace & Hope (formerly Faith & Light)

Peace & Hope is church for adults with a learning disability, their family and carers. We now meet fortnightly Saturday mornings and spend time together learning and growing in our faith in an accessible and relevant way.

We started the year learning about Discipleship, then looking how each of our members serve God and each other. We discovered that between us we serve, support, pray, teach, encourage, evangelise and lead!

In April, due to lockdown, we could not meet; and when we resumed we had to follow social distance guidelines, which has proved difficult for some and impossible for others. We were unable to sing, do craft, hug and share refreshments together.

However, we adapted and continued to meet until the second lockdown, when the decision was made not to meet to protect the more vulnerable members. So, unfortunately, we have not been able to meet for most of the year.

We value your prayers as we emerge from lockdown in 2021, that we will be able to once again be able to fully engage in fellowship together.

Karen and Trevor Dyer and the team

Prayer Ministry Teams

At the start of 2020, Prayer Ministry was offered each Sunday either during or after the main morning service. This was accompanied by a fledgling Sozo Prayer Ministry offering on an adhoc basis and a monthly Communion Service with Prayer for Healing.

With the advent of Covid and subsequent lockdown it was not possible initially to continue offering prayer ministry in these ways. From August however we started to offer Prayer Ministry via Zoom as part of a wider meet up and chat zoom meeting after the online service on a Sunday morning. Take up for this was however minimal and the decision was made to discontinue this offer in November 2020. A huge thank you is due to all of those on the Prayer

Ministry Team who gave up their time both in person and online over the course of the year in some fairly difficult circumstances. Prayer ministry remains an important aspect in the life of St Marks.

Amanda Maskell

Small Groups

St Mark's three Principles:

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

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

Taking on the mantle of responsibility for our Small Groups during a global pandemic has been challenging. It has obviously been a difficult time for all members of St Mark's, not least for our Home Groups. Covid 19 isolation, shielding and lockdowns along with technology have hit like a Tsunami. Thanks and praise must go to the leaders who have coped and persevered during the struggle of the past year. St Mark's is very appreciative and grateful for your role and of the time you give in this important work. Four groups have embraced technology and met on Zoom, one has kept in touch via telephone and four have disbanded.

The Ladies Group thrive and meet via Zoom during the day.

Home Groups have maintained our Government's Covid guidelines, finding innovative ways to meet and keep in contact. Along with weekly Zoom meetings, one group has a Zoom coffee morning each week. Shopping has been done for those isolating, shielding or in need. Picnics have been arranged during the Summer (when we were able to meet in groups of six) and walks with social distancing have been invigorating. Chats and prayer sessions via the telephone or on Zoom along with cards and letters have been supportive. All in the love of Christ and living for Jesus.

We have studied together, along with our Sunday sermons:

- Rebuild, Restore, Revive on the Book of Nehemiah at the beginning of January 2020.
- Acts 2:42 The Fellowship of the Believers in March 2020
- Mission Shaped Living November 2020
- Cultivate: Love Thy neighbour January 2021

Unfortunately, not all members of Home Groups have the technology or resources to have met on Zoom, resulting in further feelings of isolation during this difficult time, despite the Home Group leaders' efforts at keeping in touch. All members of the Church have had the opportunity to follow the Study material whether alone, in a Trio or within a Home Group. This has been supported by the Sermons on a Sunday morning.

Several Home Group leaders have requested to relinquish their leadership responsibilities. Resulting in some groups without a champion, nonetheless they have continued to meet and support one another.

Exciting times lay ahead. The plan for the next year is to establish new leaders alongside our existing ones and to cultivate “the heart of St Mark’s Church”. Obviously, this cannot be done without the commitment and willingness of the members of St Mark’s.

From the 21 June 2021 (according to Government guidelines on the Recovery from Covid) it is hoped we will be able to meet up in person and rejoice in coming together again. It is proposed that a meeting take place at the end of June, to relaunch our Home Groups. Those interested in continuing in or new to Home Groups, can explore and meet up in the church building to have a time of prayer, reflection and thanksgiving, to share our experiences of lockdown and to discuss the way forward.

And I look forward to meeting you all.

With Blessings

Val Flick Small Group’s Co-ordinator

Tear Fund

With sadness I have to report that fundraising activities planned in 2020 was did not occur due to Covid-19.

We continue to pray for a new normal and the safety of our community and our country as a whole. The Tearfund team are committed to move forward.

Colette Wentzel- Tearfund Ambassador

St. Mark’s Pre-School

Since the last APCM the Pre-school has obviously been heavily affected by Covid 19 and this has influenced the way the Pre-school has operated. Focus has been first and foremost on Health & Safety, and the rigid commitment to the Government guidelines, and the following of a very robust Risk Assessment put in place by the Management. However, the Winter/Spring 2021 term saw steady numbers of new children start at the setting and have gradually grown in number to almost being full. The Pre-school Team have continued to make the learning/play experience for your children fun, interactive, and importantly a safe place to be. St Marks Pre-school continues to provide a safe and stimulating environment for Pre-school children. The children came back to the setting in September to a fully renovated and upgraded outside learning area to which the children regularly use in all weathers.

Julie and the Pre-school team are dedicated and work hard to maintain a very high standard and services to young Children, and the focus of the Pre-school staff continues to be that of ensuring a high-quality learning environment for the children who attend. As the Pre-school continues to be successful, we have had to employ new members of staff this year, and the setting now has its highest number ever of contracted staff. One other staff event since the last APCM is the training of Jo Tilly as the Assistant Trainee Manager.

Lance Hanning

Chair – St Marks Pre-school Management Committee

This year has been a challenging year for all but again I am amazed by the determination and dedication of all involved with the Pre-School.

Finances have been tighter than in the previous year and understandably Covid is a direct cause of this. There was a period of closure which meant income was impacted due to reduction of fees brought in by fee-paying families. Staffing costs remained near the same as we were unable to furlough the Pre-school practitioners as the Pre-school has the majority of its funding from the local authority. Children numbers since the return of Pre-school have grown and this positively impacts the preschool finances. We have had greater staff costs due to additional SEN children - a victim of our own success with SEN children, meaning the Pre-school attracts more families with children with SEN and this can mean additional staff to support these children and costs from the local authority are seen as a contribution of costs.

With all this in mind the Pre-school ended the year positively and continues to be self-sufficient during 2020-2021.

Alastair Williams
Treasurer – St Marks Pre-school Management Committee

Parent and Toddlers

Parent & Toddlers was not able to meet indoors throughout 'lockdown' however we did have a few weeks when restrictions were relaxed and we were able to meet in the Old Vicarage Garden. Currently we are not able to restart because of, I believe, restrictions imposed by the Diocese. We have had several enquiries from parents asking when we will reopen. Lots of prayer required for this please.

Love and blessings

Ruth Howard

Crèche (up to 3 years)

There was no report for Crèche.

Report for APCM Children's ministry

Gems: years (1 - 6 years) Pebbles – (3 – 5 years).

In Pebbles and Gems, 2020 started with a continuation of the stories of the Old Testament and how these stories all point to us to Jesus.

In March when we entered lockdown our Sunday morning lesson went online, and our topics covered a broader range of subjects to appeal to our new audience. Our lessons continued to be Bible focused and aimed to teach children how the Bible is applicable to their everyday life. Parents were contacted and those who wanted materials to help engage their children were sent games and stories to share.

At this time there was also a weekly Bible lesson online for our pebbles and a mid-week Bible story for our older children.

Starting in May there were daily morning Bible devotions for children and evening story time.

When restrictions eased in the summer we resumed in person Sunday morning classes in a Covid safe environment. This took a lot of planning and set up but was worth it to be able to meet in person again. Instead of singing we did lots of dancing and lip syncing, individual crafts replaced team games and one-way systems and masks became part of our regular routines.

We also held a hybrid summer program in conjunction with The Family Trust. We watched their daily pre-recorded camp lessons and then met on zoom to join in digging deeper into the story and making a craft together. We met on the final day in a Covid safe environment on the green behind the Old Vicarage to recap on the learning for the week, make a craft, picnic as families, and enjoy fellowship albeit from a distance.

With the second lockdown we again took our lessons online and started a journey through the Bible using stories, crafts, object lessons, and songs to bring the Bible to life and apply it to our everyday lives. We have also continued using creative ways of teaching our children to pray. Christmas brought online Christingle, with packs being distributed prior to service in a Covid safe way.

This year has been a challenge in many ways, and we have missed our personal interaction with each other as a team and with the children. We have however gained knowledge and skills that have allowed us to present lessons weekly online and reach an audience around the world with the love of God.

Rock Ministry

We started the year off with our face-to-face ministry meeting at the Old Vicarage. We have 6 young people who would regularly attend our sessions and for the first part of 2020 we looked at mental health, wellbeing, and relationships. With the pandemic we had to look at another way to continue this ministry, so we went online. Online came with all sorts of challenges for both the young people and the leaders. We moved our time to later in the day which suited the young people and leaders. As we continued with Rock Ministry online a few of our young people dropped off due to school being online, church, and other activities some found this transition hard. As a team we continued to do weekly sessions for 3 of our young people and we looked at a series of topics over the next few months. We explored Jesus at the movies, our Christian commitments and as we moved into September, we looked at starting school and how as a Christian that can be hard and finally, we explored the beatitudes up to Christmas. As you can imagine this year has been testing for our young people, but they have been amazing, and I have been blessed to be a part of this ministry for 3 years.

I would like the church to continue for our young people and leaders of Rock Ministry as we head into a new year of uncertainty of how this ministry will look and as restrictions change over the next year.

Simon Morbey

Summit Group

Summit ministry is made up of 11 young people aged between 11-18 years and we have been meeting up at the Old Vicarage on a Sunday evening. We have set session for each term arranging from quiz nights, movie nights and just chill sessions. The year started with us meeting up on a Sunday evening and the young people have been really engaged in the sessions but unfortunately things changed at the beginning of April with the pandemic so just

like Rock Ministry we moved onto an online format and this was challenging for both the leaders and the young people. We have really had to think outside the box for each session, but we have still managed to run a session most weeks. Unfortunately some of the young people dropped out but I still stayed in contact with them on a fortnightly basis, through messages and contact with their parents. Over the past year we were able to meet back face-to-face for a few sessions as restrictions had allowed us. These sessions were amazing, and it was great to see all the young people back together.

Going forward we would love to see the ministry grow in numbers and strength as more young people attend the sessions.

Prayer- For the young people to grow in their relationships with their peers and leaders, that over the next year we will be able to meet face-to-face. Pray for the upcoming year as it is uncertain what this ministry will look like, a possibility of it being a hybrid of face to face and online. Pray for the leaders involved in the ministry and for each young person who attends.

Simon Morbey

Mentoring

Mentoring started new this year due to the pandemic. We felt as a team that we needed to offer support to some of our young people who have been struggling during this time. We have 3 young people involved in the sessions and these sessions vary on what we do. During the sessions we chat about school, life and just have general conversations. I have spent time supporting the young people by offering wisdom and knowledge over certain situations. I have planned Bible study sessions with the young people, and it has been great to see the growth in knowledge and spirituality with the young people. Some of the session just involve us going on walks and for me to listen and nothing more.

Going into the new year I pray that this will continue and the relationships that I have formed with the young people will grow. I also pray that more young people will be able to benefit from these sessions.

As a church it would be great that we pray for the upcoming year and that these sessions help the young people grow in their relationships and that they are able to use some of the skills, knowledge and wisdom from the sessions in their day-to-day lives.

Simon Morbey

Who Let the Dad's Out

This has not happened during the year.

Kidz Klub

Friday evenings were filled with laughter fellowship and fun for around 15 children at Kidz Klub. We played team games, board games, made crafts, and baked. We also had 10 minute God slots that used imaginative ways to teach the children Biblical truths. The children also learned to pray for the things they appreciated in their lives.

When we first introduced God slot a few years ago some children were reluctant to participate and sometimes grumbled about having to stop what they were doing to meet for God slot. However, it became an integral part of the evening and even those who at first were reluctant to join in began to ask if it was time for the God slot. They often clamoured to volunteer to help with the object lesson and answer any questions.

With the first lockdown in March 2020 we put Kidz Klub on hold and contacted parents to offer support and continued communication with their children. We have been unable to reopen Kidz Klub since this time.

This year will give us an opportunity to reevaluate how we can effectively reach children in our community in the future.

Christine Cordle

Strategic Development Fund (SDF)

Gospel Church Planter, Mayowa Oyinloye

At the beginning of the first lockdown the services were being streamed from my house to various social media platforms but as the Covid restrictions eased up, we streamed live from church with a band without a congregation.

Most of the services and activities are being done online.

Mayowa Oyinloye

Community Pastor, Karen Turnbull

January to March

During this period I ran craft club, built community links and started meeting with five adults and their children for the beginning of our worshipping community, according to my job description. This took the form of an informal café style meeting in the Old Vicarage with food, YouTube worship, a talk from me and activities for the children – all in the same space.

March to December

First catching Covid, and then lockdown shut all my face-to-face work and I moved online, predominantly on Facebook. I ran my groups via live Facebook videos and Facebook groups. In Craft Club I also started a “by post” joint craft activity, which we will continue in person as we can during 2021.

I ran various other activities including online video teaching/conference. My work has proved infinitely difficult to implement online and in December I came to the decision that I needed to be furloughed. This was actioned in January 2021.

If anyone would like to look through my online work, you can find it all at:

<https://www.facebook.com/communitypastorgillingham>

Karen Turnbull

Community Missioner, Christine Cordle

I started my role as Community Missioner in May 2020, in the middle of the first lockdown. I started with online children's devotions and bedtime stories to try and engage local children, build community and give structure to children's days during lockdown. These had limited local viewing. I also tried my hand at a toddler presentation on Facebook, again with limited viewing, so I concentrated my efforts on online learning, conferences, preparation for future work and children's and youth ministry within St Mark's.

I took a puppeteering course and spent many hours practising and recording children's ministry using the puppet. I also took classes on audio and visual presentation to improve my online skills. I attended church planting conferences, children's work and youth work conferences, and developed a plan for when in person work was able to commence.

I have made connections with four local schools and offered online collective worship and RE lesson. We performed an online Christingle for two schools and conducted an RE lesson in another. I joined the Oasis Skinner Street Community Hub to build relationships within the community and to assess and help address the needs of the local area. My goal is to run a sports club and a 'Make a Lunch' Holiday Club at the school. I would also like to start a Messy Church at the school in the future.

I also joined the St Marks Pre-school committee. I would like to form closer ties with the Pre-school to support staff, help provide Christian input to the children and support parents.

I signed up to take a course to teach a Parenting Class, CAP Money Class and a Kick Academy Class all of which have been completed. I also took a course on teaching County Lines to learn more about the organised drug criminals and have a means to educate the church and community of the risk to our children, youth, and vulnerable people.

In 2021 I have built on the plans I made in 2020 and hope to see growth in all areas as lockdown eases.

St. Mary's Island Church (SMIC)

The total number of people on the Electoral Roll for 2020 was 58. Five people have moved out of the area and two have ceased to worship at SMIC. There are two new applications to be included on the Electoral Roll for 2021. This makes this total for 2021 to be 53.

This year has been a most unusual one but the church has remained steadfast in meeting every week, using Zoom. The final church service held in the school building was on 22 March 2020. Initially the thought had been that access to the building would be restricted for only a short period of time, but it was soon realised that we had to take action to maintain the church worship services and provide care and fellowship to all the membership remotely, as Covid restrictions were applied and access to the building was not possible.

The SMIC technical team soon setup access to a dedicated church Zoom account and people tuned in week by week, quickly becoming familiar with this new format. Attendance at these services had to be restricted to known church members, as children play an integral part in them. The technicians were able to provide the music and songs that are an important part of worship and also shared the readings and prayers by using screen sharing. Most people quickly became familiar with the new world of virtual worship through the use of technology, and the more able members helped those who were finding it more challenging.

The average Sunday attendance was around 30 – 35 sign-ins. Some of these were single adults but several included multiple adults and children. This meant that around 50 people were 'attending' these weekly services. The total was not so different from the actual weekly Sunday attendance figure pre-lockdown.

SMIC church groups were no longer able to meet in person, but again some of them moved onto Zoom meetings. The Prayer Powerhouse continued to meet throughout the year using this format.

Malachi, the church mouse played his part and took part in regular Zoom 'parties' for the children. These were very popular with our children. Goody bags were delivered prior to the parties which contained essential items needed during the games. Some food for tea was included, always with a piece of cheese. A bible story was part of the programme and the children were enthusiastic at joining in the activities arranged for them.

The Ladies group stayed united throughout the year. Chris Pinner faithfully delivered a monthly gift with a bible sentiment. This was much appreciated by all the ladies and it culminated in a Zoom meeting organised by Chris Pinner, Katy Hallam, Carol Ward and Wendy Drogba.

The church has continued to be mindful of its mission statement and has been reaching out to the residents in the 'Atlas Place' extra care accommodation. At Christmas a group of 6, limited by Covid restrictions, visited and were able to sing Carols in the gardens. The residents were each given a Sharing the Light bookmark and a small gift of a hand-made mini-Christmas sock with chocolate coins inside. The residents were delighted to be remembered in such a way and the manager expressed her gratitude.

Likewise at Easter the church remembered those living in Atlas Place. A gift bag containing a palm cross, an Easter 'Hope and Love' bookmark and a little bag of chocolate Easter eggs was delivered for each resident. This time we were unable to enter due to Covid restrictions, but the manager again expressed her gratitude and is looking forward to the easing of restrictions when the church can play a larger part in the lives of the residents.

It has not been possible to maintain links with the school during this time.

We had to say farewell to some of our members during the past year. Freya and Mike Fryatt, Jan Williamson and Gill and Alan Pesto. However, we were able to welcome a new family, The Woods, Flick, Ollie, Bennett and Charlie. They have shared their enthusiasm for the children's work and have been a mainstay of the Malachi parties.

May we continue to be richly blessed. Carolyn Facey (Church Secretary)

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