



Annual Parochial Church Meetings 2020

Wednesday 7th October 2020 at 7.00pm

To be held via Zoom

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86405939032>

Meeting ID: 864 0593 9032

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AGENDA for Annual Parochial Church Meetings 2020

Meeting of the Parishioners for the Election of Churchwardens - Agenda

1. Apologies for Absence
2. Churchwardens' Reports
3. Election of Churchwardens

Annual Parochial Church Meeting - Agenda

1. Minutes of last Annual Parochial Church Meeting
2. Matters arising from the Minutes
3. Electoral Roll Officer's Report
4. PCC Secretary's Report
5. PCC Treasurer's Report
6. Safeguarding and DBS Officer's Report
7. Deanery Synod Report
8. Incumbents Report
9. Intergenerational Missioner's Report
10. Election of four members to the Deanery Synod
11. Election of twelve members to the Parochial Church Council
12. Appointment of Sidespersons
13. Appointment of Independent Examiner for the Accounts
14. Organisations' Reports

Meeting of the Parochial Church Council

1. Election of Vice Chairman
2. Appointment of Secretary
3. Appointment of Treasurer
4. Appointment of two Deputy Wardens
5. Dates of future meetings
6. AOB

Churchwardens' Report

CHURCH FABRIC

Phase 2 of the re-ordering project was completed in 2019. The pews have been removed and a new oak floor applied to the whole building. A total of 266 chairs now provides the church seating. Plans for Phase 3 are established and will include: levelling of the entrances to the chancel and north porch and new glass entrance doors with 'curtain heaters' to prevent major heat loss to the north. Permission should be received to do the work in 2020. The lighting is now all repaired and a big thankyou to Mark Sanderson for all his help in getting this completed... Thanks also to the re-ordering team; their work to date continues to be admired.

CHURCH SECURITY

There have only been minor incidents of pilfering in 2019.

CHURCHYARD

The normal arrangements in the churchyard and Garden of Remembrance have continued. Volunteers and the Probation Service managed to keep the Open Churchyard clear of really long grass. Rebuilding of part of the wall was also completed. Thanks as usual to Bob Ryan for his efforts with the strimmer.

CHURCH HALL

The new arrangements for the Food Larder and the upstairs offices have proved highly practical and effective. The office suite vacated by the Larder has been renovated and leased to Addaction.

RECTOR

We are very pleased to report the seamless introduction of our new Rector, Rev Sean Semple. Sean joined us in July and we are very grateful to all the members of our ministry team for making him so welcome as we continue to establish our vision for the future of St Mary's.

THANKYOU

The people are the church and we thank everyone for their help and their efforts in 2019.

Dr Janet Cooper Dr John Setchfield

Parish of St. Mary's, Ross on Wye

Annual Parochial Church Meeting

Wednesday 3rd April 2019 at 7.30 in the Parish Hall

Minutes

Present: Rev S Tarlton, K Vitale, Canon F Davies, P Eward, P Raddenbury, J Spencer, J Spencer, C Leggate, P Leggate, A Morris, M Mason, P Mason, V Allen, J Setchfield, J Cooper, P Waters, T Waters, B Jones, B Ryan, S Ryan, A Remmington, H Setchfield, R Lewis, G Altree, D Lane, M Sanderson, F Barnaby, E Richards, K Richards, S Greer and J Harrison.

1. **Apologies were received from:** T Davies, D Glover, C Glover, P Landau, S Greer, P Harding, T Harding, A Morris, D Eward, N Lewis and P Altree.
2. **Election of Churchwardens:** J Setchfield and J Cooper were duly re-elected as Church Wardens.

Meeting closed at 7.40

Annual Parochial Church Meeting

- 1 **Minutes of the APCM held on 18th April 2018.** The minutes were previously circulated and accepted as correct, with only a few minor spelling errors, they were agreed and signed.

Proposed by B Jones

Seconded by P Raddenbury

2 abstentions due to absence.
2. **Matters Arising:** None
3. **Electoral Roll Officers Report:** The Roll opens after this APCM, it is currently 115.
4. **Secretary's Report:** No report.
5. **Treasurers Report:** P Raddenbury explained to the meeting that unrestricted funds were used on Phase 1 of the re-ordering, permission was received from the Charity Commission to do so. There are surplus funds in the unrestricted account, the intention is that this will be used for Phase 3.

We are running a deficit each year, there are not enough funds coming in to cover the outgoings.

P Raddenbury thanked the members of the finance group for their support, also D Bennett who gives his time willingly to do the accounts.

J Setchfield thanked P Raddenbury for all of his efforts and hard work.

6. **Presentation of the Annual Reports for 2016 and any comments required.**

No comments or questions.

7. **Fabric, Goods and Ornaments report**

No questions.

8. **Deanery Synod Report**

No questions.

9. **Deanery Synod Representatives**

F Barnaby, M Sanderson and P Eward were elected.

10. **Election of twelve members to the Parochial Church Council:**

T Waters, F Barnaby and R Lewis were elected.

11. **Appointment of Sidepersons:**

As per the list on P.23 of the Minutes.

Proposed: M Sanderson

Seconded: B Jones

Unanimous

12. **Appointment of Independent Examiner for the Accounts:**

D Bennett is willing to continue in this role.

Proposed: P Raddenbury

Seconded: M Sanderson

Unanimous

13. **Incumbent's Report and Intergenerational Missioner's Report:**

Canon F Davies expressed thanks on behalf of the APCM to Rev S Tarlton on all he has done, a well-deserved round of applause was given.

14. **Organisations Report:**

The APCM expressed how impressed they were with how many new initiatives were happening.

J Setchfield thanked everybody for their reports and special thanks to M Sanderson and M Lyons for getting all of the reports together.

Apologies were given for the reports which were not available for the meeting.

C Leggate gave out a copy of a booklet on Mission and Ministry at Life Events.

The meeting closed at 8.10pm

Electoral Roll Report for the year 2019-2020

The annual Electoral Roll Report is unique in that it runs from one Annual Meeting to the next. The Roll closes shortly before each APCM for revision and the number on Roll will be reported at the Meeting. The Roll was completely renewed last April and, at the time of writing, we have a total of 120 but there is a short period before the Roll closes for final review.

Peter Raddenbury
Electoral Roll Officer

PCC Secretary's Report 2019

Membership

At the beginning of the year, PCC members were: John Setchfield (Church Warden and Chairman, Janet Cooper (Church Warden), Peter Raddenbury (Treasurer), Karen Vitale (Secretary), Paul Eward, Bryan Jones, Anne Morris, Keith Richards, Anne Remmington, Peter Reynolds, Mark Sanderson.

Ex-officio members were the Revd Simon Tarlton, Revd Canon Chris Blanchard, Revd Caroline Pascoe, Dr Derek Glover (Reader Emeritus) and Canon Freda Davies (Reader), Christine Cattanach (Intergenerational Missioner).

At the Annual Meeting in April, Fiona Barnaby, Rachel Lewis and Tim Waters were elected to the PCC. Karen Vitale resigned as secretary and Rachel Lewis took over as secretary. In May, Joanna Kelly joined the PCC but in November had to resign due to a new job.

In July the Revd Sean Semple was installed as Rector and in September the Revd Simon Tarlton left the parish.

Following the Annual Meeting of the Town Council in May, Councillor Rob Taylor became the representative from the Town Council to report on the Open Churchyard.

Meetings

Six meetings were held with no extraordinary meetings being called.

The Standing Committee (Chairman, Church Wardens, Treasurer and Secretary) met in November (prior to the PCC meeting).

The Rector

At the beginning of the year adverts and a parish profile were put out for applications for a new Rector and following interviews, Sean Semple (Vicar of Weobley) was appointed.

Since arriving in Ross at the end of July, the Rector has given comprehensive reports to the PCC. His main emphasis has been on the importance of mission within our church and offering a way forward, including a Parish Vision Day to be held in January 2020.

Intergenerational Missioner

Christine Cattanach has kept the PCC up to date with the work she has been undertaking. This has included weekly Toast meetings for parents and toddlers, LEAF group for secondary school age students, and ALPHA courses and follow up groups. It is now important for the church to find leaders to continue these activities in order for the church to grow. In addition work, has continued in Brampton Abbots and Ashfield Park Primary Schools and John Kyrle High School.

Finance

The treasurer has kept members up to date with accounts and a report at every meeting.

The main fundraising event of the year was the Christmas Tree Festival.

For regular giving, the Parish Giving Scheme is now running but discussion has taken place to promote and encourage its use it more widely.

Charitable giving was to the Night Shelter in Hereford and the Church Mission Society.

Works to the church and churchyard

During the year, the second phase of building work in the church was completed and chairs which had been sponsored were purchased. Discussions concerning the third phase (north entrance and welcome area) were held and a faculty applied for. Faulty light fittings caused problems for many months and eventually, thanks to Mark Sanderson's persistence these were finally sorted out.

Approval was given by the PCC for the Friends' flood lighting scheme and a faculty applied for. It had been hoped to remove the Wellingtonia which shadows the south of the tower but the County Council would not give permission for it to be felled.

Discussion took place regarding storage in both the hall and the church and a possible new sound system, both of which still need to be resolved and wifi, including fibre, in the church, and logos and a "house style" for both the church and the benefice which have been approved and taken effect.

Other matters

In July, the Revd Simon Tarlton (curate) was thanked by the PCC for his tremendous work in keeping the church running so well during the interregnum and the PCC wished him well in his new parishes.

The website plays an important part in communication, including providing a platform for all information regarding PCC meetings. There is a dedicated page for meeting documents (available to members) and another for all minutes and dates of meetings which is available to anyone.

The PCC has appointed Judith Wiggins as Safeguarding Officer and Bryan Jones as Health & Safety Officer.

Rachel Lewis, PCC Secretary

PCC Treasurer's Report 2019

The Annual Report and Financial Statements for the year ended 31 December 2019 are published as a separate booklet and this includes a Financial Review for the year that I will not reiterate here. Our brought forward balances continue to hide the fact that each year we continue to operate with a deficit budget. Our resources will become depleted over time and there is a need to increase our annual income to cover the shortfall. The Parish Giving Scheme is a marvellous way of helping to address this and I would encourage you to join this if you are not already in the Scheme and to be as generous as possible. As there is no administration cost that we have to pay, and we receive both the donations and the income tax recovered on these early each month it does significantly improve our cashflow.

Once again, I am indebted to David Bennett for carrying out the Independent Examination of the Financial Statements within the timescale that I had requested. Also considerable thanks to the Finance Group of John Setchfield, Paul Eward, Nigel Lewis and Paul Mason for their support during the last year. Louise Jarvis in the office has also been of great support and has provided the reports and dealt with my enquiries enthusiastically.

I am stepping back after five years as Treasurer and a team is in place to split the many tasks between them and to take matters forward. I like to think that I have left matters in good order to assist them and I wish them well.

Peter Raddenbury

Safeguarding and DBS Officer's Report

I believe it is just about a year since I was formally asked if I would apply for the role of Safeguarding Officer to the Ross Benefice. Shortly thereafter I submitted my CV to the 3 parishes and my application was accepted. What a year it has been!

I attended my first safeguarding training session at the Bishop's Palace in Hereford on 5.10.19 and this, together with the information provided in written form and online, helped me to form some idea as to the task I had agreed to undertake. The Benefice Safeguarding records were scant and some files returned to me by the former Safeguarding Officer did not really take matters much further. What did become clear was that it made sense for me to take on the dual roles of Safeguarding Officer and DBS officer. It is fair to say that this latter role has been more time-consuming than the former.

I believe that I was able to meet up with the leaders of all the relevant activities offered within the Benefice before lockdown. I used my meetings with them to identify their volunteers, what they did and to try to pinpoint tasks I needed to carry out. I was in the process of drafting risk assessments for those activities and groups that did not have them when the world was turned on its head by the Corona Virus. It did not seem to be sensible to continue with those risk assessments until we knew what activities would even be allowed to continue and how those that are to be permitted would take place. Although we are now allowed to gather once more for services at least, guidance from the Church of England and the Government still seems to fluctuate from week to week. I have recently spoken with the Diocesan Safeguarding Officer's Deputy, Angela Ayliffe, and she assures me that Safeguarding Officers will soon be given proper information and guidance as, clearly, ensuring that any activities are conducted are done so in a way that is compliant with Covid 19 regulations will have to become an intrinsic part of all risk assessments in future. This health problem does not look as if it is going away anytime soon and it seems to be a fact of life that many church volunteers are in the "vulnerable" age categories. Once it becomes clear that church activities can resume, in whatever form, and I have been given the appropriate guidance from the Diocesan Safeguarding Team, I will prepare the appropriate draft risk assessments and go over them with the relevant activity leaders. I am, of course, aware that the Ministry Team and the relevant church wardens have conducted their own risk assessments in accordance with the guidance sent to them to allow the churches to reopen to a limited extent for such services as are able to take place and I will, of course, make sure that I work in tandem with them too.

Before lockdown two safeguarding issues were brought to my attention by our rector, Sean. One was somewhat historic, the other current. I referred both to the Diocesan Safeguarding Officer, as I am directed to do. The historic matter was deemed to have been sufficiently dealt with at the time and more thorough investigation, coupled with a change in the circumstances, resulted in the concern about the more recent issue diminishing. The Diocesan Safeguarding Officer is satisfied that all appropriate steps have been taken and there are not outstanding safeguarding issues relating to the two referrals.

I haven't been entirely idle during lockdown as I have worked with those offering the St Michael's zoom family services and the picnic family services to ensure that they are being conducted in an appropriate way from a safeguarding point of view. My input has been minimal as our Ministry Teams are excellent, but I have tried to be useful in some small way.

As you may have gathered from my reports to the regular PCC meetings. I have been keen to try to ensure that all PCC members as possible have read the Church of England Parish Safeguarding Handbook and completed at least the basic, C0, level of online safeguarding. Certain PCC members are required to go on to complete levels C1, C2 and C3, depending on their role. I have received notification that some PCC members have done this, but it seems that there are still some members who have not. This really does

need to be done. My discussions with activity leaders revealed that some safeguarding training or refresher training was required and, pre-lockdown, I received permission from the Diocesan Safeguarding Officer to conduct this training myself in the hope I could do so in a concise and, if not interesting, at least bearable manner. As soon as this training can be offered in a way and at a location that is compliant with the appropriate regulations, I will endeavour to do so. I have now completed training up to C3 and received my enhanced DBS certificate, so I am not being a hypocrite.

I have also been able to answer some queries from the individual parishes and hope that this has been useful. I remain very happy to do all that I can to assist with any safeguarding queries that arise.

My other role is that of DBS officer and this is a pretty thankless task, partly due to very cumbersome way in which the process is conducted at a Diocesan level with the certificate recipient being required to send it back to the Diocesan office once they have received it so it can be registered and notification provided to me as DBS officer. There have been problems at the Diocesan office too, as the Diocesan DBS officer, left, a new one had to be recruited and trained before being put on furlough during lockdown. She is now on her honeymoon! The DBS certificate requirement is essential for volunteers in certain roles but the Church of England insistence on conducting its own DBS assessment process even for those who have certificates through their employment or other voluntary work can be seen as an unnecessary irritation by some. The Deputy Diocesan Safeguarding Officer has been handling the DBS side of things too for much of the time and she has informed me that things may become even more longwinded and repetitive once certain new protocols are implemented and there may be a requirement for 3 yearly renewals in place of the current 5 yearly ones - joy!

I mentioned in my initial PCC reports that the Diocesan Safeguarding Officer would be conducting an audit of the Benefice in 2020. The good news with which I can end this report is that this has been postponed to 2021.

Judith Wiggins

Deanery Synod Report

No report

Incumbent's Report

I was collated and installed as Rector on the 30th July 2019 – which now seems a very long time ago. So much has happened in the last year, and it is no exaggeration to say that the world has changed since then due to the coronavirus pandemic.

A Rector's role is a very busy one. When you see any Rector think of a swan, or a duck – s/he may look composed when you see them, but just below the surface, and before and after that moment, know that frantic paddling is going on. In these parishes, there are Thursday and Sunday Services to think about; home, hospital and care home visits to make; school assemblies; weekly groups like Toast or the Job Club to drop into; funerals, weddings and baptisms; PCC meetings; courses like Alpha; ministry team, school governor, deanery and diocesan meetings; around 200 emails a week to send; churchyard administration and disputes; safeguarding training; parish socials and fundraising events, among other activities! Since the pandemic a

few of these have had to cease permanently, but most stopped only for a few months, and were then adapted and moved online.

If the above-mentioned activities are the “everyday” business of parish work, there have also been several unusual or significant events in the course of the last year.

- In November 2019 Ross-on-Wye was honoured by a visit from the Prince of Wales, which involved much planning by all involved.
- The biennial Christmas Tree Festival in December 2019 attracted around 85 trees representing a wide swathe of Ross business and community life, and the Festival in turn drew many people from the town and beyond.
- Positive progress was made in talks between the Brampton Abbotts PCC, the Diocese of Hereford, and the Brampton Abbotts Church Regeneration Group, concerning the mutually beneficial use of the closed St Michael and All Angel’s Church, and its churchyard and carpark.
- From the 1st January 2020 until the 1st April 2020 I had the responsibility of being the Acting Rural Dean of the Ross and Archenfield Deanery while the Rural Dean was on sabbatical.
- In January, a visioning day was held at St Mary’s, and prayerful discernment on that day has given birth to a vision to guide the three parishes of the benefice in 2020 and beyond. We believe that we are called to be inclusive, intergenerational churches that inspire faith, hope and love in our communities.
- In late January and early February 2020, we were battered by several storms and Ross experienced extensive flooding. This provided a valuable opportunity to engage with flood victims, and to hand out wellies and hot chocolate to them and to helpers.
- In March 2020 our lives changed due to the pandemic and subsequent lockdown. For the first time since the year 1208 churches were locked, and we were unable to enter our churches even at Easter. Our benefice responded quickly and effectively to the initial challenges posed by the coronavirus, and most of our ministry, mission, meetings and even fundraising migrated online via platforms like Zoom, Facebook and You Tube. Christine Cattanach, our Intergenerational Missioner, helped groups like Toast and LEAF, move online and she has also prepared discipleship videos that can be used in schools, or with families and young people. There have also been attempts to start to meet face to face with such groups.
- Family Zoom Services were hosted by Walford parish and proved very successful.
- The Ross Remembers website was created as a virtual memorial to those who have died during this traumatic year of 2020.
- During lockdown, pastoral care was triaged. With all other clergy and readers either in a vulnerable health category or shielding a family member, I conducted all funerals and any emergency/end of life pastoral care. The rest of the ministry team worked hard to care for parishioners remotely – by phone, email, Zoom and letter.
- To a greater or lesser extent every person and institution in the country (and globally) has been left reeling and traumatised by the suddenness, scale and consequences of this pandemic, and this trauma will direct much of the Church’s work in years to come.
- We anticipate that our mixed economy of physically gathered and virtual services will be our new normal until such time as a vaccine for COVID-19 has been found.
- In June our new curate, Mrs Tiffany Jackson, her husband Dr Stephen Jackson, and their son Liam moved into the curate’s house in Ross. Tiffany was licenced by the Bishop of Hereford in July to enable her to begin her curacy, and she will be ordained to the diaconate on the 27th September 2020 at Hereford Cathedral.
- From July 2020 the benefice vision began to be rolled out with the rebranding of the parishes as “The Ross Parishes” which replaces the “Rawchurch” branding.

- St Marys' reopened for public, socially distanced worship on the 5th July and has since then provided a hybrid service consisting of gathered congregation and recorded elements which is live-streamed, and attracts a local and international audience.
- Several funerals have been held, and two weddings will take place in the next two months. There has been no rescheduling of Christenings possibly due to the current restriction on the number of people allowed in church (30) for occasional services.
- In September the Bereavement Group, now known as "Just B", was restarted and is providing vital support to those who are bereaved, and particularly those who have experienced complex bereavement this year.
- Socially distanced services have recently resumed in Walford and Brampton Abbots.

In the immediate future we need to restart our ministry in schools which at this stage will be via videos, and there are similarly plans to restart the Job Club in a slightly different form. Christine and her helpers will be starting Messy Church in October. But so much of our planning and ministry depends on the spread or containment of the coronavirus, and subsequent Government and National Church guidance, and so it is difficult to plan too far ahead.

In the longer term we know that the Rev'd Canon Chris Blanchard will sadly retire as House for Duty Priest in Walford in April 2021, and so we will need to make a strong case to the Diocese to recruit his successor. Brampton Abbots is hoping to resume regular Sunday services by the beginning of 2021. But our overall focus will be prayerfully and practically working out how we can inspire faith, hope and love in our three communities during this very difficult time.

As this time of our Annual Parochial Church Meetings (APCMs) one of our primary responsibilities is to elect people onto our PCCs who will help lead our churches. At a time of crisis like now, good leadership is even more important. Our Vision provides us with a clear sense of direction and purpose, and so we need PCCs who can make vision a reality, and who will help lead our people to reach out and make a positive difference to the people around them. Simply put, the Gospel calls us to add value to others' lives. We should not exist for our own sake or expect our communities to add value to the church. It is very much the other way around.

I would like to thank all of you for your prayers and for your dedication to Christ in these parishes during this most tumultuous of years. Particular thanks are due to those who have shown imaginative, courageous and determined leadership; to those who do the hard and humble work behind the scenes; to our dedicated ministry team; to Lou Jarvis our wonderfully unflappable and competent administrator, and especially to Mark Sanderson for helping our parishes become digital parishes that continued to bring faith, hope and love to people even when the doors of the physical church were locked.

We are the people of the Church of England parishes in Ross, Walford and Brampton Abbots in 2020. In the year of the pandemic when the world changed. Our grandchildren and our spiritual heirs will look back and will wonder what we Christians did at this difficult time; how we kept the Christ-light burning in our communities during and after COVID-19. When they look back - and they will - what will they find?

The Rev'd Sean Semple

Rector: The Ross Parishes

Intergenerational Missioner's Report

The IM role has now entered its second year and overall the year has been one in which intergenerational mission has really started to flourish at St Mary's despite another change of leadership as the previous curate moved onto his own parish and our new incumbent the Rev'd Sean Semple took charge. The project has made considerable progress during 2019 and continuity has been maintained as Sean has taken time to support and embrace the project.

The role exists to support the parish to grow both spiritually and numerically using a strategy based upon research and the work of the new Archbishop of York Stephen Cottrell. The IM role is a five year project during which time it is hoped that all generations will be supported to grow. In this context much of the focus is upon families and younger people whose numbers are currently disproportionate to the current demographic. Part of the role is to create new congregations and engage with those who are currently outside the church by creating new opportunities to encounter steps to faith. For those inside the church it is to create opportunities to grow in faith that support what is already happening. This happens using a strategic tool, called the Growth Cycle to Connect, Engage and Nurture, Create opportunities to Commit and Disciple.

Schools Work

Schools work has continued in Brampton Abbots developing well as the Open the Book team has grown under the direction of Margaret Mason, with many flamboyant and entertaining performances of Bible stories. IM Assemblies have continued to follow up on the bible themes and the IM continued volunteering in the school. Sox puppets also became more established during 2019. The children who were involved led their own expressions of Christian worship with the puppets both in school assemblies and also at Easter and at the end of term in St Mary's Church, in front of their parents as well as the rest of the school.

The IM has also been able to utilise her connection with Laura Toomer, who works for the Christian charity Village Hope during 2019. She is a very experienced school's worker and they have created a great partnership. This has been partly in BA but also in Walford with the backing of Rev'd Chris Blanchard which has led to some opportunities to complement the current Clergy Assemblies and OTB lead by Canon Freda Davies by creating a Lego club to establish relationships there with a view to introducing more faith based initiatives such as Walk Through the Bible and Prayer Stations in Schools.

The IM visited JKHS School with the Rev Semple, and again they seemed keen for our involvement, however this has not yet lead to the proposed ideas coming to fruition. We are still keen and hopeful to be able to support the school going forward in 2020.

Children, families and young people's work

Toast is essentially a toddler group where parents can also relax and find a listening ear and a warm welcome, this is a way of connecting with people who in general have no experience of church. Toast has certainly become very much established and shown positive signs of growth during 2019 with around 25-30 regular attendees each Wednesday. The holiday 'specials' have been particularly popular with the Fridays in August seeing more than 50 people attending most of the sessions. This is encouraging that so many families have made this first step of coming into the church on a regular basis and feel welcomed and at home in the building.

The team called the Toast Makers has also grown and become a solid team who can run the general sessions without the IM on occasion. They are have become more involved with the planning and decision-making

going forward and are creating great relationships with many of the parents and small people who are known as Toast Eaters.

Six of our Toast Eating families came along to our Crib Service which this year saw more than 300 people attend. Several of the families who had become known to us through Toast had never been to a church service before. This is testament to the strong relationships that have been established and nurtured.

LEAF

LEAF is our age 11-15 Youth Group which began with five faithful young people and has certainly grown in the last year to approximately 15. This group has really benefited from the reordering of the church and have been known to play crazy golf, hockey and rounders as well as create craft and what has become the annual gingerbread house making session in Advent. This group have a gathering activity which sometimes involves a moral debating game and sometimes uses pieces of scripture to think about how the bible speaks to us, followed by a time of prayer. Several of the young people from LEAF have become confirmed during 2019 and it was a wonderful to be involved with the confirmation classes for one of these young people at the invitation of the Curate.

Champing

The good people of Walford Church allowed us to come and camp in the grounds of St Michael's and also inside the church (for those who found it too spooky in the churchyard). This meant that families who come to Walford and some of the LEAF young people were able to come and spend an extended social time in the grounds of the church. This was followed by a wonderful All Age Service kindly lead by Freda Davies which all the families came along to. We repeated the experience in September and were joined by some of my fellow IMs and their families. The deal was that we created and delivered a Forest Church Service the following morning. We were delighted that Rev'd Caroline Pascoe was able to join us and FD bless all 56 people came to this outdoor Service that take elements of nature and the seasons to celebrate God's creation.

Services

The IM role is designed to be 28 hours in the parish and 7 in the Diocese. Some of this time is taken with training and IM team meetings but during 2019 I have used the majority of this time to support Ross Benefice. This has meant being involved with services and some families work at Walford and at Brampton which I hope has been a help during interregnum.

All Age Worship

Predominantly delivered at Ross our All Age Service has developed and perhaps come full circle during 2019. It began as a collaboration during interregnum and has grown over the past year with particular highlights being Sandra Miller's visit for a Mother's Day service, our Easter Day offering which was an ambitious and successful blend of traditional and All Age worship styles. This poignant service in the round was the first time that a service of this type have been possible in St Mary's due to the removal of the pews and combined a Eucharist that was literally shared around the Table as a fitting farewell to our curate Rev'd Simon Tarlton. The handover to our new Incumbent was fairly seamless and his willingness to follow this pattern of All Age was a great asset. The thrill of All Age amongst the Christmas Trees where sitting around tables was a great privilege to lead.

Our new Rector was more than happy to continue and participate in the formation of the service each month and did a brilliant job despite the pressure on his time. This type of service takes a lot of time and thought and prayer to put together and developing a team to help with both planning and delivery seemed like a logical step.

However, as the year went on two things became more obvious. We were asked to develop the existing All Age into something more invitational by members of the congregation. Perhaps a lack of invitational culture contributed to the reality that the new people we had hoped would join us did not really materialise and our new family contacts were not ready or available to come to such a large service on a Sunday morning. Secondly although numbers continued to be fairly stable it did become clear that for a proportion of the current congregation, the service was too different for them to feel that they were worshipping in a way that was comfortable for them. When we first planned the service we had hoped that we would grow it enough to divide it further down the line and create a second morning service for families. This is the nature of mission and there is much to be thankful for and to learn from this All Age chapter. It is now up to Sean as Rector to decide whether to keep the service, to adapt it, or whether to try something different moving forward.

Discipleship

During 2019 we have run two Alpha Courses, each of which have then formed home groups. Each home group has gone on to study The Bible Society Bible Course which has been well received so far.

The first Alpha course ran from February to April. 22 guests joined us, who were all from the current congregations of our benefice. The idea was that they would experience Alpha and then we hoped would help us to run a subsequent course. The first course ran in the hall but Team Alpha decided they would ambitiously like to hold Alpha inside St Mary's. Alpha Chefs became a vibrant group of willing volunteers who would deliver some amazing hot food to be served by the helpers, to the next set of guests. The atmosphere in the church added to the evenings and although there were some teething issues with sound, the teams worked well to deliver the different elements of each week. Something we have noticed is how guests who would say they had a faith to begin with, certainly came alive in their faith and developed in confidence to talk about it with other people both inside and outside the church. Many of the guests on Alpha have also become very willing volunteers who offer to help build relationships and create opportunities for those outside the church to create steps to faith. Creating and developing lay leadership is integral to the IM role and those now involved with Alpha have gone on to help with teams that run Toast, LEAF, All Age, and subsequent discipleship courses.

The IM project had completed the first two years of the five years at the end of 2019 and it is encouraging to see so many things birthed and growing, as well as learning lessons from things that have not grown as we would have hoped. St Mary's is slowly becoming more intergenerational but mission is not easy, it takes teamwork, time and faith to hear and to see what God is doing and to join in with that. As we work toward a new vision, I hope the next three years will see us all travelling together toward God's plan for us as a church.

Organisations' Reports for 2019

Altar Services

I am grateful to the loyal band of volunteers who have ensured that there has been a crucifer and two acolytes for every 9.30am Eucharist as well as at other Eucharistic services during the year. Few people realise that there is more involved to being an Altar Server than that of leading processions and attending to the needs of the priest during services. Servers are responsible for setting up the Altar and the elements required for communion before services and for clearing up afterwards.

If you feel that you would like to help with this do contact me – there is no age limit and full training is given!

Freda Davies

Bell Ringers

Objectives

The primary objectives of St Mary's bellringing team are to provide the personnel to ring the bells prior to Sunday services and other festivals, and to build and maintain an inclusive team of bellringers within the local and regional community to continually develop their ringing skills and capabilities, within a safe and secure environment.

Bells

St Mary's Ross-on-Wye is fortunate to possess what are generally acknowledged to be one of the best rings of bells in the county. The bells (8 bells, ranging in weight from 4cwt to just over 1 ton, plus a separate service bell of approx 1cwt) hang in a massive oak frame installed in 1881. The last major restorations were carried out in 1976 when one cracked bell was recast and the major fittings (bearings, clappers, wheels, ropes and pulleys) were replaced, and in 1982 when a new metal grillage was installed beneath the timber frame.

Service and Maintenance

Regular maintenance of the installation is carried out by the local ringers (as is the case with many rings of bells across the country), who also voluntarily fund and resource the replacement and/or repair of items such as ropes, stays and clappers.

Condition

All major fittings (frame, headstocks, bearings and wheels) are in good condition, although there is an investigation underway at present to check the conditions of the bearings on the tenor bell. Secondary items are as follows:

- Clappers

Clappers are a high wear item and most have been repaired over the past 10-15 years, so it is anticipated that we will continue to see an average of one failure per year. Failures include broken shafts, where the metal shaft breaks above the ball, or worn bearings, causing excessive play and eventual failure.

Both require specialist repair or replacement by one of the bell foundry companies. We have an established relationship with John Taylors Bell Foundry, who performed the last major restoration, and provide a fast and efficient service.

In 2019 the clappers on the 5th, 6th and 8th bells were refurbished at Taylors Bell Foundry. We were fortunate to receive a hands-on visit by Simon Adams, Marketing Director, who helped review our requirements and re-design the clapper assembly for the tenor bell. This has resulted in a noticeable improvement in the sound and resonance of the bell.

- Stays

Stays (used to hold the bell still when not ringing) are subject to stress damage, especially when training new recruits. No stays were replaced this year.

- Ropes

Bell ropes are subject to constant wear so require frequent inspection and adjustment. Over the past year 4 ropes required repair or binding to resolve and avoid damage.

The new set of ropes purchased in 2017 (as a memorial to 2 of our previous ringers) have all now been fitted.

Environmental**Lighting**

Installation of new external lighting on the boiler house wall has greatly improved security by the tower door.

The majority of incandescent light bulbs have been replaced with low energy alternatives, and will be upgraded to long life LED units in due course.

Heating

No change.

Access

Access to the ringing chamber is by 35 steps, which some of our more mature and less able ringers find increasingly difficult to climb.

There is a rope fixed to the newel of the spiral, however, this does not provide adequate support, especially when descending the stairs.

An alternative rope or (preferably) handrail to the outer wall of the first stage of the spiral staircase would greatly improve access, both for our less able-bodied ringers and all other visitors to the tower.

Security

The entrance door to the staircase has been subject to occasional vandalism and may require further repair or reinforcement. In 2015 the old mortice latch and lock failed and was subsequently removed, leaving no means to keep the door closed other than being locked with the security key, which cannot generally be used when people are in the tower to ensure a means of exit. In windy conditions the door often blows open making the stairway less secure and open for intrusion and vandalism.

Reinstatement of the mortice lock would improve security and weatherproofing of the stairway.

Ringers

Our service band comprises a group of 9 regular ringers, 5 of whom live outside Ross town (1 in Peterstow, 1 in Much Marcle, 1 in Bridstow and 2 in Littledean), plus itinerant support from 2 ringers from Bridstow and Gorsley. We did not gain any new recruits over the year, instead focusing on consolidating the team and building our skills.

On Tuesday practice nights we attract regular support from ringers from other towers in South Herefordshire and the Forest of Dean, plus occasional visitors from further afield.

Changes

We unfortunately lost 4 of our youngsters over the year, 2 of whom progressed to higher education and the others moving to other activities.

Officers

Officers of the St Mary's Ross-on-Wye Bellringers band are as follows:

- Tower Captain Roman Sadowski
- Secretary Pauline Leggate

- Treasurer Frances Taylor
- Safeguarding representative Shared responsibility by the above

Recruitment

We welcome and encourage all new recruits (from 9 to 90!). All members of the public, and especially the P.C.C., are very welcome to visit the tower to see what we do!

Safeguarding

Our recent recruits include young people from 11 to 17 years of age, so we have adopted Church and bellringing association guidelines to fully implement safeguarding procedures for the protection of young people and vulnerable adults. 3 members of the tower who are primarily responsible for the tuition and protection of recruits have undergone DBS checks and we have added Safeguarding as a shared responsibility for all members of the band.

Achievements and Events

We rang for all major Church events and Sunday service throughout the year.

We hosted various visiting groups of ringers and other events during the year (details on request).

Bereavement Support Group

The death of a loved one can be difficult to cope with and for some it can be helpful to talk to someone who has some understanding of the feelings they might be experiencing. Most of us have experienced bereavement ourselves and while every individual's situation is different, our aim is to support the bereaved in any way we can. For some, the support comes from a visit and a chat. For others the loneliness experienced as a result of the death of a loved one can be hard to cope with and sometimes it is helpful to find a place to go where there is a warm welcome and someone to talk to who has some understanding of the situation the bereaved persons may find themselves in – a place where no one minds tears or the need to repeat the same story again and again, or when no one minds if someone prefers to just be quiet drinking a cup of coffee or tea. The Bereavement Support Group with help from Ross Mothers' Union hope that the Bereavement Cafe in St Mary's Hall on the fourth Wednesday of every month goes some way to addressing this need. Some people just come once or twice while for others the cafe becomes a regular event and new friendships develop.

Freda Davies

Bible-A-Month Club

The Bible Study groups of St Mary's have continued to participate in Bible Society's Bible-a-Month scheme throughout 2019 so that others around the world can have access to their own Bible or portion. Each month £15 has gone to provide Bibles to those who long for them; persecuted Christians in the Middle East; Christians in war torn Syria; the 3/4 million Epie speakers in Nigeria who have not had even a verse of the Bible in their own language; and even materials to bring "Open the Book" to schools in Ghana. These are just some examples, every month is different.

In addition, during Lent people continued to make their usual donations even though meetings were weekly not fortnightly. As a result an extra £50 was raised, which members agreed should go to provide 10 children's Bibles to Malawi, where Sunday School attendances often run into the hundreds per church!

We hope both to continue this work throughout 2020 and encourage other groups to join in helping to improve the balance between ourselves who have the privilege of reading the Bible whenever we choose, and those who have never had the chance.

Janet Nelson
St Mary's, Ross-on-Wye
and Bible Society Hereford Action Group.

Bible Study Groups

It is now 9 years since Pauline and Colin Leggate opened their home for a Bible Study group, which quickly outgrew the lounge in Merrivale, necessitating the establishment of a second group at the home of Margaret and Paul Mason. Around two dozen members of St Mary's have loyally supported these two groups and I think that all would acknowledge growth in faith and assurance in fellowship as we have studied God's word together.

Other groups have, over these last years, flourished for a while but, for various reasons, have not continued. Chris Blanchard, who acts as benefice house group co-ordinator, arranges meetings two or three times a year for group leaders to meet and share news of their activities and discuss future plans. With house groups now starting at the end of Alpha it will be good to welcome new group leaders at these meetings.

The pattern for the twice monthly house group meetings has remained much the same – coffee, opening prayer, reading of a passage of the bible, discussion, concluding with prayer. We have used various study guides which have focused on a book of the bible, a character or a theme and this year we have spent time studying the lives of various followers of Jesus and some of the parables. Study guides provide some helpful background, indicate the sections of scripture for study and set around ten questions for group discussion.

Each group usually do the same course of study during Lent and Advent. During Lent we followed the study course designed by the Marches Christian Environment Network to address the environmental issues affecting our planet. The course prompted discussion and reflection through three main areas: Spiritual (Poetry, Bible Study, Contemplation, Pilgrimage, Prayer walks), Practical (Science, Technology, Food) and Social (Beauty, Justice & Compassion, Economy). We followed this up with a very interesting visit to EnviroSort in Worcester. This plant receives, sorts and dispatches all the contents of our green recyclable bins.

For Advent we looked at some interesting and imaginative 'newspapers' (e.g. Bethlehem Star, The Daily Prophet) produced by www.faithandworship.com, the source of a number of study courses that we have used. The varied set of articles enabled us to empathise with so many of the people who were very much part of that first Christmas and the course was concluded with each group producing their own 'newspaper'. The 'Crescent Chronicles' and 'Mews News' will be shared with church members next Advent.

Paul Mason

Brampton Abbots CE Primary School

'Open the Book' is now firmly established in Brampton Abbots. Three or four times a term the OTB team present a Bible story during the school's act of Collective Worship. Each presentation takes around 10–15 minutes. Big thanks to Christine for getting this off the ground. We are now looking to recruit a few more to join the team; please speak to Christine if you think you could help.

Otherwise the pattern of St Mary's involvement at the school remains much as it has been in recent years. The Thursday morning acts of worship continue to be led by a member of St Mary's ministry team and, once a month, by the OTB team. A number of church members regularly go in to school as volunteers to listen to children read or assist in some other way and Christine runs a 'Sox-Puppets' after-school club aimed at enabling them to lead acts of worship using the puppets to create both dance and drama.

Simon Tarlton retired as Foundation Governor when he moved away, and we welcomed Sean Semple as an ex officio member of the Governing Body. The others who served as Foundation Governors in 2019 were Roger Hanson, Peter Jenkins, Paul Mason and Keith Richards. The continued good health of the school is due in no small part to the work of the Governing Body.

With thanks to the PCC we have continued the practice of presenting (The Lion) Children's Bible to each child when they enter Key Stage 2. They are then 7 years old and have acquired reading skills that are at a very exploratory stage. It is to be hoped that they will enjoy reading "the world's greatest story retold for every child" and sharing it with other family members.

Brampton Abbots continues to be oversubscribed which is encouraging but none the less it is not easy to turn down applications from some who live quite close to the school. The school was again placed in the top 20% of schools in England in most of the areas covered by the SATs tests with 29% of pupils achieving the highest standard in each of the three core KS2 subjects English, Maths and Writing. This achievement was not bettered by any other school in the County although this honour was shared with a couple of other schools.

After just over three years of collaborating with Bridstow School and sharing a headteacher, the governing bodies of both schools have now taken the decision to make the arrangement more formal by entering into a (hard) federation, to be known as Oak Meadow Federation. Little will change in the day-to-day work in each school but, from 2nd March 2020, there will be just one governing body covering both schools.

Thank you one and all for the many and varied bits of help from church members and especially for your prayers for our own church school. More information about the school can be found on the school's website www.bramptonabbotts.org.

Paul Mason

Cana Ministry

For many the only time they enter a church is for a wedding, christening or funeral and it is important that the church is seen to be a welcoming and non-threatening place to be. The Cana Ministry was developed to form a link with couples choosing to marry in our churches and the church community. The volunteer's role is one of a befriender who is available to welcome the couple if for example, they want to come to services before their wedding but need some help to find their way through the liturgy. Thanks to the generosity of The Mothers' Union each couple is given a small gift on their Wedding Day from the congregation – this is presented by the befriender during the service. Recognising that marriage is not just about the 'Big Day', every effort is made to maintain contact with the couple after the ceremony so that they feel part of the church family.

Freda Davies

Catering team report

2019 was an especially busy year for the Catering Team who provided refreshments on various occasions starting with the Epiphany party in January followed by Lent Lunches, Job Club Easter lunch, Interview day, a Pet service in April, the Open Gardens weekend, a British Legion concert, Sunday teas in August, Sean's installation, Simon's last service, Harvest supper, Christmas Tree Festival, Job Club Christmas lunch and the Carol service. All these occasions were part of the hospitality of St Mary's as well as raising over £2167 for St Mary's and other charities. Thank you to everyone who provided food and spent time working hard in the kitchen.

Margaret Mason

Christian Aid

The annual house to house collection for Christian Aid, organised by representatives from all the churches in Ross & District, took place from May 12th – 18th. The emphasis of the week was on maternity care in Sierra Leone. A total of £6616.40 was raised.

The efforts of seventeen collectors from St Mary's contributed £1182.74 towards the total amount. This will be augmented by gift aid. This was achieved by distributing envelopes through letter boxes and returning a few days later to collect the, hopefully, filled envelopes. On many occasions this entailed returning a second time. 261 filled envelopes were returned. In some instances, where householders were away, envelopes were left with an address in town to which they could be taken. A further 6 church members worked on the counting and banking of the money.

The work of our seventeen church members is greatly appreciated as house to house collecting is not always rewarding. Thank you to all members of the congregation who are always generous in their support.

Jean Harrison

Church Hall Committee

No report

Commercial and Industrial Chaplaincy

As I am very late writing this, it is August 19th, I am finding it difficult to put last year into perspective as everything since March has been dominated by the pandemic.

In 2019 visiting went as normal, the joy of new ventures starting and the pain of old friends shutting down were reminders that in God's world there is always movement.

Two highlights were the Odd Object and the Christmas Tree Festival. The Festival was well planned and ordered but I had decorated the Chaplain's Tree all higgledy piggledy with the traders names everywhere and when the Horizon Centre couldn't find their name I could only assure them it was there, even though I couldn't find it myself! But we laughed. The Odd Object had record entries, a clear winner and wonderful assistance from Andrew, all superb.

So why do these two occasions deserve mention?

I was in Horizon on the day they closed in March, the tears were unbearable as these vulnerable people with profound learning difficulties were being told they could not come again. And the Odd Object? – Carnival and competition cancelled.

Our prayers are needed for the rebuilding of "joy" within our industrial sector.

Church Watch, Welcome and Care

No report

Community Food Larder (CTRD)

Firstly our very grateful thanks to St Mary's Church who have completely refurbished our new Larder premises. Our new home is welcoming, fit for purpose and, most importantly, no stairs! We are very thankful to all involved in this project, most especially to Bryan Jones.

The Larder has continued to meet a genuine need amongst local people, our numbers remain fairly constant, we had been geared up for a rise in use due to the introduction of Universal Credit but, thankfully, apart from one or two specific issues, we have not noticed a serious upturn in demand.

We continue to be very blessed with a constant stream of donations, as reported in previous years we have never run out of food; we are also generously supported by financial gifts. We have good relationships with (most of) the supermarkets in town where we have collecting points as well as support from schools, Churches, local organisations and businesses as well as many individuals.

We work closely with the Job Club and provide refreshments at Tea and Toast which is now becoming something of a community cafe. We have recently arranged to issue vouchers from the Hall on a Tuesday morning which we hope will enable more people to join in the fellowship that is provided. We also have close links with CAP (Christians Against Poverty) and are planning to offer a Life Skills course soon to help with budgeting, cookery etc.

We are also well blessed in the number of volunteers that help with this vital social outreach, friendships are made between the volunteers from the different Churches in the town and those of no faith. It is a privilege to be part of this community action. Our very sincere thanks to all at St Mary's for the practical and prayerful support we receive.

Lindsay Cole

Contemplative Prayer Group

The Contemplative Prayer Group aims to meet on the third Wednesday of each month. During the time of silence, our aim is to empty the mind so enabling us to focus our minds on God usually aided by a sentence from scripture. Towards the end of each session some time is spent in intercessory prayer. During Advent and Lent we meet every Wednesday in church as part of the Seasonal Reflection Group.

Contemplative Prayer is not easy and takes practice, while this form of prayer is not for everyone, we would welcome anyone who might like to try this for themselves. Do ask me for more information.

Freda Davies

Flicks in the Sticks

Once again we were able to show a wide variety of films and we also took part in the Borderlines Film Festival. We averaged between 20 and 30 patrons on each occasion but it is very much a friendly get-together and reaches out to many people in the town and surrounding areas.

We raised over £700 for the Church Hall, £170 of this being tea monies organised by Norma and John Davies. As I write this we are sorry to report that John died this year and we shall miss him very much. He

and Norma joined the team at the very beginning nearly 20 years ago and have been loyal and valued contributors to the success of Flicks in Ross.

This year we have been hit hard by Covid restrictions and at the moment we can see no way of starting to show films again for many months to come.

Thank you to all the team, the Flicks organisers in Montgomeryshire and, of course, our very supportive patrons.

William Hazelton

Flower Rota

As usual I would like to thank the few who generously provide and arrange flowers at the High Altar and in the Markyee Chapel. I think all will agree that their efforts go some way to enhance the beauty of our church. Sadly, each year there are fewer volunteers so we would be delighted to hear from anyone who would like to join us. If flower arranging is not one of your talents perhaps you might consider donating money towards the flowers perhaps to mark some special occasion or in memory of a loved one - one of the group will be delighted to arrange the flowers on your behalf.

Lindsay Ray ensures that the church is suitably decorated for festivals such as Christmas, Easter and Harvest and is grateful to all who spend many hours arranging the flowers for these events. Generous donations from members of the congregation for Easter Lilies and Christmas flowers are much appreciated.

Celia Glover continues to be our link for those who marry at St Mary's sometimes liaising with Florists or with the bride herself and ensuring that wherever possible, special requests for colours etc. are catered for.

Freda Davies

Friends of St Mary's Church

Another year of fund raising and activities for the Friends. The big event of the year was the biannual town Open Gardens in June. Income from this was slightly down on usual, largely attributed to poor weather especially on the Sunday. This has become a regular event for the whole town and it's always great to see St Mary's taking the lead. Discussions started about the replacement of the church floodlights, a collaboration between the Friends and the Town Council, this project should complete any time now when we will once again be able to see the church properly illuminated with more efficient LED lights. Substantial donations were made to the PCC for phase 2 reordering. At the end of the year John Taylor stood down as chairman, due to ill health. We thank him for his devotion to the Friends (which continues) and assure him of our thoughts and prayers as he continues to fight his illness.

Mark Sanderson

Home Communion and Visiting

Twelve members of the congregation as well as the clergy team took Home Communion to 6 Residential homes and Sheltered Accommodation complexes during 2019 although Rosedale chose not to have us visit early in the year. The monthly total has been about 45 regular communicants in the residential sector. Twelve individuals received us for Communion in their own homes but the move to Ross Court by Majorie Hicks and Sylvia Churchas, and to Brockhampton by Audrey Jandrell reduced these numbers. A compensating group of between three and five people has developed at Wallace Court. Ross Court also continued Evensong with hymns taken by Simon Tarlton (or Derek) on a bi-monthly basis. During the year we maintained our invitation for Home Communion to members of the congregation who are now unable to come to Church for services.

Celia Glover (Rota Organiser)

Hospital Chaplaincy

We continued to provide chaplaincy for the Community Hospital. The ward visitors for Peregrine and Merlin (Celia Glover and Jean Spencer) offer continuing weekly support especially for longer term patients and those from a distance with few visitors. They also are a link with the staff and the three ministerial chaplains who also visit each week on their monthly rota with an opportunity for patients to take communion then. Additional communions have been arranged on Sundays under special circumstances. The Rector responded to all emergency visit requests when needed.

Job Club

This is run as an adjunct to the Tea and Toast on Community Larder mornings. Computer access and assistance from Melvyn Reynolds, and Andrew Norledge is available, and used by a small number each week. Plans are afoot to develop a wider support service with help in aspects of housing, legal representation and financial management as well as personal counselling.

Derek Glover

Mothers' Union

St. Mary's branch continues to flourish, and our membership is increasing.

We have had a year of entertaining and challenging talks and some great fun and fellowship: whilst fund raising for the work of the Mothers Union at home and overseas.

Many of our members are heavily involved in the pastoral work of our church, e.g. Baptism group, Bereavement Café. Canna Ministry, Community Larder, Job Club, Toast and Toddle and the Thursday Prayer group.

We meet each month in the church hall

Margaret Willis

Music

St Mary's Choir continued to provide music for services throughout 2019. One of the highlights of the year for the choir was our now annual summer cathedral visit which in 2019 took us to Exeter where we sang three evensongs, from Friday to Sunday as well as the Sunday Eucharist. Thanks as always to my wonderful colleague, Adrian and to all who assist from the sidelines with the provision of high quality music at St Mary's.

Mark Sanderson

Piecemakers

During the past year emphasis has been on designing and creating new pulpit falls for St. Mary's. Currently the Easter/ Christmas, and the Lent/Advent designs have been dedicated and are in use. Whitsun and Trinity falls are still work in progress. Anyone with an interest or skills in any form of needlecraft is welcome to join us on the second Wednesday in the month, in the church hall.

Margaret Willis

Prayers for St Mary's

Prayers have continued to be said monthly in church for the fulfilment of a vision received over 10 years ago of a full church for every main service. We meet at 12 noon on the first Monday of every month, and would be glad of more members of the congregation to join us on a regular or ad hoc basis.

Janet and Nick Nelson

Prayer Chain

From time to time we are asked to pray for people who would prefer their request not to be made public. These requests are passed on to members of the Prayer Chain to be included in their private prayer. As co-ordinator of the Prayer Chain I would be delighted to hear from anyone interested in being part of this and am always happy to pass on requests for prayer ensuring requests are dealt with sensitively and always maintaining confidentiality.

Terry Davies

Residential Homes

We continue to support these as and when they request services. There are two types of contact – the care homes for which we offer chaplaincy and Home communions – Ross Court, Westbank and Rosedale (until April 2019), and the residential complexes – Fontaine Court, Wallace Hall Court, Bernard Hackett Housing and Woodside for whom we make provision as agreed with the residents. Christmas services were held for Westbank and Ross Court. During the year we have continued to deepen our understanding of the needs of dementia sufferers and Anne Morris and Judith Hazelton have a monthly programme of individual and group contacts at Westbank.

Sidespersons

2019 proved to be another challenging year. Services for clergy leaving and clergy arriving together with a range of special or additional services and a sprinkling of Baptisms kept our sidespersons busy.

Thanks to all who have taken part in this ministry, especially the "8 o'clockers" who faithfully rotate their duties with very little input from me. In this context particular mention should be of the contribution made by Philip Jennings who resigned in 2019, only months before his recent death.

Once again I would like to stress there is always room for additional volunteers for this not difficult but much appreciated role in all our worship services.

Janet Nelson

Current Sidespersons List

Mrs Valerie Allen
Mrs Norma Davies
Mrs Margaret Gabb
Mr Julian Halett

Mr Gerald Altree
Mrs Marian Francis
Mrs Celia Glover
Mrs Pam Harding

Mr John Davies
Mr Gerald Francis
Mrs Sylvia Greer
Mr Terry Harding

Mrs Jean Harrison
 Mrs Susan Jenkins
 Mrs Sharn John
 Mr Peter Landau
 Mrs Anne Remmington
 Mr Peter Reynolds
 Mrs Jean Spencer
 Mr James Weatherhead

Mrs Judith Hazelton
 Mr Peter Jenkins
 Mr Bryan Jones
 Mrs Janet Nelson
 Mrs Denise Robertson
 Mrs Susan Ryan
 Mr John Spencer

Mr William Hazelton
 Mr Graham John
 Mrs Judith Landau
 Mr Nick Nelson
 Mrs Marilyn Reynolds
 Mr Bob Ryan
 Mrs Elaine Weatherhead

Sunday Kids

Sunday Kids meets during the 9.30 Service on the first and third Sunday of the month with around six children who attend on a fairly regular basis. The children leave the main Service during the first hymn to go into the Children's Room where they have their own Service which includes a craft activity based on the Gospel reading. They then return to the Service in time for Communion and to share their activities with the Congregation.

I would like to thank those people who have recently volunteered to lead or help with the group as this has really helped share the work involved in running the group.

Anne Morris

Supper Club

No report

Thursday Morning Prayer Meeting

This group has recently moved from meeting in Church after the Thursday Morning Communion service to successful digital meetings on Zoom.

We have been meeting regularly since April 2018. Our prayer times together have grown from the fellowship enjoyed by this group over many years, meeting together for coffee after the service.

Prayer is informal, we pray as we are able, and from tentative beginnings we have all grown in confidence.

Best of all we have seen God answer our prayers in wonderful ways. We often pray for people we know, both church members and others, but also for local and national concerns. We also pray for the various aspects of our Church's life and for God's Kingdom to come in this place.

Our group is open to whoever feels they'd like to pray with us.

Sue Spence

Appendix – Electoral Roll

All persons whose names are entered upon the Church Electoral Roll of the parish (and such persons only) are entitled to vote at the election of parochial representatives of the laity.

1. Subject to the provisions of rule 14(3)(c), a person is qualified to be elected a parochial representative of the laity if -
 - (a) his/her name is entered on the church electoral roll of the parish and, unless he/she is under the age of eighteen years at the date of the election, has been so entered for at least the preceding period of six months;
 - (b) he/she is an actual communicant which means that he/she has received Communion according to the use of the Church of England or of a Church in communion with the Church of England at least three times during the twelve months preceding the date of the election; and
 - (c) he/she is of sixteen years or upwards;
 - (d) he/she is not disqualified as referred to in paragraph 3 of these Notes.
2. (a) A person shall be disqualified from being nominated, chosen or elected from serving as a churchwarden, a member of a parochial church council, a district church council or any synod under these rules if he/she is disqualified from being a charity trustee under section 72(1) of the Charities Act 1993 and the disqualification is not for the time being subject to a general waiver by the Charity Commissioners under subsection (4) of that section or to a waiver by them under that subsection in respect of all ecclesiastical charities established for purposes relating to the parish concerned. In this paragraph "ecclesiastical charity" has the same meaning as that assigned to that expression in the Local Government Act 1894;
 - (b) A person shall also be disqualified from being nominated, chosen or elected from serving as a churchwarden or member of a parochial church council if he/she has been so disqualified from holding office under rule 7(3) of [the Incumbent (vacation of Benefice) Measure 1997].
3. Any person whose name is on the electoral roll may be appointed as a sidesperson.