



# **St Mark's Church Gillingham**

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

## **AGENDA**

for the meeting on 18 October 2020

## **MINUTES**

of the last APCM on 28 April 2019

**plus**

## **STATUTORY AND ADDITIONAL REPORTS**

for the year ended 31 December 2019

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

## **Sunday 18 October 2020**

- (1) Opening Prayer
  - (2) Gratitude
  - (3) Meeting of Parishioners for the Choosing of Two Churchwardens
  - (4) 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
    - e) Election of Sidespersons or Approval for the Churchwardens and PCC to appoint suitable Electoral Roll Members as Sidespersons
  3. Fabric Goods Ornament
  4. Vision for Kitchen
  5. Good News stories
  6.
    - 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*)
  7. Choosing of an Independent Examiner of the Accounts for the current year (*GA*)
  8. 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
  9. Closing Prayer (*SM*)

**Minutes for the Annual Parochial Church Meeting  
Sunday 28 April 2019**

**(1). Worship**

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

The Rev Saju Muthalaly welcomed everyone to the meeting and explained that the first meeting is for choosing churchwardens. There are two churchwardens who are willing to stand for another year, Raymond Shergill (RS) and Helen Towers (HT) had been proposed and seconded. Saju asked if there were any other proposals. None were put forward.

**Motion: Raymond Shergill and Helen Towers will be elected as Churchwardens for another year.  
All in the meeting were unanimously in favour.**

Raymond Shergill and Helen Towers joined the meeting at the front, along with Glyn Allen the Treasurer.

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

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

Apologies were received from Pauline Jackson, Lisa Highsted, Amanda Maskell, Jane Banner-Martin, Wendy Haslem, Julie Hanning and Ben Towers.

**2. Elections**

**a. Election of Electoral Roll Members to serve on PCC**

The meeting was told that there were the following positions available for election:

**4 spaces for 3 years**

**2 spaces for 2 years and**

**1 space for one year.**

As only six people have been nominated for the positions the meeting were asked whether it would be in agreement with giving all the six people a position and to allocate the three year spaces and the two year spaces rather than voting. Ope Biye and Simon Morbey had agreed to take the two year spaces, leaving the other four places for the other nominations.

The people nominated, proposed, and seconded were:

Christine Cordle

Chris Gladwell

Gabrielle Goddard

Luke Prankard

Ope Biye

Simons Morbey.

Each person was given a minute to introduce themselves to the meeting.

**Election of Electoral Roll Members to serve on PCC**

**Motion: Christine Cordle, Chris Gladwell, Gabrielle Goddard, Luke Prankard be elected for three years, and Ope Biye and Simon Morbey be elected for two years.**

The meeting agreed unanimously.

Saju thanked those people whose time on the PCC had come to an end, Denise Young and Mike Aldington, and also Lisa Highsted and Graham Wilkins who were stepping down. He wanted to thank them for playing their part in the decision making in the life of our church.

**b. Deanery Synod**

The meeting agreed to the PCC electing a person to fill the vacancy on the Deanery Synod at a later date. Following a question asking what was the role of a person on the Deanery Synod, it was explained that the Deanery Synod meets every couple of months and representatives from each church in the Deanery discuss things that affect the whole of the Deanery.

**c. Election of Sidespersons or Approval for the Churchwardens and PCC to appoint suitable Electoral Roll Members as Sidespersons**

The names of those who are willing to be on the sidesmen/ welcome team were Vicky Onitiri, Kev Hall, Denise Young, Margaret Green, Phil Gates, Lynn Trebill, Sandra Pedder, Karen and Trevor Dyer, Barry Hills, John and Ann Townsend, Pauline Jackson Joyce McElroy, Dammy Oyinloye, Siju Adeoye, Monica Shergill and Lynne Martin.

**Motion: The above names are elected to be Sidespersons and on the Welcome Team. The meeting was unanimously in favour.**

Helen Towers thanked them all for what they have done in the last year.

**3. Fabric Goods and Ornaments**

Raymond Shergill drew the attention of the meeting to his report, which he read out, which could be found on page 13 of the reports.

Fabric Goods and Ornaments covers the four buildings

St Mark's Church  
Vicarage Hall  
The Old Vicarage and  
The Garden House.

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

After reading out his report he answered questions.

With the ongoing maintenance issues surrounding the Old Vicarage and Garden House, have the leadership team thought about pulling them down and doing something radical with the land? Saju said that the PCC will be giving some thought into the long-term vision of our buildings and we will be looking at this in the near future. The position of our church building is in a prime location for re-generation of Gillingham town centre.

Derrick Thom said we have spoken about new carpets and chairs and kitchen, but he thought that the kitchen should take priority over the other things as it was a disgrace. It was noted, but as with all things we are in need of money to do things. It was hoped that something could be done soon and not take as long as the toilets to complete.

Janet Mann said that the kitchen was never meant to be a kitchen it was a flower room for the people who arrange the flowers. The kitchen was supposed to come in stage two of the building work which has never happened. The room certainly needs some new units but there is not space there for any cooking or a fridge. It was agreed that we need a kitchen.

If the Old Vicarage and Garden House were pulled down who would benefit, St Marks or the Diocese? Glyn Allen explained that although the buildings belong to the PCC of St Mark's they are invested in the Diocesan Board of Finance as a protection so that any money obtained is not misused. If we were to sell them and pull them down we would need the Diocese to agree. Incorporated in the deeds of the Garden House the proceeds of selling the house has to be re-invested in housing of a curate.

Ernie Mann said that it had been looked into in the past and at that stage the value of the land would have been less than the cost of knocking down the buildings.

The meeting was asked to consider using any assets from disposing of the buildings be reinvested in providing affordable housing.

#### **4 a. Report on the financial affairs of the Parish Church**

Glyn Allen explained that the Annual Report and Accounts for 2018 are on the website, as is his Treasurer's Report.

The report tells us in great detail how money comes in and goes out.

The General Fund is the fund where most of our monies come through. Surplus for the year was £9,623. The accounts do show a deficit of £17,894. The reason is that in September the PCC agreed to transfer £25,000 from the General Fund reserve to the Development Fund. Our General Fund had a surplus of £7,106 which compared to the forecast of deficit of £14,925 was great.

Our Voluntary Giving was £174,552 which is money that people donate, often sacrificially. Quite a increase from the previous year, as we had a Gift Day where some went to the General Fund and some to the Development Fund towards the cost of the toilets.

Giving makes up 85% of our total income. The balance comes from a few other areas - fees and rental income primarily.

Other Funds. The biggest is the Pre-school fund which has £46,569 in the bank. The next is the Development Fund which is looking reasonably healthy at £32,512 because it has in it the £25,000 which was transferred from the General Fund. This money will be used towards the purchase of new boilers and heating system modifications in the church, so most of that will be used for that.

We have a new fund this year which is the Peace and Hope Fund (previously Faith and Light), as this is now a St Mark's activity.

We had £35,953 donated for Gift Day, £21,885 to Development Fund, to finance toilets and the balance went into General Fund.

We recovered £32,237 Gift Aid tax on our General Fund giving.

Glyn Allen pointed out that if you pay tax its worth talking John Beck our Gift Aid Secretary and we should be able to reclaim the tax on your gift which doesn't cost you anything. The total amount reclaimed on all our funds was £39, 946.

Designated Away Giving was maintained at 10% of our 2017 Voluntary Giving. We have done this for many years.

The Parish Offer to the Diocese was increased to £73, 500. This money we pay to the Diocese mainly for the support of our clergy, 20% of this is paid by St Mary's Island and 80% by St Mark's.

The PCC have agreed we should hold a reserves in General Fund to allow for any eventualities or any shortfalls and this will be 35.6% of our anticipated expenditure for 2019.

We spent over £100,000 on our new toilets. We have a small retention to pay which is included in that sum.

The Garden House rental received was £10,370 from the Diocese.

Pre-school had a net surplus of over £23,000 which was tremendous bearing in mind that only a few years ago there was a question over whether the Pre-school was going to be viable.

Questions followed.

Pre-school had a profit, but we seem to have taken less for the hire of the Vicarage Hall than previous years? Glyn Allen explained that in 2018, due to an extra expenditure that pre-school had to pay of £1,500, the PCC agreed to help them with this when we did not know they would have such a large surplus, so they paid £3,500 last year. The amount for this year will be back to £5,000 and it will be continually be reviewed.

The hire cost is much less than the running cost of the Vicarage Hall and the Pre-school are now running more sessions, are we going to charge more? The last review took into consideration the increased usage of the Vicarage Hall and the cost came out at about £5,500 but we will continue to monitor this.

#### **4. b. The Budget for 2019**

We anticipate our income will be £186,980 and expenditure will be £182,194. This would give us a small surplus of £4,786. Most of our expenditure is on staff costs, Diocese Offer and Building costs. Looking at this you could say we don't have an issue, but upon reviewing the income of the first three months of this year income is lower than budget, and we will be thinking about giving further in May.

Suzanne Wilkins asked about the Away Giving. It was stated that this was 10% but on the accounts its 9%. Glyn Allen explained that the 9% is on our total expenditure but it will be 10% of our Voluntary Giving.

Keith Sheepwash said that if we are looking to do other things in the church like new chairs, carpets and kitchen this is money that we need on top of our giving and we need to pray to get that money in.

Glyn recorded his thanks to John Beck, Gift Aid Secretary, John Townsend who looks after our Payroll Management, office staff, Katie Jenkins, those who count the offering each week, Keith Sheepwash, and others recently, for banking the money given, Alastair Williams taking over the Pre-school accounts from Terry Whittaker, PCC Finance Group for their guidance and everybody at St Mark's for their sacrificial giving.

#### **5. 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 suggested using Rob Trice as we have done in the past.

**Motion: Rob Trice is used as Independent Examiner. Proposed by Luke Prankard, seconded by Keith Sheepwash. Motion passed in favour.**

**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.

##### **6.a. Electoral Roll Officer's Report (Statutory Report)**

This year the Electoral Roll was completely revised and after a lot of cajoling we have 165 people on the Electoral Roll. In 2018 there were 217 people on the Roll. 95 people did not apply to join the new roll, these were made up from people who have left, gone to worship at Reach at Gillingham Pier, not attended St Mark's in the last four years, moved from the area or deceased or who are regular attenders but have not re-applied.

- 6.b Report on the Proceedings of the PCC (Statutory Reports)**
- 6.c. Churchwardens' report on Fabric, Goods and Ornaments (Statutory Reports)**
- 6.d. Proceedings of Diocesan and Deanery Synods (Statutory Reports)**
- 6.e. Receiving the Reports from Church Ministries given in the Additional Reports and Good News stories**

Saju asked the meeting if there were any questions on the written reports.  
There were none.

Vicky Allen thanked Samuel Wilkins for all he does as Minutes Secretary.

Saju read from Poppy in the Corn by F W Boreham.

The roles God gives each one of us can be reflected in the poppies and the corn. Some of us are the poppies that make the initial impact. Some of us are the golden cornfields that surround, support, and help the poppy stand out. Neither side belittles the other, but rather, they help the other shine. We are all special.

## **7. Good News Stories**

### **Pre-school**

Lance Hanning, Chair of the Pre-school committee reported that it was interesting to hear about the Pre-schools good finances, but he mostly thought about all the people involved in the Pre-school. Things don't just happen and the Good News about the Pre-school was the human element and all thought involved in Pre-school, Julie, Sharon, Paula, Jo, Carol, Zoe, Vicky, Sue Headly who looks after one to one additional needs children, Ann and John Townsend, Alastair, Lance, Suzy Humphries and two parents representatives, Saju and Samuel who does the minutes. There are 22 children with different nationalities. We are at our maximum number of children that we can have.

### **Rock (was Pathfinder)**

Simon Morbey said that three of Rock were confirmed this year, Henry, Mariam and Peter along with Neave. He gave thanks to Martha and Luke who had run the group before. He asked everyone to keep Rock and young people in your prayers.

### **Children's Work**

Chris Cordle said that the work had been re-launched in September and we are looking at the whole of the bible which will take three years. At the moment we are in Leviticus, and it's a challenge. Each month the children have a bible verse to learn. She asked people to pray for our team and for the children.

### **Cinema Club**

Emily Mann said that Cinema Club has started in October 2018, and now we are getting around 60 people each month, and we are starting to see relationships formed. The people that have come



have advertised Cinema Club on Facebook themselves. Emily said she would like to see some of them that come to Cinema start to attend church in the future.

**Medway Campus Chaplain.**

Lynne Martin said she has the opportunity to work out her faith working alongside three universities. Recently she had partnered the Christian Union to run an eight-week study on the Purpose Driven Life.

There was good discussion about different aspects of our walk with God. There are lots of temptations on campus and lots of pressure and mental health problems. Lynne asked people to pray for the work at the universities.

The meeting closed with prayer

*Vicky Allen PCC Secretary*

# Statutory Reports

## Treasurer's Report 2019

### General Fund

At the beginning of 2019 financial year, we forecast a budget surplus on PCC unrestricted General Fund of £4,786 which included transfers between Repair and Pre-school Funds. The V2 budget included six months provision of £15,950 for HYCFM. This position was not filled, and we ended the year with a deficit of £3,518. It should be noted that had that position been made, the deficit would have been £19,468. Overall, compared to budget, our income and expenditure were both lower than budget by approximately £17,300 and £9,000, respectively.

Donations (Voluntary Income) decreased to £139,076 from £174,552 in 2018 being lower than budget by £20,925. The large drop in voluntary income was largely due to a number of givers leaving the church for various reasons during the year. Gift Aid tax recovered amounted to £26,260, lower than recent years, reflecting the reduction in voluntary giving.

The Pre-school funds transfer to General Fund, for the daily use of the Vicarage Hall, was £5,000 and is a useful contribution towards the fixed costs for the building. Income continued to be supplemented by rental for the Garden House of £11,522 for the year, paid by the Diocese to provide housing provision for the Medway Campus Chaplain. Wedding and funeral fees, at £4,732 were similar to last year. We were reimbursed by SMI Church for Jonica Thomas' salary as SMI Administrator.

For expenditure, staff costs were lower than budget by £11,847 due to the HYCFM position not being filled. The Old Vicarage running costs were higher than budget by £4,102, mainly due to maintenance costs. Youth and children, students, evangelism, office, and photocopying expenditures were all lower than budget. Mission Giving was £10,765 compared to an amended budget figure of £16,000. The balance of £5,235 was transferred to the Mission/Reach Funds as carry over to 2020. Based on 10% of donations received in 2019, our General Fund Away Giving in 2020 will be budgeted at £13,900.

This year the PCC, together with St Mary's Island Church DCC, agreed that the Parish Offer paid to the Diocese, as a contribution to meet both stipend costs for parish clergy and towards other diocesan support costs, would be £78,299 – a 6.5% increase on 2018. This was apportioned £62,639 for St Mark's and £15,660 for St Mary's Island – I.E. 80%/20% split. This Offer figure was arrived at after consultations with the Diocese on a new method of Offer calculation known as an Indicative Offer. Having agreed the amount for 2019 the method of calculation was revised using a percentage of unrestricted income plus some fixed costs as bases. This new method will be used for 2020.

The General Fund cash at bank and in hand at 31 December 2019 was £56,376. After debtors and creditors adjustment the net current asset was £61,401. This represents a 'reserve' of 34.6% of our 2020 forecast expenditure. The PCC agreed to a minimum Reserve Policy for 2019 of £55,000. The Reserve Policy will be reviewed by the PCC annually.

<b>General Fund Highlights</b>	<b>2019</b>	<b>2018</b>
Donations (Voluntary Income)	£139,076	£174,552
Total Income	£164,284	£202,173
Total Expenditure	£162,725	£192,550
Surplus (Deficit)	£1,558	£9,623
Net Surplus/Deficit after transfers	(£3,518)	(£17,894)

### **Other Funds**

The total year-end balance in our Repair Funds was £29,036. We deposited a total of £5,225 and transferred £5,000 from the Church Repair Fund to the Development Fund.

During the year, we settled costs for new church boilers and improvements to the heating system of £43,731 from the Development Fund. We are grateful for a donation of £8,000 towards the cost. The Development Fund now has a balance of £7,808.

The balance in the Mission Fund is £10,190, which includes £1,735 unallocated in 2019 and £2,500 earmarked transfer from General Fund Mission Giving. During the year we donated a total of £674 from this fund.

The Vicar's Discretionary Fund received donations of £950 with discretionary spending of £1,820. The fund current balance is £1,086.

The India Fund had an expenditure of £344 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 £5,142 with expenditure of £3,302. £1,000 was transferred to this fund as part of mission giving. The fund balance is £6,710.

Our application for a grant from the Diocese Children and Young People (CYP) was successful and of £1,600 was added to the HYCFM Fund. During the year £1,921 has been spent, leaving a balance of £4,030.

The Peace and Hope Fund received £152 income, with £183 expenditure. The current fund balance is £1,304.

A new Specific Donation Restricted Fund was opened this year to receive designated donations. An income of £2,315 was received, with an expenditure of £495. The fund balance is £1,820.

An expenditure of £424 was incurred from the Small Funds for the funeral arrangements for Ivy Baily. The fund now has a balance of £76.

A new Strategic Development Restricted Fund has been established for the income and expenditure management of SDF projects. SDF funding can be drawn down periodically from the Diocese of Rochester. To the year expenditure was £861, with a draw down of £800, giving a negative balance of £61. Further funds will be drawn down in 2020.

Pre-school income from all sources was £109,771 and expenditure £89,059 giving a surplus for the year of £20,713 and a net surplus of £15,329 after transfer of £5,384 to General Fund. This compares to a net surplus of £23,015 in 2018. The Pre-school Fund balance is £61,897. I would like to acknowledge the Pre-school team for maintaining a good financial performance again this year.

<b>Fund Balances</b>	<b>Closing 2019</b>	<b>Opening 2019</b>
General Fund	£61,401	£64,919
Development Fund	£7,808	£32,512
Mission Fund	£10,190	£6,394
Repair Funds	£29,036	£2,8717
Small Funds	£76	£500
Vicar's Discretionary Fund	£1,086	£1,956
Pre-school Fund	£61,897	£46,569
HYCFM Fund	£4,030	£4,351
India Fund	£10,492	£10,836
Reach at Gillingham Pier Fund	£6,710	£3,870
Peace and Hope Fund	£1,304	£1,336
Specific Donation Fund	£1,820	-
Strategic Development Fund	(£61)	-
Net current assets less current liabilities	£195,790	£201,960

The PCC has approved the final General Fund 2020 V1b budget, with a year-end forecast deficit of £4,084, with an assumed voluntary income of £140,000.

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 85% of our General Fund income is from voluntary giving and we thank God for the sacrificial giving of so many that His work may continue and grow here and beyond.

*Glyn Allen - Treasurer*

## **Fabric, Goods and Ornaments**

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

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

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

### **Premises Task Group**

This sub-committee of the PCC consist of Chris Gladwell, Luke Prankard, Ope Biye, Paul Smith, and Raymond Shergill. The sub-committee meets every 2-3 months to ensure that our various buildings are fit for Christian mission and activity as well as to oversee the work necessary to keep our buildings well maintained and in good running order. We would like to thank the members of this group for their diligence, and in particular Ope Biye, Chris Gladwell, Paul Smith, Luke Prankard, 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 (QQ). 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 and the report received in October, which found the building in good overall condition, and mainly had a few issues relating to brick and stonework. These will need to be dealt with in the coming months.

### **The Church**

The year 2019 saw the replacement of the Main Boiler system for the Church along with the replacement of new and larger radiators to accommodate for the heating of the Church. The new system has contributed to a more efficient and economical system to maintain and run. A special thank you to all involved in the buildings team and in particular Peter Guinness and Mic Aldington, and Glyn Allen who oversaw the whole project from start to finish.

The AV team installed a new truss system on the inner side of the pillars of the Church, with a new sound system and lighting installed on the trusses. This has contributed to better quality of sound and on-stage lighting, alongside numerous benefits in the utilisation of the Church building. A big thank you to Chris Banner, Mic Aldington and Chris Blewett for working tirelessly on installing the complete "Truss system".

Significant repairs were undertaken to the Church roof and guttering as a consequence of storms; these costs were mainly met by our insurers leaving us to pay the excess but still saved us a significant expense. The tiles on the roof are not nailed down so unless something is done to rectify this long term, we will inevitably continue to face a problem each time the wind blows hard. Obviously, to nail them all down now would have a large cost implication which wouldn't be covered by the insurers.

The Premises Task Group is in the process of looking into replacing the current chairs in the Church with lighter ones. They are also looking to increase the storage in the Church and as a result hope to erect a large steel shed to the rear of the church, this would solve most of our storage issues in Church, we are in the process of applying for a full planning application to the planning department of the Council. The Premises task group installed a new notice board towards the front of the Church facing the High Street to update the community with Church activities.

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 building and making it more friendly for the community. A report with recommendations will be presented to the PCC for discussion in 2020.

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, especially on a Sunday morning.

A special thanks to Stan Brown who has continued to clean the church building during the year.

### **The Old Vicarage**

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

The partially collapsed boundary wall on the site still has not been replaced, as we have been waiting for joint action with the owners of the Doctor's surgery. There are significant repairs required to some structural parts of the Old Vicarage, and we hope to identify these and seek estimates in 2020. The Premises Task Group will be looking to update the church office later this year.

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

### **Vicarage Hall**

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

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

### **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 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**

The Premises Task Group are always looking for volunteers to serve in different aspects of maintaining the Church buildings. If you are trained in a specific trade or would like to help out then please feel free to talk to the Church Wardens or the Vicar and we will be more than happy to include you in our team.

*Helen Towers and Raymond Shergill (Churchwardens)*

## Proceedings of the PCC

The PCC meets monthly except in August. Each meeting begins with the Chair (usually Saju), bringing a Bible reading or a thought which is followed by prayer.

The format of the meetings are generally the same, with

- Apologies for Absence.
- Review and approval of the previous month's minutes.
- Matters Arising.
- Finance with a run down on the current financial position and projections going forward.
- 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, Finance chaired by Glyn Allen and MLTG also chaired by Glyn Allen.

Any urgent matters that need to be dealt with 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 three elected members from the PCC. Amanda Maskell has also joined as part of her training.

The Agenda each month is always full and leaders of groups are invited to present updates on their group activities. These have included in 2019, Pre-school from Lance Hanning, Youth and Children from Simon Morbey and Tim Barrow one of our missionaries. Tim came and spoke about Serving in Mission UK (SIMUK) and Engage, a two year programme to bring mission workers (mostly from the the southern hemisphere) into Urban UK churches to work hand in hand with evangelical churches.

Other areas covered during the year were:

### **Staffing**

After Ellie Oparaku's resignation, the PCC agreed to advertise internally a role for a Operations manager / Vicar's PA / Intern with a view towards ministry, for 20 hours a week. Rob Byrne was the successful applicant to fill this position.

After agreeing to put on hold a decision about employing a new Youth Children and Families Worker for six months, in July the PCC agreed to offer a paid position of Youth Worker for 20 hours a week (in addition to his 12 hours voluntary work) to Simon Morbey, for 45 weeks of the year, until the end of his college course.

The beginning of the year saw a small group of people who met together to look at the question of Biblical Inclusion. The outcome of the questionnaire was shared at the PCC Away Day this showed that only 25% of the congregation responded and of those 10 were from Peace and Hope.

### **Strategic Development Fund**

The PCC were informed of the bid to obtain money available from the National church to fund three Church Plants "change projects" to be created over the next five years, with three part time staff members employed by the Diocese. St Mark's was successful in gaining the funding. Three projects were advertised and these position were filled by:-

**Gospel Plant Leader** – (Mayowa Oyinloye) who will be responsible for the development and delivery of all music related aspects to promote the growth of the new 'gospel' congregation.

**Community Pastor** – (Karen Turnbull) responsible for outreach and practical and pastoral care of the socially and economically disadvantaged, including supporting and establishment of an 'Ignite-style' new worshipping community.

**Community Missioner**, (Chris Cordle) (who began in early 2020) oversees the work of Mayowa and Karan, engages with a wide range of local community groups and forms partnerships with local schools - even leading assemblies and workshops. She is also working on establishing new Messy Churches and other brand-new worshipping communities in Gillingham.

Other areas covered during the year were: -

Agreement to St Mark's church building used during National Hate Crime Week in October.

George Verwer visit.

Agreement to a High Street presence once a month serving coffee engaging with the community.

Tidiness in church.

Pre-school summer event.

Beyond the Star budget.

Outreach initiative for "Overflow" in August 2020, taking the gospel message to the streets.

In June Canon Chris Dench (Vice Dean of Rochester Cathedral) joined the PCC meeting to talk about Saju's upcoming sabbatical and explained to the PCC that every ten years a clergyman can apply to take three months' sabbatical. This would be a mixture of study, spiritual renewal, retreat and holiday with their family. At the end of the sabbatical Saju will produce something to show what he has been doing during his time away. He took any questions from the meeting

Also discussed and implemented was the 24/7 Prayer Encounter which Lynn Martin would be co-ordinating, which took place in September 2019.

Other areas of PCC activities can be found in other reports.

The work of the PCC requires commitment from its members of proficiency and time. All of the work is undertaken on a voluntary basis

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 was revised 3<sup>rd</sup> October 2020 and the number on the roll is now 170. (165 for 2019).

15 people have been taken off the Roll.

This is as follows:

13 people have left to go to other churches or moved away.

2 are deceased.

20 new people have been added to the Roll since April 2019

### **The Electoral Roll for St Mary's Island 2020**

The revised roll for St Mary's Island 2020 now stands at 58.

Total roll for St Mark's Parish is 228.



## Deanery Synod

We sometimes forget that our church is part of something bigger. Of course, we're part of St Mark's but we're also part of the Deanery of Gillingham – imagine a triangle with St Mary's Island at one end and stretching as far as St Margaret's in Rainham and St Peter's in Bredhurst. The churches within this area may have different priorities or tactics but we all share a heart for our communities, and all are seeking to reach out and draw people in, all in the name of Jesus. It has been a blessing to work with the other churches towards this goal.

*Eve Martin (SMI)*

## Additional Reports

### ALPHA – An Introduction to the Christian Faith

This year the Alpha course had a change of venue, additional time and a change of team. The course took place in the church rather than Old Vic in the evening but was also run during the day at the Old Vicarage and was led by Keith Sheepwash, Simon Morbey, Katie Jenkins and Jeff Maskell.

There was still a meal (done via slow cookers) which was coordinated in her usual excellent manner by Lynda Smith.

The Holy Spirit away day was held at St Mary's Island.

Over the course we had a total of 14 guests, 5 of whom completed the whole course and several of those who finished have since joined home groups.

Special thanks go to David Wilkins, Wendy Haslam for leading groups and to Lisa Higham and Lucy Williams who were there every week praying for the duration and Bishop James for being our guest speaker one week.

One of the key things about being located in the church was the number of people who came in because we were open in the evening and the many great conversations we had because of this. Let us pray that they bear fruit going forward.

*Amanda Maskell - for the Alpha Team*

### Audio Visual and Technical Report

Once again it has been an interesting time for the technical team.

In terms of additions and improvements to our equipment, we have received DAC approval and installed a flying truss system onto which we have installed 4 high quality loudspeakers, on long term loan from a church member, and a number of LED coloured lights. Also, the new projector, purchased in 2018 is also now mounted on the truss.

To control the lights, we have a simple budget laptop with a digital DMX lighting control interface. This allows us to provide anything from a basic white wash across the front for most services, then great colour effects can be achieved for 'specials'. This came into its own for the Christmas production, with deep blue night scenes, including UV to make the angels glow, and spotlighting particular areas as necessary.

As part of the installation of equipment onto the trussing, we took the opportunity to convert all audio and video distribution to digital and upgraded the church internal network to cope. This means we have the ability with video to put as many repeater screens as we want, in a much simpler manner. This proved to be the case on Remembrance Sunday, when such a screen was put in the side chapel.

The improved sound quality has also proved invaluable now we are having Gospel Music Services, with much larger numbers of instruments and vocalists.

A special thanks to Chris Banner for all his efforts in researching sourcing and installing the trussing.

Once again great thanks to all members of the team for commitment to Sunday services, extra events, and general maintenance of the system.

*Mic Aldington and Chris Blewett*

## Baptism Visiting

In 2019 we baptised 8, of which 4 were re-affirmations.

On taking baptisms on more, it has become more and more clear that if it is a children's baptism the commitment to continue the journey with God and within our church family opening our arms to them doesn't carry on.

Due to this we now have a new process in place (although since getting this ready we have had no children's baptisms, so this is yet to be trialled). There is now a mini course called 'We Welcome You' which involves the parents and child/ren to attend a small meeting twice before the baptism and once after with activities. This way we can engage more and really gain the level of commitment to this important decision of baptism. The old process was simply a video and short conversation. We may still use the video at times.

*Katie Jenkins*

## Catering and Hospitality

2019 started with a few home groups serving hot drinks to the Gillingham community in the High Street. In February we had a great lunch for Saju's licensing, and the last Sunday in March saw the first of our wonderful gospel evenings.

The 18 April was our Passover meal superbly organised by Lucy Day and her helpers.

June, we celebrated two Gospel evenings and a Bring And Share Lunch of Grandma's favourite recipes with Bishop Simon Burton Jones.

July brought our fifth Let Loose concert in the High Street and the end of the month a Praise Concert in church.

The Alpha Course started in September, a twelve-week course, with most of the catering done by the leaders of the course, and the end of the month another Gospel Evening.

October 12th we had Stop the Hate Campaign in church.

November was the Soup Prayer Evening, and another Gospel Evening.

Saturday 21 December was our wonderful Christmas Service, Beyond the Star, and the Old Year was seen out and the New Year in with the Watch Night Service.

Sadly, we also said goodbye to some of St Mark's well-loved family with the funerals of Emma Ivy Baily, Rachel Littlewood and John Richards.

As you probably all know I have retired from the Chief Lead of the Catering Team and would like to take this opportunity to thank the congregation for all their help, but special thanks to my Home

Group who were always there to fill the gap and back me when no one else was available. I am still a willing pair of hands to help anyone who takes on this exciting role.

Thank You

*Lynda Smith and the catering team.*

## Church in the Pub

Church in the Pub last met in June 2019, before breaking for the Summer Holidays. As this coincided with me taking on the role of Focal Lay Minister of St Mary's Island Church, I expressed a wish that someone else would take over the initiative and help me better manage my workload. Due to a combination of challenges in finding the right person and the coronavirus we are yet to resume our normal monthly schedule (although we did enjoy a Carol Service in December). It was, and still is, hoped that Church in the Pub will return when (1) the government allows the re-opening of pubs, (2) the leadership of the project is agreed and (3) we have clarity over the future of the venue (the tenant at the King George V currently being in dispute with his landlord).

While new leadership may wish to implement changes, the format of the evenings has remained relatively stable since inception – they are held between 5.30-7.00pm on the fourth Sunday of the month, begin with a brief introductory talk on a topic and are followed by a session in which groups discuss questions from the "Table Talk" card deck. Members of St Mary's Island, St Mark's and no church at all are welcome.

We also held a Carol Service in the pub, which again proved popular and will hopefully remain a fixture going forwards.

To date I believe we have been successful in offering an experience which is both convivial, spiritually stimulating, and accessible to those outside of the church. 'Church in the Pub' represents an important initiative within our community, which I pray will resume in the coming year.

*Matt Keeler*

## Cinema Club

This past year has seen some amazing developments in Cinema Club (before lockdown!!) We have gone from still establishing ourselves as a team serving our community, to starting to welcome regular members of Cinema Club who have been with us since the start, onto our team! This has proven to be a fantastic step and has given the people who attend, on a monthly basis, more of a sense of ownership over Cinema Club. In turn, this has allowed them to feel more 'at home' in the church building and with those of us who are volunteering.

We have also seen near consistent attendance numbers of over 50 people, a proportion of whom have come as a result of hearing about Cinema Club at Foodbank. This has proven to be a real answer to prayer because it has meant that they have felt safe enough to come and just be for a couple of hours. We've also started to see some families from Cinema Club starting to come to church on Sundays which is amazing!

We would value continued prayers for more members to join the team, continuing ways to better serve our community as well as more relationships to be built as a result of Cinema Club.

Thank you! Emily and the team.

*Emily Mann*

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

Despite an enthusiastic response for the net practice sessions, the season did not get off to a good start. Against West Farleigh our bowlers took a bit of a hammering and after losing some early wickets it was obvious we were not going to get anywhere near the target, and despite some resistance for the last wicket, we were well short. The next match against a strong Rainham side followed a similar pattern. Against Holborough, we managed to get them out for a low score and this gave us real hope but a late collapse by our batting meant that we slipped to a narrow defeat. Against Old Roffensians we did better, and we notched up our first and, as it turned out, our only win of the season. The last game against Rochester & Canterbury Diocese should have been won by us, with Saju, Amit and Des scoring freely, but after losing one of our players to a pulled muscle earlier on, the match ended in a tie! So it was won 1, tied 1, lost 3. Overall, we could have done better with a stronger batting line up in the earlier games, though Saju was a notable exception.

This year we only managed to get in one net practice before the national lockdown took effect. Hopefully it can be lifted so that we can get a game or two for the last part of the season. We will have to wait and see. Thank you to all those who came to support us.

*Guy Jackson.*

## **Dementia Cafe**

The Dementia Cafe had been operating about 5 months before we were forced to close in March.

We open from 1.00 to 3.00 pm on two Wednesdays a month and take up has been slow although the first two or three sessions which were free of guests allowed us to invite organisations who provide services to those who live with dementia and their carers. So we’ve had visits from Imago, Medway Community Healthcare, Admiral Nurse, St Peters Church in the Delce and the Community Library Service.

We have contacted and dropped off a number of flyers at various locations throughout Gillingham, including churches, community hubs and residential homes.

The 3 of whom volunteer regularly from St Marks work well together, bringing eats, refreshments, games and socialising.

There is no budget, and we manage any expenditure from our own pockets.

Age UK have been visiting on a regular basis and usually bring 4/5 guests, including a volunteer.

One of us also attends a carer's groups at Dobbie's where we are able to network and promote our Café.

We had also arranged for Carers Support to visit in March before we had to cancel.

We have two, or sometimes 4 people that visit and when Age UK come, it can be as many as 6 to 7.

It's hoped that we will see numbers increase during the next 6 months and we can provide a much-needed resource for this part of Gillingham

Thanks.

*Paul Harris*

## Elderly Care

### Charing House Care and Residential Home

The ministry at Charing House has two facets namely, the Sunday service which takes place on the second Sunday afternoon of each month and Holy Communion which takes place on the last Tuesday afternoon of each month.

#### **The Sunday Service**

There are four teams which take the service on a rota basis thus each team takes three services during the year. As the Sunday nearest to Christmas is the annual Carol Service and needs a little more preparation than for the other Sundays, the teams are rotated each year so that the same team isn't responsible for organising it every year.

On paper, the teams have approximately five volunteers each drawn from St Mark's, St Mary's Island, Green Street Baptist Church, St Mary Magdalene, the United Reformed Church, St Augustine's, and Salem Church of the Nazarene.

During this year, in line with a more disciplined approach to safeguarding, all team members now need to complete the first two levels of safeguarding awareness but team leaders must also have completed the third level. This is an on-going process.

In late March the Activities Manager who organised the collection and return of residents to the service and is our principal contact, left so services were put on hold for April and May 2019 until her successor was appointed. Two ladies now share the role but neither work at weekends which has created a resource problem. After contact with the House Manager we agreed that the care staff on the wings would bring and return residents who wished to come to the service. Unfortunately, this has not worked as smoothly as we would have liked leaving, to my knowledge, three services without any attendees. Disappointingly, the annual Carol Service had just three residents present whereas in previous years this was the best attended. As I see it, the problem appears to be (1) demands on the care staff with few available to bring residents and (2) communication problems. I see this as a recurring problem so your prayers for a resolution would be appreciated.

So, 2019 as far as the Sunday services are concerned were somewhat spasmodic and lacked continuity with attendances ranging from 0 (zero) to 4 or 5 at best which is considerably well down on previous year.

### **Holy Communion**

The Revd Mike McLaughlin, Ernie Gray (Reader with PTO at St Luke's) and Graham Davis share each month in pairs with one of the pair being the lead. The third person can have the month off or come along especially for the after-service chat. The two lay ministers bring previously consecrated elements and use the form of service for the Distribution of Holy Communion to a Home.

Because the two Activities Co-ordinators are present during the week, attendances at the Communion Services have been good ranging from 6 to 14 even when having to use another lounge in the building on a couple of occasions.

Integral to the service itself is the chat to residents afterwards, usually longer than the service itself, in which relationships are built up, and this is appreciated by residents and staff alike. We make ourselves available for individual prayer which is occasionally taken up.

### **In conclusion**

Ministering to those in the latter stages of their lives is a privilege and the services are really appreciated. A few have encouraging faith stories to tell; others are not so forthcoming, but we pray that what they understand from us will move them to secure their eternity in Jesus' work on the cross.

If anyone can spare 1 hour 15 minutes three times a year on a Sunday and is willing to undertake the first two levels of safeguarding, if you do not have this, (which can be completed on-line) then please see me and I can allocate you to a team.

*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 are 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 we heard about the sudden death of Kathy and our thoughts and prayers are with dear Eddie at this sad time.

Numerous speakers are invited throughout the year chosen from Lay Readers and other willing volunteers and we would like to thank all those who regularly agree to help with this. There are periodic Holy Communion Services throughout the year which sometimes include prayer for healing and anointing with oil.

Generally, we have four elderly residents who attend but several more came for the Christmas Carol Service at which we were joined by Kathryn Thom and the choir from St Mark's. We all had a joyous time praising God so thanks to all involved. There were over twenty people filling the lounge and we were all treated to mince pies to complete the festivities.

*Richard and Jane Tolhurst*

## Funeral Ministry

Those of us privileged to minister to the bereaved in one of the crisis times of life see it as an occasion whereby we are able to draw alongside the sorrowing and weep with those who weep. It is a privilege of the Church of England to be available to anyone who requires our services in a time of loss and need. Many, who contact us do so because they want a service with a Christian ethos even if they rarely attend church yet have a nominal belief. It is at such moments in life that we, as Christians, can offer support and point to the hope that is Jesus Christ.

### **The Funeral Director**

We have good relationships with the local Funeral Directors who normally have the first contact with the bereaved. They ascertain the wishes of the family about the kind of service they want to mark the passing of their loved one. These days, an increasing number opt for a secular service conducted by a Life Celebrant with little, if any, Christian content.

### **Contact and support of the bereaved family**

When an individual or family decides upon a Christian funeral service the Funeral Director contacts our office when the availability of someone to take it is ascertained. Having agreed an officiant, an appointment with the family is arranged to explain and discuss the service, agree the music and other points of detail. Close liaison is maintained with the Funeral Director up to the time of the service. It is at this initial meeting with the family members that a rapport can be established and some level of Christian witness, including prayer, can be gently introduced if an appropriate moment presents itself.

Whilst the tribute to the deceased is better delivered by a family member many prefer the officiant to do so after sufficient information about the deceased's life is shared. When a family member does so, I ask for a copy of what they intend to say in case doing so becomes too emotional for them to continue so I can take over.

### **The Service**

Whilst the service is not an evangelistic event, it does offer, through the readings, reflection and prayers the natural opportunity to share the hope that is in the resurrection. Where appropriate, connections with the deceased's life are made with the reading so that those attending can have something to take away with them.

Often, the officiant is invited to "The Wake" which brings further opportunities to mention the hope that is in Christ in a more informal setting.

### **Post-Service follow-up**

About two months after the service, I usually ring the family to see how they are coping and ask if they would like me to visit. Most do not want any further pastoral care but are grateful for the call nevertheless. For me, I have four people with whom I am still in touch and visit three of them every two to three months in a social rather than pastoral context.



All those who have had a funeral during the year and beyond get an invitation to the *Empty Chair Service* before Christmas with an encouraging number attending.

### **Funerals taken during 2019**

The number of funerals taken this year by the staff and Readers with permission to do so totalled 12 plus one taken by a former vicar for a previous member of St Mark's well known to him.

*Graham Davis*

## **Flower Arrangements and Displays Team**

We are a smallish group of people – mainly ladies plus Keith Sheepwash, who willingly use their God given Abilities (SH A PE – Saju's sermon on 9<sup>th</sup> May) to help enhance the beauty of the church and our worship. We are all self-taught, no-one is professional, hence the many different styles. We thoroughly enjoy arranging the flowers.

During the last twelve months we were privileged to decorate the church for several weddings – all related to members of the church family. At Easter and Christmas the whole team work together and complement the other decorative arrangements made by Mayowa and her team of helpers. During the rest of the year we worked in two's but had just changed to just one person and replacing just one pedestal at a time.

Over the year we have built up our stock of silk flowers through the generosity of individuals - thank you you know who you are. We use these in conjunction with fresh flowers and fresh greenery.

Why not come and join us? – just let me know (01634 3048930). We are always willing to train you.

*Janet Mann (on behalf of the Flower Arrangers).*

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

The Community Choir came together to perform at the Christmas Carol service of 2019. Rehearsals had started for the Easter Service on the High Street for Good Friday which had to be cancelled due to the pandemic.

The Kids Choir is still functioning, sessions are still being held online to those interested and open to this mode of communication.

Once the restrictions are lifted, the choir will help with the recording of the SING GILLINGHAM SING songs.

*Mayowa Oyinloye*

## **Medway Campus Chaplaincy**

As the Campus Chaplain I work across all three universities at Medway. Chaplaincy is involved in a variety of student welcome events at the start of the academic year. We run several regular events such as, World Cafe, TABLEtalk, Bring & Share Lunches, and the Bargain Corner. I'd like to say a big THANK YOU to all who faithfully assist with these activities.

We also run a number of trips and social events each year. Alongside that, as Chaplain, I provide a confidential listening ear for both students and staff, and work in close liaison with each of the university Well-being teams. Pastoral work amongst students, primarily, involves a plethora of struggles including, academic and financial stress, cultural and relationship issues, bereavement and mental health support, etc.

Chaplaincy also oversees the multi-faith Faith Space on campus and runs occasional services, including Remembrance Day (*thanks Saju*) and Carols on Campus. This year I have also facilitated several memorial services for students and staff who have died.

The culmination of our academic year is the graduation ceremonies, when we have opportunity to say a BIG WELL DONE. Sadly, this summer will be empty of these celebrations. The Medway Campus closed on March 16th and since then I've worked remotely, continue to support students who are struggling, and liaise with various schools/faculties and, thanks to Simon Morbey, have been able to take occasional deliveries of food to those students still in halls of residence. Your prayers for September and the coming academic year are greatly appreciated.

For more information:

Facebook: Medway Campus Chaplaincy

Blog: <https://medwaystudents.blogspot.com/>

*Lynne Martin*

## Medway Foodbank Centre for Gillingham

St. Mark's Foodbank has been running well throughout the period 2019/20.

From the 1 April 2019 to 31 March 2020 we have distributed 26% of all Medway Foodbanks Vouchers, making us one of the busiest centres in Medway, supporting more than 2061 clients with nearly 900 of these being children. This is a 46% increase in usage but includes recent weeks in March which due to the Covid-19 crisis was particularly busy.

The vouchers were issued by a variety of referral agencies across the Medway Towns these include - Age UK, Schools, Academies, Children's Centres, Health Care professionals, Mental Health professionals and Churches.

From 1 January 2019 to 31 December 2019 Medway Foodbank honoured 3072 vouchers. These vouchers fed 7588 people, of these 4342 were adults, 3246 were children.

The top four reasons were

1. Low income
2. Benefit changes
3. Benefit delays
4. Debt

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

We continue to offer prayer to our clients with a 95% uptake; we also invite them to our Church services.

We are not here just to offer food - a big part of what we do is to signpost people to organisations that can help, for example:

- CAP (Christians against Poverty) a money course for people with debt problems.
- ALPHA Course for those who would like to go further in exploring Christianity.
- THE NIGHT SHELTER for people who are sleeping rough.
- RECOVERY Course for people with alcohol, drug or gambling problems.
- Housing & homelessness organisations for people facing eviction.
- Anyone who is suffering domestic abuse.
- Sometimes a friendly face and the telephone number of an organisation that might be able to help will be all it takes to really make a difference in someone's life.

We are also involved in an initiative called: Medway R.E.A.P (Restoration- Empowerment- Action- Purpose) Medway REAP is a partnership of Medway Charities and organisations that are committed to helping anyone who is in a hardship crisis.

They include:-

- All Saints Community Project
- Home Start
- MEGAN (Medway- Engagement-Group-And-Network)

Our project manager Lorraine Schulz said "I would just like to say how extremely grateful I have been to the amazing team at St Mark's over these difficult weeks. I pray that they are now recharging their batteries ready for when we decide to reopen centers. Thanks too to the wider church at St Mark's for all the support over this time – it has been much appreciated". Blessings.

*Lorraine Schulze Project Manager for Paul Smith*

## Men's Group/Curry Nights

We meet once every 3 months. We eat out and have discussions too. There is a turn-out of between 20-29 men. We also invite guest speakers to have a talk during the meals.

We have also introduced breakfasts which has been a great success.

Men find the atmosphere easy to relate with and a safe space for them to interact and get to know fellow men beyond the walls of the church. We also have men that are not members of St Mark's joining and engaging too.

*Damola Oyinloye*

## Mission Links Task Group (MLTG)

### **Mission Links Task Group (MLTG) January – December 2019 APCM report.**

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

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 Connected Church- The Sahaara Project India, Family Trust working in schools locally and The Bishop's Charity Poverty and Hope.

In addition, we made one off donations to Food Bank through our 2p Feed the Five Thousand initiative, A ROCHA UK Caring for God's Earth, Operation Mobilisation, the SIM learn project, Mike Campbell Foundation and Operation Christmas Child.

Locally we made a donation to support 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" led by Mayowa in Gillingham High Street in July, REACH at Gillingham Pier, and the Modern Slavery Awareness Campaign. We support Food Bank by allowing Food Bank to use the church as one of its centres twice weekly and members of the congregation have donated food by placing it in the Food Bank collection box in church and at Harvest.

We supported Jon Friday when he returned to India for a short-term six-month mission placement working with The Fishermen Trust at the beginning of 2019.

We have updated our MLTG policy in line with the Church of England's Five Marks of Mission.

We make regular contact with our mission partners during the year and enjoy receiving news from them. To keep in touch with our missionaries it has been possible to find information on St Mark's website, in our weekly news and prayer and praise. 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.

George Verwer, founder of Operation Mobilisation, came to preach at St Mark's in April and Mike Haslam was interviewed in church about his work with Family Trust in September.

We continue to be grateful for the support and advice from Tim and Tricia Barrow, members of MLTG, with their many years first-hand mission experience in the field. We have recently been exploring the possibility of finding a person to work with the Asian Christian Fellowship through the charity that Tim works with "Serving in Mission" (SIM) and his project ENGAGE.

If you are considering short- or long-term mission work do speak to us as we would love to hear from you.

If you would like to join MLTG, please speak to one of us. Please continue to pray for our Mission Partners.

*Denise Young on behalf of the team*

*Glyn Allen, Keith Sheepwash, Saju Muthalaly, Amanda Maskell, Tim and Tricia Barrow.*

## Music Worship

Our APCM reports are meant to cover the previous calendar year, but for myself I don't remember too much about last year so this report is looking at the last year gone (up to May 2020, not knowing when APCM will eventually arrive).

### People

**The Lord giveth...** we have been blessed by Elizabeth Kuperus taking on the worship for All-Age services and including several of our young people. Ben Maskell helped lead this team for a while, but in February needed to follow his new job at St. Francis, Strood.

**The Lord taketh away...** We have now lost worship leaders and instrumentalists JT Mann and Wayne Hickmott. JT has moved on to other commitments, but we have had the blessing of his gifts for many years. Wayne has been a part of St Marks and playing guitar for more years than he'd like to remember, but since moving to Lower Halstow has felt a calling to the group of parishes around there where he is regularly leading worship.

### **Blessed be the Name of the Lord.**

### **The New Normal...**

The Covid-19 restrictions have made music worship at St Mark's a real challenge, but everyone has stepped up to the mark and done their best to make it work, subject to technology limitations! As worship leaders, we have tried to make the online service worship seem as normal as possible, and each of us has used their opportunities to the best.

For Emily, this has been to play and sing live using her keyboard/computer backing, and sometimes some of the family helping out. I have been making recordings with Samuel, but doing each song in one take, mistakes and all, so that it is more natural than a studio-style recording would sound. We have also done these recordings for Elizabeth and Kathryn when they are leading.

For some of us this has meant even more work, and Samuel has shown his skills and commitment in mixing down all of our pre-recordings and has been invaluable to myself in making the recordings to begin with.

At the time of writing, we have developed to using picture-in-picture, which is done by the other singers videoing themselves whilst listening to the Graham/Samuel recording, which I then combine into one video. Luke has then been making the final edits including adding the song words.

Mayowa has been very busy in her new role of Gospel church leader and has brought her usual gifting and enthusiasm into the online worship, including live streaming the Gospel Night from her living room.

Since February of this year I've taken on responsibility for co-ordinating the worship teams, so any queries or arrangements should come through me so that I can organise us effectively (and try to protect the worship teams from overload!).

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.

**Blessed be the Name of the Lord!**

*Graham Wilkins*

## Peace & Hope (formerly Faith & Light)

The beginning of the year saw us officially leave Faith and Light to continue our faith journey with a new name and accountable to the leadership of St Mark's Church.

All members of the group were involved with the choice of name and a new logo which was followed by a new T-shirt in March to reflect our new identity.

Peace & Hope use the same series of talks used in Church and home groups adapted to be presented in a relevant way for all the community to be involved.

Sadly, in May, Rachel left us to be with the Lord, all the community will miss her. The evening we shared the news, Saju joined us to talk about the 'taboo' subject of death. However, due to our community members faith and belief, everyone coped well with the news and in June our Peace & Hope community joined with Rachel's family to celebrate her life.

In August we took a train to spend the day at Sheerness, everyone had a wonderful time, the weather was perfect and before we returned we had a lovely fish & chip dinner in a local restaurant.

September saw the community have a picnic in the church to mark the start of St Marks 24/7 week of prayer.

We finished the year off by having a Christmas party, enjoyed by all who attended.

*Karen, Trevor and all of the Peace & Hope team*

## Prayer Ministry Teams

The Prayer ministry team are available both after the services and when required during the services with a listening ear and to pray for you as required in confidence. During the year we have increased our numbers and it's been great to welcome younger people to be part of the team. We are always around the church and willing to listen and pray. Don't be afraid to ask.

*Keith Sheepwash on behalf of the team.*

## Small Groups

Small groups have flourished this year with new members joining throughout the year, particularly in November and December. A couple of groups are full but others are open to new members.

Small groups are essential in the life of the church and we would encourage everyone to become a member of a group. Small groups are the place where friendships are developed, pastoral and

prayer support happens, where we can be intentional about developing our relationship with Jesus and becoming better disciples. They are safe places to work out our gifts and learn to share them to build up the body of Christ. Finally, they are a place where we can intentionally invite others, and put into action activities that reach outside of our small groups to those who don't know about Jesus.

One leadership change is that Rob Byrne is now leading Junction as Jackie and Don have taken a step back. We managed only one home-group leaders' breakfast this year early in June which was well attended and beneficial as a means of support, communication and information exchange. The Standing home-group, which consisted mainly of members of the Reach team, is now fully supporting the ministry of Reach at Gillingham Pier and no longer part of St Mark's home-group system.

There is an updated 'Small Group' information leaflet available from the Welcome Desk if you would like to find out more about what happens and when, and both Amanda and Pauline are more than happy to talk to you about joining a small group and finding a best one for you.

*Amanda Maskell*

## **Tear Fund**

First of all I would like to thank Monica (ambassador) and Lesley (representative) for all they have done for Tearfund over the years.

I was nominated by Monika to fill her role of ambassador as she stepped down early autumn 2019 but unfortunately Lesley stepped down shortly after.

With the help and input from Demi, Monica and others we were still able to do some fundraising for Tearfund.

Since then I had engaged with individuals in church to join, including making a podium appeal appearance prior to Harvest.

So far, events held for Tearfund since Autumn 2019 where:

Harvest collection - £722.63

Christmas card collection - amount still outstanding as I had not had a chance to speak to the stewards.

I unfortunately do not have any reports prior to autumn 2019

### **Moving forward in 2020**

I am glad to inform you that Fummi one of our church members has happily agreed to join the Tearfund fundraising efforts. As soon as I have all her details, I will be forwarding this to you and to Tearfund to get her registered.

Fundraising events to look forward to:

Big Bake

Big Quiz Night

Harvest Collection

Christmas Card collection

It is a privilege and an honor to help where the need is most.

*Colette - Tearfund Ambassador*

## Youth, Children and Families Ministries

### St. Mark's Pre-School

In the last 12 months the Pre-school has continued to grow in Children's numbers, and this has also brought financial stability for the setting.

The Pre-school has gone from operating seven sessions a week to Eight, and currently there are no available spaces in these Eight Sessions.

Although it is intended to extend Pre-School opening sessions to Nine/Ten in the future, there are no immediate plan to Implement these extra sessions currently.

There is potential demand for these extra sessions, however working extra sessions in pack away Pre-school environment, brings additional strains and ergonomic concerns for the Staff. The Pre-School Committee has focused on minimalizing the packing away activities this last term, several changes have been made, and with great co-operation from the Mums & Toddlers group and the Peace & Hope group, there is now a minimal amount of packing away on Wednesday afternoons.

The Pre-school has continued to attract above average numbers of new children, the ethnic mix is varied, as is the learning capabilities. The Pre-school has seen high numbers of children with severe learning/capability issues.

Julie and her team have had to work very closely with local services and support agencies to deliver the right learning packages and support for these children.

The summer event in July was an amazing success, attracting almost a 100 people, it was planned to have a similar event this year, however the lockdown process, and the current closure of the setting could make this difficult to put on this year.

Julie and the staff have worked extremely hard to maintain the high standard of teaching and learning through play , and I believe this can be supported by the high numbers of new enquiries and very positive comments from visitors and Agencies to the setting.

Weekly visits from Amanda into the setting bringing bible stories to the children has also been very positive and a welcome addition to the setting.

*Lance Hanning Pre-school Chair*



## Parent and Toddlers

The Parent and Toddlers group meets once a week in the Vicarage Hall on Wednesday afternoons during school term time.

This provides an outreach into the community where parents with their children can meet in an informal social atmosphere to enjoy free play with the toys provided, as well as organised craft activities and refreshments.

The afternoons are organised by myself, Martha Prankard, Simon Morbey and Frank Howard . Much enjoyed by parents and children are the refreshments provided by Terri Thom and Kath Burtrum Thank you to Saju for leading much appreciated music and song when he is available. Also, a big thank you to Ernie Mann who attended our Christmas party complete with big red suit and curly white beard.

A significant change that has taken place during the past year is much closer co-operation with Pre-school which has made life easier for both groups using the Vicarage Hall. Thank you to Sheila, Lance and team for proposing these changes.

We have up to 18 adults and 28 children attending, although numbers fluctuate widely from week to week, the doors are open to many who would not normally enter church premises and has led to some parents becoming regular church attenders. Parents have given feed-back commenting that they enjoy coming to Parent and Toddlers because of the friendly, relaxed, atmosphere and the sharing of God's love for all.

*Ruth Howard*

## Crèche (up to 3 years)

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

#### **Children's Church – Gems and Pebbles.**

The number of children attending our Sunday morning service has continued to grow. We continue to work our way through the Bible and have reached the book of Kings. Each story points children toward Jesus as our Saviour. Our goal is for children to learn how much God loves them and to encourage them to fall in love with Jesus and make a personal commitment to him. We do this through stories, songs, games, memory verses and occasional crafts. The children are learning to use their Bibles to find stories and answer questions using the Bible. We have seen much growth in many of our children.

## Rock Ministry

This year, Rock Ministry has seen a few changes. We had decided as a team to spend one session a month down at church as we found that it would be beneficial for the young people to integrate into church life and church services.

Throughout the year we have followed multiple series from Energise looking at gift areas of being a Christian. We started the year by looking at the series "wonderful youth" and the series gave the young people insight into why they are, blessed, chosen, holy, loved and forgiven. This then went into a series called "church" and we looked at why church isn't just people in aprons serving tea and

coffee, we looked at the biblical view of church. To end the year off we looked at some apologetics, we looked into Job and was he a suffering servant, Jesus and the empty tomb and why we believe in creation.

The prayer for the upcoming year will for the young people to grow in confidence and to continue their walk with God.

## Summit Group

This past year at Summit we have seen some changes, to start with we made some changes as the group only consisted of two young people and we cancelled more session then we were actually doing. We moved summit from been a bible study for 14-18 year old to a social group catering for 11-18 years. The aim for Summit is to reach the young people of the community and the parish of St Mark's. We have gained three new leaders this year Trevor Towers, Rob Turnbull and Tim Friday and the group has grown from 2 to 13 and on average we have 10 young people attend.

The session consists of different themes and we do crafts, baking, quiz's and games nights. We have had one social last year and we linked up with St Mary's Island youth group and went bowling.

The prayer for group would have to be that the young people continue to come and enjoy what we have been doing in the last year and that more young people from the community join us. Also pray that when we go to BCDO the young people who do not have a relationship with God would experience his presence.

## Who Let the Dad's Out

This has been a tough year for this group as we haven't seen much improvement from last year and we made a decision to cancel until the new year and look at what the group does and how it can help the community.

We would like you to pray for this group, as we seek God's wisdom on how we approach the next year.

## Kidz Klub

At the beginning of the school year our numbers dropped slightly at Kidz Klub due to some children becoming too old for the group and graduating to Summit. However, as the year has progressed, we have had new children join who have been told about Kidz Klub by other children who attend. We find this very encouraging that it is growing through word of mouth. The group continue to be vibrant and enjoyed by all. Children use the time to socialise with friends, some who they only see at Kidz Klub, play games, engage in crafts, and chat to leaders. We also do a 15 minute 'God Slot' at the end of every session which includes objects lessons, an introduction to the character of God and a prayer time which all the children choose to participate in.

*Simon Morbey and Christine Cordle*

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

### **St Mary's Island Church link with St Mary's Island School: 2019**

St Mary's Island Church normally holds Sunday services in the School Hall. The church has unrestricted access to the Hall on a Sunday. Other programmes that are planned outside of teaching hours are booked with the school office.

These programmes can include Messy Church, held monthly on a Saturday, prayer meetings and District Council Meetings.

There is a close link between the church and school. Several church members also either work or volunteer at the school.

Reverend Saju Muthalaly is not only the Church Vicar but also a member of the School Governing Body. He regularly visits the school, speaks to staff and leads worship for the children and staff. He speaks at the various Christian festivals that are held with the children and also their parents and families attending.

Carolyn Facey is a volunteer at the school. She works with the headteacher and staff to support and promote the RE curriculum. Week by week, she leads worship with the children. Sometimes this can be in the Hall and incorporates the whole school and sometimes in class. The expansion of the school has led to an adaptation of the daily timetable. This has meant that some children miss out on the daily corporate worship. This has been addressed by Carolyn leading worship in their own classrooms for those children. The children are introduced to how the church operates on a Sunday. The church furniture is set out and the children are able to experience what a church is like and learn about the importance of the various articles of furniture and their significance.

Significant Christian festivals are celebrated with the children. Among these are the beginning of Lent which was celebrated with the children at an outdoor service in the school playground. Remembrance Day is an important service of respect and supported by the Royal Engineers who send representatives to support and speak to the school. Also, at Christmas the school choir sang at the Carol Service organised by the church and held outside the Community Centre.

Staff and children alike, daily enjoy a close relationship with the church.

*Carolyn Facey*

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