

ST. MARY'S ACM - APRIL 2014 - CHURCHWARDENS' REPORT

THE CHURCH

Restoration of the spire is progressing well. A very small amount of the main timbers has had to be renewed, but on the whole the structure seems sound. A few coping stones have had to be replaced. However, major corrosion was found in the iron rod supporting the weather vane, which requires the rod to be remade. Repairs to the South aisle and porch roof are about to start and work to the floor stones is almost completed. We are still hoping that all works will be finished and the scaffolding removed by the end of May.

Having discovered the source of the leak in the heating pipes, repairing them and enjoying a month or so of the heating working perfectly, the system sprang another hidden leak. Luckily with a mild winter and keeping the inner circuit of radiators on throughout, we did not suffer too much from a cold church. However, the poor clergy and choir did have to put up with a freezing vestry ! Investigations are now underway to pin point the latest leak and repair accordingly.

Plans are now in hand to recover and replace all the pew seat cushions over the next couple of years.

The next major project is the lighting. Light Perceptions has been engaged and designs are being finalised. All being well, we hope that work will commence early in 2015.

SPIRE & LIGHTING APPEAL

The amount raised currently stands at about £175,000. We have been fortunate in receiving very large donations from the AELTC and also from a local resident. We initially sought and received contributions from the local community and have now appealed directly to the members of the electoral roll.

CHURCHYARD

A new lamp post is to be erected by the finger post to give better light for those going to and from Garden Hall. Lights on Fellowship House are being renewed and the floodlighting of the tower overhauled.

The dangerous tree in the churchyard extension was pruned and made safe by tree surgeons

GARDEN HALL

Garden Hall was re-decorated last summer. The floor has been stripped and re-sealed; the partition serviced and the lock on the sliding glass wall repaired. In January, the torrential rain leaked through the roof and brought a section of the ceiling down. The roof has now been sealed and the ceiling repaired (an insurance claim).

Garden Hall continues to be as popular as ever and weekday bookings are virtually at capacity. Many thanks to Jenny Micalapopoulos, Liz Whitson and of course, Caroline Revill for managing the bookings so efficiently and making all the hall users feel so welcome.

FELLOWSHIP HOUSE

The boiler was replaced last autumn and the persistent drainage problem in the garden / playground rectified.

No.3, ARTHUR ROAD

Since Tony's departure in July, No.3, Arthur Road has been re-decorated and undergone some renovation and is now let to tenants for the next two years.

FUTURE PLANS

A working party / sub committee drawn from both St.Mary's and the Parish will be set up to plan the development of the Arthur Road site.

A meeting of interested parties was held to discuss our use of church buildings including the two halls. It was generally felt that certain requirements such as small comfortable meeting rooms and adequate office space were not currently being met. Therefore the working party / sub committee's remit will cover consideration of the best use of Fellowship House.

STAFF

We have not replaced Tony with a full time caretaker. Presently, major heating and electrical work is being carried out by Cuddingtons and other maintenance work is being dealt with on a job by job basis. We are grateful to Stephen English for the help he has given us in this regard.

We are also very fortunate in having Caroline Reville as Parish Operation Manager who deals with many of the day-to-day maintenance problems.

We shall regularly review the situation and if the need for a part-time caretaker becomes pressing, then it will certainly be considered.

INSPECTION

The annual inspection was carried out on Saturday 12th April by the Assistant Area Dean, Canon Jenny Thomas; all was found to be satisfactory.

THANKS

The churchwardens are very grateful to the many volunteers who give so much of their time and expertise in the upkeep of the church, churchyard and halls and in supporting the spiritual and social life of St.Mary's.

Sarah Canby & John Bush

St. Mary's Church, Wimbledon
Annual Church Meeting - 27th April 2014

Treasurer's Report

2013

The year ended in line with expectation, with a surplus on Unrestricted Activities of £4,332, compared with a surplus of £14,018 in 2012.

Total Unrestricted Income was broadly comparable to last year, albeit with planned giving 3% lower. This was offset in part by additional donations received from weddings and baptisms.

Costs on Unrestricted Activities were £13,000 higher than 2012, with remedial works for 3 Arthur Road prior to letting being the principal single item.

At 31st December 2013 Unrestricted Funds are £188,960, representing 5.3 months of expenditure.

The Renewal Fund stands at £341,207, and the Spire Fund (after some initial costs) is just under £100,000.

In December we received a legacy of £34,053 which we have yet to allocate.

2014

Activities are in line with budget for the year to date. We have paid the first two instalments on the Spire. We have also paid £4,000 for the re-sanding and polishing of the Garden Hall floor.

There continue to be a variety of other costs arising, including external lighting improvements, Fellowship House roof maintenance, and adjustments to the Garden Hall partition.

We have made an LPW VAT claim on various 2013 items, and will make claims this year for the Spire and related works.

Fundraising on the Spire, and now also Lighting, has progressed well in the year to date, although we have a long way to go (some £100,000) to reach our total target.

James Little
Treasurer

Deanery & Diocesan Synod Report for ACM – April 2014

Our Synod reps continue to fulfil the relentless round of meetings associated with their role. Merton Deanery Synod reps Alasdair McGregor and Neal Harvey have attended three meetings over the past twelve months. In May they discussed the ways in which the Bishop's "Faith, Hope and Love call to Mission" initiative had been implemented in parishes, and could be made meaningful within the Deanery set up.

This was followed up in October when we welcomed the new Archdeacon of Lambeth, the Venerable Simon Gates. In his address the Ven. Gates recommended the Church of England course Pilgrim, for church congregations. Faith Hope and Love was again discussed, including notification of a new Deanery Handbook/Induction Pack, a Spiritual Formation Group to organize Spirituality days, and whether training could be organised at a Deanery level.

In January of this year, the meeting was given over to a Eucharist, celebrating the conclusion of the Faith Hope and Love call to Mission. This was an unusual service, with songs not hymns and a chance to display something which conveyed our parish response to the process. We are now in possession of the Merton Deanery Induction Pack. We are grateful to Revd. Richard Lane, the area dean and vicar at Christ Church, West Wimbledon for his effort in chairing these meetings.

Meanwhile our Diocesan Synod reps, Mark Bide and Neal Harvey have busy in the Southwark Diocesan Synod. Topics here have included the state of the Diocesan Finances, and the latest attempt to find a solution to the legislative changes needed to enable the consecration of Women Bishops. At the February 2014 meeting, these proposals were approved by a 3 votes to 0 in the House of Bishops, 45 votes to 6 in the House of Clergy and 62 votes to 6 in the House of Laity.

The other ongoing theme has been the adoption of the Strategy for Ministry proposals. At the March 2013 meeting we discussed in groups the possibilities for strengthening the role of Deaneries. We have continued to receive reports from the implementation committee and to monitor the progress in reducing the number of stipendiary posts.

These reductions are a key component of the Strategy for Ministry, in response to the continuing problems with Diocesan Finances. The budget for 2014 was received at the November meeting showing a shortfall of £880,000. It was at this meeting that proposals to change the method by which contributions are raised from the Parishes were accepted.

On a more positive note, the July meeting saw passed a motion requesting the National Investing Bodies to ensure that their investment policy was aligned with the Church's "Shrinking the Footprint" campaign, and to establish a working group on the environment. This motion was subsequently passed at General Synod level in February 2014.

So a difficult time, dominated by trying to find ways to improve the financial situation, but still being able to approve and promote significant policy changes within the Church of England.

Neal continues to be the Deanery Lay representative on the Diocesan Board of Finance, and is a member of the Executive and Glebe subcommittee.

*Neal Harvey
April 2014*

Report from Church Committee Secretary for ACM – April 2014

The Church Committee met six times during the year. The main matters discussed were:

- 1) Property issues, especially those relating to
 - the Spire, South Porch and Aisle Roof and floor stones;
 - the lighting project;
 - Garden Hall; and
 - the boiler
- 2) The Spire Appeal
- 3) 3 Arthur Road
- 4) Tennis Fortnight
- 5) the Finances of the Church
- 6) Carols in the Field;
- 7) Friends of St Marys; and
- 8) Mission Action Planning.”

Julia Hemmings

Electoral Role report for ACM – April 2014

New total 628. This comes from the 2013 figure of 601 plus 43 additions less 16 deletions ie net increase of 27.

Anthony Gubbins

Safeguarding report for ACM – April 2014

The four churches have again undertaken a safeguarding audit examining every area of church life to ensure that the children and vulnerable adults in our care are kept safe. The Rector and the PSO both have copies of the audit and the action plan for each church. All the points requiring action from last year's initial audit have now been addressed and we are therefore confident that we are fully compliant with diocesan safeguarding policy as outlined in *A Safe Church*.

The main areas for ongoing action are the completion and renewal of DBS checks for all people working with children or vulnerable adults and the undertaking of training for church officers and volunteer staff in order to keep up to date with safeguarding policies and procedures.

Jane Sanderson (Parish Safeguarding Officer)

Youth and Family Worker's Report for ACM – April 2014

My remit continues to grow and the last year has proved to be busy, interesting and exciting. My work now encompasses every generation at St Mary's which makes for a challenging week. Here follows a sample of some of the things we have done over the past twelve months:

Toddler Praise continues to expand. We lost some regulars to school but we have gained new families and Wednesday mornings are very lively. The Mums and Dads take it in turns to tell the story and to lead the prayers. This is very creative and the service is always very interactive. The tea and toys are great fun, and Toddler Praise is valued by all who are involved. We have had outings and a picnic in the field, and more of these are planned.

Friday People has changed considerably this year. The older members moved on, and so the group is a little smaller in number but is still very enthusiastic. We have a core of about half a dozen members who meet regularly with others on the register who join us for social events and special occasions. These have included a bowling trip and cinema trips this year. The Friday nights are a mixture of an exploration of faith, and fun games and activities. Willing parents help out, and we have been helped considerably by recruiting John Weig as a volunteer but we always need more help for this group.

Rafters are a lovely, diverse group who meet every Sunday night. These evenings are based around food, conversation, discussion and games. It is a really special time and is very well supported. We held a Capture the Flag event on Wimbledon Common, and have played Crazy Golf, been bowling and been to the cinema this year. We also provide breakfast for the dawn service on Easter Day and the preparation for this is much enjoyed. Liz Johnson is a perpetual volunteer and her contribution is invaluable.

Carrot Wood – We teamed up with Bethan Jenkins, the Youthworker at St Mark's and took 17 young people to a residential Activity Centre in Kent for a weekend in March. Most were from St Mark's but we took a couple of St Mary's young people. This was an exhausting but an absolutely brilliant experience – we would love to encourage this as an annual event, and will be recruiting young people for next year as soon as we can. It was great to work alongside Bethan and those children who attended will be very happy to describe their adventures and inspire others to come along.

Special events – The Light Party is firmly established in the Church's calendar and is great fun, as well as being a positive alternative to Hallowe'en events. It is very well attended, and is already in the diary for next year. We had the Good Friday Children's Workshop, held during the Good Friday morning service which was a wonderful way for children of all ages to creatively learn and explore the Easter

story. We also held a Christmas celebration on the Sunday closest to Christmas, and were visited by Father Christmas – all great fun for our Sunday School regulars.

First Communion and Confirmation – We held courses for both of these last year. Four children received Communion for the first time at Pentecost, and the classes leading up to this were inspirational – much questioning and discussion about the key issues of belief. The Confirmation Course for teenagers was a joint venture between St Mark's and St Mary's and the Confirmation service was held here which was wonderful.

Other things

I continue to run the Bible Study at the Rose and Crown on Monday mornings. This is a great expression of the St Mary's community, and the age range here has sometimes been from 18-90+! I learn so much from these sessions and really value them, and it has been good to establish a working relationship with the pub.

I also have some input into Bishop Gilpin, particularly through assemblies. I meet young people, and others, regularly on a one –to-one basis, and my pastoral work is growing.

I love the variety of all that I am privileged to do and I look forward to another year of food, fun, faith exploration and friendship!

Catherine Linsley

Music Report for ACM – April 2014

The St Mary's Choir has had a busy and fulfilling year of music, including cathedral visits to Ely and St Paul's (twice) along with excellent performances of Handel's *Messiah* and Bach's *St John Passion*, as well as the traditionally special music at Christmas and in Holy Week. There have also been many happy social evenings, including informal musical evenings in Garden Hall. Under Colette's direction, the choristers have performed impressively, notably at the Advent and Christmas Carol Services. The Gospel Choir continues to increase in strength, and on two occasions this year has been ably supported by the Bishop Gilpin Parents' Choir - these collaborations have been memorable and we hope they will continue. In all these musical groups, singing has been key to building and developing friendship among members, for which we can be grateful.

Max Barley

Licensing Report for ACM – April 2014

In October, Johanna Hearn was licensed as a Lay Reader in Southwark Cathedral. She is grateful for the support she received from the clergy team and members of the congregation during her three years of training, and those who attended the service and celebration that followed. In particular, Johanna is grateful to Sheila Lenon, Andrew Pollard, Janet Baker and Sally Flew who supported and prayed for her during her training.

Johanna Hearn

RECTOR'S REPORT 2014

The last year has seen growth in the number of families with small children coming to the church. On the first Sunday of the month the 11:15 now often equals the 9:30 in numbers. Parents now have more opportunities to engage with each other through Toddler Praise, baptism lunches and Men Behaving Madly. We have also extended our concern for those who are caring for the elderly. In addition to the long-running and popular Tuesday lunches we have started the Fountain Group which provides information and support for those caring for relatives with dementia or related problems. We still struggle to engage the 11 – 18 age range in any numbers. In part this is because many families move away from the area as their children get older, and we also face competition from sport and other activities. Nevertheless, it is an area for concern, and it would certainly be helped if more adults volunteered to help with the existing groups.

Getting people to come to church is only the first step. I am pleased that we are offering more to help people grow spiritually, both through the Julian Group and through Quiet Days. We have had good bible study groups and study courses to help people understand the bible. We had a retreat to Spain and a thought-provoking trip to the Holy Land.

Our worship has been enhanced by the choir, who go from strength to strength. The performances of the Messiah and St John Passion were exceptional. How many voluntary Parish Choirs could sing the Allegrì Misereri at a weekday service? The choristers are now making a wonderful sound and are singing on their own at both 9:30 and 11:15 services. The gospel choir, sometimes supplemented by singers from the Bishop Gilpin Parents Choir, have added a welcome lively dimension to the 11:15 services. We also now have a drum kit – we are just waiting for the drummer!

A church that only looks inwards is not following the gospel, and I am pleased to say that at St Mary's we not only give generously to charities, but continues to provide shelter for the homeless through the Night Shelter and donate food for the Food Bank on a regular monthly basis.

We have said goodbye this year to many long-standing members of the congregation. It was with great sadness that we said our farewells to Monica Allanach, Eileen Green, Denise Murgatroyd, Brian Pigott, Christopher Spencer and Dick Strong. May they rest in peace. There was also happier news. Catherine Parkes married Alister and became Mrs Catherine Linsley. We welcomed Chris Griffiths as our Curate in July and Johanna Hearn was licensed as a Reader in October; it a wonderful to have them both ministering in the Parish. On the ministry Team we have been blessed to have the assistance of Rev Cynthia Jackson, who has brought a reflective spirituality to St Mary's. Shara Leonard has nearly completed her training as a SPA and we look forward to her pastoral ministry developing. The Pastoral Team is growing and we trained people in listening skills. This will enable us to extend the work we do with people who are going through difficult times.

The buildings and administration have taken up a great deal of energy. We said goodbye to Fiona Grom and welcomed Caroline Revill in the new role of Operations Manager. Tony Winship retired as verger/handyman and we are still exploring the best way of covering the work that he did.

There are an incredible number of people who deserve thanks: the sidesmen, the welcomers, those who keep the churchyard immaculate in all weathers, the flower arrangers, the cleaners, the silver

and brass polishers, the linen washers, Jenny and Liz, who deal with hall lettings, Nadia for editing Grapevine, Lawrence Davies and all the bellringers, those who read the lessons and lead intercessions, the servers, the communion assistants, Andrew Lenon , the Children's wardens and all who help with our ministry to young people, Jane Sanderson who looks after safeguarding issues, Sylvia Davies and all who help with Tuesday lunch, John Bush and Ann Williams who have organised congregational breakfasts, Jonathan Broad who has challenged us on Quiz nights, those who make the coffee every Sunday morning, Lucy and Susan and all their helpers who organised the overwhelmingly popular Harvest lunch, Mary Ann and Steven Turnbull and their team of helpers who managed the parking in Tennis Fortnight, Sylvia for verging, and of course, Caroline in the office. Catherine Linsley has been invaluable in her work with families and young people and I thank Liz Johnson for her help too. I would not be able to minister here without the help I have received from Cynthia and Chris, and latterly also from Johanna. We are very lucky to have such a good team.

The committee undertakes so much of the organisational work. Thank you to all of you, and especially to those who are leaving the committee: Sean Whitman, Liz Whitson, Joe Pitt and Alan Jenkins. Thanks are also due to Julia in her role as committee secretary for keeping us all informed. A particular thank you to James Little who has overseen the finances of the Church – no mean task in a year when we have had to do so much fundraising – and also to Roger Chadder and Margaret Swain who have managed the planned giving and Gift Aid. I usually try to keep out of the papers, but this year, thanks to Sheila Lenon, we have had good publicity for the Spire Appeal.

Money and buildings have proved a challenge this year, with broken boilers, leaking pipes, rotting shingles on the spire, leaking roof and cracked flag stones, to name but a few of the problems. All these tasks end up falling on the wardens shoulders. I have been truly blessed by having Sarah Canby and John Bush as wardens and I, and indeed all of us, owe them a huge debt of gratitude.

I am also aware that every year I thank people and I usually manage to leave someone out, and if it is you I apologise. However, there is one person I have never thanked publicly and I would like to put that right this year. I would like to thank Mark, who puts up with my bad temper, makes Sunday lunch and does countless things behind the scenes. Thank you.

Fountain Group report for ACM – April 2014

Notes for 2013 ACM Annual Report

Highlights:

- 1. 14.10.13 Johanna's Licensing Service at Southwark**
- 2. 7.2.13 Start of the Julian Prayer Meetings**
- 3. 25.9.13 Start of Fountain Group**
- 4. 13.12.13 Fountain Group Advent Service**

25.9.13 Very few introductions were needed at our first meeting of Fountain Group. The common link of St Mary's meant that most people knew or recognised one another and conversation flowed easily. Numbers have steadily grown from 9 in September to 16 in March. Not everyone can make the monthly meetings but we keep in touch via e-mail. Guests have included representatives from Crossroads, Carer's Support Merton and the Wimbledon Guild. Lucianne's experience of providing care and dealing with Social Services is much appreciated by the group as are Chris' moments of reflection and prayers at the end of each meeting.

13.12.13 The Chancel was perfect for the Fountain Group Advent Service, with the Christmas tree, flower arrangements and candle light it felt like a chapel. The traditional format of readings and carols Chris had chosen were very much enjoyed. Max's accompaniment and some strong singers helped to boost the confidence of the rest of us to have a good sing!

Tuesday Lunches Report for ACM – April 2014

The Tuesday Lunches continue to be popular and are much enjoyed. They have also raised about £2500 for charity since September 2013 and this has been used to support the Merton Night Shelter, West London Churches Homeless Concern and The Bishops Lent Call. In the summer we fundraise for a charity nominated by our members and this year it will be After Adoption for their work with teenagers.

In the past 12 months we have had a summer outing to Polesden Lacey and visited the Putney Pantry in November. We have celebrated four 90th birthdays and bid farewell to Judy Haire who died in February. We are experimenting with lunches after tennis fortnight to reduce the length of the summer break.

Male representation is increasing with Anthony Gubbins giving regular lifts and one or two husbands assisting their wives. We are about to welcome Donald Broad as our first ever male host and anticipate a bumper turnout for this notable event. We are looking for more people to give lunches as many of those who now do so are downsizing or moving away. Please contact Sylvia or Mary if you are able to do this.

Without hosts and drivers the lunches could not function but special thanks are due to Simone Tromans for organising the lifts and treating us to her wonderful cakes and to Anthony who regularly provides transport for some of our least mobile members.

Bellringing Report for ACM – April 2014

We have rung regularly for the 9.30 service, practised most Wednesdays and rung for a large number of weddings. Six quarter peals have been rung for Evensong and one to celebrate St. George's Day. The tune ringing team rang handbells at the Christmas Carol service and we have practiced handbell changering monthly at various ringers' houses.

There have been 2 outings; one a day outing by train to Hampshire and the other a weekend away in Somerset.

We are pleased to report that the ringers team was victorious in the Parish Quiz held in November. Clara Jackson, one of our more experienced ringers, is leaving us to move to Cheltenham and we wish her and Quentin all the best as they anticipate the arrival of their first child.

Most of our members have at least 10 years service so we would welcome some new recruits especially younger ones who would reduce the band's average age. The minimum age for learning to ring is about 10 years, children younger than this are not really tall enough.