

# APCM BOOK OF REPORTS



**APRIL 2019**

**GKCHURCH**  
GOUDHURST & KILNDOWN

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# thank you!

One of the remarkable things about the church community at St Mary's - and it's a mark of a church that knows what it means to be church - is the number of people who are involved in some kind of ministry for and on behalf of us all.

There are so many people who do something that we can't possibly list who you all are; there are nearly 250 adults in the church community (plus 115 children and young people) and almost everyone does something! So here is a thank you to everyone who:

Led or helped at a kid's group on Sunday and helped raise the next generation in faith  
Served tea, coffee and biscuits after the service  
Cooked and served breakfast before the service  
Gave financially to the church  
Said 'yes' to helping out at the last minute  
Took photographs  
Cleaned the brass  
Made sure the church is in good repair and order  
Ordered oil  
Took a risk for God  
Helped run the Youth Group  
Was part of the PCC  
Read in church  
Applied for a faculty  
Ran the sound desk  
Sang, made music and kept our worship focussed on God  
Washed up  
Opened the tower  
Set up a service  
Organised people into rotas, so that things get done  
Looked after flowerbeds and the Churchyard

Cleaned, tidied, and made everything look lovely  
Looked out for people who are new and chatted to them  
Ran Lend with Care  
Changed light bulbs  
Invited someone to church or to Alpha  
Was part of Alpha, whether as leader or helper, or by cooking a meal  
Liked a church Facebook post  
Preached  
Shared their faith with someone else  
Helped keep the Community cupboard stocked  
Led a small group  
Led or helped an Alpha table  
Arranged flowers and made the church beautiful  
Was on the Blend team  
Led the intercessions at the 10:45  
Gave communion at the 8:00 or 10:45  
Baked a cake (or lots of cakes!)  
Cooked for Alpha, quiz nights and welcome lunches

Sorted and delivered food bags or cooked for the meal train  
Welcomed people on Sunday  
Handed out books as people arrive at church  
Looked after the finances  
Collected and banked donations and sorted Gift Aid  
Did something kind for someone in church without anyone knowing  
Helped at the fete or other big community activities  
Ran a fundraising event  
Locked or opened the church  
Rang bells  
Made the bookstall look interesting and inspiring  
Washed church linen, table cloths or tea towels  
Prayed with or for someone  
Donated clothes or other items  
And any one of a thousand other things that make the church community what it is.....

*Thank you all*

# VICAR'S REPORT

There are things that every church is called to do; to pray, worship and love one another, to serve the community, make disciples and witness to our faith. This is just what it means to be 'church'. But 'Church' is never a theory and always exists in the midst of the joys and complexities of the real world. And that means that every church has its own specific identity and is given its own specific call.

For the last few years at St Mary's we have named that identity and call under 5 headings. These define our particular character as a community, and these are the areas we want to focus on, in order to be the church that God has called us to be. These 5 headings should run through who we are and what we do like the letters in the middle of a stick of seaside rock.

And I want to look back at the last year through the lens of these 5 headings.

## 1. Everyone is welcome

Jesus said, '*Come to me all who labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest*'. He didn't add any extra criteria to that invitation - everyone is welcome - and because we want to be faithful to Jesus, it is a core value for us that everyone is welcome, and that they know that is the case.

That is about a whole community culture, because everyone shares responsibility for communicating that message of welcome, both to those who come to church services and events, and in our everyday interactions.

We continue to work hard on making sure that people coming to church for the first time feel welcomed, and that they are quickly invited to be part of the community, if they want that. We have particularly tried to develop a culture of mutual hospitality within the community and preached a sermon series on that subject and encouraged people to share meals together.

To make sure that the message of welcome is widely heard, we have recently reviewed the way that we communicate with people, both internally within the church community and more widely. You will already have seen the new logo and branding and, if you use social media, a more deliberate use of Facebook and Instagram. Over the next months the weekly sheet, weekly email and website will be updated.

## 2. Jesus at the centre

In the 1930's the writer Evelyn Underhill wrote to the Archbishop of Canterbury. She said '*God is the only interesting thing about religion. And people are thirsty for God*'. We are, fundamentally, not here to hold church services, look after a building or run a PCC. First and foremost we are here to point people towards Jesus Christ, who is the way to God the Father. And people are thirsty for God.

And that means everything we do needs to be centred on Jesus. And that makes us a community passionately open to going deeper in prayer, worship and study of the bible. It means being ready to seek his will for us in all that we do.

Everyone is welcome, and they are welcomed into a community which has Jesus at the centre.

In his letter to the Colossians St Paul says that his purpose is to preach and teach so that he can '*present everyone mature in Christ*'. We want to keep on maturing in faith and this year we have talked a lot about *Going Deeper* - with a significant number of people wanting to take more risks for God, asking him to show them where they are called, being ready to be bold and generous with their gifts and resources.

Our prayer ministry continues to grow in depth, and there is more about that elsewhere in the report.

One of the blessings of our setting is being one church with two buildings, and this year we have increasingly differentiated the different styles of St Mary's and Christ Church so we can make sure there is both a more traditional and a more informal service every week.

We have also continued to grow the 5 O'clock as a place for free encounter with God, and have begun a new Taize service as a place of stillness and meeting with God.

### **3. Children, young people and families**

Research suggests that healthy churches are those that 'do a few things and do them well.' For some years now we have chosen to make ministry to children, young people and their families a particular priority. You can read about Blend, Sunday groups, Youth Group, film club, our schools work, Cafe Toddlers, Youth Alpha and everything else we do with young people further on in this report - and I want both to thank everyone who is already serving in this crucial ministry and to encourage everyone to consider being involved.

Organisations that want to focus on a particular area of work are sometimes asked to think about what 'great would look like' for that activity. The idea is that, if you can imagine what it would be like if a particular ministry or activity were going as well as it possibly can, that can then become your guiding vision. For some time now I have believed that our work with children and young people would be 'great' if a family arriving in the area who ask 'what is there for kids round here?' were told - 'you have got to find out what's going on in GK Church. Everything they do with kids is fantastic.' That vision drives us forward and the welcome given to families at Cafe Toddlers, teenagers at Blend and all our children at the Sunday groups makes it clear that we are well on the way to that vision coming into reality.

In recent weeks we have been thinking together about how we can all share the responsibility for raising the faith of the next generation, including in our families. We will be hosting a major day conference on this theme in June, with nationally known speakers sharing their expertise with us. More details will be available on this shortly.

### **4. 7-day faith**

The church has sometimes given the impression that the point of being a Christian is to go to church. But Jesus never told anyone to go to church - he told people to love God, to follow him, to heal the sick, to visit those who were suffering, to stand up against injustice and to preach the gospel. Sunday church is when we come together to be refreshed and taught, to be with one another and to worship God - but we do that in order to go and follow Jesus from Monday to Saturday.

This year we have continued to run Apologetics sessions, helping us all grow in confidence when we're talking to people about our faith and these will continue next term. The School of Theology has also been a wonderful addition to church life, offering high quality theological teaching which is accessible and engaging, and which supports those wanting to go deeper than is possible in a Sunday sermon. The next term will start in the summer.

Our ongoing focus on helping people explore their calling before God - whether that's to something in church, at work or in the community - included a day of prayer and reflection with the Diocesan Director of Vocations, as well as specific courses and support for individuals who are taking their explorations further.

## 5. Generous with everything we've been given

We know that we have been wonderfully blessed. First and foremost we have received the gift of faith in Jesus. It is for us to share this as widely as possible and it remains a priority for us to grow in confidence in talking about our faith with others.

Alpha was a very significant investment of time, prayer and love from many people this year and I was absolutely delighted with how many of the church community invited someone to come.

Our thanks are due to everyone who helped make Alpha happen, both those who were there each evening and those who cooked and baked in the background. It was a major logistical feat to feed 73 people once a week for 11 weeks! There is more about Alpha elsewhere in this report.

Being generous is also about sharing the resources that we have as a church with other Christians in the area. This year, whenever we have run courses or events we have offered them to other local churches as well. The School of Theology, the God's Calling day, our apologetics and marriage evenings have all been widely advertised and shared, and we will continue to do this into the future. We are also heavily involved, as you can read later in this booklet, in work with the Deanery.

Generosity is about faith, practical resources and also service to the local community. Connect is providing both help and practical care to a wide range of people and is one of the most important services that we now offer. There's lots more about Connect later in this booklet.

Our other major investment of time, finance and energy this year has been the Weald Family Hub. Louise Vickerman took up the post of Coordinator in November and 6 months in her work is bearing significant fruit. Her report is also in this booklet.

### Next steps

We have been so richly blessed in every way at St Mary's, and we want to use all those blessings for God's glory.

At a recent Leadership Team away day, we looked at Joshua 1:1-9. It tells the beginning of the story of Joshua and the people of Israel's arrival in the Promised Land. Four times Joshua is told 'to be strong and courageous'. We also want to be strong and courageous in taking risks for God and his kingdom; to try things out that enable those who have not yet heard the Good News of Jesus Christ to do so; to meet the people who are on the edge of society and who we are particularly called to serve; to do all we can to combat the scourge of teenage mental illness; to risk going deeper in trust of one another and of God as we grow a church that is built of living stones.

*'Be strong and courageous; do not be frightened or dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go.'*

# CHURCH COMMUNITY

## **Small Groups**

Small Groups continue to flourish and are integral to the life and growth of the Church. At present we have 9 Small Groups, some meeting during the daytime and some in the evening with approximately 80 people involved overall. Following on from this year's very successful Alpha course, we are hoping to launch at least three and possibly four more Small Groups as there has been a great response and enthusiasm from the Alpha attendees to continue to meet up and explore faith further.

Although each group is very different in feel, many of our Groups now enjoy studying one of the recent sermons and exploring its themes in greater depth. Prayer plays a very important part in all of the Groups.

Feedback from those attending Small Groups is very positive with many attendees speaking openly about making a point of prioritising meeting dates in the diary, and about how much they value the fellowship and support offered by the Group, as well as the opportunity to strengthen their faith.

*Huthrie Copplestone*

## **The Weald School of Theology**

In June 2018 we ran the first ever term of the Weald School of Theology. Participants attend terms of 8 weekly lectures which offer high quality theological input from St Mellitus College, an Anglican theological training college in London. We set the School of Theology up in response to requests for more in-depth input and teaching, and offered it widely to local churches. The first course, covering The Bible had 33 attendees and the second, which looked at issues relating to ethics and living as a disciple had 39. Both terms were very well received and we will be running a third term, on Christian doctrine, in the summer.

Our thanks are due to Bella Hastie and Kat Ogden who ran the School of Theology.

*Hugh Nelson*

## **Safeguarding**

Throughout the year I have been carrying out various DBS checks, these are either for new volunteers or a five year re-check. The Diocese ask that everyone is re-checked every five years. This is now done online and the system works well.

Last November the Diocese carried out C2 safeguarding training, which more of our team attended. There are still quite a few team members who have not carried out this training and we are hoping to organise another session in the near future. All members of the Sunday Club, Blend, the Youth Group and the Connect Team must do this training.

Caroline and I recently attended a training session in Ashford run by Murray Wilkinson on Children's and Youth Ministry. This course was about the best way to run your groups, the causes of bad behaviour, how that situation can be dealt with and, more importantly, avoided in the first place! It was very interesting and we gained some useful ideas on how to run our groups. It was also a great opportunity to meet other leaders who run various types of group throughout the Parish and share our experiences with them. Murray also mentioned the importance of paperwork, having

policies that work, carrying out risk assessments and recording information properly. This training is being held again on Saturday 27<sup>th</sup> April in Maidstone and we felt it would be an appropriate opportunity for members of our Youth Ministry team to attend if possible.

Becky and I annually check through all the paperwork held in the Church office to ensure it is up to date, which we did at the beginning of the year and we are happy that we are adhering to the Diocese's requirements.

*Andrea Kirkby*

# FAITH & WORSHIP

## **The band, The 5 o'clock and the informal choir**

The role of the worship team, in all its different movements, is to help our congregation encounter God with songs; we sing to Him, we sing about Him, and we encourage each other by singing all together. We use songs, old and new, sometimes written in our own church family, inspired by messages, or by the general flavour of what is most needed for a particular occasion or season, which might lead us to music that is beautiful, exciting, moving, or fun, slightly unique each time. Generally, we are in a good place in all that we do, but we also see ways in which we'd like to grow, in each area.

We've had a busy year. We have the "full band" on the first Sunday of the month, including two of our amazing teenagers regularly playing drums and bass. All the feedback we receive is that we are becoming more and more skilful, creating a more vibrant and exciting sound each month. We would love to grow the band; especially we'd like to raise others into leading times of worship, and we'd also love to have more teenagers playing among us too.

The informal choir joins a slightly smaller band on the second Sunday. We are now into our third year of what began as an experiment, and it has settled into a good rhythm of around ten enthusiastic singers each time. Our range of songs continues to include well known hymns sung and played in fresh ways, and contemporary songs that lend themselves to beautiful harmonies. We continue to learn and grow together.

Our monthly 5 o'clock Service offers an extended time of encountering God in worship, followed by talking and praying about aspects of living with God. Every meeting has been different and special, including a first 5 o'clock Christmas celebration this year. It remains a slightly "less discovered" meeting, with perhaps 15 or so regular attendees who love it, so if you've never tried it, it can be a beautiful way to end and begin the week.

Additionally, we've been part of a celebratory Harvest Thanksgiving Service, the Confirmation Service in Frittenden and a full and exciting Christmas season. So in conclusion, a really good year, with a wonderful team. And we look forward and pray for "more" in many senses for the year ahead.

*Wes Hinsley*

## **Choir**

I am privileged to have taken over directing the Choir from January 2019, as well as being involved in some of the major Church festivals in 2018.

It has been a year of change for the Choir as they get used to not only a new leader but also a shift in the pattern of services at St.Mary's and Christ Church.

Rehearsals take place on Saturday mornings in St.Mary's. We have been working hard to learn new repertoire and explore good vocal technique. It has been a lot of fun and I really want to thank all members for their loyalty and commitment, as well as for their warm welcome. Particular thanks go to Angela Pakenham-Walsh for continuing to help with administrative matters and to David Denton for accompanying rehearsals and answering all my musical questions.

*Michael Tester*

## **The Prayer Ministry Team**

First, I would like to thank the team for their encouragement and support over the last few years. God has really blessed the work of the Prayer Ministry Team and we give thanks to God for the work He has done for those who have come forward and received prayer. And we praise God for the difference prayer has made in their lives.

We continue to actively seek Gods will in our church.

- We have started a prayer meeting once a month for the team to encourage each other, listen to Gods voice and pray for each other and the church as a whole.
- A rota of the prayer ministry team has enabled people to come to prayer at the end of the service and we have seen a steady flow of people seeking prayer for a range of issues including, emotional and physical healing.
- To encourage others within the church we held a day of 'Be still and be healed' with the Living Well, Canterbury. I would like to say thank you to Canon Rev Sarah Chapman and team. The day was held in the church rooms and really encouraged personal experience of the Holy Spirit.
- We have successfully completed training of the Healing and Wholeness course. I am delighted to report this will be run again in the autumn of 2019. I would like to express my particular gratitude to Faye and Wes for writing and delivering this training.
- Other recent activity include intercessory Prayer for Alpha and continued use for the emergency prayer WhatsApp and prayer chain.

Finally, but not least. I would like to thank the team for their encouragement and commitment to the Prayer Ministry at St Mary's and we look forward to doing more of God's work to His praise and glory.

*Claire Cooke*

## **Bellringing**

This years report is completely different. Sadly during the last year 2 of our ringers died - Norma and Mike. Our band was extremely thin and we needed to import ringers from elsewhere for most of last years weddings. At the beginning of this year an appeal was put out for potential learners, and 6 people came forward, plus a learner we already had, and one other ringer. As there were insufficient experienced ringers to support this number, I asked for help from the District Committee and this is forthcoming. I can now report that all learners are progressing well and we should soon have a band of our own again.

*Rosemary Southon*

# CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE

## **Children, young people and families**

This has been an incredibly busy and rewarding year for all of our groups. God is good and we should celebrate what is happening at St Mary's because our Children and Youth Ministry is alive and well.

## **GK Children – Sunday Groups**

This year we've been developing a sense of 'team' within the leadership of all groups. Training the team in SEN awareness, First Aid, Vision and Values and how they can best grow their skills in Children's Ministry. Each smaller team has been given more autonomy to plan their own rota and sessions and thus develop their own leadership skills

Alongside Sunday Groups we have led a few Outdoor Church sessions on Glebe Field and have also run the Light and Spring Parties with the intention of enabling the wider community to participate. These are ever popular and fun.

## **GK Youth**

One of the primary objectives this year has been to establish a pattern of ministry for the children in order for them to feel that they are contributing to the church community and are not just participants in a separate group on a Sunday. They lead services each term and are part of the ministry team on the first Sunday of the month. This will enrich and encourage them in their faith and give them a sense of ownership at St Mary's. We want the young people here to be confident in who they are in Jesus and to have a life-long faith.

## **Youth Alpha**

We ran a Youth Alpha Series earlier in 2018 and saw some of the children take some giant leaps in their faith – praying openly for each other, allowing the Holy Spirit to move, looking at their own personal relationship with God. For some of the group this led to a decision to be confirmed.

## **St Bartz and social events**

If young people are in a group of loving and supportive friends/peers in their church they are more likely to stick with their faith into adulthood so we make a great effort to build these relationships outside of the Sunday service. They have been on numerous outings and socials in the village, and the highlight of the year is most definitely St Bartz – now a St Mary's institution. This year is booked already for October! An aim for this year would be to ensure that as they get to the sixth form, there is provision in place for the older children to continue in their relationship both at church and in their own time with each other. This requires a strong parent/church partnership. Also, we have a 'Young Leader' initiative which is in its early stages and will be developed throughout this year.

## **Blend**

This year Blend has become a group that is known and respected by the local community. The team is strong and committed to the vision of bringing children back together after leaving primary school. We have a large number of children who regularly attend and many others who drop in and out for periods of time but know they are welcome and loved when they return.

We have been fortunate to receive a large donation from Richard Stewart's business Untangled to help purchase a new table tennis table (so much easier to store), table football and reconditioned computer for children to log into their homework portals.

Some highlights of Blend include The Christingle and Ash Wednesday Services - children are used to taking part in church services at St Mary's and it has been accepted as part of what we do to celebrate Christian festivals at Blend.

Blend on Tour – taking the concept of the pop-up café onto Glebe Field and to Culpepers to engage with the children where they are. This will be revisited next term as we intend to do this more regularly.

Three other churches who are interested in setting up Blend have been in touch and we are working with them and the Diocese to see if we can make this happen.

## **Mentoring Training**

As the relationships have developed over the year with the young people at Blend and we are gaining their trust and confidence, some of the Blend leaders are training to become mentors. A mentor is a trusted person who is willing to guide and enable another to grow into their potential. We are also building links with High Weald Academy and mentoring has already begun there with some of the students who are struggling with school, friendships and family issues. We are also in discussion with the Weald Family Hub, Fegans and CAST (part of the Family Trust) to make sure there is a strong supportive structure underpinning this work. This is going to grow and develop in the coming year.

## **School link**

We continue to visit GK School and Colliers Green each week in Collective Worship and through the ever-popular Trinity Lights lunch time group at GK School. Our aim for this year is to develop a team of people who may want to join in with leading this. Beks Harding has come on board to build her knowledge and skills in School's work.

## **Prayer Space**

We held a prayer space in both Colliers Green and GK School in September - a whole week each with every member of the school taking an hour to interact with various stations in the space. This allows space and time to think, to question, to explore feelings and to pray.

## **Looking Ahead**

All of this is possible through the love and dedication of a willing team who beaver away behind the scenes to ensure that these children and young people are given the very best start in their faith and in the family at St Mary's. The children are thriving but we need to ensure the teams are strong in number to cover all of the work and also for our safeguarding requirements.

Please pray that we can grow this ministry and encourage other adults at St Mary's to join this exciting team. Thank you to everyone who gives so much of their time and energy each week. You are amazing!

*Caroline Turvey*

## **Café Toddlers**

Café Toddlers is 6!

Every Friday morning during term, about 20-25 mums, dads, grannies and nannies come to church with their children. It is a very happy time and everyone seems to enjoy the cakes, craft and conversation.

For most of these people, it is the only time they come to church. The Mums quite often remark on how much the little ones like coming to church on a Friday. We hope that it gives them very good associations with church long term.

The completely fantastic Victoria Dawes, amazingly giving Sue Donkin, fabulously energetic and enthusiastic Caroline Turvey, incredibly loving Bridget Stewart, astonishingly kind Ursula Elwood and of course the wise and wonderful Mandy Allison are a brilliant team. There are a variety of other kitchen helpers who do one or two Fridays a term. What we really need is some more help on the craft table, so if you could run craft occasionally, please let me know on 01580 212766. We can reimburse you for any materials. Some local children help make cakes for us as part of their Duke of Edinburgh scheme volunteering, so that's brilliant.

It would be great if other members of the church congregation popped in sometimes to encourage us and chat to the mums. Please come along and have a cup of coffee and see what we are up to. Or send up a prayer for us as we reach out to our community.

*Henrietta Mayhew*

## **The Weald Family Hub**

The Weald Family Hub was conceived in response to rising concerns about mental illness in young people in the Wealden community. Its aim is to connect the community with people, projects and organisations that support young people and their families who are struggling with issues of mental health and is focussed on becoming a key local network of support for the Wealden villages.

The Hub was launched in June 2018 and has connected local churches, schools and individuals to fund the work, in addition to funding from the Weald Deanery, and has now started work in earnest.

The Hub is initially working in partnership with Fegans, a highly respected charity that specialises in working with teenage mental illness. Fegans works with families holistically, counselling children and providing parental support, intervention and training.

In November 2018, the Hub made two new appointments; firstly, Louise Vickerman as the Weald Family Hub Co-ordinator, who is working closely with local churches, schools and community groups who have a shared interest and commitment to the issues of mental health. In addition, through continued fundraising activities in support of The Hub, Katie Davis-Clifford was appointed as Parent Support Co-ordinator. She is playing a pivotal role as part of The Hub team, focussing on recruiting and training volunteers to run the Fegans' *Parents Supporting Parents* scheme.

The first group of twelve children from four local primary schools have completed their counselling sessions, subsidised by The Hub. This has given them access to individual, professional counselling sessions that may not have been otherwise available. Fegans have provided the specialised counselling on behalf of The Hub and are currently working with a further six schools reaching an additional eighteen children.

Five local volunteers have also been recruited and trained to run the *Parents Supporting Parents (PSP)* scheme. The Fegans PSP scheme trains volunteers to offer personalised 1:1 community support to

families who are struggling to manage family life, focusing on parenting skills. Four local families have been paired with volunteers so far and will work through the programme in the coming weeks.

We are fortunate to have the support of many people across the Wealden community in addition to many offering their time, expertise and fundraising skills and our sincerest gratitude goes to them all – thank you! Without you we would not be able to realise our vision in support of the young people in our villages.

*Louise Vickerman*

## **Goudhurst and Kilndown Primary School**

Academic standards continue to remain high and we were delighted to receive a letter from the Local Authority congratulating us on our sustained achievements. This year we were ranked in the top 10% of the country for both attainment and progress, which I think you will agree, is an amazing achievement. Staffing has continued to be very stable and indeed we are fortunate to have an experienced and committed teaching staff that work incredibly hard every day to ensure that the children in our school receive the very best Education possible. We started the new academic year with a full complement of staff and in addition, this year we have welcomed Miss Huxley and Miss Wilford to our teaching team.

We are very proud of our National Support School Status and this year we have not only been supporting schools locally but also nationally; “when we approach things together, we become stronger.”

We continue to be committed to delivering Forest School and Outdoor Learning and in May we were delighted to welcome The Rt Hon Greg Clark to officially open our Outdoor Classroom and newly refurbished pond area. We were joined by members of our Governing Body and PTFA, members of the Parish Council, Tesco's store in Hawkhurst, (it was a Tesco's community grant that enabled us to build the 'The Hide'), the Co-op store in Cranbrook and Sarah Easton who is the General Manager of Hush Heath Winery, all of whom are sponsors of the recent refurbishment of the Pond Area and of course Mr Russell who was the mastermind, designer and builder behind both projects. The Minister was very impressed with both the Hide and the Pond Area and he also spent time talking to the school council and he took questions from the children in year 5 and 6. The sun shone, the children behaved impeccably and it truly was a memorable occasion. Once again thank you to Joe Meyer for allowing us to use his woodland.

Year 3-6 attended a church service at Christ Church in Kilndown on 13<sup>th</sup> June 2018. Years 4-6 then walked back to Goudhurst from Kilndown following the Millennium Trail. Whilst Year 3 learnt all about the history of the church and surrounding area. Particular thanks must go to David Denton for giving up his time to share his knowledge with Mrs Wyatt and Year 3.

30 Year 6 pupils moved to a variety of secondary schools last summer. We celebrated the achievements of each at our leavers' service and gave everyone a Good News Bible, paid for by the PCC – Thank you.

This year one of our school improvement priorities is to develop a whole school approach to supporting good mental health for learning in our staff and our children, maximising happiness in the whole school community. We have introduced “Mindfulness Practices” to all the staff and children in Keystage 2. I would like to thank the Kilndown Educational Trust who awarded us a grant towards this initiative. We are also working with the Weald Family Hub to provide counselling for some children and family support, where necessary. We are grateful for their

amazing work in local schools and the wider community. We are also keen to embed “Godly Play” into our school curriculum, as we strongly believe that by developing spirituality, we can improve resilience and emotional well-being which in turn will lead to happiness. We were delighted recently to receive a grant from Allchurches Trust to support us turning this vision into a reality

In addition to the statutory curriculum, we try to provide our children with a wide range of extra curricular experiences to help enrich their learning. The children and staff in KS2 put on a wonderful performance of ‘Ye Ha’ at the end of the summer term. Year 5 completed their two night residential trip to Swattenden during the middle of September and once again Year 6 enjoyed their final residential trip to Hardelot, France. All the children had an opportunity to practice their French and combined learning about French culture and outdoor adventurous activities. Year R, 1 and 2 have received weekly whole class djembe drumming lessons and Year 5 are enjoying learning how to play the trumpet. In addition, some children are learning to play the guitar, piano, recorder, and some are having singing lessons. Year 5 this year took part in a magnificent production of Twelfth Night as part of the Royal Shakespeare School Festival at the Trinity Theatre Tunbridge Wells. Their performance was described as being “funny, charismatic, dynamic and very professional.” All the children spoke confidently and clearly, indeed their vocal energy and their timing was excellent. In recognition of our commitment to providing high quality Music and Performing Arts Education, we have been awarded a Music Mark and Artsmark Gold. Indeed, we are an accredited Arts Award Centre.

It has been another year of great sporting success. Amazingly, we secured 1<sup>st</sup> place for the 10<sup>th</sup> time in the Julie Rose Athletics in July 2018. Other events entered included the Rawlinson Run, the Orchard Run, Basketball, Hockey, Netball, Football, Swimming Gala, Cross Country Festival, Curling, Infant Agility and The Kent Junior Schools Cross Country Championships where we competed against hundreds of children taking part from all over Kent. Our daily ‘mile run’ continues to be ever popular and we certainly believe that this daily exercise is having a positive impact on the children’s fitness and concentration skills.

Every year the children contribute either by their actions or by raising money for worthy causes. This year was no exception and included Demelza. Help For Heroes, Comic Relief and Jeans for Genes, to name but a few. Well done and a BIG thank you to everyone. The children continue to learn about the work of Starfish Malawi and receive regular updates about our link school in Malawi.

We recognise the importance and value our strong links with St. Mary’s Church. The School/ Church Link Group has already met a number of times this year and the meetings have been most productive. Reverend Hugh and Caroline Turvey continue to lead our Thursday Collective Worship Services; Breathe sessions for staff continue to be appreciated and Trinity Lights held every week is ever more popular- Thank you.

We continue to offer a cooked lunch once a fortnight to members of the Village Community. The older children meet and greet our visitors and serve them a delicious roast lunch.

Our Harvest Festival took place on Friday 28<sup>th</sup> September in St. Mary’s Church; the children performed beautifully and filled the church with their music, poems and prayers! It was a delight to see so many parents and members of the community coming together at the service to help us celebrate. We held a Community Harvest Shared Lunch in the school on Wednesday 26<sup>th</sup> September. The school laid a wreath, as usual, on Remembrance Day as part of the Sunday Service

after joining the procession through the High Street; some of our children were invited to read at the service.

Our Choir regularly perform at village events – late night shopping, family services and once again this year they represented the school in the Young Voices Choir February 2019 at the O2.

KS1 performed a wonderful Nativity Play entitled 'The Nativity' on 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> December, which were very well attended by, parents and the retiring collection raised over £170 towards the Weald Family Hub. The dress rehearsal on 10<sup>th</sup> December was watched by KS2 alongside members of the community who had first enjoyed mince pies and tea. On Wednesday 19<sup>th</sup> December, we had our end of term Carol Service that was again very well attended and the retiring collection raised £192 for the innovative charity Lend with Care. What a lovely end to a very busy term.

This year we held our Christingle Service in St. Mary's Church on Friday 25<sup>th</sup> January. The Year 6 pupils led the service very confidently; every child was given a glow stick to hold whilst the year 6 pupils were given a real candle. When the candles were lit and the lights turned out, silence filled the church and there was a sense of awe and wonder in the air. Our annual Ash Wednesday service, led by Caroline Turvey was also held in St. Mary's Church on 6<sup>th</sup> March. Moments such as these really help to deepen the children's spiritual development.

Finally, on Monday 18<sup>th</sup> March we welcomed Bishop Trevor to the school for one last time. He visited each class and led us in Worship. As always he left us filled with encouragement, wisdom, hope and love for the future.

Please visit our school website to keep up to date with all the latest school news and events: at [www.goudhurst-kilndown.kent.sch.uk](http://www.goudhurst-kilndown.kent.sch.uk)

*Lindsay Roberts*

# SERVING THE COMMUNITY

## Alpha

We have run another large-scale Alpha course, from January to March 2019, with eleven weekly sessions on Tuesday evenings as well as a dedicated Alpha Day one Saturday in March. In the run up, we focused on publicising and promoting Alpha in both the local and the wider community, and have been blessed with very high participation and consistent attendance.

This year we moved the venue to GK Primary School and have been very grateful for their generosity in letting us use their facilities – we have had a wonderful kitchen to work in (including a much-needed dishwasher!) as well as plenty of space in which to create a welcoming environment for our guests. We also decided to reach out to the GK Church community for volunteer cooks each week and had an overwhelming response with over 30 people cooking or baking for the eleven sessions, feeding approximately 70 people each Tuesday evening. The home-cooked food has been greatly appreciated by guests and team members alike and has undoubtedly been an important part of the success of this Alpha.

As for the figures, we have had on average 50 guests each week as well as an extremely dedicated team of volunteers from throughout the whole GK Church community. In addition to the 30 cooks, we have had 15 team leaders and helpers, a core planning team, a kitchen team, a set up team, a prayer team, an audio/visual lead - not to mention those who have helped with the publicity drive/signage, printing, fresh flowers for the tables, welcoming guests, provision of fresh bread and hard work behind the scenes in numerous ways. We have had both a fantastic team and a wonderful group of guests, all of whom have been integral to the success of Alpha.

In terms of outreach, we have calculated that 70.5% of our guests are not regular churchgoers and 61% have no connection with church at all, exactly the people we wanted to reach. As Alpha draws to a close we are hopeful that many of those who have participated will continue their faith journey by joining a Small Group and further integrating into our Church community in a variety of ways.

To conclude, we are thankful for all the wonderful people who have participated in and contributed to Alpha in some way or other but above all we are thankful for God's huge blessing on and provision for this Alpha and pray that it works for His glory.

*Caroline Davis*

## Connect

Luke 3: 10 The crowd asked Jesus, “Then what are we supposed to do?”. He answered, “If you have two coats, give one away” and then, “Do the same with your food.”

The Connect ministry continues to help support our church family and those in our community in practical ways. The Community Cupboard is a way of sharing God's generous provision. In 2018 we gave out 140 food parcels, some for short term help to bridge a gap, others for longer term help. Our Community Cupboard is not means tested, it is a Christian response, a gift from church made without judgement, but with discernment, to help out those experiencing difficult times.

At Christmas time we had a generous donation from Ready Call and were able to provide fresh fruit and vegetables and treats to everyone the Community Cupboard has supported over the last few years. We also had donations of some brand new toys and were able to give them away to help 12 families in the community with gifts for their children at Christmas. .

The Meal Train – a simple act of cooking and delivering a meal to someone, and stopping to chat for a while, is working well. Over the last year we have delivered 86 regular meals, plus other ad hoc meals to people who have been unwell or unable to cook in the short term.

Connect Clothing is also proving popular, we have held four sales in the past year, and delighted many customers with our wonderful clothes at attractive prices. We have also provided many items as a gift to help out where needed. All funds raised go to St Mary's, and although it isn't ring fenced we would look to use the funds for the Connect ministry if needed.

One moment in this ministry over the last year stands out. A homeless man walked into church and asked for prayer for his sad situation. He had come to the right place. As well as praying with him and listening to his story, we were also able to respond quickly in a practical way, simply because of your generosity. We provided a hot meal, accommodation for one night and transport to get there, kitted him out with toiletries, some food and new clothes. I don't know where that man is now, but I do know that when he walked through the doors of St Mary's he encountered the unconditional love Jesus has for all of us - because his search for prayer led him to a church where Jesus is at the centre of all we do – GK Church.

So thank you. Thank you for all your donations of food and clothes, and thank you for your time. Thank you to the people who collect food from Tesco late on a Thursday, to all the people who iron, label, store, set up and take down, help at the sales and buy our clothes! Thank you to the people who cook and visit and love our church family through the Meal Train.

*Ali Williams*

## **Lend with Care**

We continue to support various entrepreneurs from around the world through the Lend with Care programme, especially focussing on supporting education, farming and retail. This year we have lent nearly £3,800.00 and we have a further £2,000.00 to invest at the time of writing this report. A few examples of the individuals and groups that we have supported are a man rearing buffalo in Vietnam, someone building up their shop with animal feed and vitamins in the Philippines and a banana farmer in Rwanda. It's always very interesting to read the entrepreneurs' stories from around the world but increasingly, rather than being able to be the sole lender to an individual, we are often part of a group of lenders as the loan requests seem to have increased in value. To find out more please have a look at the Lend with Care website – [www.lendwithcare.org](http://www.lendwithcare.org)

*Rosemary Southon*

# THE WIDER CHURCH

## Churches Together

St Mary's, Christ Church and Sacred Heart Catholic church have had a long, deep and committed shared life, expressed in individual friendships and shared acts of worship, for many years. A small group, with people from each of the churches, continues to meet regularly to plan shared events, and we are very grateful to them for this commitment.

We have continued with our usual pattern of services and events this year, including services to mark the start of Advent, Ash Wednesday, Good Friday and the wonderful celebration of resurrection on Easter Eve. We held a first Churches Together Barbecue this year and enjoyed more time to chat and get to know each other. We will do this again this summer.

The shared Lent groups continue to attract good numbers, and the Lent lunches, after a period when we thought they would have to end, have burst into a new and vigorous popularity. We are very grateful to Caroline Richards and Louise Martine for making these such a success, and to everyone who cooks the high quality soup that are the heart of the lunches!

Beyond these formal events, it has been a joy to see a group of parents from across the church communities gathering together to pray after Cafe Toddlers each week. This spontaneous desire to pray is Holy Spirit led, and is sure to bear much fruit.

*Hugh Nelson*

## The Diocese of Canterbury

The Diocese recognises that the Church faces very significant challenges and has created a strategy, 'Changed Lives > Changing Lives,' that addresses these issues.

The key goals for 2018-2023 are to:

- become more *connected* and mission-focused in prayer
- become more *diverse*: with more people from more communities in our congregations – especially young people and those from areas of deprivation
- offer more courageous *leadership*: calling, equipping and supporting lay and ordained people to lead the Church in mission in a rapidly changing culture.

Some of the **Projects** that are underway include:

- Changing Lives Prayer Network
- Ignite: Church, but not as you know it
- Prioritising Young People
- Changing Lives Conversations
- Missional Learning Communities

In order to implement the strategy, increased funding is required and a number of proposals relating to increasing Parish Share were put forward for churches to vote upon. It has been decided that the increase will be 3.7% in 2019 (rising to 3.9% in 2020 and 4.1% in 2021). This is understood to be the option that will stabilise the current situation, but it is slightly disappointing as it is not a budget for growth that the highest proposed increase of 6% would have allowed for, although it does reflect the financial worry that many of our churches are facing. Despite this, it is wonderful to see our Diocese embracing change and putting in place the actions needed to meet the strategy's objectives of growing Church whilst enriching communities.

The Vocations Officer for Canterbury recently held an 'Explore More' day at St Mary's for people interested in better understanding God's call on their life. One of the Diocese's objectives is to re-imagine ministry for lay and ordained people, and this was an informative but reflective session that highlighted the many ways in which people are called to serve and some of the formal pathways that can be followed in relation to this.

*Kat Ogden*

## **The Weald Deanery**

Within the last year the Deanery and its churches were all invited to contribute to the founding of the Weald Family Hub and it has been wonderful to see this initiative supported financially and in spirit throughout the Deanery.

We have hosted the second term of the Weald School of Theology at St Mary's which was well attended by people from a range of parishes. This series was entitled Life Track and looked at a range of thought-provoking and topical subjects including 'Has Science Disproved God', 'Capitalism & Christianity', 'Wealth & Poverty' and 'Politics & Faith'.

It is an exciting time for the Deanery as two parallel strands of work into furthering our Mission and Ministry in the Weald have begun. We are looking to compile a Deanery Plan that addresses how the Deanery can best support both individual churches and group projects in bringing the Kingdom of Heaven closer to our communities. Kat Ogden and Ali Williams are both part of the group working on the plan. Some of the areas identified for focus are:

- continued support of initiatives such as the School of Theology and particularly the Weald Family Hub;
- helping to encourage, equip and empower lay people to fully use their gifts to develop a living church;
- improved communication and sharing of information and resources;
- a good, informative and fun presence in all of our C of E Primary Schools to provide children with a strong foundation in the word of the living God;
- Looking at how to take the focus away from 'church' as something that only happens on a Sunday morning, whilst ensuring that church buildings are well used by communities.

The second strand of work links to the last point: Rev. Hugh has had an initial meeting with a group of people who are interested in setting up a parallel Deanery team to look at how we bring 'church' to many of the people in our communities who are not likely to come to traditional Sunday morning services but who could come to know Jesus through alternative settings.

It is clear that God is at work in our Deanery and that we have many opportunities to serve Him and to bring His Kingdom closer to our communities. We give thanks for all of those who have been willing to engage with the discussions and to consider change, and we pray for wisdom and that we are humble enough to listen to where God is guiding us and are able to find the resources to realise His works.

*Kat Ogden*

# THE CHURCH BUILDING

## **The Friends of St. Mary's**

The year began in April with our annual quiz, slightly later than expected due to bad weather. The evening was well supported and enjoyed by all.

One of our major sources of income comes from opening the Tower on weekends and Bank Holidays. The Quinquennial Report, which was done at the end of 2017, assessed the door opening onto the Tower as unsafe for public access. We employed structural engineers to advise and with the practical help of Richard Hillier were able to construct a temporary repair. We also had the pigeon droppings cleared, commissioned Oliver Budd to restore the millennium mosaics and had covers made to protect them. A banner was made, which is displayed by the Plain throughout the season to encourage visitors.

In March we took part in "Meet the Parish". This was also hindered by bad weather but we were able to recruit new volunteers for the Tower and generate interest in the Friends.

At the Village Fête this year we had the ever-popular Human Fruit Machine and opened the Tower. For our summer fundraiser we returned to Smugley Farm House, courtesy of Keith & Carol Buckland. There was an excellent collection of vintage cars on view, complemented by music from the Shepway U3A Swing band. A good time was had by all.

In April and October we carried out our "Tidy Up" around the churchyard.

This year we produced 2019 calendars, where each month would feature a photograph of Goudhurst or Kilndown. We were delighted with the results and our thanks to the Weald Service Station who sponsored this venture.

November 30<sup>th</sup> saw the annual Christmas Fair and Village Evening. This is our major fundraising event (in excess of £3,000 was raised this year). Thanks to those who helped us run this event so successfully.

Our thanks go once again to Jill Dunstall for organising the choir and to those who hosted Carol parties. This year we were hosted by Georgie and Donald Sargeant for the first time. Who knew a garage could be turned into "party central" with such success!

In 2018 we spent money on issues concerning the Tower and contributed £2670 towards new notice boards on either side of the churchyard path. Looking ahead we have agreed a contribution of £30,000 towards works identified by the quinquennial inspection, including permanent repairs to the door onto the Tower and repairs to the louvres, also on the Tower.

*Andrea Kirkby*

## **The Property and Fabric team**

Our Committee (Ali Williams, Don Sargeant, David Nichol, Mark Taylor, Phil Kirkby and Richard Hillier) have met on five occasions during the last year and have been actively seeking quotations and DAC permission for the more urgent works set out in the Quinquennial Report.

During the year a number of projects were completed:

- 1) The external Noticeboards were finally installed.
- 2) The brick path through the Churchyard was re-laid.
- 3) The access ramp adjoining the Store Room was re-laid.

4) Pigeon guano was professionally cleared from the Tower viewing area as well as from the circular stairway located by the Choir vestry.

5) PAT tests and repairs to electrical fittings throughout the building have been undertaken, including the replacement of the earthing of the lightning conductor.

6) Gutters, downpipes and drainage channels have been cleared.

There has been excellent dialogue with the Friends of St Mary's and the PCC regarding the shared funding of work required in the QI report and, having obtained competitive quotes, Easthope Stained Glass Studios have been appointed to carry out work to various windows in the sum of £4460.

Our main contractor, Yew Tree Construction and Landscaping Ltd., will shortly be carrying out non-masonry work to the West Tower and some rainwater goods in the sum of £7750 plus VAT.

We are meeting our Contractor and Church Architect later this week to agree the specification of the masonry works required in the QI report. Before work commences it is necessary to obtain approval from the relevant Diocesan buildings committee (the DAC) and this can cause delays.

Frustratingly, the Church Wall continues to be hit by HGV lorries, but now that the Highways Dept. have confirmed that there is no likelihood of the road being downgraded from A to B in the short term, it is possible that the DAC and the TWBC Conservation team might consider some re-alignment of the wall to take it out of reach of the traffic, and this will be discussed with our Architect.

Finally, DAC approval for the proposed new Monitors in the Church has, at last, been given, but funding has not yet been finalised.

*Richard Hillier*

## **Flower arranging**

It will be two years this September, 2019, since we last held a Flower Festival, but we are all aware that it is Christ Church, Kilndown's "turn" so to speak, and they may well need to raise the funds.

The theme of the last Festival at St. Mary's was "Nature's Harvest" which has been taken up by all our arrangers, in the enthusiasm to use flowers, and greenery from our gardens and the hedgerows in decorating the Church during 2018, not only at the Church Festivals, but also during the year, and we are carrying that on this coming year, 2019.

Easter will be very late this April, thanks I understand to the moon, which means we will be unable to use a lot of our spring garden flowers and shrubs as they will be over, but I am sure we will have some beautiful Easter lilies to arrange and we welcome all donations.

The Christmas arrangements were outstanding, and, with judicious watering, lasted to the end of January.

Sadly, two or three faithful arrangers from our list have stepped back, and we are looking for younger supporters to come and help us. The two lists are in St. Mary's on, or near, the Bread Tomb, by the door to the Kitchen. Please feel free to come and help us (possibly with a friend?) and put your names down on the lists, or phone me on 01580 211610.

*Angela Pakenham-Walsh*

# WHO'S WHO IN CHURCH

## **The PCC**

*Overall responsibility for 'promoting the whole mission of the church' particularly for resources, vision and strategy. Meets every two months*

Elected members: Barney Mayhew, James Wickham, Catherine Lloyd, Kat Ogden, Richard Vinton

By role: David Lodge (Treasurer), Val Martin (Secretary)

Ex Officio: Revd Hugh Nelson (Vicar), Ali Williams (Church Warden), Simon Taurins (Church Warden)

As members of the Staff Team: Caroline Turvey, Becky Addis

## **The Leadership Team**

*Responsible for discerning the moves of the Holy Spirit in the life of the church and the local community and for strategic direction. Meets three times a year.*

Responsible Revd Hugh Nelson, (Vicar) Barney Mayhew (PCC chair), Ali Williams (Church Warden), Simon Taurins (Church Warden), Becky Addis (Church Administrator), Caroline Turvey (Lay Minister)

## **The Staff Team**

*Responsible for the day to day running of the church. Meets fortnightly and informally most days.*

Revd Hugh Nelson, Ali Williams, Becky Addis, Caroline Turvey

## **Areas of Ministry**

**Prayer Ministry:** Claire Cooke and Katie Taurins

**Connect Care:** Ali Williams, Angie Westmacott and Gill Wallis-Hoskins

**Connect Clothing:** Ali Williams

**Connect Community cupboard:** Ali Williams

**Small Groups:** Huthrie Copplestone

**Finance:** Dave Lodge with the Finance Team, delegated by the PCC, made up of Richard Vinton, Revd Hugh Nelson and Simon Taurins.

**Children and Young People:** Caroline Turvey, with big (and wonderful) teams for Sunday groups, Blend and Youth Group

**Cafe Toddlers:** Henrietta Mayhew, Sue Donkin, Mandy Allison, Victoria Dawes, Ursula Ellwood, Caroline Turvey, Bridget Stewart

**Property & Fabric:** Richard Hillier and Ali Williams with the Property & Fabric Team, made up of Don Sargeant, David Nichols and Mark Taylor.

**Alpha Coordinator:** Caroline Davis

**Fundraising:** Angela Pakenham-Walsh, Richard Vinton, James Wickham

**Deanery Representatives:** Kat Ogden, Ali Williams

**Worship & Music:** Wes Hinsley and the band and informal choir, Michael Tester and the choir