

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL MEETING OF PARISHIONERS and ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHURCH MEETING – Sunday 24th APRIL 2016

PRESENT: Some 74 people (67 members of the electoral roll + 5 Clergy + 2 visitor) attended one or both meetings. The Reverend Canon Mat Ineson (vicar) was in the Chair.

ANNUAL MEETING OF PARISHIONERS TO ELECT WARDENS

The Vicar welcomed those attending the meeting, which was open to everyone living in the Parish. The afternoon had started with worship; no further prayers were said.

Nominations – (see appendix1) Jo Morris had served 3 years as warden and was standing down. The Vicar thanked Jo for her support to him in the last 18 months while he was Vicar and also for all that she had done for St Mary's during the vacancy. Jo is going to train as a licensed lay minister at Trinity in September.

Tony Hughes had served two years and was eligible to stand again. He was nominated by Ann Thomas and seconded by Yvonne Penn.

Stephanie Wren was willing to stand as warden, nominated by Tony Hughes and seconded by Jo Morris.

There were no other nominations. Both were unanimously elected as church wardens with no abstentions.

ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHURCH MEETING

The Chairman Mat Ineson welcomed everyone to the meeting.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Gillian Baxter, David Mander, Judith and Keith Sheather, Allister Simpson, May Wong.

2. MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF 28th APRIL 2015

With one small amendment to remove Maurice Maple from the apologies, the minutes were approved with no objections and 1 abstentions and signed by the chairman.

Proposed Nick Powlesland

Seconded Pauline Pearson

3. MATTERS ARISING from the MINUTES

There were no matters arising

4. APPOINTMENTS and ELECTIONS

Appointments -

Independent Examiner– The meeting unanimously agreed that Messrs. Mazars be re-appointed as auditors with no abstentions.

Proposed Chris Smith

Seconded Caroline Owen

Two tellers and four assistants – were not appointed as no election counting was deemed necessary

Elections -

PCC (see appendix 1)

– Jason Parker and Helen Wake were standing down early. The Vicar thanked them for all their support on the PCC. This left 2 vacancies on the PCC and 2 people had been proposed. Both were elected with no abstentions and no objections.

Mike Stewart, proposed by Angie Coutts and seconded by Rachel Powlesland.

Beverley Richardson proposed by Lucy Swithinbank and seconded by Yvonne Penn.

Deanery Synod – Mike Stewart was standing down which left one vacancy.

Jo Morris was elected with no abstentions and no objections, proposed by Chris Thomas and seconded by Angela Williams

Welcomers, Deputy wardens, Sides people – See list of current positions – appendix 2.

The Vicar thanked those standing down and read the list of Sides people and Deputy Wardens who were changing. The meeting unanimously agreed the positions with no abstentions. It was also agreed that the wardens could choose further Deputy Wardens as necessary and there were no abstentions or objections to this proposal.

Electoral Roll Secretary

There being no other nominations, Jenny Baker was duly re- elected with no objections or abstentions.

Proposed Wendy Hughes

Seconded Jo Morris

5. FINANCIAL STATEMENT of the PCC PRESENTED BY THE HONORARY TREASURER

Caroline Owen presented her annual report as Treasurer, (see appendix 3 and accounts in the Annual report and finances already circulated).

The accounts were unanimously adopted with no abstentions.

Proposed Caroline Jowett-Ive

Seconded Jason Parker

6. ANNUAL REPORT OF THE PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL

The PCC secretary (Wendy Hughes) hoped that every-one had seen the annual report. She announced that the office had tried to send out the report by e mail before the meeting (with the agenda and minutes of the last meeting) to all parishioners on the electoral role to so that they could be viewed beforehand. She asked that those who had not received it electronically but had an e mail address, get in touch with Yvonne Penn in the office with their details as they were not only missing this report but other useful information about what is going on in St Mary's.

The secretary thanked every-one who has contributed to the report and was especially grateful to the office for their help in producing it.

Every year for the past 5 years she said she recommends that the document is read or browsed through and she was sure yet again that there would be something new that has happened in the church during the year that the parishioners would find interesting and not have previously known about.

Finally the secretary asked that if any-one had any comments about the report, preferably positive suggestions, Angie Coutts in the office or the secretary herself, would be pleased to hear them as they are looking at ways of improving it.

7. SAFEGUARDING

Lucy Swithinbank showed a power point presentation highlighting the issues seen in appendix 4. She emphasized that St Mary's PCC take safeguarding very seriously and also that safeguarding is every-one's responsibility.

8. FABRIC, GOODS AND ORNAMENTS

See report from Peter Robottom appendix 5

9. ELECTORAL ROLL REPORT ON CHANGES

The Electoral Roll Secretary, Jenny Baker, reported the following:

Number on Roll at APCM 2015	318
Number died during the year	8
Number moved away	10
Number of New Members	10
Total Number on Roll as at 24.4.2016	<u>310</u>

The Vicar thanked the Electoral Roll Secretary for her work.

10. BRISTOL WEST DEANERY SYNOD, REPORT ON PROCEEDINGS

Tony Hughes presented the report from the Deanery see appendix 6.

11. LOOKING AHEAD–The Rev. Mat Ineson –

For the Vicar's report see appendix 7.

12. AGREEMENT for STANDING COMMITTEE / LEADERSHIP TEAM

The meeting agreed with the Vicar's proposal to reshape the Leadership team and the Staff team as laid out in his report – appendix 8.

13. ANY OTHER BUSINESS.

Parishioners had been invited to leave questions in a box in the office leading up to the APCM.4 questions were addressed by the Vicar. See appendix 9.

Tony Hughes (warden) acknowledged the positive influence that the Vicar has had on St Mary's as a church and on individuals with his commitment and enthusiasm during the 18 months he has been at the church. Parishioners gathered round as the curate, James Harris lead a prayer for the Vicar.

14. PRAYER

The Vicar closed the meeting with prayer at 6.10pm.

Signed..... Date.....

Appendix 1

ST MARY MAGDALENE CHURCH, STOKE BISHOP ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHURCH MEETING 2016 NOMINATION LIST

Church wardens (maximum of 3 years)

Jo Morris has served for three years and will be standing down

Tony Hughes has served for one year and is willing to stand again for election.

	NAME	PROPOSED	SECONDED
1	Tony Hughes	Ann Thomas	Yvonne Penn
2	Stephanie Wren	Tony Hughes	Jo Morris

PCC 3 year post – maximum 6 years

There are **two places** Jason Parker and Helen Wake are standing down early

	NAME	PROPOSED	SECONDED
1	Mike Stewart	Angie Coutts	Rachel Powlesland
2	Beverley Richardson	Lucy Swithinbank	Yvonne Penn
3			
4			

Deanery Synod

There is **one place** on the Deanery synod as Mike Stewart is standing down

	NAME	PROPOSED	SECONDED
1	Jo Morris	Chris Thomas	Angela Williams
2			
3			

Appendix 2

LISTS OF SIDESMEN, DEPUTY WARDENS & WELCOMERS - 2015-2016

Sides people

LEFT	
Pat Grenfell	Sides person
Brian & Sonia Dunster	Sides people
JOINED	
Barry Agar	Sides person and Reader
Jon Bowen	Sides peron
Sarah Williams	Sides person

Barry Agar	Albert Pearson
Michael Apps	Pauline Pearson
Gillian Baxter	Felicity Pine
Gill Bowen	Judith Reynolds
Jon Bowen	Peter Robottom
Jan Caple	Jerry Sandford
Jim Currie	Jan Serjeant
Pamela Elderton	Peter Serjeant
Richard Elderton	Peter Simpson (Sabbatical)
Liz Floyd	Barbara Spedding
Christopher Harries	David Swithinbank
Eileen Jervis	Maureen Watkinson
Jackie Kitching	Barbie Whitby-Smith
Miles Kitching	Scott Whitby-Smith
Paul Lewis-Smith	Sarah Williams
Uca Lewis-Smith	Shirley Wotton
Margaret Maple	Martin Wren
Peter Miller	Stephanie Wren
June Miller	
Jane Newton	

Deputy Wardens

Michael Apps	Beverley Richardson
Jim Currie	Peter Robottom
Peter Miller	Lucy Swithinbank
Jane Newton	Maureen Watkinson
Albert Pearson	Stephanie Wren
Pauline Pearson	
Jason Parker	(Peter Simpson – on sabbatical)

Intercessors

We need a few more and to state which service they prefer.

Angela Cattell	Jo Morris
Graham Donald	Judith Sheather
Andy Gliddon	Keith Sheather
John/Julia Gwyther	Tim Smith
Sue Hook	Chris Thomas
Caroline Jowett-Ive	Hazel Trapnell
Andrew Judd	Tony Williams
Joan Kelsey	Stephanie Wren
Glenda Lindsay	

Sound and Vision

We always need more.

SOUND	VISION
Jim Currie	Gage Hands
Steve Fairbairn	Elliot Judd
John Gwyther	Ed Powlesland
Albert Pearson	Allister Simpson
Brian Richardson	Emily Smith
Paul Richardson	Tim Smith
Peter Robottom	
Andy Wilson	

Readers

We need more readers for the 10.30 service

Barry Agar	Albert Pearson
David Baker	Beverly Richardson
Jeremy Barwell	Judith Sheather
Michael Barwell	Keith Sheather
Gillian Baxter	Jason Smith
Gill Bowen	Carol Speedyman
Martin Bryan- Brown	David Speedyman
Jim Currie	Lucy Swithinbank
Anni Davey	Hazel Trapnell
Brian Dunster	Maureen Watkinson
Pamela Halford	Scott Whitby-Smith
Miles Kitching	Tony Williams
Paul Lewis-Smith	David Wotton
Glenda Lindsay	Martin Wren
Jo Morris	Stephanie Wren

Welcomers

Jan Caple	Paul Richardson
Lis Floyd	Pat Sherwood
Glenda Lindsay	Angela Williams
Eileen Jervis	

Church hosts

LEFT	
Sheila Adatia	Brian Hall
Mike and Patsy Barwell	Tryphy Morgan
Brian and Sonia Dunster	Margaret Newman
John Ellis	Betty Rowlands
JOINED	
Jennifer Burston	Gill Perks
Jan Caple	Barbara Spedding
Joan Clarke	

Michael Apps	Peter Miller
Ian Beattie	Margaret O'Higgins
Dorothy Blythe	Lawrence Payne
Helen Brady	Albert and Pauline Pearson
Chris Harries	Judith Sheather
Sue Harris	Keith Sheather
Graham and Janet Horne	David and Carol Speedyman
Uca Lewis-Smith	David Swithinbank
Ian Lyndsay	Maureen Watkinson
John Luckes	

Appendix 3 Treasurer's report - Financial report year ended 31/12/15 Caroline Owen

The financial element of the accounts is set out on pages 18 to 28 of the annual report.

Page 19 is the statement of financial activities, which sets out in financial terms what we have done in the year and page 20 is the balance sheet which shows the financial position on the 31st December 2015.

Income

Funds that are received by the church are split into two categories:

Unrestricted funds i.e. money that the PCC can decide how to spend and

Restricted money that can only be used for a particular purpose.

The income for the church has risen this year as more of our church family have committed themselves to monthly giving. This is increasingly done by a monthly standing order. The standing orders give a regular income that we depend on but I would add that they should be reviewed as there are a lot of monthly figures that have remained unchanged for several years.

The other sources of income have grown. The use of the church as a wedding venue has given a new source of income to make up for the loss of income in the church rooms when we lost the playgroup. The split of the rental income is roughly £7733 for the church and £10612 for the church rooms.

Expenditure

The expenditure for the year is set out in detail in note 6.

I would draw to your attention a few things:

The biggest cost is to the diocese. We committed £132,000 to the diocese. This money is used to support the work of the church across the whole diocese, supporting those parishes less fortunate than us. The PCC voted this sum gladly as it truly ties in with our mission strap line "Following Jesus and making him known"

If anyone has any specific questions about the money spent I would be happy to answer them if I can.

Net Income

The net income for the year was £33408. However most of this was in respect of bequests and donations which have been kept in the development fund for a future project, probably the development of the church rooms.

The increase in funds for the church was £239. In a business I would be a bit worried about this, particularly if £200 of it was then given away twinning the toilets; however as a church it is right where we should be. God has blessed us and provided us with enough.

The balance sheet shows us the funds we had on 31 December. In summary we own a house which has a current market value of £380K. We are owed some money, £16k which is the tax due on the final quarter of the year and we have cash in the bank of £96k. Most of the bank balance is money given as the development fund and the building fund and is therefore not free for us to spend. Available cash reserves are reviewed by the Finance committee and an amount is kept as working capital to ensure we are responsible with regard to our employees and creditors so that we can pay amounts as they fall due.

BUDGET

The budget for 2016 has been a challenge. We are going forward in faith with plans for developing every area of our church life. We know the costs and we are trusting that God will move people to support us. It is amazing how every year by October we seem to have a big deficit and people are moved to provide at our giving day.

I did a quick ask around this morning as to what people wanted to know about the accounts. Hopefully I have answered most things already. However the most frequent question was - **how much do we give away?**

If I am honest and this is a personal view, the answer is not enough if giving away is donating to other good causes. We have supported our mission partners by giving them £23,746. We also give to the diocese by our parish share. However everything we do fulfils our charitable purpose. Every penny we spend is for our work glorifying God and spreading his name. So the true answer is not the money we have paid to third parties but the £305k we have spent on being here.

It has been a really interesting year as treasurer and I have been well supported by Martin who does the banking and Scott who helps with the tax claim. The finance committee meet regularly to review the finances and prepare budgets. It was sad this year that David Norris after so many years as treasurer, has also retired from the finance committee. His wealth of knowledge about the church will be missed.

Appendix 4 Safeguarding Power point presentation APCM 2016 Lucy Swithinbank

As a Church we welcome everyone – With this openness comes responsibility

Whose responsibility?

- PCC
- Parish Safeguarding Officer
- All of us

Children are our future

We are thankful that

- Over 70 children attended Holiday Club
- We have a thriving weekly children's ministry
- With this busy Children's ministry comes responsibility

Your responsibilities

- Be aware
- Noticeboard
- Respect boundaries where children's groups are taking place - DON'T WANDER
- Express any concerns about children

Who do I express concerns to?

- PSO (complete confidentiality)
- PSO seeks advice (when necessary) of Diocesan Safeguarding Officer

Together we can make our Church a safe and welcoming environment for children

Appendix 5 Fabric, Goods and ornaments – Peter Robottom

Fabric, Goods and ornaments

While I have not sought to count our hymn books, prayer books or bibles, still less the cups, saucers and plates or cutlery, I am as sure as I can be that no-one has intentionally run off with our goods and ornaments. Certainly, we still have the silverware we should have and the 460 adult chairs we use for worship and public activities in the church and halls and we have intentionally gained a few additional tables and improved office furniture during the year.

Whether it has anything to do with what I said at last year's APCM, I think we had less by way of things, intentionally, accidentally or forgetfully being left in the church, but can I remind everyone that while donations in kind may be gratefully received they should not be left without agreeing with Angie or Yvonne that that they will be useful and valuable additions to our equipment. We have very limited storage space and it needs to be remembered that the Goodbody Room is a meeting room not a junk room, that the vestry is an office and not a store room, the church rooms offices likewise are for that purpose and not for storage of material that should have been taken away and the narthex and lobby are circulation spaces and escape routes which must not be cluttered and obstructed.

That is almost all of my gripes, though there is one request I will return to at the end after thanking those who help look after the church, but before then a few words on fabric, though I do not intend to repeat what is in the written report on pages 13-14.

Of the works mentioned as not complete, work is still continuing by volunteers to finish off the 3 new cycle stands because we have not been able to utilise the services of Andy McNab for some months as after he had recovered from his ankle injury he snapped a tendon in his shoulder and convalescence and physiotherapy is proving lengthy. I saw him in his role as a steward at the Cathedral twice this week and it may still be some time before he can resume work. He should be in our prayers for a speedy recovery.

We also need to locate someone who could remake the crosses on the lychgate, so my question is are there woodworkers in our midst who could undertake this work as otherwise the restoration of the lychgate has been completed?

The electrical work referred to has now been largely completed with renewed and additional emergency lights around the halls and additional sockets at the servery in church. Some replacement bulbs are still necessary in some of the external intruder lights and it is proving a longer job to replace some of the failed floor lights because the original fittings are no longer available but these matters should be completed soon.

We will shortly be installing a second handrail to assist those climbing onto the dais near the lectern – it will be a mirror image of the existing one by the James Chapel. We are very grateful for a donation that will cover a substantial portion of the cost. It would have been hoped that the work would already have been completed but it took longer than anticipated to get formal clearance from the Diocese but now Quentin Alder is chasing the contractor he identified to do the work.

Looking forward, as noted in the report we are considering how best to enhance the church rooms. Initial attention is being given to improving access for those with disabilities or for pushchairs and buggies, and to the acknowledged need for enlarged kitchen facilities and improved toilets, but to tackle these issues, it is almost certain that we will need a replacement accessible meeting room – ideally an additional one as well – and in the context of considering installation of a lift, we are currently checking whether the foundations of the lobby/office area are strong enough to enable us to build a first floor over that area which would also be accessible from the church. Until this is ascertained we cannot plan a phased programme of improvements.

It only remains to re-iterate my thanks to those who help arrange or undertake fabric works – Chris Thomas, Jason Parker and Graham Horn in particular and those who have been undertaking maintenance works, in particular Richard Elderton, Mike Chant and also Keith Sheather, who has done some de-cobwebbing, and those who maintain the church yard and care for the roses, David Swithinbank, Shan Stock and Ruth Marson. There are obviously also those who help clean the brassware and wash the linen but I trust they will have been thanked elsewhere. Last but by no means least I must commend our new church cleaner, Lucy Allen, who has greatly improved the cleanliness of the church and halls on an ongoing basis. She is a joy to have around and although we could probably not have made being a Christian an occupational requirement, her faith is very evident.

But I must now make my final request as it is related to keeping the church neat and tidy and therefore minimising the efforts needed by sidespersons, church hosts and others who tidy up, and freeing Lucy to do more deep cleaning. Could everyone, please, on leaving whether from a service or other activity seek to leave the church or halls as found or ready for the next use. For instance taking away church news and stacking hymn books and bibles neatly back in the book boxes – they were designed to take the blue hymn books and bibles singly side by side, spines outwards. That way they look neat and do not get knocked out. Similarly, down in the halls, the blue chairs stack 10 high on the window side but not in front of the radiator, nor so far pushed back between the stanchions that the curtains cannot be drawn. Again if breakages occur – and these things happen – no one is going to get shot, but please report them to the office so that items can be repaired or replaced. If we do not know, we cannot take action until someone else finds something missing or not working. I could go on about getting spills immediately mopped up whether from chairs or carpets, but I hope the message is clear. We ought to keep the church and halls in as least as good condition and as neat and tidy as our own homes as part of our witness to the love of Christ.

Appendix 6 Bristol West Deanery Synod Report 2015 (read by the warden Tony Hughes)

Bristol West Deanery Synod met three times in 2015: in January (at Westbury-on-Trym), May (at Almondsbury) and October (at Henbury).

Synod heard presentations on Bristol Networks and Churches Together (Roger Allen), the healing ministry (Lorraine Izzard), Basic Christian Communities' work with ex-offenders (Rachael Albans) and safeguarding (Leanne Smith).

Churches have also shared experiences from their evangelism initiatives, including a Deanery Alpha course run by Christ Church Clifton and St Peter's Henleaze.

We heard an inspiring report from nine members of churches in the Deanery who travelled to Uganda in July, visiting our link dioceses in Nebbi and Gulu. It is hoped to invite some Ugandan Christians to Bristol later this year.

In December, at a Deanery Forum, the Revd Steve Pierce spoke about Giving in Grace, a stewardship tool developed in the Diocese of Liverpool that is recommended to parishes. There is a need for giving to increase if current levels of ministry are to be maintained.

Two vacancies were filled during the year: Avonmouth and Lawrence Weston (the Revd Andy Murray) and All Saints Clifton (the Revd Charles Sutton). Shirehampton and Alveston are still in vacancy.

Bristol West was well represented in those elected to General Synod in October: Emma Ineson, Paul Langham and Mark Pilgrim were elected to the House of Clergy, and Ed Shaw and Ian Yemm to the House of Laity.

Brendan Biggs

Deanery Secretary

Appendix 7 Looking ahead – The Vicar

As I begin can I just express my thanks to all those who have contributed to this afternoon and an enormous thank you to each person who has contributed in any way, no matter how small to the life, ministry and work of St Mary's.

I don't know whether you have a favourite moment of 2015 at St Mary's. For me witnessing the full immersion baptism of 11 young people and a number of adults and the confirmation of 13 young people and some adults would high on my list. It is so good and so encouraging to see people committing public to Christian faith.

Overall 2015 was a good year, it was not without its challenges but held many joys too. And I think it is safe to say that we moved on as a church, and that is good. Evidence of us beginning to move on can be seen in the new sign outside, the new logo, new appointments of church manager and musical worship leader, and the agreement of a new strap line- 'Following Jesus and making Him known'.

On the face of it the addition of this strap line to our existing vision may look like window dressing. And to be honest if it remains as just a strap line then that is all it is, window dressing. We need to make it a reality. And the hard work of doing that has only just begun, it will take a few years to implement. If you take nothing else from the next few minutes just remember, following Jesus and making Him known.

Following Jesus and making Him known is beginning to have some traction in all our activities; some more clearly than others. As we continue to move forward we need to continually ask whether our activities as a church are in alignment with this stated purpose to follow Jesus and make Him known.

Let me outline a number of areas by way of example.

Firstly our Sunday worship. Our worship needs to increasingly become a place of nourishment for our walk with God, a place of wonder at the goodness of God, a place where we celebrate our following of Jesus in the week and a place where we can be equipped to follow Jesus in our whole lives.

We currently have 3 Sunday services. The evening service has I think found its identity and is beginning to grow in depth. Whilst the numbers are not huge at that service my sense is that those who are coming want to be there and are coming with a sense of expectation to meet with God. It is growing in numbers and I expect that to continue.

The 10.30 service seems to me to have settled more into its identity. The children's and youth groups are well received and enjoyed but I think it would be fair to say that our musical worship has struggled a little since Colin left. This is not a reflection on Joanna but is I think a reflection on an unhealthy over reliance we had on Colin.

We still have issues that need to resolve around how to encourage committed musicians and singers to serve at the 1030 service. It is getting better and we are very grateful to those who have stepped up in the past months and led us so well, but she and I would be pleased to hear what could be done differently in order to encourage more involvement from musicians. This is a challenge we face and a work in progress.

The 9am service continues to be faithfully attended and much appreciated. Exciting plans are coming together to re-launch the choir at this service. And if you are interested in joining a new choir, then do speak to Joanna about that and look out for more information in the coming weeks.

If I am honest I have some questions about Book of Common Prayer Morning Prayer and its place in St Mary's going forward. I would be keen to hear from regular 9am congregation who have opinions on both sides. It seems to me that the participation in this service is lower than the communion services and the Common worship Morning Prayer. If we are serious about our worship equipping and encouraging us in our lives following Jesus and making Him known, and crucially if we are to attract those who like our more liturgical worship which I value hugely, we need to consider whether BCP Morning Prayer has a regular place in our worship or whether it has had its day. Do let me know what you think.

That's all I want to say about Sunday worship, except to ask again whether for you, Sunday worship helps you to follow Jesus and make Him known.

Secondly, I wanted to speak about the challenge of mid-week discipleship groups - home groups. For many years there has been a commitment in this church to meet together mid-week in order to study the bible, share fellowship and pray for one another.

Whilst there are around 16 groups that meet across any one month there are a large number of church members who are not yet part of a mid-week group. I am convinced by evidence from around the world that meeting together with a smaller group of Christians is essential to help us grow in discipleship - following Jesus.

I want to encourage all regular church members to become part of a small group in order to help us grow in our following of Jesus.

However I am aware that for many that would mean making time rather than finding spare time. And that if we make time for these groups then they would need to scratch where we are itching. So in the coming weeks Jo Morris who leads our growing disciples work will be asking each of us to fill in a survey. Can I encourage all of us to do that so we can identify how we can best support and encourage one another in 'following Jesus and making Him known'.

The mid-week groups we end up with may or may not look like house groups now. For example it might be that 3 people meet together for an hour at lunchtime or in an evening or that families get together on a Sunday afternoon or that a team from the Crisis Centre meets together to pray and reflect about their ministry at the wild Goose, or something else.

If we as a church are to be serious about following Jesus in our everyday lives and making Him known then we will need to invest time together.

Thirdly a word about our youth and children's ministry. For 0-18s, we run 6 weekly activities for youth and children in addition to monthly mini church, monthly toddler worship, parenting courses, and all that is in addition to our Sunday groups at which we have around 40 children each week and the ever popular holiday club. Massive thank you to all who currently volunteer and lead in these crucial groups.

It is also good to know that, we have church members involved in leading nearly every local scout, cub, guide brownie and beaver group.

Excluding the uniformed organisations, through an average week we have contact with around 400 children and around 50 young people. The challenge facing us is to make sure that we are making Jesus known through those contacts.

We have the additional challenge of working out how to replace the role that Emma Dobson has done so well for us for the past 2 years. She worked alongside her husband John for the first of those years, they made a good team. I want to take this opportunity to publicly thank Emma and John for all they have done during their time here.

They have built on what has gone before and improved it. Their passion and focus for making disciples of Jesus that make disciples has begun to bear fruit. In many ways the young people's work has been demonstrating and leading change for us as a church. We will miss Emma's energy, enthusiasm, passion for Jesus, clear thinking and leadership. Please do pray for the work to grow and flourish going forward and for a new appointment.

The example of the youth work leads me on to my fourth challenge. Making Jesus known. As Rob George reminded us last week bringing people to faith in Jesus Christ cannot be only about bringing people into church and church events. The primary way we, the church, make Jesus known is through our witness, our action and our speaking. I'm convinced that the only way to really make a difference is for us each to live out our faith each day of each week in every area of our lives.

In effect making Jesus known is a consequence of following Jesus. Or in Emma Dobson speak - disciples make disciples. If we want to see new people come to faith in Jesus then we need to take seriously our call to follow Jesus. That is why I am so keen on mid-week groups. They are not only about helping us grow in faith and live better, they are also about our call to witness Jesus - to make him known.

In the coming year you will notice a number of events run by London Institute of Contemporary Christianity (LICC) happening at St Mary's and being advertised. The first of those is for preachers and is coming up soon. LICC's events and training are targeted at helping all of us to live better for Jesus on our front lines. And helping us as a church help one another. Which means wherever we are, at home or school or work or our clubs or societies or the gym or wherever.

Keep your eyes peeled for those events.

Fifthly, just a word about prayer. Prayer in all its forms is key to our growth as a church. In prayer we spend time with God, praise Him and bring the needs of the world and our church and parish before him. And prayer works. We need to celebrate that more through testimony.

I am so grateful to those who pray for this church individually and at the regular prayer meetings on Saturday and Tuesday mornings and at other times. God gives growth to us, so prayer is key.

So can I encourage us to try and each increase our prayerfulness in the coming weeks and months. There is the week of prayer coming on the run up to Pentecost. If you need help with your prayer life do speak to one of the ordained leaders here about it.

Penultimately, let me say offer a couple of observations. In 2015 we said a sad goodbye to a number of our regulars who have died and gone to glory. There are a number of our community approaching the end of their lives at this time. It is sad to say good bye and it can be hard to live with grief even though we have the certain hope of eternal life and can give so much thanks for their lives. In a congregation such as ours death is a sad fact of life. Giving thanks for them encourages me to work to build on all that they have given. As they join the saints cheering us on we need to continue to run the race knowing that one day we will be together again in the full presence of God.

My second observation is this. I am aware that many of those with children at home or recent empty nesters find it difficult to make time for church activity. One of our challenges is to engage all of us more fully in the mission of St Mary's to 'follow Jesus and make Him known. I want to encourage us each to look at our own time commitments and consider whether God is calling us to commit along with so many others to the life of the church. If we all did a bit it would receive the pressure on so many people and would enable the church to grow. If you want to talk more about this do speak to one of the staff team. Angie Coutts is heading this up for us and would be a good place to start.

And finally, I have said since I arrived that I thought we as a church should be giving more resource to the Diocese. I don't only mean money. The opportunity to do that is presenting itself at the moment. I'll say more to PCC in a couple of weeks' time but the Diocese have asked us to be the hub for a trial mission area.

Other local parishes who are not as well-resourced as us and about to be asked whether they would like to partner with us in mission where that is appropriate across this area.

Further information will follow but I'm excited that we as a church are being stretched to aid the growth of God's kingdom outside our parish - and hopeful that this will mean an increase in mission locally too.

In addition to this I have also been asked to be Area Dean of Bristol West which means having additional responsibility across the Deanery, giving around 1 day per week to the Deanery. The mission area and area dean fit well together and I've said yes to this, after consultation with the wardens.

Let me finish.

2015 was a good year - we began to move, our challenge for 2016 and beyond is to increase our capacity in prayer and action in order to keep that momentum increasing, so that we can achieve our goal of 'following Jesus and making Him known'. I look forward to working with you in this and believe God is equipping us to move and be fruitful. Let us pray.

Appendix 8 Questions placed in the box a week prior to the meeting.

- 1. The vicar was asked about the method used for serving bread and wine at communion and whether we should move to the model they use at the Cathedral where people line up to receive from a stationary priest and helpers.**

Staff team will consider this.

- 2. With the departure of the current youth and children's worker, Emma Dobson, from church leadership at St. Mary's, has there been a reflection by the leadership team about whether or how we might best support and submit to our ministry staff team so that they can fulfill the roles we have commissioned them for?**

That conversation has begun and will continue at PCC as we consider the role or roles moving forward.

- 3. Perhaps for the sake of those new to the church it could be explained what the various levels of leadership are, who is authorized to do what, who reports to whom, what number of people are needed on the PCC (for what reason), and so on.**

Good idea - we need to somehow include that in the new welcome pack. Just briefly for now, the vicar and PCC are together responsible for ministry and mission in the parish of St Mary's Stoke Bishop. Because our PCC is so large, we have delegated authority to the Leadership team for day to day oversight and to make decisions in certain areas between PCC meetings. The staff team reports to the vicar and PCC who hold them accountable to their roles usually through the line management set up for them. The licensed lay ministers and ordained ministers are held accountable to the Bishop through the ministry of the vicar.

The vicar is held accountable to the Bishop. One of the wardens' roles is to be the Bishops officers in doing this and to support the vicar.

The leadership team is currently the wardens and vicar and head of each of our main ministry areas, Growing disciples, Making disciples, Youth and Children, Pastoral care, Worship and teaching and resources. It also currently contains the Treasurer.

- 4. With the sound being so problematic at the 10:30 service, has there been any consideration put into moving the 9am service earlier or the 10:30 service later in order to enable more preparation?**

We will re-visit the timing of the services initially at staff team and then at PCC but I suspect it would be difficult to move either. We will consider it.