

Rector's Report

This has been another tremendously encouraging year in our life as a church. There is so much to praise God for: the successful launch of Cafe Church and Quiz Nights (thanks to the Baxters) – each of which is changing and growing us in different but very significant ways. Easter saw the launch of Prayer After Services, to complement our ongoing commitment to prayer as shown in the Prayer Chain, Prayer Walks, Revive Monday Meeting and Thursday Midday prayers. I am convinced this 'engine' of prayers empowers so much of what happens here.

Coffee morning continues to thrive and new residents have become regulars this year. We are on the verge of the baby weigh-in clinic becoming a reality! Open House remains an important monthly gathering for our older members, and likewise Friendship Club has had a much stronger year, with a number of newcomers. Our ministry at the local care home (Milton Court), led by Alise, is a wonderful blessing, and has seen a new singalong with Colin and Melvyn alongside our twice-monthly services. Our pastoral care and friendship bonds remain a bedrock of our life as a church, not least in the wonderful saints we've said goodbye to this year – Nancy and George. My thanks to Elizabeth, Ann B, Ann H and Alise in particular for the pastoral care they offer so freely, and to Keith, Alan, Birgitte, Melvyn, Joyce, Leslie, Lisa, Colin, Matt H and Philip for leading us in worship so capably this year. Thanks too to Susan for pioneering a significant new ministry looking at the issue of domestic abuse – watch this space for 2019.

A new home group has started in the evening at Melvyn's, alongside the existing one in the afternoon at the Rectory, and Review continues to provide a safe place for young mums. The men are now gathering for socials, thanks to which the women decided to as well! And we have finally joined the 21st century with a new Facebook page. My thanks to Alex, Melvyn, Adrian and Jo for stimulating these terrific new initiatives, and to Alise, Lianne and Trish for their continuing commitment to Review. Likewise to the unsung heroes like Christine serving faithfully week after week at coffee morning, to all the bakers, to our wonderful cleaning team, to Emily and Trish our school governors, to Lisa, Joyce and Carol for their investment in our young people, and to Ray, Roger, Brian, Keith H, Barry, Adrian, Leslie, Trish, Ann, Joyce and Mike for all the 'nuts and bolts' work that keeps us going. Thanks too to Sheila, Clare, Jonty, Joyce, Brian, Lianne & Alise for their wonderful creative gifts: who could forget our Remembrance Weekend?

There are many other things I could mention – and it is always risky to name certain things for fear that other important things are missed; big apologies if I have! – but what we are seeing is the church taking its place at the heart of the community again. We can see that in so many ways:

- More visitors on Sunday, alongside the many who join us for coffee, quizzes and Canzonetta Concerts
- More requests from the community to use our wonderful building
- Opportunities to be involved in the 'big-picture' discussions about the future of our community life
- The new school about to open in September 2019
- The wonderful financial support we have received for the Chancel Roof, and (hopefully) for the Garden of Rest – my thanks to our very own Peter, as well as David Hopkins, Alan Kemp, Edel Langan and Paul van Geete for their very generous support

I've only got a page, but I what I can sense is that as a church we are:

- *Energised* – you can feel it whenever we meet
- *Expanding* – into the community and also in faith and prayer
- *Expectant* – that God will continue to do even more among us
- *Empowered* – it might be said in years gone by that we were a bit reticent, unsure of ourselves. It feels to me that we've now found our voice, there is a new confidence and vitality.

So I write with much excitement (another 'e'!), looking forward to all that God will do among us this year. However, I can't finish without giving all the thanks and glory to God. Our confidence, our empowerment and expectation are found only in Him. We are first and foremost a worshipping community – if that stays right, everything else will follow. I am so grateful to be walking this journey with each one of you! My love, blessings and continued prayers to you all.

Matt, March 2019

Church Wardens' Report

It has been a good year for the Church. The Chancel roof is under way and almost fully funded by Milton Keynes council. We have had roof alarms fitted and WIFI in the Church. Sadly we have lost faithful friends but also gained new faces in the congregation.

The Churchyard is slowly getting under control with help from Hope MK and our once-a-month clear up morning sessions. Many thanks to all who turn up to help out, whether to mow or trim back.

We look forward to an interesting year ahead, with the school moving to Eagles Rest, and the proposed new Garden of Rest in the autumn.

It has been wonderful to see so many visiting the Church over Armistice weekend and regular quiz nights.

Ray Holmwood & Roger Hancock

Mission

As I continue to be the Steward for Mission for St. Mary's I am humbled by the amount of missionary work that members of our congregation undertake on behalf of our Church. We are very much a family and give our support to each other in very many ways. This strength of working together will become more important as the houses at the bottom of the village are built and our parish becomes even larger. We will need to embrace this new community into our Church with love, while also beginning to look at different ways to worship as a Church. Communication will be vital to success and we need to consider how we can inform all the people in our parish, both in the existing developments and the new, of what God's Church offers to them. Continuing to be a missionary church will be an essential element of our successful growth in our community

I would like to thank Joyce very much for keeping the Mission Board up to date in church. It is full of pictures and stories of the mission work that is happening in our church and takes her a great deal of time to complete.

I continue to be our Church's representative on the Walton Churches Partnership and have regularly attended their meetings. We are all members of the Partnership and meeting together and supporting each other in their wider community work is a very important.

The coming year will present enormous opportunities for us to go out and grow our Church and meet many new and exciting parishioners. As our new school gradually grows in size it will without doubt present many opportunities for mission amongst the young families connected with it.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all of you for giving me such a warm welcome when I came to St. Mary's. It will be four years next month that I moved to Wavendon Gate and I have been so lucky to meet people who have surrounded me with their love and enabled Sooty and I to build a home full of warmth. Thank you.

Ann Beaton

Discipleship

Here we are at another AGM, and I am left wondering how the last 12 months disappeared so quickly! I have been Discipleship Steward for four years now, and have been privileged to be a part of a very solid and committed group of people.

From the start, I decided that the noticeboards, inside the church, were a valuable facility for expressing our faith. I aimed then, as I do now, to keep them looking fresh and colourful as well as informative in order to catch the eye. The large one next to the refreshments table is commonly called the Discipleship board, and focuses on whatever the current sermon series happens to be. Week by week it illustrates a particular scriptural text, and my hope is that it helps in bringing some truth or other into sharper focus.

In August/September, I invited the congregation to consider their favourite Bible verse, and why it was important to them. With Post-it notes provided, they were invited to write down their favourite and display it on the board as part of something we could all share.

Starting over three years ago now, the Testimony Slot, on the fourth Sunday of every month, has continued to bring forth many wonderful stories of how God is working in our lives. Giving the congregation an opportunity to testify, in the moment, whatever they long to share with others, is both an encouragement and a blessing to us all, and helps to bond us to each other all the more. The facility of a 'roving' mike being brought to participants in their seats is also an advantage, especially to the less mobile, or those seeking courage to express their story.

In December 2018, at one of our WCP meetings, Ann Beaton (Mission Steward) and I volunteered to put together a Prayer Booklet which all of our Partnership Churches could use, in marking the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity (Jan 2019). With the help of resources from the Barnabas Fund, we used our different skills and strengths to create a tool that many, we hope, found useful.

In furthering my Discipleship role, I consider my involvement in Children's Church to be very important in helping the much younger generation to get started on their own Christian path. Though we are a small group, it is a joy to see each child progressing over time, and understanding more and more about our faith.

Being a Steward is a responsible position, and it is fundamental that each of us continues to develop and deepen our own Christian understanding. For myself, I enjoy being part of a regular Home Study Group held at the Rectory, and also attend meetings and workshops wherever I can, joining with other Christians from other churches.

Joyce Fennell

Children & Youth

Joyce and I enjoy running fortnightly sessions on a Sunday morning. As well as our regular three children, we now have two more younger children who have joined us so our age ranges from 4 to 10. One child is accompanied with their parent for now. We have also been blessed with help from Alise, Gemma and Lianne on occasions when one of us has been unwell. We are also grateful for Alise, who has been providing a themed activity during Café Church, which has been well received by the children.

We are finding there is a wealth of material to use from Scripture Union and the children engage enthusiastically with whatever we have prepared for them. I know we've said it before but it really is a great privilege to witness their growing knowledge of Jesus and stories from the Bible. We're also grateful to the parents who support the activities we do on a Sunday morning, at home.

Christmas saw our fourth year of running a Nativity from Scratch style format with the added 'craft' activity which seem to go down well with members of the congregation. Our theme this year was from the king's point of view. We were very grateful for Alise, whose inspiration in the early hours one morning, prompted a wonderful script. We were blessed with the presence of Melyvn, who played a 'lost' king in Wavendon searching for a baby called Jesus. We are incredibly grateful to Sheila for accompanying the congregation on the piano. God provided a packed church – we actually ran out of chairs this year! We like that kind of problem! The feedback has been very positive, with a friend commenting on it just recently. Our thanks also for Christine who supports the running of the service; organising the children to bring forward the crib characters, so that the Nativity scene can be built up in front of the congregation. In addition, to supplying many pieces of material for costumes which members of the congregation can use to feel part of the service.

WCP Youth work – Rock Solid

Youth from across our churches within the Walton Partnership attend Rock Solid on a fortnightly basis. The sessions are led by Matt Trendall, Carol Robinson, Dan Jenkins (CtK) and myself. Last September saw the beginning of our fifth year.

The dynamics of the group can change dramatically from one session to the next, however our numbers have dropped off significantly, leaving us with a core of about 3-5 young people. The ages range from 10-13, however, when the older youth are present our age range rises to include 15 year olds. We are continuing to use resources from Youth for Christ which provide a good range of games and discussion points. We share much laughter and joy with our young people, as well as meaningful chats.

Home Group at CtK

Our older youth, from across our partnership, are greatly supported by members of CtK's congregation who help to run a monthly homegroup. They meet at Steve and Jenny Potter's house or Matt & Alise's. Ope and Taiwo lead the Bible study session. This year our young people have led a joint service at St Mary's in July and then at CtK on 23rd December, which highlighted what a talented bunch they are; from singing and providing live music for all of the worship songs to leading prayers, readings and preaching. We are grateful to all the adults who are nurturing our young people's journey with Christ.

Please continue to pray for all our young people within our partnership, that they may build on what they learn in these sessions and begin to share their love of Jesus with others.

Lisa Rowe

Pastoral

St Mary's continues to be a community which seeks to care for those in need, especially our members. This year, we said goodbye to two very special people – Nancy Pumfrey and George Whitaker – our sadness mixed with the assurance that their journey is done and they are now with our dear Lord Jesus.

'Open Door' – our Thursday morning coffee morning – continues to thrive and attract new guests. It remains a bedrock of our community life: a massive thank you to everyone who gives their time to help, and especially the church members who bake delicious cakes.

In addition, this year we have been thrilled to see the successful launch of our monthly Quiz Nights, which regular attract 50+ visitors, many from outside the church. Huge thanks to Colin and Pam for leading this great initiative.

Alise also continues to take a group into Milton Court once a month to lead a service there. Thanks to all the team, but especially Ray, Tanja and Cali from St Mary's who assist in this important ministry. This year we have also begun a singalong led by Melvyn, Alise and Colin. This has made a great start and the care home is a very important part of our ministry as a church.

St Mary's now has two weekly or fortnightly home groups – one hosted in the evening by Melvyn, and the other in the afternoon at the Rectory. These provide a wonderful opportunity both for growth in faith and pastoral support.

A final word: we continue to need a Pastoral Steward, and the lack of this role is becoming increasingly important. Many of our members are wonderfully well cared for, but we do lack capacity to offer additional support and friendship to as many people as we would like. If, reading this, you felt you might be able to offer some help pastorally, please do talk to me, I would – both professionally and personally – be very grateful!

Matt

Building and Maintenance

As ever maintenance is ongoing, minor repairs as needed. These included painting the porch and other areas. The cracks that are appearing on the East End 'Chancel' Walls are being observed and monitored. At the moment these appear to be superficial.

We hope that the 'smells' that visited us in the church are a thing of the past, thanks to Keith Howkins' detective work in tracing the absence of an 'airtight' seal when the tower was refurbished, and his skills in creating a customised part to fix it. Keith's skills were also used when he fitted a safety rail to the ringing loft.

The church boiler has become too old and inefficient; hence a replacement is needed to comply with new regulations. We are currently preparing specifications ready to replace this year.

Brian Norwood

Communications

2018/19 brought many exciting opportunities to make our presence known locally and to invite people into our community at St Mary's. The Peace Exhibition was a major highlight, and the monthly St Mary's Quiz Night is now a firmly-embedded regular event, looked forward to by many in the church and neighbourhood. This year saw new neighbours move into 'The Gables' development along Lower End Road, and the local Parish Council invited St Mary's to contribute an article to the welcome booklet for new residents - a valuable introduction for St Mary's, as the hub of the existing community and a significant link for families once the school relocates to Eagle Farm.

Alongside the road-sign which flags up our '13th-century church' to traffic along the Newport Road, any mentions in local media (print or digital) are important in making our church visible - so do pass on your suggestions for any opportunity to raise our profile. As the neighbourhood evolves and we strive to serve its needs, strong communications will be vital; if anyone would like to join the team, there's lots to do:

We advertise our services, social groups, and special events in local newsletters including Wafas and Wallas (thanks to the Parish Council for our standing invitation) and Walton Matters (a small charge is made by Walton Community Council). Thanks go this year to Roundabout Here editor Maria for fitting in details of our Christmas 2018 services. Do check these publications for other local news, groups, outings, etc.

Some promising developments in our internal conversations and news gathering:

- January 2019 saw the start of St Mary's Church Wavendon Village Facebook Group. This closed group (administered by Alex Dickens) joins the Walton Churches Partnership Group as a way to share invitations, news and feedback on events in St Mary's and other Walton Churches; you can also find/post songs, bible passages and other snippets to help inspire and encourage us all in fellowship. Thanks to Alex for this; please ask if you can't find us!
- Ruth Maxey of Church Without Walls (CWW) is using WhatsApp to keep in touch and encourage conversation about ideas raised in Lent teaching - something that's especially useful for those who don't find it easy to attend a group in person; we hope this might prove helpful for more of us in supporting one another in our walk together as Christians, offering an alternative to our traditional Lent groups and other opportunities for fellowship. Please ask if you missed the sign-up for this and would like to be involved in future.

More traditional ways of staying in touch are still available, however . . . !

- Our notice boards in the porch display news of events and services outside the church as well as posters for our own activities; inside, keep up with Joyce's rich displays supporting current teaching topics and those with news of St Mary's outreach in mission.
- Copies of our monthly Diary/Notice Sheet are available in church (and in digital form by email), and handbills for individual events produced by Matt and Alise are usually available too - so please use these to pass on news and invitations of possible interest to others.

- It's probably easiest if you sign up to receive email; updates and reminders arrive at least weekly to echo the notices delivered at St Mary's Sunday service.
- News of additional activities and last-minute reminders are emailed too, so if you don't use email, please let us know how else to reach you, whether by phone call or text, or by making sure that someone else will pass on messages. We don't want to leave anyone out, so please let us know of any changes in your contact details so we can keep our contact list up to date. (We are compliant with GDPR!)

St Mary's Church website is regularly updated (bookmark stmaryswavendon.co.uk - or search for 'wcpmk' and follow the links); and do try to visit the Milton Keynes Mission Partnership site, where you can usually find John Robertson's latest email from this MK-wide church network, as well as a list of events coming up in all the city's churches.

But you can't beat a chat over a cuppa - which we can all enjoy after Sunday service; or try to join us on Thursdays at Coffee Morning, when you can catch up on local news or talk something through with Peter and other locals and church members. If you're housebound or otherwise unable to get to such meetings, do make sure that you let me know how we can best help you to pass on your thoughts or stay in touch. Whether you're new or not, if you have any questions at all, I'll do my best to put you in touch with the right people!

Thank you to Alise and Matt, Colin, Alex, Ruth Maxey, Ann Harris, Peter Laws and Lynn Atkinson for feeding through information and producing handouts/posters for events at St Mary's and across the Walton Churches Partnership (WCP). Thanks to anyone who spotted errors and inconsistencies in our notices - and for your tolerance of these! And special thanks to Joyce for supervising our seasonal wall-banners - bright and welcoming signals carrying the church's message, showing that our community is open and active.

Patricia Rosewell

Membership & Electoral Roll

St Mary's currently has 69 full members and 24 associate members. (Associate members tend to be partners of members and/or their children.) This compares with equivalent figures in 2018 of 67 and 31 respectively.

Membership by church affiliation is as follows:

Anglican	51
Methodist	12
Baptist	1
Roman Catholic	1
Salvationist	1
Orthodox	1
<i>Non-Anglican</i>	<i>16</i>
Not stated	2
Total	69

We now calculate Electoral Roll Membership differently – counting all Anglicans, no URC/Baptists/Methodists (to avoid double counting) and ¼ of 'Others' – this means that Electoral Roll membership currently totals 52.

Matt

Deanery Synod, Mission Partnership and Walton Churches Partnership report

Our relationships with the churches in our team, and the wider community of churches in MK, continues to be very important to us – indeed it becomes ever more important. Some brief highlights of the last year:

Walton Churches Partnership

There is much to give thanks for around the Partnership. Church Without Walls continues to flourish in Broughton and there is a growing sense of connectedness with the rest of our Partnership. All Saints remains on a similar course as St Mary's in terms of reaching out to the local community, albeit this has taken different (but equally exciting) forms – in particular Go4th Sunday. Christ the King has just appointed a new Baptist Minister who will be joining us in the summer – it has been a long vacancy, but the congregation has coped admirably.

Many significant initiatives continue to thrive through our determination to work together for the good of the Kingdom. Prayer remains an important focus, including Daily Prayer, Thy Kingdom Come, the Week Of Guided Prayer and a devotional booklet for the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity. We share significant events together, such as Ash Wednesday and also have fun together, with our very popular BBQ in July. Youth work is organised across the Partnership, with Rock Solid (for 9-14s) and the new youth group (for 13+).

The events surrounding Remembrance 2018 were a particular highlight this year, and the exhibition in particular will live long in the memory!

Organisationally, the revamped WCP Council continues to work well. My thanks also to Rachael Jenkins for her huge contribution as Safeguarding Officer, and to our Treasurer Julia Davie, who leaves for pastures new in June.

Mission Partnership and wider MK Christian Community

There remains much to praise God for, as we seek for our city to become 'A City Alive to God'. The termly Mission Partnership Assemblies continue to provide an inspiring environment for Christians to meet and seek God's heart for the city. The Winter Night Shelter has doubled its capacity, with local churches now offering two locations every night for a longer period. 'The Call' Prayer meeting continues termly and unites Christians in prayer across MK. The coMPass courses continue to challenge and bless us, and I want to give particular thanks to Carolyn Sanderson who has led this important ministry, and also to Rev. Keith who has recently led (for the second time) a coMPass course on the relationship between science and faith.

MK Deanery

The major preoccupation for the Deanery last year (and this) is the Diocese's stated commitment to investing in MK, a major initiative which is called 'Celebrate and Bless'. A summary of this is appended to the ACM documents. There are two major priorities – church planting (and the people required to do this) and a learning hub to stimulate discipleship and training. We are very much involved in both, with Ruth and Keith sharing their expertise. We are particularly excited that our Partnership may be among the first to trial some AI learning, thanks to Keith's input. We may also benefit in time to come from further investment in staff.... watch this space!

Matt

Appendix: The Stewards' Council

Throughout 2018-19 the St Mary's Church Council has continued to function through a committee of **Stewards** acting as representatives of the congregation with decision-making powers and responsibilities. The stewards have each take responsibility for an area of Church life and have met regularly through the year – 8 times in the 2018 calendar year. These areas have included mission, discipleship, communications, children & young people and building & maintenance.

Membership and Structure of the Church Stewards' Council

As an ecumenical body, the Church Council operates as an effective amalgamation of both Free Church and Anglican governance. We have Churchwardens (an Anglican role), however the Council appoints Stewards annually (a Free Church method) electing stewards via the Annual Church Meeting. The Rector is ex officio Chair of the Council.

During the year the following served as members of the Church Council:

Chair: Matt Trendall (Rector)

Church Wardens: Ray Holmwood & Roger Hancock

Treasurer: Mike Anderson

Mission Steward & Minutes Secretary: Ann Beaton

Discipleship Steward: Joyce Fennell

Communication Steward: Trish Rosewell

Buildings & Maintenance Steward: Brian Norwood

Children and Young People Steward: Lisa Rowe

Pastoral Care Steward: *Unfilled*

Community Life Steward: *Unfilled*

The following roles were also appointed at the Annual Church Meeting in 2018:

Walton Churches Partnership Representatives: Ann Beaton, Joyce Fennell

Deanery Synod Representative: Anthony Tull (elected until 2020)

Mission Partnership Assembly Representatives: Lisa Rowe, Ann Beaton

Safeguarding Officer: Rachael Jenkins (for the whole WCP)

Responsible Adult (previously Children's Advocate): Ann Beaton