

Our Rector, Rachel, writes.....

Looking back over 2018, how have we continued to build upon our Lord's vision for St Peter's?

### **Belong**

Our regular groups on a Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday mornings each continue to be well attended and appreciated. Some of our regular attenders have spread the word and invited/brought others along with them. This kind of invitational approach is one that we might become increasingly proactive and involved in as a whole congregation. These groups seem to have a steady flow of new people coming along and we have not needed to advertise these group to attract others! Praise the Lord for the work He is doing among each of these weekly groups.

### **Believe**

2018 saw the launch of our first 'Start!' group, providing an engaging opportunity to explore the Christian faith and to think about our life journeys. The fruit of this group was evident through the relationships that were built and also that one member went on to be baptised and two others were Confirmed – thank the Lord for those whom He has called and chosen and who have responded to His love!

TNG (our older children's group) began the Youth Emmaus course which helped to prepare one of our group members for Confirmation.

### **Grow**

In addition to the Start! group and also a continuing and steady house group, other discipleship groups were available during Lent and Advent, providing valuable opportunities to get to know one another better in fellowship, to learn more about our faith (e.g. the Spiritual Disciplines) and to spend time in the presence of our Lord in order to be open to the transforming work of the Holy Spirit.

A quiet day and a quiet morning were hosted and enjoyed by those who came along for some special, quality time together with the Lord.

Our Monday evening Night Prayer Service continues to attract a faithful number of our church family, committed to praying for our parish and the world.

May we see an increase among our fellowship in personal commitment to growing in faith so that this is not seen as an 'optional extra' for the few, but for us all!

### **Reach**

Another cause for celebration was the launch of our bereavement support group in February. The feedback we have received from this has been very humbling and has spurred us on to continue this ministry as long as it continues to be sustainable and meets the needs of those in need. Many of those who have come to the group are not regular church members. Even more encouraging is that some of these members have come along to Coffee or Knit and Chat and also one of the Start! groups. Bless the Lord for these wonderful opportunities!

### **What has been NEW in 2018?**

- An Easter service for Alfred Street School (who are keen to return again in 2019!)
- Members of our Knit, Craft and Chat group have begun to teach knitting in Alfred St School.
- The announcement at Advent that we will be getting a curate in 2019.
- Our Nativity Festival happened under one roof this year so visitors could enjoy entertainment, stalls, refreshments and displays in once place for easier access and socialising.

- A 'Messy' style all-age Christmas service.
- Carol Singing at Rushden Lakes where we were joined by a good number of folks from across the churches in Rushden.
- St Peter's hosted a Rushden and Diamonds Football Club carol service.
- Joint churches Growing Leaders Course.
- There has been some increase in the number of church members joining one of our regular giving schemes; however, general giving continues to remain a challenge as we struggle to meet our financial outgoings.
- There has been an increase in the number of church members attending the annual Bishop's Bible Day

*'Thus says the Lord.....I am about to do a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it?'*  
(Isaiah 43)

In addition to the above, it is essential for our growth (personally and jointly) and for the growth of the Kingdom of God, that we are ready to recognise and join in with the 'new thing' that the Lord is doing among us – particularly in our personal lives. This doesn't happen by accident! We each need to be open to hearing the Lord's voice and promptings. If we put ourselves in that regular place of listening (through prayer, bible reading and regular worship) then we shall be best placed to hear the Lord's voice above the clamour of our busy lives and world.

### **What new things may we expect in 2019?**

- 'Moving On', some sessions following the Start! group material.
- Exploring further small group learning opportunities to grow in faith.
- Further links developing with schools in our parish, Imperial Court and The Lakes.
- Working alongside our Curate, Jordan and his wife-to-be, Emily.
- .....

The Lord is always in the business of a doing a new thing and the challenge is for us to try and keep up! We need to be watchful and to recognise the new things the Lord is doing and to respond lovingly and faithfully and in joyful hope.

*'Do not remember the former things, or consider the things of old. I am about to do a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it?'* (Isaiah 43)

**Lord, give us eyes to see the new things you are doing among us, steadfast wills to follow and obey you and hearts that are ready to be moulded and shaped by you, for your glory and kingdom. Amen!**

## **PCC Report – Ken Woodhall**

The PCC held 7 meetings during the year, average attendance was 87%. The PCC also has a number of task groups and committees set up to manage specific tasks and who are responsible to the PCC.

Topics covered by the PCC this year have included the re-surfacing of the driveway to Midland Road, new notice boards, reviewing the Safeguarding Policy and practices, establishing a Legacy Policy, reviewing and agreeing the format for the celebration of Christian Festivals and special events throughout the year.

The PCC endeavours to operate in an open and transparent manner, with minutes of the meetings posted on the notice board at the main door within two weeks of each meeting.

## **Fabric Report 2018**

The Church buildings, fabrics, ornaments and grounds are generally in a good condition. There will always be items of repair and maintenance needed, and we are very grateful for all the voluntary help given so willingly by so many when matters arise. Some works from the last Quinquennial Inspection remain under consideration for action.

## **Higham Deanery Synod report**

There have been 3 meetings since the 2018 APCM

**Tuesday 12<sup>th</sup> June: All Hallows, Hargrave:** Rachael Newman from Spurgeons spoke about the Christian charity's "Together for Families" project which supports churches in their work with children under 5. An update was also given on the Deanery Mission Plan.

**Wednesday 17<sup>th</sup> October: St Peter's Church, Rushden:** Helen Allan, Operations Manager at East Northants Community Services described the various projects run by ENCS; including the Community Repair Scheme, the Night Shelter, Recovery House, the Cornerfield Café and the Food Bank.

**Thursday 14<sup>th</sup> February: St Mary's Church Rushden.** The focus was on Christians in the workplace with 2 church members from Rushden, who are also a senior manager of CAMRA (Ken Owst) and the founder of the Christian Ambulance Network (Simon King).

The Deanery's 6 directly elected places on **Peterborough Diocesan Synod** were filled during 2018; with 3 clergy members (Jon Aldwinkle, Steve Prior and Richard Stainer) and 3 lay people (Chris Butts, Dave Shuttle and Tony Smith). Andrew Presland is also on as a General Synod member.

Report submitted by Lin Reynolds and Barbara Clark

## **Safeguarding report for St Peter's Rushden APCM 2019**

Safeguarding of children, young people and vulnerable adults is an important aspect of church life, based on biblical principles as Archbishop Justin Welby states in the forward of the new Church of England Policy and procedure guidance for Anglican churches. Churches are places of trust and open to all, and yet we must be alert to anyone who might harm others in some way. As such, it is everyone's responsibility to be aware and respond to someone's cry for help.

The PCC is working towards fully complying with these standards and ensuring that all those who have a role in church life are working in accordance with these Safeguarding policies and procedures. We have completed this year's Safeguarding Audit for the Diocese which includes confirming that we are DBS checking those in responsible positions, and encouraging them to take appropriate training. One of the aspects which we need to address is to appoint a deputy to organise DBS checks when I am unable to do them. There are what some might regard as more general aspects of church life such as health and safety and risk assessments, but these too are covered in the standards and we must make sure we keep these up-to-date when working with children and young people and vulnerable adults. All these aspects form part of our action plan as a consequence of the audit for this year. The Diocese also provides access to the Church of England online training as an additional resource to the face to face training already offered, and some of this is available to anyone who wishes to take up that opportunity.

I act as Parish Safeguarding Officer and am happy to answer anyone's questions on this important issue.

Jim Reynolds

Parish Safeguarding Officer

## **Coffee and Chat report for APCM April 2019**

Coffee and chat meets on Tuesday mornings from 10-12noon in the community room, in the summer we also use the garden.

We are an informal group, people are encouraged to come as and when they want to and to stay for as long or as short a time as they like.

We welcome all ages and enjoy a time to chat and share. We regularly see between 16 and 25 people at our meetings. Some good friendships have been made; newcomers are always warmly welcomed; people have been supported and helped and members are meeting each other outside of the Tuesday meetings. We share information about our church meetings and events and offer support and prayer for members if required. Some of our group members have joined other groups and attended services and other events, the Christmas services have been particularly popular.

We hope to continue to grow both in numbers and fellowship. There is an open invitation to all.

Jean Bowerman

### **Coffee Morning – Elizabeth Ingram**

The monthly coffee mornings are well supported by the community and proves to be a friendly environment, raising £3,000 annually for the church.

Any help on Friday's (setting up) and on Saturday would be warmly welcomed, do approach any member of the team too if you have any items in good saleable condition.

### **CHURCH FLOWERS – Sandy Iliffe**

The ladies who arrange the flowers meet on Friday mornings from 9am until around 11am. About half time we usually have a hot drink, chat and prayer. There are no flowers in church during Lent or Advent. Doreen Denny and Yvonne Gilby have been coming faithfully for many years, and we have some new members too - Margaret De Monte and Lyn Phal who are being taught by Sandy. Barbara Clark is in charge of the money and ordering the flowers and Sandy Iliffe the person who guides the flower arrangers. We try to make the flowers last as long as possible, moving them to different locations in church and refreshing them with clean water, trimmed stems and a new arrangement when they have been in church more than 2 weeks. Jacqui Johnson will be re-joining us after Easter. It is hoped that some younger people will come along some Fridays during the school holidays and have a go. If anyone is keen to learn please speak to Sandy.

### **Gardening Crew – Sue Bibby**

Willing hands are always welcome to assist with keeping the garden tidy.

Feel free to turn up anytime, just let the churchwardens know but you will need to bring your own tools.

**Tuesday afternoon housegroup** meets on the first and third Tuesday of the month. We meet at 22 Paddocks Road, Rushden which is the home of Sandy Iliffe who leads the group. It starts 1.30pm with hot drinks and chat, then bible study, and aims to finish by 3pm. At the moment there are nine people in the group and we study various passages of the bible, hoping to discover what God is teaching us through them, and realise more of his love for us. We have room for two more people, as long as everyone squashes up a bit! On the last Tuesday of the month some of us go to Imperial Court, at 2pm, to support those leading the short church service there and offer friendship to the residents.

Sandy Iliffe

### **St Peter's Knit, Craft and Chat – Jean Bowerman**

St Peter's Knit, Craft and Chat group continues to grow in new members and supports KasCare in Africa, Kettering neonatal unit, Babybasics Northampton and Knit for Peace, by knitting a huge variety of items. The group provided knitted fruit and veg for the Harvest Festival service and contributed to the St Peter's Nativity Festival by knitting outfits for life-size Mary, Joseph and Jesus; again, little angels for the Tots & Tiddler Carol service were knitted so that each child could take home a reminder of the occasion. The group have also crafted nursery rhyme toys for the Tots and Tiddlers to help with their singing activity. We are very grateful for the abundance of wool donated which enables us to continue on a low budget. In January we started a knitting club in Alfred Street School on Friday lunch times, and 5 of our members voluntarily help with this, which is proving successful and well attended. We are grateful to those who, despite being unable to come along to the Wednesday morning sessions, continue to knit items for the charities we support. The group is welcoming and pastorally supportive, and there is always plenty of laughter and chatter each week.

### **Men's Events – Andrew Hawkins**

In 2018 activities included Scalextric and a Jamaican food event. Both were well attended and enjoyed. Phil was an amazing help with the cooking and it was great that so many guys helped to tidy up at the end of the evening.

Look out for events in 2019 and invite your friends, neighbours and work colleagues!

### **Mission Action Group - Joan Botterill.**

As a church family we have continued to support Derek and Jane Waller working, with the Church Mission Society, in the Diocese of Toliara, Madagascar. We support them with interest, prayer and financial giving. The project for Lent 2019 is to improve the living conditions of those who live in the Cathedral Compound in Toliara.

During Lent 2018 we twinned our toilets, in the Church and the Hall, with toilets in Burundi.

During the year we have also supported the work of TEAR Fund especially at Harvest and Christmas. Some members of our Church Family have also attended Mid Northants CMS events.

**Party Report - Joan Botterill.**

Sixty people attended the Church Family party on Saturday 26<sup>th</sup> January 2019. Everyone seemed to enjoy it and helped to contribute in many different ways.

We are grateful to Lin and Sallie especially, for all their help in planning and preparation.

We were agreed in our aims and worked well together. We feel that God answered our prayers for the event.

£223 has been handed to the treasurer, being profit after deduction of expenses.

The planning group has now disbanded.

**Tots & Tiddlers**

**2019 APCM Annual Report**

During 2018 we saw the group grow again with numbers of children averaging around 25 each week, up from 20 in 2017. Nearly all of these come from the local community and weekly sees a good mix of both mums (& dads) and grannies (& grandads) coming with them. Good friendships have been formed between the adults and with the children. Our wish is for the group to be not only for the children but also a place of welcome, support and friendship, particularly for some of the mums for whom life is not easy at times.

We are gradually adding to our collection of play equipment in order to provide a variety of choices for the children, by being able to rotate the selection each week. The sessions still run with free play first followed by a drink and toast for the children and after this we usually have a craft or messy activity for those who wish to join in. We finish the morning with group singing that the children know is about to start when Mary brings out the bag of musical instruments.

At Christmas a Nativity Service was held at St Peter's, led by Rachel, to which we invited the children and carers from other Church toddler groups in the town. Once again this was well attended and all the children left the service with a knitted Angel made by the ladies from Knit & Chat. All the children who come to our group were also given an age suitable Nativity Story book at Christmas.

Yvonne Gilby continues to provide great support to us by making tea and coffee for the adults and the children's refreshments, assisted by a rota of other helpers from St. Peter's. Thank you to these ladies & gentlemen, the group would not be able to run without you.

The group is self-financing & has been able to make financial donations to the work of St. Peter's during the year.

Margaret Maddams & Mary Jenkins

**SPYS (St. Peter's Young Stars) Report – April 2019** – Alice Belton

Until recently we had two age groups:

- 'Infant' school children (ages 3-7), based on 'Jack in the Box' resources.
- 'Junior' school children (ages 7-11), based on 'Roots' resources.

The groups meet in the church hall during Sunday 10am services; there are a selection of activities, varying from bible stories and prayer to crafts and games. There are often leaflets or items they have made to take home.

We follow the Peterborough Diocese Safeguarding policy and ensure that all our leaders and helpers are DBS checked.

Recently we have only been seeing 1-4 children attending each group and have also unfortunately had leaders and helpers decide to step down. This has led to us deciding from March to combine the groups, for a trial period.

I would like to thank Amy and Sam (for their very many years) and Liz and Vivian (for several years) of dedicated service as enthusiastic leaders/helper; I'm sure they have inspired many of the children they have taught; we will all miss them greatly as they leave SPYS's. Also, thanks to Daisy and Jessica who helped at the groups until they had finished their secondary education, we wish them well in their further studies away from home.

I would like to thank the other leaders Jean M and Margaret M for their continued commitment to teaching and for the helpers (Debbie, Elizabeth, Nicole, Sheila and Rita) who do a wonderful job supporting the children.

**TNG** – Rachel Hawkins

The group have continued to follow the 'Roots' material on a Sunday morning (which is lectionary based). The idea being that, for the majority of the time, our children and young people follow the same bible readings in their age-appropriate groups.

On Tuesday evenings we have been following the Youth Emmaus course which has focused on Christian discipleship and what it means to live out the Christian faith. During Holy Week we shared some food together to remember Christ's Last Supper (and had an Easter egg hunt!) We have also done a mixtures of craft activities including glass engraving, mosaic windows, sand bracelets, glass painting and hama beads (did you see our nativity display at the nativity festival?)

It was good to see one of our member's Confirmed by the Bishop in September.

The confidence among some of our young people in particular has grown and this is demonstrated quite powerfully in our prayer times together. This is so encouraging to witness. 2018 ended with our Christmas party at the rectory when we decorated the Christmas tree and prayed for different members of our church as we added each bauble, in turn.

*Let us thank the Lord for all who faithfully serve as leaders and helpers of TNG, praying that we may lead by example; following Jesus in our lives first and then teaching this to others.*

*Let us pray for our children and young people, that they may grow in their relationship with the Lord and commit to following and serving Him. Amen!*



**St Peter's Church, Midland Road, Rushden**

**Churchwardens' Report for 2018**

Once again our grateful thanks go to Rachel for her continuing faithful ministry in our Parish and to Andrew for his assistance and unfailing support to her.

We are truly blessed to have so many dedicated volunteers who freely give so much time and energy in so many ways to help St. Peter's remain a vibrant, welcoming and well-kept Church. These are not only our regular worshippers, but also the spouses, relatives & friends of our worshippers who also offer their time and service to St. Peter's. Our grateful thanks go to you all.

The upkeep of our church buildings and grounds is always an on-going task. They are generally in a good state of repair and we continue to be aware of the Quinquennial report issues. Routine maintenance continues, for which we are grateful to those who willingly and without question use their talents in this way. During the summer the drive & footpath from Midland Road to the Station Road door was dug out & had new tarmac laid, ending what had been a Health & Safety concern for a number of years. Replacement of the heating system in the hall at the end of 2017 proved fortuitous with the UK having such an extremely harsh winter from December through until the end of March. The hall proved comfortably heated throughout for the benefit of our hirers, which would not have been possible with the previous system. The boilers in the Church had their annual service at the end of 2018, one minor repair was needed but the engineer feels that, although not the most efficient or economical system, they should remain serviceable for a few more years yet.

Litter in the garden continues to be a problem, as do occasional incidences of anti-social behaviour, but we do not want to deny the public the benefit of enjoying our grounds which are so beautifully maintained. We are grateful to all who pick up the litter coming to and from our church premises. If you do encounter any abuse or suspect illegal activities are occurring please do not try to deal with it yourself, contact the Police if necessary or speak to one of the Churchwardens.

Our various community groups have, in the main, seen a very successful year of increasing numbers, giving not only outreach and friendship to the people of Rushden, but also being able to make financial donations towards the work of St. Peter's.

We are pleased that we were able to pay our full parish share although, once again, we had to dip into our reserves to accomplish this. This may well not be possible again. Encouragement, however, comes from seeing that our levels of giving are not diminishing & by seeing new people joining our Church.

There is always more which could be done if we had the money, but we are only too aware that these are uncertain & difficult times for many people. We remain confident that you all continue to pray for our Church and help us with your time, talents and resources as far as you are able to make it a safe and welcoming church, which is a witness and blessing to our local community.

Thank you to you all.

Jean Bowerman and Steve Maddams

Churchwardens

March 2018