

St Mark's Church Gillingham

ADDITIONAL REPORTS

For the year ended 31st December 2010

- (1) Worship**
- (2) Meeting of Parishioners for the Choosing of Two Churchwardens**
- (3) The Annual Parochial Church Meeting of St Mark's Electoral Roll Members**

Members may ask questions or raise relevant matters at any time during the meeting.

- 1.** Apologies for Absence
- 2.** The following agenda items are all covered in the Annual Report or the Additional Reports. (If not they will be provided at the meeting by the officer responsible.) To save time, the meeting will be invited to accept these reports en bloc unless discussion of specific issues is requested by the meeting.
 - a) Minutes of the previous year's meeting.
 - b) Electoral Roll Officer's Report
 - c) Report on the Proceedings of the PCC /Church Members (Additional Reports p. 8)
 - d) Churchwardens' report on Fabric, Goods and Ornaments (Additional Reports p. 9)
 - e) Proceedings of Deanery and Diocesan Synods (Additional Reports p. 11, 12)
 - f) Receiving the Reports from Church Organisations given in the Additional Reports
- 3.**
 - a) Report on the financial affairs of the Parish Church (Annual Report)
 - b) Examined Accounts for the previous calendar year (Annual Report)
 - c) Examined statement of Funds and Property for 2010 (Annual Report)
- 4.** Elections
 - a) Appointment of 5 tellers for the election.
 - b) Introduction of each candidate standing for election.
 - c) Election of 4 Electoral Roll members to serve as parish representatives on Deanery Synod for 3 years. Deanery Synod members become PCC members automatically.
 - d) Election of 4 Electoral Roll Members to serve on PCC; three candidates for 3 years, one for 2 year.
 - e) Election of Sidespersons or Approval for the Churchwardens and PCC to appoint suitable Electoral Roll Members as Sidespersons.
- 5.** Choosing of an Independent Examiner of the Accounts for the current year.
- 6.** Formal Motions (none have been submitted)
- 7.** Closing Worship.

Minutes of the Annual Parochial Church Meeting

held in the Church on Sunday, 25th April 2010

A. Worship together

Glenn McWatt spoke from Acts 6: 1-7.

B. Meeting of Parishioners for the appointment of Churchwardens

Due to there being a change of incumbent Peter Guinness (PG) requested that we pass a resolution to say that we will not apply the legislation from General Synod that a church warden may only stand for 6 years and then step down.

In favour: Overall majority; 0 abstentions; 3 against

Terry Whittaker (TW) and Glyn Allen (GA) were nominated and agreed to stand for churchwarden - 1 abstention otherwise all in favour.

C. Annual Parochial Church Meeting

1. Apologies for absence

9 apologies for absence were given.

2. Minutes of the APCM held on 26th April, 2009

These were confirmed as an accurate record of the meeting. All in favour.

3. Matters Arising

Disabled toilet - Dorothy Brundle asked if there are any plans for this to be sorted and said that this needs to be tied up with the need for baby change facilities.

PG pledged to examine this in the context of whole church building plan within a year.

Vicarage Road site - Alan Allen (AA) raised the issue of security at the site. TW explained that we have looked in to adding a barrier. A number of suggestions were made including barrier cards, clamping, talking to residents and a sign to say 'no unauthorised parking'. PG said that the PCC will look at it.

4. Elections

4.1 Appointment of scrutineers

Appointment of scrutineers – not needed

4.2 Lay representatives to the Parochial Church Council

There are 6 vacancies and 5 nominations: David Wilkins, Chris Tozer, Trevor Dyer, Mick Aldington, Nikki Bailey. All in favour except for 2 abstentions.

4.3 Sidespersons

A list of sidespersons was read and accepted. All in favour.

5. Statutory Reports

5.1 Electoral roll

Derick Thom reported that, at 11/4/2010, the roll stood at 190, with 8 additions and 5 names removed. In addition, 34 people from St Mary's Island Church are included in the roll, making a total of 224.

5.2 Financial report

Luke Prankard presented highlights including the gift day which gave us over £20,000. At the end of the financial year there was a £15,641 surplus and there has been a 20% increase in regular giving. Extra money was raised for the Exodus trip to Uganda. LP warned that this year will again be challenging.

GA asked about the situation looking forward. LP said we are in line with budget, not including an administrator that will eat in to our reserves.

PG said it is a joint responsibility of all to seek God as to what he wants us to give.

TW formally thanked LP for last year's service and apologised as a PCC for not providing the support he requested when he started the role. Rod White asked about grants and said we need to look for someone to do this. Trevor Dyer offered to help with raising money through grants.

NOTE: As the final accounts were still not ready only draft accounts were presented. The accounts are with the Examiner of Accounts. The PCC will have to approve the final accounts and then provide copies for members.

5.3 Proceedings of the PCC

See the published report. No comments or questions

5.4 Fabric, Goods and Ornaments

PG said he appreciates that everything is in good order and all have taken care of the buildings. GA recorded thanks to David Norton in the verger's role. TW gave an update re the Energy efficient lighting in the church, which has been agreed by PCC. In the Garden house we are looking to replace/refurbish the kitchen. PG thanked those who worked hard in redecorating the vicarage. Helen Towers asked about the church administrator. GA said there has been ongoing discussion about the role and what to do. He thanked Mandy Tozer and Janet Mann. PG said he was glad not to rush in to decisions as we need to get it right.

5.5 Deanery Synod

No comments or questions.

PG reported that the Deanery plans are fluid and should be firmed up with the new archdeacon. The Rural Dean, Alan Vousden, is also leaving.

6. Notification of items for consideration under Any Other Business

None

7. Other Activities and Matters of Interest

The following reports were highlighted:

Youth and Children's Ministries - It was pointed out that the Explorer report is not the one that was written. Nat Graves is to e-mail the original to PG. Phil Gates asked about the New Brompton College

funding. PG said that a task group has been set up to discuss with Mike in detail what we will do and how we will handle it and will inform the church as soon as we know. PG said that St Mark's is known in the area for its work with children and young people. He gave thanks to all the leaders for their hard work and dedication.

Coffee Shop - PG gave thanks again and reported that NHS reps are looking at opportunities to use the facilities.

Missions Support Group, Associate Minister, St. Mary's Island Church Report, Ladies Group, St. Mark's House and Mount Evans House were also highlighted.

PG thanked all those who have written the reports.

8. Appointment of Independent Examiner

Rob Trice was proposed – Majority in favour but 5 abstentions.

9. Chairman's Remarks

PG thanked the church for their welcome and said he was looking forward to what lies ahead. We need to pray for God's guidance for the following challenges:

- Deanery reorganisation – PG is encouraged that the new Archdeacon is prepared to take positive action. St Mark's has an important role in this.
- Working closely with other churches in the area – we need to pray for effectiveness.
- Recruiting volunteers for youth and children's work, linking with GYFC and WOTS
- How strong is our welcome for new members? Alpha is a good way to share hospitality.
- Use of buildings – they are only used some of the time.
- Consider Youth led services and links with the Baptist church to make the most of evening services.
- Home groups – If called 'small groups' not limited to traditional home groups

We need to have on-going conversations with each other and with God about how St. Mark's should move forward, including Fresh expressions. What does God want US to do? PG encouraged us to be praying in 2s and 3s.

PG showed a video 'The Next Generation' www.wymad.org.uk and read Deut 6: 4-9.

This concluded the APCM at 12.05.

Attendance: 141

Treasurer's Report

General Fund

All income and expenditure for day to day running of St Mark's is referred to as the General Fund, shown in detail in the accounts. We started the year in a healthy financial state thanks to a large surplus in 2009 following a successful gift day during November 2009.

The New Year brought a number of changes that influenced church finances, on 25th of February 2010 Revd Canon Peter Guinness was installed as Priest in Charge and at the end of August our Youth Worker, Mike King, left St Mark's. This resulted in an overall increase of £14,290 in ministry costs compared with 2009.

Other areas of change in expenditure were:-

1) Away Giving.

This is set at 10% of 2009 Church voluntary income, resulting in an increase of £2,328 to £13,136 with Lucy Haslam and Claire Coleman being added to those already regularly supported by St Mark's.

2) Depreciation.

Each year the church policy has been to depreciate the church fixed assets (excluding buildings) by 10%. At the beginning of 2010 there were fixed assets valued at £7,078 carried forward in the accounts with £787 having been charged in 2009, the assets concerned were church sound desk and church chairs. Bearing in mind age of assets and condition, this was not felt to be a true valuation and it was decided to charge £7,078 fully depreciating their value to £0.

3) Administrator Salary

Since we have been without a paid Church Administrator and operated the office thanks to the voluntary work of a number of people, there was a saving of £5,753 compared to 2009.

Despite the difficult financial times, members of St Marks have continued to give generously to support all church activities. Gift Aid standing order giving increased by £8,444 to £80,306 and non-gift aid regular giving (other) increased by £4,146 to £6,543. Total giving plus gift aid tax refund was £134,786, an increase of £7,198 over 2009. Overall, after transfers between funds, the General Fund returned a surplus of £1,795 for 2010.

Other Funds

All other funds performed soundly, Exodus Fund remained unchanged, Development Fund, Care Fund and Repair Funds all ended the year with healthy balances and Play Group continues to operate on a sound financial footing.

Rod White

St Mark's Church Treasurer



Proceedings of the PCC

During the year the PCC met ten times. Each meeting started with a passage of scripture and prayer. Many of the details of our discussions are contained in the Annual Report but the following presents a flavour of PCC dialogue and decisions:

Finance – Rod White took over as Treasurer and our thanks go to Luke Prankard for his work in this role. Rod and John Beck continue to keep us updated with all things financial. The change in banks was a matter for discussion and action.

Staffing – various staffing situations were discussed and dealt with, such as Peter and Michele’s arrival, cleaning of the various church buildings, administrative support within the church office and the appointment of Lynne Martin as Student and Internationals Coordinator.

Youth and children’s ministry updates were received and discussions about staffing, child protection and CRB checks were had. The vision for a Youth Pastor was also discussed.

Buildings – There have been on-going discussions about

- providing a disabled access toilet in church,
- church lighting,
- electrics in the Vicarage Hall,
- issues raised in the Quinquennial report.

There has been much discussion about the way forward and a vision for St. Mark’s and the following items were among the things raised as areas for development:

1. Small groups
2. Induction/ welcome of new people
3. Prayer
4. Discipleship
5. Sunday Worship

Other points of discussion have included:

- the Church Website
- the Deanery Development Plan
- a new photocopier
- Mission Task Group updates
- Tearfund support
- The October attendance information

Please continue to pray for all the members of the PCC as they seek to listen to God and represent members of the church in their decision making. Make sure you speak to members of the PCC if you want your thoughts and opinions represented.

Chris Atkins
PCC Secretary



Fabric, Goods and Ornaments

The following buildings, associated land and other related assets are entrusted to us and, led by the Churchwardens and PCC, it is the responsibility of us all to care for their upkeep however we can:

St Mark's Church, Vicarage Hall, Old Vicarage, Garden House

The maintenance of the Vicarage is the responsibility of the Diocesan Board of Finance, but during the interregnum the PCC had responsibility to ensure the building was secure, regularly checked, protected against frost damage and the garden was maintained.

In readiness for the arrival of Peter and Michele Guinness, the PCC undertook to carry out the internal redecoration of the building, in addition to other repairs and improvements carried out by the Diocese. We are most grateful to all who volunteered to do this redecoration, especially Guy Jackson, Derick Thom, Rod White and Trevor Dyer, who dedicated much time and ensured it was completed 'just in time' for Peter and Michele's arrival in February.

Our buildings are inspected professionally every five years (Quinquennial Inspection), by a Diocesan appointed surveyor, who gives recommendations on repairs and other actions that need to be carried out in the short, medium and longer terms. The Garden House was last inspected in 2006; the Church in 2008 and the Vicarage Hall and Old Vicarage in 2009.

All of our buildings are in the Diocesan Repair Fund, which we can draw on to meet the costs of larger maintenance items. This year we contributed a total of £5,007 to this fund and at the year-end have a total balance of £39,945, most of which (66%) is designated for the church. The buildings are insured with the Ecclesiastical Insurance Group, which covers such things as storm damage, vandalism, burglary etc. This year our total insurance premiums were £6,713.

Church

The Quinquennial Inspection that took place in 2008 concluded that the Church is generally in fair condition, both internally and externally. The essential works, identified to be carried over two to five years, are primarily repairs to the roofs, gutters, brickwork and masonry. The PCC has agreed to appoint an architect to draw up a specification for this work as well as a design for a toilet accessible for disabled, located in the 'choir vestry'.

Some general maintenance and repairs have been carried out during the year, including to the heating system. Both church notice boards were replaced and the details updated.

Due to the frequent failure of the tungsten halogen bulbs, the majority of the flood lamps inside the building have been changed for low energy fittings. In addition to giving increased bulb life, making maintenance easier, the new fittings will give the benefit of a reduction in energy costs.

We are grateful to our sound team for carrying out maintenance work on our sound system, which has confirmed we will need to consider replacing some key equipment in the near future.

Vicarage Hall

The Vicarage Hall has very high usage from a number of regular groups and is generally in a good state of repair. The Quinquennial Inspection identified some minor internal repairs required and some external re-pointing of the brickwork. These items are still pending.

The heating boiler has given problems on a number of occasions and our heating contractor has recommended it be replaced, which we plan to do next year.

Garden House

The Garden House is generally in a reasonable state of repair, having being completely redecorated internally in 2008 for the arrival of Glenn and Irene McWatt. We have yet to resolve the drainage problem in the area in front of the study, which occurs when there is heavy rain.

Old Vicarage

The Old Vicarage continues to have high usage and is generally in reasonable repair. The last Quinquennial Inspection identified some internal repairs and some re-pointing of the external brickwork.

To enable Peter Guinness to use the room next to the front door as a study, the majority of the resource material was moved to the upstairs room used by Youth and Children's leaders. The study was redecorated and carpet cleaned. A new computer network, with points in all rooms has also been installed.

We record our thanks for the generous donations of a new hall, stairs and landing carpet and office furniture and equipment.

Having persevered with the unreliable photocopier, it was replaced and a new contract taken out. The new machine is very efficient, is able to produce colour copies and saves the office staff much time.

Vicarage Road Site

A number of small general maintenance items have been carried out during the year on all the buildings located at the Vicarage Road Site, including servicing the boilers and clearing the drains and gutters etc. New smoke alarms, conforming to the Kent Fire and Rescue specification, were installed in the Vicarage, Old Vicarage and Vicarage Hall.

We thank our volunteer Administrators, Mandy Tozer, Lyn Trebill and Jo Whittaker, for addressing many day to day maintenance matters over the past year, including dealing with 'church mice'. We are also very grateful to David Norton for his dedication in efficiently carrying out the various 'verger duties'.

It is not possible to mention everybody by name, but we do give our thanks and appreciation to all those who have carried out the many tasks, seen and unseen, that help to keep our buildings in good order and make them places that are attractive and honouring to God and fit for His purposes.

Glyn Allen and Terry Whittaker (Churchwardens)

Diocesan Synod Report

The Diocesan Synod has two full meetings a year for elected members, plus one meeting to which other delegates are invited, known as the Gathering, where a number of workshops designed to stimulate interest in all aspects of the Diocese. The Gathering also includes the Annual Meeting of the Diocesan Board of Finance.

Items are sent down from General Synod for us to discuss e.g. "Women in the Episcopate" (women bishops, to you and me) and "The Anglican Covenant". Some of these items are then passed to Deanery Synods for further discussion who then report back to the Diocesan Synod in order to vote on the issue.

During the last year Diocesan Synod received reports from various Diocesan Departments:- Mission and Unity, Communications Department, Board of Education, Council for Training and Ministry etc. and the Bishop's Council which, among other things, agrees the Agenda for Diocesan Synod and presents certain recommendations, such as the Diocesan Budget.

The Diocesan Budget directly affects the Parish Share which individual churches contribute towards for the ongoing work of the Diocese. Included in the Parish Share is a contribution to the central church for clergy training etc. The Diocesan Budget has been a contentious agenda item. Parishes who are struggling to pay their way are showing a growing concern over the ever increasing cost of the Diocesan organisation and the amount required by the national church. Due to budget constraints one department - 'Church and Society' - has been disbanded during the past year.

This may sound very boring but it is an essential underpinning of all we do as a church and at Synod we have also had some exciting reports about outreach in the Diocese.

Ernie Mann

Gillingham Deanery Synod

The Gillingham Deanery Synod met on 17th March (chaired by outgoing Rural Dean, Canon Alan Vousden) and on 2nd November (chaired by the new Rural Dean, Rev'd Jonathan Jennings, Vicar of St Augustine).

At the March meeting the main discussion was the Deanery Mission and Ministry Plan. The document dated 25 March 2009, incorporating some amendments, was accepted as a basis from which to progress. The next stage was for clergy of the North Gillingham parishes (St Mary Magdalene, St Augustine, St Barnabas, St Luke and St Mark) to meet to discuss closer working together. The futures of St Barnabas and St Luke were discussed together with possible arrangements to cater for the needs of those congregations.

Other items considered were:

- Personnel changes within the Deanery.
- The Church Army ceasing financial support of ASPIRE with a suggested levy for the parishes in the Gillingham Deanery;
- Confirmation arrangements being seen as a Deanery event rather than local parish events;
- The Wedding Fayre at Hempstead Valley as a success for participating parishes;
- How the total Parish share for the Deanery might be paid.

At the November meeting the following items were noted:

- The new Bishop of Rochester will visit the Deanery in June or July 2011.
- St Barnabas and St Luke's churches will not close and the Deanery Mission Plan won't be implemented.
- The Rev'd Bonnie Appleton was welcomed as Team Rector of South Gillingham, based at St Matthew, Wigmore.

According to Graham:

"Deanery Synod functions as a microcosm of the whole Church of England, indeed the whole Anglican Communion. If the dimensions of the latter two are difficult for the mind to assimilate, the local deanery cluster of parishes are more manageable. It helps us to widen our horizons and not to be too parochial."

Please see him for an explanation!

Graham Davis (Deanery Synod member)

Youth and Children's Ministries

Crèche (up to 2 years old)

We are a group of 6 volunteers who share the monthly crèche rota during term-time. We consider it a privilege and pleasure to look after God's little children. We aim to make both parent and child feel relaxed and allow the parents some precious time with God. We have a selection of toys and books which we are regularly updating. We have been running crèche in the back of church (instead of the Vestry) since September 2010 and the parents seem much happier to leave their children with us where they can see and hear them if need be. It certainly shows in our attendance records. We previously had one regular child but now have between 2 and 5 children. Crèche is especially well used during baptisms. The visiting parents have commented how welcoming the church is, especially when their children see the toys and crèche area as soon as they walk in. We are always keen to hear from others who may want to join our rota.

Natasha, Jan, Karen, Lucy, Denise and Linda

Scramblers (pre-school children from 2 years old)

Scramblers has been an adventure this last year! We have seen the five regular little ones grow to eight, ranging from very young 2 year olds to more outgoing 3 and 4 year olds. We love the challenge of adapting bible stories to exciting games and crafts!

A big thank you for answered prayer this last month has been the addition of some much needed helpers, who will be really valued in ensuring Scramblers can develop in their own time and way!

Caz, Stuart, Vanessa, Bridget, Charley, Jo, Beth, Emily, Emily, Laurie

Climbers (Foundation and Key Stage 1 children, years R to 2)

Climbers is growing and so are the kids! We have up to 15 children every Sunday, a large proportion of which are boys! We have a great team of leaders but we are always looking for more to join us! We have taken a whistle-stop tour of the Prophets of the Old Testament (just ask one of the "Climbers" what a Prophet is!) and we are now thinking together about what exactly the Bible means to us as Christians.

Becky Cooper, Sheena Davidson, Angela Bitton, Josh Atkins

Xplorers (Key Stage 2 children, years 3 to 6)

Xplorers meet every Sunday (apart from All Age services) in the Vicarage Hall. In the past year we have looked at a number of different prophets and their message for us today as well as the story of Esther. Recently we have begun looking at what the Bible and Church mean to us as young people.



Each week can be very different but what we do have is fun! We love praying with paper aeroplanes and if a game of hide and seek in the Old Vicarage grounds can be included then it's a must! We would like to thank all the lovely young people who come week after week with real enthusiasm and help make Xplorers such a great place to be!

Jason, Nat, Helen and Trevor

Pathfinders (School years 7 to 9, 11-14 year olds)

Pathfinders underwent many changes last year. We said goodbye to several members as they moved onto Landmark, but have welcomed many new members too. Not all of the Pathfinders are from church families and we strive to make Pathfinders welcoming and friendly for everyone. Each week between 10 and 15 young people come. They are a great bunch who are energetic, engaging, chatty and keen to explore Christianity, their own sense of faith and how to live as a young Christian. The leadership team has also undergone some changes; we said a couple of sad good byes, firstly to Mike Haslam when he started working for Family Trust and then to Chris Atkins who stepped down from overseeing Pathfinders at the end of the year. They were both fantastic leaders and a real blessing to all of the Pathfinders as well as myself.

God has been faithful and blessed us with new leaders, Lance Hanning, Terry & Jo Whittaker and Lucy Wheatley have all recently joined the team. Please pray for wisdom for us as leaders, as we co-ordinate each week, that we don't lose sight of God's vision for the group and are able to meet the needs of our young people. Overall it has been a privilege to watch the Pathfinders grow and take on the responsibility of maintaining a relationship with God for themselves.

Claire Banner, Lance, Terry, Jo, Lucy

Landmark (14-18 years old, from Y9 in the term after they are 14)

Landmark numbers vary between 15 and 25 young people who are a close-knit bunch that have great fun together. It's been a year of many changes. After Mike King left, Mike and Wendy Haslam were the leaders on an interim basis. We are immensely grateful to them for all the work and love they put in during that time, and for Wendy, much longer. In January Ross and Jane Garner are due to take over the leadership, assisted by Andy Hurst and Michele Guinness. Peter initiated a new youth-friendly service on the second Sunday evening of the month, with a youth band and input, and a more interactive-style sermon. Michele started a sub group called Planners, who enjoy putting together both that and the youth-led service on the fourth Sunday evening, eating her out of home-made biscuits. Landmark would really welcome some new, imaginative, younger leadership.

Michele Guinness

Parent and Toddlers

We have continued to provide a safe, fun afternoon for pre-school children, their parents and carers each Wednesday afternoon during term time. We play, sing, paint, glue, listen to a story and have refreshments together. The vicarage hall is certainly an exciting place to be as we reach out into the community and build relationships with those who come each week.

And come they do! Numbers have been consistently high throughout the year and we have had to consider opening on another afternoon. We have prayed and discussed this and feel we cannot split the current team or group. But we do have a vision for a new team to run with a different format on another afternoon. How about a Mums and Toddlers Keep Fit Group? Any volunteers for a new team?

Mums' meals remain a vital part of our outreach. These are always well supported and the mums now organise evenings out themselves. These may be special meals, bingo or a weekly jog! We see these events as part of our ministry, developing friendships and making our Mums feel special and valued. Several of our families came to services over Christmas, a much prayed for breakthrough in our desire to see our Mums develop a relationship with Jesus.

We sometimes feel isolated as a group. We reach into the community, yet are not always sure where we fit into the life of St. Mark's. Our parents leave us when their youngest child is four, which means a 2/3 year gap before we can invite them to another outreach group, such as SPLAT. We need to look for ways to coordinate this.

Thank you to the team who make this group happen. Each person who sets up, puts away, makes refreshments and chats has a vital role to play in this exciting work. Please pray for us all!

Sheelagh, Nat, Jo, Lucy, Martha and Caz



Kidz Klub

Kidz Klub has grown from strength to strength this year. Between 50 and 60 seven to 11 year olds come each Friday night to the Old Vicarage to have fun, spend time with friends and experience unconditional acceptance from the leaders. The evening consists of crafts, sports, games and challenges plus cheap tuck! This is followed by Xtreme Time where the team present God's love in a fun and relevant way. A committed team turn up every Friday at the end of a busy working week, work through the exhaustion and love seeing God at work in these children's lives! It has been exciting to invite them and their families to the new SPLAT church – where will God take us next?

The Kidz Klub team

Playgroup

This year has been another busy one for St. Mark's Playgroup with staff and volunteers working hard to meet the needs of the individual children that attend playgroup as well as making on-going developments to the environment and provision of resources.

The following items represent some of the issues discussed and developed:

The Government introduced Extended 15 hours Free Flexible Childcare so Playgroup now opens for three hours every morning. Policies and Procedures are regularly reviewed and updated to ensure the welfare requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage are met and support the continued good practice of the Playgroup.

At each committee meeting we have updates about the financial situation so that we can make informed decisions about spending. Janet Mann works hard to make sure that the books balance.

Justine, a parent representative on our committee operates regular coffee mornings in the Old Vicarage which enables parents and carers to have a chat and discuss any playgroup issues. There have been on-going developments in the outside area which mean the children have a greater opportunity to continue their learning outside.

Staff have continued to develop their knowledge through attending various professional development training. Congratulations to Kelly for her NVQ Level 3, Fiona for completing the Foundation Degree in Early Years Studies and Julie who has gained a BA (Hons) Degree in Early Years Studies. The knowledge that continual professional development brings makes a difference to not only the children but their parents as well.

Thanks to the staff, volunteers and committee for all their hard work in aiming to ensure the continued professional, smooth running of Playgroup. Thanks also to St. Mark's Church for allowing us to use the hall and giving us a huge amount of freedom to make changes to support the on-going developments and enhancements.

Gary Atkins

Chairman, St. Mark's Playgroup Management Committee



SPLAT!

This year's SPLAT! saw over 70, 6 to 11 year olds and 33 leaders go behind the scenes at SPLAT TV. We sang, danced and made peppermint creams (of sorts); took challenges with water-filled balloons and heard stories of Jesus in SPLATanory Jackanory. We took part in the Clapperboard Challenge and the 50/50 quiz, made pen pots, picture frames and fridge magnets; told jokes, ate breakfast from 8ft long spoons and took part in the Pants Challenge. There was fish finger throwing and quizzes; we had Magic Moments, listened to SPLAT News, took part in the Slammer (freedom was granted to Andy for his magical fingers and Tom for funky dancing) and the Best of Friends Challenge. We got messy, got funky, made friends with Jesus and had a thoroughly SPLAT-tastic time! To round off the week lots of children returned with their families to take part in SPLAT's Got Talent and the Parent's Pants Challenge, as well as watching a presentation of awards for the SPLAT Oscars – congratulations go to Henry and the amazing disappearing ball; Samuel and his fast dancing feet and Jack for his winning smile.

We also had the privilege of chatting to many of the parents/carers and it has been an absolute joy to see them come along as families to the SPLAT Christmas event and share in God's love. Watch this space for more SPLAT family events. A huge thank you to everybody on the team and to those behind the scenes, praying, making and serving refreshments.

Jo Whittaker

SNUG (11-14 year olds)

An average of 14 young people attend SNUG once a month. We are glad to have Keith Sheepwash on board as another leader.

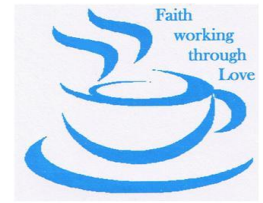
In the summer we had a BBQ and, as with our Christmas social, it was good to see a number of the parents attending too, allowing us to build relationships with the whole family. We took a number of them on a bowling trip to Lordswood which was a very successful evening. After doing an evening about the 10 commandments we asked the young people to produce a set of rules for SNUG by putting them into four teams, picking the rules that appeared on every team's list – this came to exactly 10 – and every one had "Respect God" on their list, which was amazing as most of the young people are from an un-churched background.

We are trying to give SNUG a new look by way of a new logo, a newly designed poster done by the young people themselves and we also have a website (see the link from the St. Mark's website). We would like to thank Ben Towers for his work on these projects.

Trevor, Lesley, Angela, Keith, Karen and Trevor

Coffee Shop

It is always a joy and a privilege to be able to serve our local community through Coffee Shop on Monday mornings. Over the past year we have been blessed with new volunteers and many more new customers!!!! We pray for our team, church and customers each Monday before we open and after we close. We also pray for specific customer prayer requests, either with them personally or those placed in our prayer box. Ideally we would like Prayer Partners from our church family to be praying during our opening hours of 10 to 12 every Monday morning.



We have explored the possibility of holding an Alpha Course specifically geared to our customers and in order to gain more insight on how to make this work a couple of our staff recently attended the Alpha Lite course run by Green Street Baptist Church.

We are encouraged by seeing some of our non churched customers attending various activities and morning worship at St Mark's recently.

It is wonderful to be able to pray with, chat to, listen to and sometimes just provide tea and cake for everyone who comes into Coffee Shop as an extension of our church reaching into the local community.

Karen and the Coffee Shop Team

ALPHA – An Introduction to the Christian Faith

An Alpha Course was started on Thursday evenings from 30th September, running for 13 weeks, with one Saturday. Each evening we started with a meal, and then we watched a DVD presentation by Nicky Gumbel of Holy Trinity Brompton. The Alpha Course covers topics like "Who is Jesus?", "Why did Jesus die?" and "How can I become a Christian?" A lively discussion about what we had heard followed. The Saturday allowed for more time to be spent together, covering two topics and time for prayer to receive the Holy Spirit.

Six people attended the course and everyone received a great deal from the course and were blessed by the Lord, especially on the Saturday during the Holy Spirit prayer session.

There was a team of six leading and preparing for the evenings plus members of the church preparing the meals (our grateful thanks to them)

Another Alpha Course is planned to start in April 2011.

Keith Sheepwash for the Alpha Team



Mission Support Group

The Mission Support Group, formally known as the Missions Task Group (MTG), has met regularly on the last Monday of each month, in order to share the latest information received from Mission Partners, and pray for at least half of them. Mandy Tozer is the new liaison co-ordinator, keeping in touch with Partners and obtaining up-to-date information for the monthly display on the Missions board. The fortnightly focus on Mission Partners during morning worship has been deferred, and needs to be reviewed. The way forward may be to ask each Small Group link to provide an update on a rota basis.

Last September, both Claire Coleman and Lucy Haslam completed one year with their respective missions. Claire works under Operation Mobilisation in one of the Central Asian Republics. Lucy is a team member with the International Fellowship of Evangelical Students based in Brussels, and is presently doing a Bible College course.

GYFC is still without a replacement for Malcolm Smith, but we continue to support the work, both financially and in prayer. Tim and Tricia Barrow working with SIM in South Africa are due for home assignment leave and plan to visit St Mark's in May 2011. Richard and Carolyn Davey are planning to step down from their work with WEC International in April 2011, leaving the Bulstrode community and moving to Leamington Spa.

Jan Whitmore and her co-worker Mintie Nel lead retreats for single missionaries. They recently left the church which provided a sizeable proportion of their monetary and prayer support, and are now settled in Worthing Baptist Church. Lynne Martin has now joined the staff team at St Mark's.

We have not had any new recruits to MTG in 2010 and one or two have struggled to attend regularly. We would be glad to see some new faces in the coming months.

Our Mission Partners and serving organisations:

Katy Barnwell (Wycliffe Bible Translators)
Tim & Tricia Barrow (Serving in Mission – SIM)
Claire' (Operation Mobilisation)
Richard & Carolyn Davey (WEC, UK)
Lucy Haslam (IFES Brussels)
Carri MacFarlane (Nehemiah)
Lynne Martin (Friends International, Paisley)
Gillingham Youth for Christ (GYFC)
Brian & Jenny Stutley (CLC, UK)
Joy Thomas (OM Ships, UK)
Mik' & Hel'n (- -)
Jan Whitmore (Mission Encouragement Trust – MET)



Glenn McWatt



Small Groups

Small Groups are recognised as important within church life because meeting together in smaller groups means that people can get to know each other and everyone can participate, rather than be spectators, in a more comfortable and informal way. The groups are more able to equip people for ministry and everyone can pray and be prayed for, minister and be ministered to.

It was important to revisit the make up of these groups and reflect upon how people's lives are different and that many people are busier, sometimes finding it difficult to attend a traditional Home Group. Chris and I offered to take on the role of coordinating Small Groups. The timing was right and a meeting was planned for early January to raise the profile of the existing groups, invite others to join and to promote the Tear Fund Just People course.

Small Groups should be seen as a place to support one another in prayer, fellowship and friendship. This can happen through the Home Group structure but may also happen through other groups that already meet together, e.g. Ladies Group, Coffee Shop team. The leaders of the groups, which range in size from three to 15 people, need to facilitate rather than necessarily lead everything themselves. This has been an exciting time of development and, at the time of writing, the number of Small Groups has doubled from the number that existed back in September.

If you would like to be part of a group please speak to one of us or a member of the Church leadership.

Gary and Chris Atkins

Ladies Group

Ladies Group has met regularly during the past year each Wednesday, except during school holidays. We meet at the Old Vicarage from 10am to 11.30am. We usually have about 10 ladies present and we have a crèche for small children.

Last summer we completed Bible studies on the books of Ruth and Esther and then in the autumn we looked at the book of James. It was wonderful to see how God worked in the lives of Ruth and Esther and then apply this to our own lives and circumstances today. We were then challenged by James about putting our faith into action. This term we are doing the Just People course along with the other small groups in our church.

Ladies Group is a friendly supportive group for women of any age. In addition to regular Bible study we are able to share our problems and our prayer and praise requests with each other. It is so encouraging

to know that others will be praying and also supporting us in a practical way if necessary.

You are welcome to come along and join us any Wednesday morning during term time – even if you can't make it every week. We look forward to seeing you!

We are very grateful to Rose for all she does for us. She continues to come faithfully every week to look after our children in the crèche. We would be very grateful if there was anyone in the church who would be prepared to help Rose. If you are able to help out one Wednesday morning now and again we would really appreciate it. Please speak to Lucy Day or to someone else you know in our group if you can help.

Margaret Weston, Lucy Day, Martha Prankard, Helen Towers

Ministry Teams

The Ministry teams are available to pray with the family of St. Marks in confidence, believing that the Lord will minister through the Holy Spirit to each person that is prayed for. We would like to encourage people to use the teams for both prayer and praise. It has been encouraging to see more people coming up for prayer recently. We would love to hear of answers to prayer so that we might praise the Lord or pray for you again.

During October we had a ministry training day, led by Peter Guinness, focussing on allowing the Holy Spirit to minister to those we pray for. We looked at several models of praying for someone and also the laying on of hands. We looked at biblical verses on healing and had a session praying for each other. As a result of this training day we welcomed several new team members.

The area used for ministry at the front of the church is not ideal but it is the best place we have, so please respect this area when it is being used. We would like to thank the team members for their commitment Sunday by Sunday to this service for the Lord.

Keith Sheepwash & Terry Thom

Pastoral Visiting

We are aiming to visit the family of St. Mark's over time, particularly those that are not known to us. People who have joined the fellowship over the last few months and filled in their details on the tear off slip in Marktime receive a letter welcoming them to our church and offering them a home visit. We are in the process of dealing with these at present.

Keith Sheepwash

St Mark's House

Ministry to the elderly is an important encouragement to those who are in their declining years and, apart from illness or family visiting, a small core of regular attendees come each month deriving fellowship and sensing God's presence for an hour – including refreshments.

St. Mark's House is a residential home situated just outside St. Mark's Church. For around 25 years regular monthly services have taken place on the second Sunday of each month at 5 p.m. Typically 8 or 9 residents attend, supplemented by a small team who, between them, provide after service refreshments, lead intercessions, play the keyboard and read Scripture. Further fellowship follows during the refreshment time where friendships are formed and consolidated.

Services alternate between an adapted "Word" service and "Communion by extension", the latter being supplemented with anointing with oil, the laying on of hands and prayer twice a year. This has turned out to be popular with the residents who find help and spiritual value from the Lord. During the current year, I am introducing guest speakers to bring fresh faces and voices to the meetings. Julia Crathorne, who heads up ministry with the elderly in this area, has visited us in the past and is scheduled to do so again.

Graham Davis

Esmonde House

Following on from the monthly services previously held in Esmonde House, a small group have continued to hold a monthly Friday "tea and chat" meeting. Members generally come from Esmonde House itself with a couple coming from flats in Brompton. The warden is very supportive and even cancelled a fish and chips lunch in January because it would have clashed with our meeting. We also hold an informal service to celebrate major Christian festivals. We have been delighted to have support from other churches as well as continued support from Glenn. Our next service will be 3pm on Easter Sunday. We welcome your prayer support and you are welcome to join us!

Rachel Littlewood

Muntevans House

During the past year a small team of people have continued to lead a Worship Service on the second Sunday of each month, for a small group of residents who we have come to know very well. This has enabled people to be more open, to share and be prayed for. We have different people of our group sharing from God's word. Twice a year Graham Davis celebrates communion by extension with us and offers anointing with oil for those who wish to receive it.

On Easter Sunday some of the residents were able to attend worship with us at St Mark's. At Christmas we sent each resident a Christmas card with an invitation to "Carols and tea and cake in the lounge" with Samuel Wilkins providing the music and other people doing readings and a sketch. A good afternoon was had by all.

We do have contact with some of the other residents but generally this is difficult as we cannot call on someone unless they request it. Our monthly visit to Mountevans House is always a blessing to all of us. Our thanks to all who have supported us throughout the Year.

Keith Sheepwash, Kathryn Thom, Wendy Haslam, Dorothy Brundle, David Wilkins

Faith & Light



It's amazing that we are now into our 20th year at St Mark's! We are very grateful to be able to meet in the Vicarage Hall every other Wednesday, in term time, between 7pm and 9pm. Each year, we have a theme to follow and this year it is Pilgrimage. After time to chat, a drink and a game, we read and discuss a Bible story, either read from a children's Bible or rewritten in an appropriate version; usually this story is acted out to help the learning disabled members to remember and understand the story. Sometimes we use drawing and craft instead. We have drinks and biscuits and then sing Christian songs. The last part of the evening is quiet - we dim the lights, sit around a lighted candle, listen to music and then pray. Everyone who wants to shares a short prayer then we all join in 'Amen'. We say the Lord's Prayer together and, if anyone has a birthday, we sing happy birthday including the verse that God will bless them always. The birthday person blows out the candle.

We see ourselves as a community; not there to do things for the disabled but everyone does the activities, singing, acting, and prayers together. Numbers vary between a dozen and thirty.

We have had two outings this year. We went to Aylesford Friary in July to perform a mime about the Good Samaritan. With some extra evenings of practice it went well. In August we went to Minster for a Saturday with our friends the Benedictine Sisters, two of whom used to work as students with learning disabled. We also enjoyed a Christmas party, greatly helped by Bruce and Guy.

If anyone wants to come to and join us they are very welcome. We would especially welcome more learning disabled folk who want to be part of a Christian community.

Rachel Littlewood



CAP Money Course

Since going on the Christians Against Poverty (CAP) Money training course in September 2010 Lynda Smith, Pauline Wastell and Angela Bitton have run three CAP Money courses, helping 14 people to manage their money better. It is a privilege to help people in this way, many feeling able to unburden themselves with more than just their money problems, often in some way related. We finish each session in prayer, although we always ask if people are comfortable with this beforehand. We have varied the course times – morning with light refreshments, afternoon with a light lunch of soup and rolls and evening with tea/ coffee and cake or biscuits.

We are planning a get together for all those who have attended the courses so far. We are hoping to send more people on the CAP Money course and are looking at the possibility of further training. We make a good team and work well together. We appreciate your support in prayer and your thanks for the work we do.

Angela, Lynda and Pauline



Music Worship

Currently we have the following worship teams and leaders: Sarah Mann and Lorraine Schulze, who share the same team; Graham Wilkins; Youth Band 1 who share leadership and play on the second Sunday in the month; Youth Band 2 which is the same, but includes more youth and plays for the youth-led services on the fourth Sunday of the month; Janet Waters, whose team mostly shares services with other teams; Chris Tozer, who is either solo or with his wife Mandy, and also beginning to share services.

Recently we have been trying to move towards a more consistent style of service and worship, so we are now sharing some Communion services between teams and aiming to provide a regular more youth-appropriate form of music worship in evening services.

We are always looking for new people to be involved in the music worship, particularly as our gifted young people keep leaving us to go to university etc.! We are hoping very soon to run some taster sessions. If you would like to be involved in this please contact Graham Wilkins or Sarah Mann.

Graham Wilkins

Report on Audio Visual equipment – The view from the back

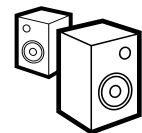
The biggest changes to equipment have been on the projection side, with the introduction of a second DVD player, an upgrade to the switching capabilities, and the provision of a dimmer control for the spotlights on the front pillars. These additions have been provided at no direct cost to the Church, the funds having been donated.

The sound equipment has changed in the way signals are routed and controlled for ancillary feeds such as the induction loop and recording. All the equipment in the main console has been mounted in a custom built rack which has improved the reliability of connections as the equipment no longer “wanders around”.

The age of the main loudspeakers, amplifiers, and mixing desk, is starting to be an issue. All these are at least 10 years old (some over 15 years) and, although we are keeping up with repairs at present, we need to be aware that we will soon need to budget for replacements. Please pray that the technical team will be guided in the best way forward in this important ministry, as if one cannot hear clearly then it distracts from good worship.

The members of the technical teams have remained almost constant throughout the year, two notable exceptions being the loss of Samuel to university and Tom's commitment to GYFC. We are particularly short-staffed on the Video/PC side. We would welcome younger members of the Church to take a more active role – don't be scared, we give training before letting you loose on your own!

Mick Aldington



Hospitality

During the year there have been many opportunities for the hospitality team and their volunteers to serve us by organising, preparing and serving various forms of refreshment. Examples of their hard work were seen at Peter's Induction service, the Passover meal, a jacket potato lunch, meals for the Alpha course, the Back to the Future SPLAT event and the Carol Production at Christmas.

Thank you to everyone involved at these and other events for your willingness to serve. If you would like to offer your services to prepare or serve please see one of the team.

Lynda, Vanessa, Martha, Ann and their team of volunteers



Flower Arrangers

We are seven in the flower team: Jenny, Keith, Janet M, Lesley, Pauline, Irene and Janet W, working individually each week on a rota, except at times, such as Christmas, Easter and Harvest when we get together and work as a team. Each person has his or her own style and efforts at uniformity are not encouraged. I think I can safely say that we all enjoy what we do and regard flower arranging as a vehicle for praise. We would welcome anyone who feels they would like to join our number, whether skilled or not at flower arranging (the latter would be broken in gently!)

Janet Waters

St Mary's Island Church

Membership: 43 – an increase on last year

3 Infant Baptisms, 3 Thanksgivings.

Average Sunday attendance 41 adults, 12 children

Family services: 50+ 20 children. Child attendance is increasing.

Outreach:

New ventures of Carol Singing outside the Ship and Trades pub attracted some 90 people and the first evening candlelit service was well attended as was the usual Christmas Eve communion service.

Life and Work of the church:

- The two Lent Home Groups continued to meet for bible study throughout the year. A third group is now established.
- Links with the St Mary's Island School continue: leading school worship, praying with staff, supporting the school during the recent Ofsted and Diocesan inspections, helping with King's Squad, inviting to the families to services via school parent mail and offering street theatre and running a church bookstall at the Christmas Fair. Seven people work as volunteers in school and a further four are part of the staff team. Four of the volunteers are members of the school governing body.
- An Alpha Course was attended by 15 people. Departure from the norm was to hold this in the 'Ship and Trades' pub.
- We still look to extend our links with the Morning Star Trust.
- We have supported financially 12 charities for mission and give away more than 50% of our income.
- Visiting preachers this year: Revd Richard Alford (URC) and Revd Harvey Nicholson, Ecumenical Officer for Kent Churches Together.
- The development of a prayer ministry team has commenced.

Leadership: A structure for building teams is now in place. Each of the three leaders has responsibility for pastoral, mission/evangelism and ministry. Aspects of ecumenical partnership are being explored with Revd John Currie.

Alongside this the leadership team awaits outcomes of the process of Martin's candidating for the URC ministry and the impact of Bernie's decision to step down from leadership for a few months. The latter two issues could influence how we see our way forward as an ecumenical partnership.

The leaders and the church council remain committed to the vision of taking the gospel to every home on the island.

Janet Adkin

St.Mary's Island Church of England (Aided) Primary School

After 11 years, the school is popular and well established. This year we saw a continued rise in pupil numbers to 408, ensuring we have a healthy budget.

We have continued to build on the academic successes of the previous year and celebrated good progress made by Year 6 pupils in their SATs. This follows a three year upward trend; the school is in now seventh in Medway. 22 pupils passed the 11+ Test which is our highest pass rate.

<u>Key Stage 1 Results</u>				<u>Key Stage 2 Results</u>					
Reading	L2+	95%	L3	20%	English	L4+	88%	L5	55%
Writing	L2+	87%	L3	10%	Maths	L4+	81%	L5	40%
Maths	L2+	97%	L3	18%					

We are involved in a number of projects to raise standards in reading and writing which are already showing positive results. The children enjoy our creative curriculum based on topics, including themed dressing up days in period costumes, re-enacting life in the past and story days.

Parents came to a Parents Workshop to learn about maths and how to help their children. The RE days followed themes of Pentecost, creating a Spiritual Garden and One World Harvest. Contributions came from the Island Church and parents who shared their celebrations and special foods.

Other events this year included Diocesan Events at Rochester Cathedral (the Christmas Carol Service and Lent Pilgrimage) which enabled children to join other Medway church schools; Choral events including the Medway Schools Music Festival; and a Bridge Building Competition with the Royal Engineers. Teams received many Fair-Play Awards at sporting events; we are working on higher medal positions!

Our dedicated Christian staff team contribute much to the life of the school for which we thank God. Charitable giving has matched last year's figure of £6,000 and the money has supported projects and good causes at home and abroad.

Special thanks go to our Chaplain, Glenn, for his pastoral care and support and the Foundation Governors of the school.

Sharon Day - Headteacher