

# **The Parish of St. Mary the Virgin Felpham**



## **2010 Group reports**

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## **St.Mary's Management Committee**

The Management Committee continues to oversee the day to day running of St Mary's Centre ensuring that the buildings comply with all current regulations and updating and improving facilities where appropriate.

We owe David Bidwell many thanks for all the hard work he does at the centre as Premises Manager.

Our bookings continue to grow and our reputation for first-class facilities is very good both locally and further afield. Huge thanks are due to Margaret Treacy for all her hard work as Bookings Officer.

We have unfortunately had a major problem with the floor in the main hall after fifteen years of good service and are still negotiating a claim with our insurers. The floor needs replacing or repairing as soon as possible. Other improvements including new ventilation and window refurbishment are temporary on hold until the floor is in working order again.

We have this year amended the constitution bringing it up to date and this is now with Arun Council awaiting their approval.

Ann Webster

## **Baptisms**

There were 21 children and 1 adult baptised at St. Mary's in 2010. Thank you to all the baptism visitors for their friendly welcome and support to these families. Our small band of dedicated "Knitters" continue to provide white shawls which are presented to each child in the service. We give bookmarks to the Godparents as a reminder of the day and a card is sent to the child on the first anniversary of their baptism. We give thanks those baptized.

Pat Swain

## **Church Flowers**

An arrangement of flowers was made at the altar in St. Mary's for all Sundays except during the church seasons of Advent and Lent. Some arrangements were requested in memory of loved ones or to celebrate a special occasion.

There were a number of weddings during the year when there were usually flowers at the pulpit, by the statue of the Virgin and on the pew ends. The flowers and colours are the bride's choice. Flowers for a wedding ceremony were one of the displays for the Flower Festival.

The flower arrangers were joined by members of the congregation to make the posies which were distributed at the services on Mothering Sunday. They are also grateful to those who bring us evergreen foliage to arrange with the flowers for the posies and at Christmas and Easter.

The flower pedestals which were damaged some time ago in the old Choir Vestry were replaced during the year.

Doreen Brigden

## **St Mary's Ladies Group**

The St. Marys Ladies Group reformed in the Summer of 2010 with Debra, Mel, Sarah and Sue at the helm. The meetings have taken place since then on the first Friday of each month.

Meetings have included a beautician's advice evening, a quiz, a meal at the China Inn and a race evening. Future meetings include a kurling evening, a cookery evening , a plant swap and a BBQ.

The ladies have also organised a trip to the panto and a monthly cinema trip.

Each meeting has been well attended and supported and the intention is to hold an AGM in July when 4 new organisers will be appointed for the period Summer 2011 to 2012.

Sue Crockford

## **Youth Group Report**

The Youth Group now meets every Sunday with two sessions, one for five to eleven year olds and one for eleven to eighteen year olds with an overlap of half an hour.

The new session took a while to take off but numbers have grown at both sessions with eighteen young people attending our last session.

The new tuck shop has gone down very well with the young people and no one minds the fifty pence admission fee.

The Youth Group provides a safe and friendly environment for the young people to have fun and get to know each other.

We provide a pool-table, which is very popular, and so are our craft activities. We also have badminton, football, and board games. We have a quiet time/chat when we can discuss our theme of the night in more detail. We have been swimming, had a quiz night and a film night.

Our Christmas workshop was well attended along with the Christmas party.

Sunday School is very well attended with an average of 15 to 25 children present each week. This increase is seen as very rewarding. We use the Searchlight book for Common Worship, Candles for the 3-5 year olds and Lamps for the 6-10 plus age group. It gives us a fully worked-out plan for every Sunday of the year. This includes a story, prayers and worksheets. We also use our well stocked craft cupboard.

Through our care and friendliness the children will begin to know God's love.

Emma Holmes, Janet Bidwell & Nicola White.

## **Bible Study Groups**

### **Tuesday Group**

We meet on Tuesday afternoons for one hour study of Scripture. 2.30 – 3.30. Recently we have been studying Chapters 1 – 10 of the Acts of the Apostles, trying to see what relevance this might have to our own lives and Church. The discussion around this can be very lively and sometimes funny. We can ask all those questions we have always wanted to ask but been afraid to in case we appeared foolish. Each meeting begins with prayer, and ends with specific prayers from those present. A recent development

is that we pray specifically for Emma, Janet and the youth team and also for the uniformed groups. One person undertakes to write to Fr. Ray once a month to remind him that we at St. Marys have not forgotten him. Anyone is welcome to join us as and when they can. For details of venue contact Toni Whitehead.

### Wednesday Evening Group

Following our exploration of the Old Testament earlier in the year, the Wednesday evening Bible Study Group considered the Epistle to the Hebrews during the autumn term.

This winter we discussed St. Paul's letter to the Ephesians. We were assisted in this with a series of talks recorded by the former Archbishop of Canterbury, George Carey, to the Bognor Regis Bible Week last year, which we found most informative, inspiring and at times highly amusing.

We are having a break now before Easter so that members can join in the Lent Course organised by Bognor Regis Churches Together; we shall meet again after the Easter break. Please see the weekly Pew Sheet & 'Star of the Sea' for details.

Do please come and join us. We are not sober-sides or religious fanatics, nor have we been radicalised in any way! We just share, like you, a love of our Lord and a faith which is described in Hebrews 11 as "being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see." If that fits with your philosophy then come along and learn where that will lead you.

John Godfrey

### St Mary's Choir Report

The year started with the first of the midweek services - The Epiphany.

I am always thankful to our Choir members for their commitment to the Choir. Those who sing at all the midweek services in the year, Christmas and Easter Services as well as every Sunday: this coupled with our Concert programme and the Monthly Choral Evensong.

We have a busy season of Weddings here at St Mary's where the Choir enjoys singing. This, together with rehearsals every week, accounts for a staggering 130 days in the year where the choir is involved. This is true commitment as well as the time in their busy lives.

Burns' Night was very enjoyable with some of the Choir involved in the Dancing although I think some should stick to the singing!

The Choir was then busy rehearsing for Easter services and our Jesus Christ Superstar Concert which was a very moving Concert and enjoyed by all.

We were pleased to sing once again Faure's Requiem as part of All Souls' Day Service. The Advent Carol service, our Christmas Concert and Carol Service were lovely, and it was good to see Jennie Witton and Rachel Ayers back with us at Christmas.

Our St Cecilia Concert was very challenging but proved popular with our large audience where we performed Hymn to St Cecilia, Rutter's Requiem and Vivaldi's Gloria.

During December we were pleased to be invited to sing at Ford Prison Carol Service for a 2nd year running. Once again it proved to be a very enjoyable Concert.

During the forthcoming year as well as all the Church commitments the Choir will be singing in our Concert Program: Palm Sunday – The Seven Last Words On The Cross

by Haydn, Prom Concert as part of the Flower Festival, Joseph And His Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat and a Christmas Concert.

My thanks to Fr Timothy and everyone at St Mary's for their continued support to the Choir and myself.

James Rushman

### **Social and Fundraising Committee**

Once again the committee had a busy and enjoyable year; planning, organising and arranging a variety of events. As well as mission, the programme is designed to develop & support friendships, networks and links between local groups, and to raise money for the church.. It is hope that the different events appeal to a wide range of people, serving both regular church goers, and also the wider village community.

2009 ended/2010 began with the New Year's Eve Party & Watch Night Service. This was very popular with a 3 course buffet, games, dancing & a glass of 'Fizzy' to welcome in 2010. We all donned our kilts at the end of the month for another favourite –The Burns' Night Supper. This was, as usual, a sell out, with about 120 people attending.

In March the APCM lunch was a lovely hot meal, and was very welcome once the business at the APCM had been concluded.

April saw the Quiz evening and Ploughman's Supper and this was followed at the Bank Holiday weekend by 'Men in Tights' - The Mediaeval Banquet. A wonderful 4 course meal interspersed with maypole dancing, madrigal singing and games.

The Flower Festival & Open Gardens Weekend was the next event to be organised. What a truly memorable weekend that was! The Church looked magnificent with its many arrangements. We were able to make a donation of £1,500 to Home Start – Arun from this event.

In July we paraded in Edwardian Costume for the 'Good Old Days' With David as MC. Who will ever forget the comedian?

In September the choir sang 'Joseph and his Amazing Technicolour Dreamcoat' as part of the patronal celebrations, and at the end of the month we were delighted to welcome Bishop Mark Sowerby, the new Bishop of Horsham to our Sunday Eucharists. About 150 people attended the hot buffet lunch that followed, and this gave us the chance to meet the bishop and chat to him and each other.

Something new for Harvest was a supper on the Sunday evening where people hosted their own table. The proceeds of this evening went to the Nepal Orphanage appeal.

Later in the month we welcomed the first visit of the Phoenix Big Band to Felpham.

There was a rather sad occasion for our parish on Sunday 24th October, when we said 'au revoir' to Father Ray as he left Felpham to move to the college of St. Barnabas. A Sunday afternoon tea and presentation preceded a Songs of Praise in the Church.

We were to stage a Christmas Tree Festival in December, but unfortunately, we were victims of the cold weather and snow and so this event was cancelled. We did, however hold the Christmas fair a week later than planned.

The year ended as it began with a New Year's Eve Party.

Thank you to Pat & Stan for continuing to run the ever popular bookstall, which raises in excess of £1,000 each year, and also to Denis for the 'Felpham Calendar'. The Table Top Sales continue to be popular, with all the tables always fully taken up.

How much did we raise? – If you include the various events for specific charities, probably in the region of £20,000

Our thanks goes to all the committee & its helpers, especially Joyce Connors, whose help and advice is invaluable. To those of you who sell tickets, run stalls, give your time, donate food & the many other items we require, such as washing up! Finally a big THANK YOU must go to yourselves, and the wider community for turning up and enjoying yourselves, for opening your wallets & purses (we sometimes see the odd moth!), and for assisting us when required.

If you would like to join us, you will be very welcome, and if you have any ideas for future events, please let us know.

Social & Fund Raising Committee

### **Men's Group Annual Report**

We have had another interesting year, with a varied programme including escorted tours of the church and of the heavens (or at least that bit of it shown at Chichester Planetarium), energetic pursuits such as boules and pitch and putt, as well as indulgences of barbecue, cheese and wine, and Christmas dinner (but not all at the same time!).

We had hoped for an escorted tour of the Chichester Festival Theatre but at the last minute the theatre had to cancel, so this is a pleasure deferred until 2011, we hope.

Our membership remains strong at about 35 and we look forward to our 16th year and another programme of events which we are sure will attract even more men of St. Mary's to join us.

John Godfrey

### **Bellringer's Report 2010**

During the year we rang for a total of 14 weddings – it seems that generally if couples decide to get married in church now that they have the bells which is good. At the end of last year we had some Navy "St.Mary's Felpham" polo shirts made up with a bell logo so the ringers should all look very smart for weddings this year!

The ladder access was sorted during the year so we have been able to access the tower again. Unfortunately there are lots of pigeon feathers up there again due some of

the netting blowing down during the year so a Tower Cleaning evening has been arranged for 6 April to give it a good spring clean.

A new set of ropes was ordered back in September to replace the set put up when the bells were re-hung in 1999. This time we have ordered pre-stretched Nylon top ends so they should last a good deal longer than the existing flax set. It will be good to get a complete set of matching blue and gold sallys again!

We have several new learners this year who are making good progress and generally practices and the usual Sunday service ringing have been well attended throughout the year.

The annual Tower Outing this year is coming up very soon on 2 April which is much earlier than normal. We will be starting at Holybourne near Alton and finishing just up the road four towers later at Bramshott. Fingers crossed for some warmer weather by then...

Andrew Last