

# Serving & Transforming the Community team report 2017

*The Serving and Transforming the Community Mission Action Team comprises: Kim Edey, Veronica James, Brenda Large, Maureen Muggleton, Sheila Pilkington, Hennie Sleeman, Pauline Welch, and Jimmy Young/Guy Bridgewater (JY team leader till Autumn 2016, since then GB).*

The first thing to note is a big 'thank you' to the Mission Action Team and to the many members of St Mary's congregations who are actively involved in the local community, and who are taking seriously the Kingdom call to serve and transform it through their presence, their time, their energies, their love, and their commitment. As part of the Serving and Transforming the Community MAP teams reflections on this earlier in the year it was decided to attempt some form of audit of the various activities that people were involved with *outside* of the churches activities, and although nothing specific was to emerge from this, it was tremendously encouraging to see how many and varied the ways in which people served.

As a church we express our outward life in varied ways - from our outward giving, through to acts of service, on through our prayers, and in our engagement with the wider community. This year we have been committed to supporting a number of organisations at a local, national, and international level through prayer, and financial giving and in 2016 have been supporting: The Condor Vision Trust - which supports ministries active in Peru, particularly in areas of prison ministry, education, and counselling/healing; Anchor Counselling - an organisation providing counselling for those in need of help - an organisation in partnership with Horsham Churches Together; and "Voices in Exile" - to help fund a caseworker to provide vital support for refugees who are based in Sussex, and as part of a wider Diocesan response. Additionally our Harvest gifts went to the Salvation Army "Hope Inn" project; 2016's Lent appeal and funds raised through 'Lent Lunches' went to the Save the Children Fund's Syrian appeal, while 2017's collection will be shared with World Vision; and the Advent collection went to support Christian Aid.

2017 sees a new 'Lent Angels' scheme, where members of the congregation have been invited to offer time and energy as a resource that others can draw upon, in the shape of fulfilling simple tasks, while the recipients of this can then donate to support the Thanks a Million appeal.

For 2018 our Mission Action Plan recommends that (dependent upon permissions and funding) we move our Pre-School premises into a purpose designed area in the Church Centre (redeveloped in partnership with the Building & Fabric team and the "Thanks a Million" fundraising project)

Horsham District Council's "Adopt-a-Street" scheme was taken up by the young people this autumn, (following the Kairos congregation earlier in the year) as they donned high-vis jackets and took up some black bags to clear the memorial gardens and bushes. It is also worth highlighting special thanks to Sheila Pilkington whose Cakes and preserves stall in the Tower not only has kept us in wonderful goodies, but also raises significant money for mission.

Finally, volunteers from St Mary's again supported the Horsham Churches Together Night Shelter over the winter months, although we were unfortunately unable to provide a venue for hosting again this year. The work of Horsham Churches Together continues to be supported and encouraged, under the new Moderator Tom Murray and new Development Coordinator Rosemary Couchman. This year Jimmy has joined the Executive committee, and on Palm Sunday St Mary's will be hosting a performance of Grenville Richard Harding's "The Crucifixion" on behalf of HCT, in aid of Horsham Churches Night Shelter and Horsham District Foodbank.

## **St. Mary's Nursery, March 2017**

At our 'Forest schools' sessions, our pre-school children have the opportunity to play outdoors all morning, with mud, sticks etc. building dens, making traps & obstacle courses and climbing trees. We search for bugs and fungi, learn skills with tools such as saws, palm drills and hand drills and we learn to make fires. It is a great opportunity for the children to learn what they need to do to stay safe and build resilience and problem solving skills. Children, parents and staff all love it and it has enabled us to increase the overall number of sessions we can offer.

We are pleased that we continue to be able to care for and support many families beyond providing care and education for their children. We are able to direct families to where they can get extra support when they need it and we are about to facilitate another parenting course.

We are all very excited about the prospect of moving to the Barn, although we know that we will have to wait a bit longer yet. A more immediate change will be our name as we are going to be St. Mary's Pre-School from September this year.

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Karen Inglis-Taylor