

**GROWING AS DISCIPLES TEAM**  
**REPORT TO THE ST MARY'S CHURCH CONGREGATION**  
**AGM 18<sup>TH</sup> MARCH 2018**

Team members : Joyce Brown, Lynn Keble, Alistair Inglis-Taylor, Matt Lee, Katherine Potter, Fiona Prentice, Mark Tomlinson, Jimmy Young/Guy Bridgewater (team leader)

Warmest thanks to all the volunteers who run and host home and small groups across the week, creating space and opportunity for people to grow in their discipleship in a variety of different contexts; to all who volunteer and support the families and children's work; to all who staff the various youth activities that take place; and to everyone else who is involved in developing the discipleship of us all in the church.

<b>Objectives for 2017/18</b>	<b>Achieved</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>New Sunday Brunch Group (for 20s &amp; 30s)</b></li><li>• <b>Teaching Programme for the "Year of the Bible"</b></li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Established on monthly basis</li><li>• Personal whole Bible reading programmes encouraged</li><li>• 33 part sermon series through every book of the Bible</li><li>• 3 training mornings/days on the Bible</li><li>• Diocesan Lent Course &amp; Home Group Studies on the Bible</li><li>• "Open the Book" team teaching Bible stories in regular Primary assemblies</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Objectives for the Year 2018/9</b></li></ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Prayer Teaching programme (in partnership with worshipping &amp; Praying team) – eg training seminars, sermon series, week of guided prayer</b></li><li>• <b>Join up Homegroups &amp; Informal service with recommended syllabus for "going deeper" in our faith</b></li></ul>	

## Comments on other areas that the team oversees

### • 2017 Annual report from the families and children's worker

It has been another busy year with blessing and change in the work role and the children's ministries. A large part of the work this year has been about vision & working with God (vital!) then reviewing and pruning.

The specific goals for last year were

- 🕯️ to initiate more intergenerational links (encouraging relationships/mutual appreciation, the expectation that all ages will be included),
- 🕯️ to recruit more volunteers,
- 🕯️ to pass onto others leadership roles to maintain the attitude of invitation and inclusion into all that we do at St Mary's
- 🕯️ to support families to spiritually nurture themselves in their daily lives

Most of the work has been documented via a termly newsletter, on the families' Facebook page and on the church website. The goals for 2018 will be to continue to support and equip the multi-talented volunteers and to encourage a personal and corporate prayer life in this *Year of Prayer*.

The FACT (Families' & Children's Team) continues to coordinate & prioritise what to focus on, giving valuable feedback from their groups and enabling a better harmonisation of resources and vision for St Mary's ministry to families and children.

This year we tried some new social events (making hot cross buns, an appreciation lunch/training/retreat for all Lighthouse leaders at Micklepage and a Firework Family Feast) as well as the usual tea party for grandparents, crib service Nativity party & very popular Who Let the Dads out? sessions. We had a *Year of the Bible* themed fundraiser for *Thanks a Million* selling a book of Bible text verses individually illustrated by families. This book is a wonderful snapshot of the diverse church family in 2017.

We also look outwards into the town; families from the school, preschool and those attending Little Footprints are warmly welcomed to all our events. We were involved in some of the *Horsham Churches Together* town events and London Road Methodist Church's *Messy Church*. The *Open the Book* team has also built a reputation within the Horsham Primary schools and is much in demand with their stories supported with wonderful 'home-made' props.

Of course one of the joys of this post is working alongside such lovely, generous and skilled people seeking the Kingdom of God. I thank God for you all especially all the volunteers from First Steps, baptism visiting, Little Footprints, the party events' organisers, the crèche, the preschool, the Lighthouse, the Kairos team, the grapes for Communion providers, the holiday club teams, the happy-bag providers, WhoLetTheDadsOut? , the dropoff dropin café, the FACT team, together with the support and guidance of the leadership team and the office.

On a personal note, I took a 3-month sabbatical over the summer, which was invaluable, and I thank the church for allowing me such an amazing opportunity! I spent the time getting fitter physically & spiritually.

Fiona Prentice

Families' & Children's worker

FCW role is to

- overview of the provision of families' and children's ministries at St Mary's to ensure we are welcoming to families & children and help them grow in faith and to know & show God's love.

- model, communicate and challenge everything we do in God's name
- ensure a balance of worship, fellowship, discipleship, evangelism and service in all our ministries with families & children.

- **2017 Annual report from the Lighthouse**

there are 4 groups within Lighthouse

**Beamers** crèche 0-2 year olds, in the Trinity chapel

**Sparklers** 2+ -5 year olds or not yet ready for the Lasers, in the Leslie room

**Lasers** 5-11 year olds, in the Barn

**CIA** 11+, in the clergy vestry

### **Report from crèche**

Now that most of the 3 year olds are going up to the Leslie room for their activities, the crèche has returned to a calmer, 'baby-safe ' space with usually 2 or 3 children per week (sometimes up to 13!).

Although it is manned by 2 volunteers, most parents want to stay with their little one although they are gently encourage to go back into the service.

The crèche is now set up and manned EVERY Sunday except major church festivals like Easter Day and Christmas Day. This provision is thanks to a wonderful team of volunteers. We would like to thank all those volunteers for their commitment and dedication.

Sue West and Maureen Muggleton set up the crèche each Sunday and clean, repair and sort the happy bags, the crèche toys and the Leslie room toys regularly but we always appreciate any help as and when you notice something.

The crèche is a wonderfully welcoming space – although sometimes cold in winter- and an important ministry to newcomers as well as our ever-expanding church family!!

*Sue West/Fiona Prentice*

### **Report from Lasers and Sparklers**

Lighthouse has seen another fruitful year in 2017. Following Fiona's return from sabbatical, we agreed that I formalise my role as coordinator, managing the day-to-day running of the group with her support and oversight. It has so far been a hugely rewarding role and I am looking forward to continuing this year. Currently, there are sixty-six children on the roll with an average of between twenty and thirty attending our groups (Sparklers & Lasers) each week.

We are in the process of rolling out our colourful new logo and have been posting pictures of what we have created on the Facebook page and our noticeboards. Our dedicated team of around fifteen volunteers and leaders are working hard to support all the children at the start of their faith journey.

2017 has also been the second year that has seen the Sparklers relocate to the Leslie Room during the 9.30 Sunday service; a successful move that enables them to be closer to their parents and younger siblings and to take Communion alongside their families. The Sparklers have been busy learning about God's love and the Parables, including those of *the lost sheep* and *the mustard tree* and have produced some fantastic arts and crafts.

The older Lasers group still meet in the Barn and enjoy a packed morning before returning to Church in time for Holy Communion. Several of older Lasers completed the *Communion before Confirmation* course this year and the group have enjoyed a visit from the Open The Book Team as well as sessions exploring Biblical truths, stories and the way in which Jesus can be relevant in their lives.

We are all looking forward to our World Vision fundraiser in March, the Grandparents' and Godparents' tea where the children act as waiters and waitresses to their guests and the wider Church family. This term we will also be following the Year of Prayer theme, with sessions on the Lord's Prayer and how prayer equips us as Christians and will be looking forward to spending some time in the vicarage garden as the weather improves.

Thank you to all the Lighthouse leaders and volunteers, including the three currently on maternity leave for all the dedicated and inspirational work that they do.

*Liz*

*Lighthouse coordinator*

## **Report from CIA (Christians in Action)**

Since moving into the Clergy Vestry, CIA for young people in year 7+(11+) has covered a wide variety of topics in the past year. We've learnt about the stories of world changers, like Martin Luther King Jr and explored contemporary topics such as mental health. In the coming weeks we're looking forward to exploring some contemporary topics such as the Suffragettes & #MeToo through the lens of the Christian faith, as well as deepening our prayer life as we participate in the Diocesan 'Year of Prayer'.

Over the past 12 months we've enjoyed several special events ranging from Cake & Games at Neil's house; May Camp & Soul Survivor – These have been a great opportunity for young people to grow together in faith.

We've also had the opportunity to participate in the local YMCA DLG Sleep Easy event where we slept outside in the cold for one night, raising money for the invaluable work of the local YMCA.

In September 2017, we said thank you & goodbye to Alistair IT who stepped down after 21 years of service. Lastly, a huge thank you to our fab current volunteers, Becky and Neil, who do a fantastic job of leading sessions, facilitating discussion and sharing their faith with our wonderful young people.

## **Matt Lee**

*(Student Youth Worker)*

- **Little Footprints**

Little Footprints celebrated its 8<sup>th</sup> Birthday last September. It continues to be a very popular toddler and baby group, currently welcoming an average of 23 families each week for fun and socializing. Mother's Union members serve refreshments. We are very excited to announce that some weeks we have had 32 families, which is great but perhaps a bit challenging in terms of resources. This year we have welcomed around 20 new families with a large proportion of them returning in following weeks. One week in January we welcomed 41 families but the session was too busy so we have been forced to limit subsequent sessions. These numbers do not include helpers' families.

Little Footprints is a stepping-stone into life with St. Mary's Church, providing a friendly environment for children and their parents in our parish. At the session we offer age-appropriate toys including a separate baby area. There is a craft and a tactile activity every week, reflecting seasonal or Christian festivals. The session ends with song time with musical instruments and we celebrate any children's birthdays. We charge a small entrance fee and use this money for refreshments and craft materials. The remainder is saved for new toys and our end-of-term parties.

We support popular charity fundraising events including Red Nose Day (24<sup>th</sup> March 2017 - £135), Macmillan's World's Biggest Coffee Morning (29<sup>th</sup> September 2017 - £102), Children in Need (17<sup>th</sup> November 2017 - £83), Save the Children Christmas jumper appeal (15<sup>th</sup> December 2017 - £38.50). As the redevelopment of the barn will benefit our group we also decided to hold a bring & buy and cake sale for the Thanks a Million campaign (26<sup>th</sup> May 2017 - £93.50).

Toddler praise is still held at the last session of each term, offering a gentle introduction to Christian life, followed by a 'treat' activity – we once-again hired a bouncy castle and soft play equipment that was setup in the barn last July, to the delight of the children; it was a great start to the Summer holidays. At Christmas and Easter we celebrate in the Church before returning to the barn for refreshments and craft suitable for each occasion, as well as a small gift for each child – this year we did eggs at Easter and a book at Christmas. Interestingly, we find these sessions are not as well attended as the weekly sessions.

The Little Footprints team has lost some long-term significant contributors this year, namely Lynne Keeble, Jay Pearson and Rachel Tomlinson. They have left because their children are now at school and pre-school. These team members passed on their knowledge and information to the current team and we thank them for all that they did over the years they served Little Footprints, they are greatly missed.

The Mothers Union is of invaluable support to us and may we, once again, extend our heartfelt thanks for all their hard work in the kitchen. Volunteering to be a Little Footprints helper is a huge commitment, involving more behind-the-scenes work than one might think, so my sincere thanks go to our current team and their families: Alex Humphries, Sue Lismer, Linda Mapp, Laura Crooks, Karen Perrett, Zoe Maylon, Harriet Taylor, Becky Melliard, and Claire Airey. We will sadly be losing 3 members of the team in the summer so need to start thinking about recruitment for September 2018.

Caroline Comper

## • **St Mary's Youth Work Report for 2018 AGM**

### **Introduction**

Once again it has been another active and exciting year for young people (and youth leaders!) who are involved with the youth ministry program at St Mary's/Horsham Parish. As a student youth worker, this year has supplied with some great opportunities to train and learn alongside so many great people and work with a wonderful bunch of young people! The previous 12 months have been full of fantastic events in which I hope to tell you a little bit about here:

## **CIA**

Since moving into the Clergy Vestry, CIA for young people in year 7+(11+) has covered a wide variety of topics in the past year. We've learnt about the stories of world changers, like Martin Luther King Jnr and explored contemporary topics such as mental health. In the coming weeks we're looking forward to exploring some contemporary topics such as the Suffragettes & #MeToo through the lens of the Christian faith, as well as deepening our prayer life as we participate in the Diocesan 'Year of Prayer'. Lastly, a huge thank you to our fab volunteer's Becky and Neil who do a fantastic job of leading sessions, facilitating discussion and sharing their faith with our wonderful young people.

## **TGIF**

It has been such great fun to lead TGIF this term that I have been asked to report separately on what's been happening.

## **Café Connect/Youth Alpha**

Over the past 12 months we've seen Café Connect; a monthly youth café for secondary aged young people to come and discuss big topics & questions within the Christian faith morph into Youth Alpha; a monthly café style youth club for young people to come and explore the basics to the Christian faith. At Café Connect (April-July) we explored topics such as 'Discovering your purpose' and how we might respond in the light of the refugee crisis. At Youth Alpha, we have been exploring topics such as 'Who is Jesus & why did He die' and 'What is faith'. We will continue to be covering the youth alpha content until the end of this academic year – finishing with a BBQ in July!

## **Special Events (HCT Nativity Trail etc)**

We've one or two special events in the past year, most notably the HCT Nativity Trail! St Mary's were dressed up as Shepherds on the Carfax in December and were attending their flock of real sheep, provided generously by Sue West! We donned our thickest jumpers to stay warm whilst handing out Christmas nativity stories to passers by and pointed them towards the brilliant carol concert that evening. A big thank-you to all who helped out!

## **Residentials (May Camp & Soul Survivor)**

St Mary's had a fab time last year at May Camp, joining up with Horsham Parish attend May Camp and Soul Survivor. Both residentials were a great opportunity for young people to get together for the weekend; hang out and learn more about how to live as a Christian today. Particular highlights include mattress surfing at May Camp and obstacle course racing at Soul Survivor.

## **18s-30's Ministry**

Although it's not quite under my 'work remit' I would like to report back the amazing growth within the 18s to 30s community at St Mary's. I started monthly Brunch back in September 2016 as a way of bringing together this small, yet faithful demographic of the church to enjoy fellowship, faith, and good food. Since its initial launch we've also begun to host games nights too. It is my hope and prayer that this area of church life continues to grow and prosper.

## **Schools Work**

Few might know that when I'm not running TGIF or doing a bible study with CIA that I am in schools delivering a number of services. Firstly, I am part of the Eliv8 team who deliver courses to referred students experiencing low self-esteem, self-confidence issues or are struggling to fit in. Secondly, I do detached youth work on the playground, checking in with the students and providing support where necessary; and mentoring referred students who are facing a whole range life experiences.

## **AGM & Beyond!**

It brings me great delight to report that even more fun and exciting plans are being prepared as I write this for the coming year. CIA will be exploring the Diocesan 'Year Of Prayer' and continue to explore the gospel message with our young people. We're excited for the lighter warmer weather at TGIF to enable us to use the barrack field for more crazy games. I must also add a huge thank you here to all the volunteers who give hours of their week to come and spend time with young people - none of what we do could happen without you! Please do continue for the work of each youth project: It brings us such joy to see young people journeying with The Lord.

## **Matt Lee**

*(Student Youth Worker)*

### **• Home and Small Group Report**

The number of home groups has dropped quite a bit this year with the demise of Charles Goode's group, Simon Quail's group and a new group formed out of last year's confirmation class. So we are now at 10 with around 80 members. Most of the current newer groups have now finished the Pilgrim series, while the "Bible in One Year" E100 course was popular for many of the more established groups. In addition other groups such as "What's the Pint" continue to meet to serve a related purpose.

We have continued to communicate occasionally with the leaders with ideas of books/guides to study and so on, and have held one leader's meeting. We did not hold a "home group Sunday" or a Home Group Communion this year.

Looking to the Future, a recent Home Group leaders meeting and subsequent Growing As Disciples team meeting, reconfirmed our desire to promote small groups and home groups as a key part of church life. We will continue to raise their profile on Sunday Services, look for ways to seed new groups and encourage members to "be braver" about inviting people to join their groups.

In a significant change, we will henceforth be encouraging all groups to follow the same recommended short course each "semester" (eg currently the diocesan Lent course, followed later in the year by another course for the Year of Prayer), while still expecting them to choose their own study topics for the rest of the weeks in between. In addition, we will be encouraging Home Group members to attend the (twice a month) Informal Evening services, which will be following the same theme & material.

This will provide an opportunity to share things the groups are learning, or questions that are arising, more widely. By linking up Home Groups and evening services in this way, the overall aim is to create a loosely joined-up "going deeper" stream at St. Mary's – a focus for going deeper in fellowship, care, understanding and worship.

We will also encourage other members of the congregation to join a small group for the 6 week Lent course – it can be a good way to experience a small group but with an easy "way out" if it doesn't work out. In addition Wednesday evening compline services will also follow the Lent Course, and the morning groups taking place in the Leslie Room will be advertised as open to new people wishing to study it.

Katherine Potter