

Growing as Disciples MAP team report for AGM - 2017

The Growing as Disciples Mission Action Team comprises: Joyce Brown, Alistair Inglis-Taylor, Matt Lee, Lynn Keeble, Katherine Potter, Fiona Prentice, and Jimmy Young (team leader).

St Mary's has a wide range of activities of various intentions and descriptions, with a full range of ages involved - from newborns and toddlers, through the children and teenagers, through to young adults, and then onto those of increasing ages(!) – with opportunities being sought for all to be able to grow in their discipleship as we seek to follow Jesus here in Horsham in the 21st Century. To get more details than this brief overview can offer please do look at the relevant reports accompanying this - but it's worth highlighting a few headlines: the work with the young people and families continues to flourish and develop, including another wonderful holiday club week in the summer; new home groups have been planted, while some others have come to the end of their natural cycle and disbanded; last May saw our 'Pentecost Away day' (which was, somewhat enigmatically, neither away, nor a whole day) where people of all ages came together to think about how we can "Thrive" as followers of Jesus; and in October we saw 8 individuals from St Mary's getting confirmed in the confirmation service that took place here.

The Diocesan "Year of the Bible" has been taken on enthusiastically across the church in 2017 - with a sermon series taking us through all the books of the Bible across the year, reading plans being shared and taken on as a challenge to read the Bible in one year, and with various events taking place throughout the year to enable us to engage with the Bible. Various groups that meet across the weeks - from home groups to youth groups - have also adopted the Year of the Bible as part of their discipleship journey; and a team of "Open the book" storytellers have begun going into St Mary's school regularly to help bring the bible to life for the children through interactive and engaging story telling - made up of individuals from St Mary's and other local churches this is part of a Bible Society scheme, and has been warmly received and enthusiastically welcomed by all at the school.

Additionally we as a team have spent some time over the past year thinking about the areas of church life where we are at our weakest, and how to develop them, and have consequently started a regular Sunday brunch for those in their 20's and 30's which will hopefully grow and develop across the next year.

Our focus for the next year will be to continue to identify appropriate ways to grow in discipleship through the 'Year of the Bible' - but also to look towards 2018 and what the Diocese has identified to be a 'Year of Prayer', and to explore what accompanying teaching and discipleship programmes we can develop. The other major focus will be to keep an eye on the ongoing development of youth and children's work, particularly as Matt enters into his third year of his degree in Youth work and Theology, and we seek to build on what has been achieved in the past few years.

To conclude, thanks should be paid to everyone who is involved in the various groups and activities that go on throughout the week. There are so many different people and groups that to thank them all individually would be like one of the *less interesting* genealogy lists in Numbers or Deuteronomy, so some general thanks to all who are involved and committed in so many ways will have to suffice here:

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.