

## ST MARY'S CHURCH REPORT 2018/19

Last year saw some significant changes at St. Mary's when we said "Goodbye" to Guy and Jebbs who had been part of our Church Family for eleven years as they set off for new horizons in Bath. We hold them in our prayers in their new surroundings. Matt Lee completed his course as trainee youth worker and has now taken up a permanent role at the Matrix Trust in Guildford.

As one season finishes then another begins. In June we welcomed Rebecca as our new curate and her family: Simon, Abigail and Noah. Laura Fletcher joined the leadership team to work alongside Fiona Prentice (who reduced her hours) on the Families and Children's Ministry. We look forward to hearing of new ideas and activities.

We offer immense thanks to Joyce Brown and Caroline Crook for their many years of dedication and who have now handed on their roles as Safeguarding Officers. We are extremely grateful to Richard Pearson who has taken on the role of Parish Safeguarding Officer and to Rachel Tomlinson who now looks after us at St. Mary's.

We have been well cared for by the clergy during this time of vacancy with visits from Archdeacon Fiona, Bernard, our interim Rector, Fr. David, Alan, Natalie and our readers Simon and Karen. Each has presented us with thought provoking sermons.

2018 Was the "Year of Prayer". A dedicated prayer room was set up and a week of intercessory prayer was held. This proved so beneficial that the prayer room is still used.

We continue to be grateful to Alison and her team of office volunteers who bring great support across the board. To our vergers Jane Gorrie for her diligence and warm welcome to the many visitors we see. Thank you to Keith Burgess for looking after our finances. Thank you to our faithful teams of sidespeople, servers, sacristy helpers, flower arrangers, church welcomers, coffee teams and bell ringers. Grateful thanks to all those people who play a vital role in our MAP teams and our pastoral visitors who give so freely of their time. Our thanks to Denise Herrington and Manny Holden and their team of volunteers from St. Mary's who for the seventh year running have staffed and volunteered at the Night Shelter.

We are immensely proud of the staff and children of St. Mary's Pre-School. The "Forest School" activities are fun for children as well as adults. We take pride in our close links with St. Mary's (Church Aided) school, particularly to Alex Bird who, having taken on the position of headteacher just over a year ago, saw the school attain an overall standard of "Good" in the recent Ofsted. Alex is supported in his role by a dedicated team of teachers and also governors, a large majority of whom are from St. Mary's and led by the chair of governors, Claire Swarbrick.

Organised by Judy Brinkworth and Jo Benson, another successful Flower Festival took place in 2018 to the theme of "Inspired" based on books, music and works of art inspired by the Christian story. The event was complemented by prayer spaces in the church, the opening concert, closing Civic service and St. Mary's school country dancing in Causeway.

Headed up by Jeremy and Mike, together with chorister trainer Valerie and our worship band leader Billy, we are blessed by our talented musicians and choir who greatly complement our worship week in, week out and also on other special occasions for deanery,

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diocesan and civic services. It has been particularly helpful during the vacancy that Mike has helped in the selection of hymns.

The churchwardens accept that we may not have mentioned everyone by name who helps, organises and inspires our worship at St. Mary's so, to everyone who assists in no matter how small a capacity, THANK YOU.

Not long after Guy left we received notification that the Horsham Team parish would be subject to a review and that we would not be in a position of appointing a new incumbent until a review had been completed. Many of you will be aware that this team review has been taking place over the last few months and two weeks ago Archdeacon Fiona announced her proposals. As you probably already know the proposal being put forward is for St. John's in Broadbridge Heath to break away from the Horsham Parish team and become a parish on its own, similar to what happened only a few years ago with St. Mark's in Holbrook. The final decision is yet to be made but if all goes according to plan we might expect to see St. John's being a separate Parish by the end of 2019.

All this means that we will shortly be in a position of being able to look for a new Vicar (Team Rector) here at St. Mary's. We currently have a restriction (from the Diocese) on appointing a new incumbent but that only lasts a year from when Guy left. At our DCC meetings we have begun work on our Parish Profile which is kind of like our sales brochure for a new vicar. With the new DCC we will carry on this work in earnest over the coming months. Exciting and interesting times ahead.

For many of us this time of waiting between Vicars is frustrating, we want answers and we want them now. We find ourselves so often in our lives today, wanting and expecting instant solutions and quick answers. It is God who reminds us that we need to wait, and it will be God who decides when things will happen and how.

*Ecclesiastes 3:1-8*

*Everything that happens in this world happens at the time God chooses.*

<sup>2</sup> *He sets the time for birth and the time for death,*

*the time for planting and the time for pulling up,*

<sup>3</sup> *the time for killing and the time for healing,*

*the time for tearing down and the time for building.*

It is in Isaiah that we are reminded that the Lord will renew the strength of those who wait.

[Isaiah 40:31](#)

*But they who wait for the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles; they shall run and not be weary; they shall walk and not faint.*

So, we believe that as we wait patiently, through Parish reviews and all the other legal matters that have to be gone through, it will be when the time is right that we will be found a new Vicar, who is someone who meets our needs and is keen to walk with us in faith as we strive to be a Church inspired by God's passion for the world.

*Stephen Benson, Nigel Stalley, Elizabeth Lickiss and Morag Davies, the Churchwarden team*