

St. Mary's Report to the APCM for 2019.

For St. Mary's, 2019 was a year without a vicar. We were very grateful for all the support given to us by Rev. Rebecca Tuck, Rev. Alan Mayer and Rev. Bernard Sinton; and up until November Rev. Natalie Loveless. They did a fantastic job in keeping services running smoothly. In September, we were pleased to announce the appointment of Rev. Canon Lisa Barnett as the new vicar of Horsham, starting at the beginning of 2020.

A wide variety of services and events have taken place during the year from social activities to those deepening our Christian faith. During Lent the Rev. Alan Mayer led a meditation course which was very well received. The Horsham branch of the British Legion held a service to lay up an old and commission a new standard.

In May Lee Buck took up his position of Parish Youth Enabler. Our youth work has flourished with Lee and a strong team of willing helpers. We had an Episcopal Visitation from Arch Deacon Fiona and the Rev. David Beale reviewing the parish as a whole. The outcome of this was St. John's Broadbridge Heath becoming a separate parish in December.

Our ever popular Flower Festival theme this year was "Diversity". Multiple prayer stations were set up in and around the displays. Members of the prayer team were on duty throughout the festival to offer support for anyone in need. The festival is also a major fund raising event, the opening service being a concert and a chance to preview the displays. There were daily lunchtime recitals during the festival. On the Saturday of the festival we had the honour of holding Priestly Ordinations, Rev. Rebecca Tuck being one of the new priests. In July we held the farewell service for Bishop Mark Sowerby, leaving to take up a new post as the Principal of the College of the Resurrection in Mirfield.

Our music continues to be a very important part of our worship at St. Mary's and our fifty strong choir continues to provide training and support for both new and long standing choristers.

In September twenty people from our Pastoral Visitors and Healing Support Team attended an Acorn Listening Course which was well received. Morag Davies completed the Authorised Lay Ministry course in Pastoral Care. Our volunteer drivers have been very busy taking folk to hospital and doctors appointments. This is a service that is much appreciated for the comfort and company of those receiving treatment. Home Communion are taken to those who are housebound and those in nursing homes, on a monthly basis. In

October Rev. Alan Mayer was our guest speaker at the Healing Service which was led by Rev. Natalie Loveless.

There have been a number of fund raising events during the year to support the “Thanks a million appeal”, notably two jazz evenings and another successful Fun Run. Discussions have taken place with our architect about the south aisle reordering and the redevelopment of the Church Centre.

With the run up to the anticipated Brexit in October a prayer chapel was set up by Rev. Rebecca Tuck for the local community, to pray for our nation. This was picked up by local and national media.

We are very proud of the staff and children at St. Mary’s pre-school which along with the “Forest School” provide a range of outdoor and indoor learning activities. We continue to see a growth in ministry with children and young families. During the year in conjunction with St. Mary’s Primary School, prayer spaces were set up. The children went round the church looking at different aspects of prayer.

Charities supported in 2019 included Teach Beyond, Christian Aid, Diocesan Family Support Work, Turning Tides, Youth work at the Y Centre, Horsham Matters the Night Shelter. This winter we provided the Barn as a venue on Sunday evenings. In Advent a reverse Advent Calendar project was set up where people put an item in a box each day, with the gifts going to the Food Bank.

Thanks go to our Verger and Office Administrator for the warmth and welcome they bring to those who visit, and also to our Church Welcomers who enable us to keep the church open for a number of hours each day of the week. During December over 9,000 people came into the Church to visit or attend services. Our Church Centre and Barn continue to be used daily by a wide variety of community groups.

Morag Davies