



ST. JOHN'S CHURCH
LACEY GREEN, LOOSLEY ROW
AND SPEEN
ANNUAL REPORT 2015

Contents

Vicar’s Remarks..... 2
Churchwardens’ Annual Report..... 3
St. John’s Church Choir 4
Server’s Report..... 5
PCC Report 6
Junior Church 7
House Groups..... 8
 Monday Afternoons 8
 Wednesday Evenings 8
 Thursday Evenings 8
Fundraising Report..... 9
Treasurer’s Report 10
 General Fund..... 10
 Restoration Fund and Organ Fund..... 11
 Outlook for 2016..... 11

Vicar's Remarks

The key word which springs to my mind as I reflect on the past year at St. John's is "consolidation". It has been a good year in which a great deal has been achieved and in which none of the inevitable problems and challenges we have faced along the way have proved to be in any way discouraging or insurmountable. In fact, our focus as a Parish has been on a renewed emphasis on mission. Last November, the PCC held an Away Day at St. Dunstan's, Monks Risborough, led by the then Archdeacon of Buckingham, Karen Gorham (now Bishop of Sherborne), in which our mission priorities were agreed to be concerned with the five key areas of welcoming newcomers, strengthening young people, community and pastoral visiting, prayer and teaching on prayer, and the increasing and equipping of lay leadership. Also emerging from the PCC Away Day came some fresh ideas for our Church website and the creating of a Church Facebook page. The PCC also agreed to appoint a small task group to participate on behalf of our Parish in an initiative called "Deanery Learning Communities" held at Holy Trinity Church in Aylesbury. This programme essentially a series of four two-day conferences spread over two years. Alongside people from three other Churches in the Deanery, we are being invited to consider what all the hard work that our Church is engaged in is really about. In other words, to consider what is the purpose of our Church and what is the vision for its future. So, at the conference in February of this year – the first of the four two-day sessions – we were asked to respond to the question "why" – why is our Church here, why do we do what we do, what is the purpose behind all the hard work and energy. And what temptations and distractions do we face that divert us from the real purpose of what we are about. This "why" question, then, is an excellent question for the whole Church to ponder and consider prayerfully. And a question for which there will certainly be a very good answer – and may it truly be for us God's answer, his vision for the Church in our Parish. Our preliminary thoughts are that all our efforts as a Church are principally directed towards bringing people to faith, and supporting and strengthening the members of the Church family in the journey of faith in which we are all engaged. And that this aim and endeavour should run through everything we do. So this would therefore embrace our endeavours through the pastoral offices of Baptism, Weddings and Funerals; Toddler Praise (which we are very keen to revive); Junior Church and work with young people; choir and music which is also, of course, undergirded by a significant spiritual foundation for both adults and young people; work with our two Church schools; our house groups; our engagement in village activities; as well as a variety and range of Church activities including social events and fund-raising initiatives; and much more!

My own personal mission priorities, as agreed in my annual ministerial appraisal, have been and are concerned with developing our mission action planning, with a particular concern for mission activity across all of the three villages of Lacey Green, Loosley Row and Speen, of which our Parish is comprised; contributing positively to the life of the Risborough Team Ministry; and active involvement in developing the relationship of the Church to our two Church Schools of St. John's Primary C of E (Aided) School and Speen C of E (Aided) First School. In relation to the schools work, I am a Governor of both schools. In the case of St. John's School, I have a particular involvement in the RE and Collective worship meetings and a role with the Head Teacher in SIAMS RE appraisal. Use of the Church building by St. John's School, and School visits to Church have increased since last year. In regard to Speen School, I have been appointed SEND Governor and this involves regular meetings with the Head Teacher to consider special needs issues and provision.

There is indeed so much to look forward to as a new year in the cycle of church governance and administration gets underway. I do thank our Churchwardens Pat and Dick for their continuing

encouragement and support; and I do thank our PCC Treasurer Caroline, our PCC Secretary Cathy, and all the key officers of the church and all members of the Parochial Church Council, for their hard work and dedication. I do thank Cher and Rosemary in all they do in ensuring that our Church music is of high calibre. I do thank Suzanne and everyone involved in leading Junior Church. And I do thank all of you, members of our St. John's family, for your commitment and engagement in the life of our Church, and for all your hard work over the past year in anticipation and expectation that the coming year will also be one to celebrate!

Reverend Canon A. F. Bundock
Vicar of St. John's
April 2016

Churchwardens' Annual Report

We welcome you to St John's Annual Parochial Church Meeting for the year 2015. We were delighted to welcome Rev. Canon Tony to St John's and he has now been with us for some 18 months. We have appreciated his change in leadership and it is great to have someone 'at the helm' again.

The Spring visitation by the Lay Chair of Deanery Synod in 2015 went well. He confirmed our records were properly kept and we were given a good report. The process for visitations has changed and our next one will be in 2017.

We are due for a Quinquennial inspection in 2016 and the date of this is awaited.

We can report that the fabric of the Church is in reasonably good order, but, as always there are ongoing repairs to be done. These have to be undertaken as to priority and of course, availability of finance plays an important part. However, we have had several people in the congregation who have come forward to do jobs which has been very welcome but mostly they prefer not to be named. As an example a grave has been repaired, the steps to the boiler house cleaned, window frames within the Church have been painted, grouting in the Church floor, cutting grass and so it goes on. We are very grateful for this help in keeping God's house in order.

There are also a number of people who work, often in the background, who have offered help with ongoing jobs in the Church, and many, who have participated for lots of years, who also have continued their commitment.

We have 4 teams of cleaners working on a weekly rota basis and we thank them for their support. Also we have had a number of regular successful working parties in the Churchyard. Another member of the congregation has kindly given his time to cutting the numerous hedges surrounding the Church and graveyard. The support from all these willing volunteers is very much appreciated.

Similarly, we have been blessed with helpers for fundraising events and new initiatives have been forthcoming. The choir organised an excellent Harvest Supper in the Autumn. The Christmas Fayre was another success and we hope to build on this in 2016. The date will be 3rd December this year.

We would as usual like to give thanks to a number of people who do so much, often working in the background and the Church would not function without them. Our thanks must go to;

- the ladies who wash the linen and set up the Communion,
- the Verger, servers, sidespersons, readers, intercessors and the PCC;
- the Junior Church teachers, the Youth Study leaders the hosts for the House Groups;
- the flower ladies;
- the choir, their leaders and the organists;
- the people on the coffee rota,
- all who assist with fundraising,
- the helpers who look after jobs inside and outside of the Church and those who keep the Churchyard tidy.

We apologise to any person(s) we have omitted to mention.

Everyone has gifts, of one sort or another, to enrich the life of St John's and we do urge you to come forward with your time and talents to help us to upkeep our lovely Church.

Pat Rushmere

Dick Field

[St. John's Church Choir](#)

Once again, the Choir has had a busy year. Numbers remain fairly stable, but we have lost a couple of the younger juniors, and we would really like to recruit as few more to be "coming along" for the future.

Two of our adult members have moved away. David Williams is now in Australia, and Virginia Goode is in Cornwall caring for her mother. We are still in touch with them, and they know that, like other past choir members, they will always be welcome back if they come to Lacey Green. Virginia has been greatly missed. She was such a good musician, so reliable at services, and she did so much behind the scenes. She has now joined the choir in her new parish, so our loss is their gain.

Choir activities began in April 2015 with the performance by the Junior Choir and some of the Youth Group of two Musical Parables by Gavin Mole.

In June, the Choir was able to provide some of the background music for the very successful Church Fete. Throughout the summer there were a number of weddings, and choir numbers were augmented by members of Lacey Green Singers on several occasions during the school holidays. We also helped at a wedding in Princes Risborough.

Once again, the choir catered for a very enjoyable Harvest Lunch, and we hope to repeat this in 2016.

During the autumn, we participated in two special Memorial Services, one for Joyce Delnevo, a long standing member of the congregation, and the other for our Parish Councillor and local historian, Dennis Claydon.

The Advent Service was an ecumenical one, when we were joined, for the singing, by members of St. Mary's Choir. The whole of the Christmas season was frantically busy, starting with carol singing at

Safe Haven, a Day Care Centre for people with dementia. We were pleased with the singing over Christmas, and it was lovely to see so many in the congregation.

St. John's Day fell on a Sunday, so we were able to have a service for our own special saint. There was also a fairly light hearted Epiphany Service followed by refreshments.

The Crib Service was so well attended, that it was decided to make a special effort for Mothering Sunday. Fiona encouraged pupils from St. John's School to take part, and it was a very enjoyable occasion, with flowers provide by the choir ladies, and cakes decorated by the Junior Choir.

Easter was early this year, and the choir managed to sing at every service throughout Holy Week.

We owe an enormous debt of gratitude to Cher for all the work she has put in during the last year., and for support from many others, including Gavin Mole and Fiona Insley, and especially from Tony. Finally, I would like to thank every single member of the choir for their devotion and their support for me.

Rosemary Mortham

Server's Report

During 2015 the serving team at St. John's has remained at 1, i.e. me. Edward Field has been helping out by being Crucifer on various Sundays during the year and it is pleasing that he is undertaking this role competently. Margaret Gray, as Verger, has assisted on a few occasions and Dawne Glenister has come out of retirement, temporarily, both to provide cover on the odd occasion when I have been away or off sick. I am grateful to Edward, Margaret and Dawne for this support.

The role of the server at any church is to support the Celebrant at various times during services, but to do so in a diligent and as unobtrusive way as possible. It is not just a job, but in many ways it is also a calling. It is also a position of some responsibility and so requires maturity, the ability to be able to work both independently and as part of a team and also the ability to be able to foresee problems! 2016 sees me clocking up 29 years as a server (where has the time gone?) and even after all this time I am still learning. Having only one regular server at St. John's probably means we ought to be thinking about training up at least one other to provide cover and also to assist during major services. If you think that you are being called to volunteer and train as an altar sever, please speak to Canon Tony or myself. It does not matter if you are young or old, the key traits are being conscientious and responsible.

Now that Rev Canon Tony has been our Vicar for a whole calendar year, I hope that by now I have worked out what he expects of me as the Server!' It does seem to have been an active year in terms of Serving with some additional services to support and being asked to undertake additional roles including one of three parts narrating the Gospel of the Passion on Palm Sunday and playing one of the three Wise Men at the Epiphany Carol Service complete with thurible and incense! The latter is perhaps more Anglo-Catholic than we are used to at St. John's but is familiar to me as a member of the Guild of Servants of the Sanctuary.

The formalised training of the older choristers on how to act as acolytes did not happen during 2015, and it is my intention to get this underway during 2016. I will be looking to the Head and Deputy Head Choristers to assist with this, particularly with scheduling of dates. I would like to get all the choristers passed to be acolytes up to uniform standard so that they are familiar with the requirements of this duty

on typical Sundays. Experienced acolytes should then be able to mentor new ones as and when they start training.

Outside of St. John's in March I was re-elected as Lay Chair of the local (St. Osyth) Chapter of the Guild of Servants of the Sanctuary for 2015, and will remain so until our next AGM in April. During 2015 the Chapter celebrated a High Mass and received Benediction at St. Martin's Fenny Stratford in January and sang (or said) Guild Offices at St. Michael & All Angels Amersham, St. James Berton, All Saints Wing and, for me, a home visit to St. Johns Lacey Green in November. Canon Tony kindly agreed to give the Address during the Office, which was well received, although unfortunately by a smaller than usual congregation of servers and supporters. Thanks must go to Cher for stepping in at the last minute to play the organ whilst we sang the hymns during the Office, as a result of the Chapter's own organist being unable to attend. Like many of the Chapters of the Guild we have been suffering from reduced attendances at our meetings, but at least the local chapter is continuing to meet and remains active. Other chapters, including some in our area, have recently gone into Abeyance due to lack of members and volunteers to occupy the statutory offices. We have a programme of meetings scheduled for the coming year including to St Dunstan's Monks Risborough in November. Visitors are welcome to attend our meetings

Linked to my membership of the Guild of Servants of the Sanctuary, in November I was invited to attend the Patronal Festival of St. Martin's Fenny Stratford, as were all members of the local Chapter. I was privileged to be asked to participate in the procession and carry the banner.

Mark Roberts
Sacristan and Senior Server

[PCC Report](#)

The PCC met monthly and minutes of each meeting were approved by the meeting chair, Pat Rushmere. The PCC members are Ann Eden, Dick Field (Churchwarden), Rosie Field, Claire McWilliams, Mark Roberts, Cathy Tyrrell, Roger Wilkes, Pat Rushmere (Churchwarden). David Williams and Virginia Goode served on the PCC until they each moved away. PCC meetings are attended by Rev. Canon Tony Bundock and Caroline Gulliver (Treasurer).

The agenda for PCC meetings includes: mission, pastoral matters, schools (St. John's and Speen Schools), finance, child protection, church fabric and fundraising.

Mission

During January, the PCC met for an Away Day to focus on the work and mission of our church. Five key areas were identified:

- a. welcoming newcomers,
- b. strengthening young people,
- c. community visiting,
- d. prayer, and
- e. increasing and equipping leadership.

The PCC have also facilitated the participation of our church in the Deanery Learning Communities Initiative.

Pastoral Matters

Please refer to the Vicar's Report.

Schools

The PCC approved the appointment of 2 new governors for Speen School. The new governors met the PCC and spoke of their commitment to the school and to their Christian faith. There are vacancies for governors at both schools. The relationship between the schools and our church continues to strengthen with new initiatives including participation of the school in the Mothering Sunday service and well-being coffee mornings held in the church.

Finance

Please refer to the Treasurer's Report.

Child protection

Child protection is a priority for the PCC and ensures that DBS checks are complete and up to date for all people working with children in our church.

Church Fabric

Please refer to the Churchwardens' Report.

Fundraising

Our church requires funds to operating and the work of the Fund-raising Committee is vital to ensure that we can continue to worship at St John's. More details are presented in the Fund-raising section of this report.

Cathy Tyrrell
PCC Secretary

Junior Church

The past year's Sunday School has run smoothly. Members of the team are Claire, Rebecca, Caroline and Suzanne Farwell, all of whom teach on a 4-week rota to junior and infant school aged children. I, Suzanne Field, have continued with the confirmation group.

Attendance has been a little lower than previous years. We have approximately 24 children on our register, although on average about 4 to 6 attend each week. Probably as the core group is now much older and their Sunday Worship attendance is a little more erratic.

At Christmas we had the usual Christmas Nativity dressing up. On Mothers' Day, Claire presented a beautiful poem with the children.

During the Summer quite a few older children volunteered to help with Lighthouse. Karen Horseman is Lighthouse Rep, and also is back up teacher for Sunday School cover. A steady year on the whole.

Looking forward to the year ahead, Claire will take over leading the team at the end of the Summer term, as myself and Suzanne Farwell, stand down after 11 years and 15 years of service. The CRB forms of the 3 remaining teachers will need to be updated some point during the year ahead. Also we are still hoping for a new display board or a designated area for the children to display their work. Looking ahead the junior church team will require at least one new teacher to join the rota, to total the team to 4 leaders.

Suzanne Field
Junior Church Leader

House Groups

Monday Afternoons

Our Bible Study Group meet for one hour on Monday afternoons, and have currently been studying 'The Covenants' – God's promises and their relevance today. This involves reading various verses from appropriate books in the Bible, answering 10 questions then, when we meet there is have discussion time. This raises our awareness, and gives more insight into the Scriptures. It also deepens our faith, and helps us grow in friendship. We open and close with a prayer, and include all those we know who need healing.

Our next study book beginning after Easter is 'Transformed by the Presence of Jesus.' It is a Liz Babbs study guide.

June Brazier

Wednesday Evenings

We started the group with an Advent course based on the film Miracle on 42nd Street which is an old film from 1947, but with messages that still resonate in modern times.

After the Christmas break we started a new study for lent based on the film called The Way which is a very moving story of an American man who goes to France to recover the body of his son who died at the start of his pilgrimage and his own voyage of discovery as he completes the pilgrimage to Santiago de Compostela that his son could not finish. This basis has given the group the platform to discuss some key topics of faith.

As a new group, we have already learnt much from each other with all of us enjoying the fellowship and differing experiences of each member. The group has been a real blessing for us and we look forward to many future evenings together. Anybody who would like to join us on Wednesday evenings would be very welcome.

Hugh and Lizzie Thomas-Davies

Thursday Evenings

The house group held on Thursday evenings by David and Marge Williams ran until August 2015. The group ended when the Williams family moved to Australia in the summer.

Fundraising Report

We have had another extremely successful year on the fundraising front with £6,000 being raised for church funds and various charities. Highlights were the ceilidh, wedding dress and flower festival, the progressive supper, the summer fete and the Christmas fayre. A full list of where the money was raised can be seen in the Treasurer's report. Your help and support is greatly appreciated.

As well as raising much needed funds it is evident from the large number of individuals that get involved and the enthusiastic responses to calls for help that we also very much enjoy these fundraising events. The hope for next year is that we are successful in attracting more people from outside of our congregation, from the villages, the schools and further afield, to join in these events so that we can demonstrate that our church is at the heart of the community.

The Church is registered with Easy Fundraising. This is a very simple and effective way to raise money for the Church. All you need to do is register as a user (for free) at www.easyfundraising.org.uk supporting St John's Church Lacey Green and then shop online via that site. A huge number of retailers will make a donation to St John's for your online purchase as a thank you for shopping with them. So far we have only 14 registered members – just one more than when I reported last year. Those 14 members shop very enthusiastically and, since registration in 2014 have raised over £530. Imagine what we could achieve if all our online shoppers get in the habit of using this site, and ask their friends and families to do the same. Please register and use!

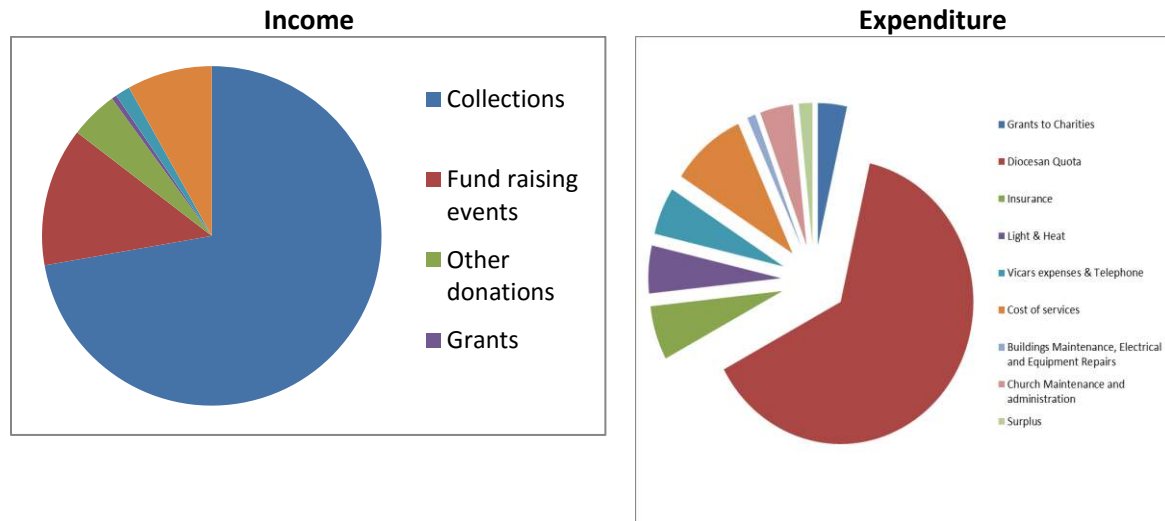
Already in 2016 the pancake party has been a great success, raising £200, and lots more is planned for the year - please do join in. New ideas, or ideas for improving or adding to the usual events are always welcome – please speak to Caroline Gulliver or Margaret Gray.

Caroline Gulliver
Treasurer

Treasurer's Report

General Fund

I am very happy to report that we have again retained a small surplus of income over expenditure of £753 for the year. The charts below indicate where our funds are generated, and how they are utilised. The two charts represent the same amount of money (£45,693), with the light green section on the right hand side being the small surplus that we have retained.



Around 72% of our income is derived from church collections. The other main contributors to income are one off donations, fees received for weddings and funerals and fundraising. Fundraising has become an integral part of our financial wellbeing, and something we improve on every year. I think we have even come to enjoy it! A breakdown of our fundraising income is in the appendix.

As is the case every year, a large portion of our income is used in paying our parish share - the large red section on the right hand side. The payment of the parish share is mandatory and so keeping all other costs in check is critical, something we have done very well for a number of years. I would like to thank all who help us to do this by giving of their time and talents in non-financial ways by cleaning the church and keeping the churchyard and hedges in a lovely condition.

During the year, as a church and a congregation we donated £1,615 to various charities representing 5.7% of our total collections, as follows: £620 was donated to Lighthouse; £120 to Churches Together in Risborough; £425 was raised by the parables musicals performed by Junior Choir and Lacey Green Youth Club which was donated to Cancer Research; and the Harvest lunch and auction raised £450 which was shared equally between Helen and Douglas House and UNHCR to aid Syrian Refugees. Further, Bibles costing £269 were donated to the year 6 pupils leaving St John's school in July 2015. In addition to the amounts shown in the accounts, we also collected for the poppy appeal and made donations to Christian Aid.

At the end of 2015 we had £10,386 in the general fund bank accounts compared to £9,633 at the end of 2014. In addition, we have £643 in the bank which is restricted to payments for church repairs (2014: £643).

For anyone interested, the full annual accounts compiled to satisfy the requirements of the Charities Act and subject to Independent Examination, are displayed on the church notice board and will be available on the church website after this meeting.

Restoration Fund and Organ Fund

Planned giving to the restoration fund, together with tax reclaimed thereon, amounted to £525. and we received bank interest of £13. No payments were made from the restoration fund during the year. The restoration fund bank accounts now stand at £18,410, and are allocated £12,478 to general restorations and £6,469 to the organ fund.

Outlook for 2016

For 2016 we aim to increase our charitable giving to nearer 10% of our total giving, whilst retaining a very small surplus.

If you have any questions, or would like more detail on any of the above, then please do ask me and I would be happy to talk to you.

Caroline Gulliver
Treasurer