

Plympton St. Mary

*Annual Report
and
Financial Statements
of the
Parochial Church Council*

For the Year ended 31st December 2009

*Incumbent
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PLYMPTON. ST. MARY. - ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2009/10

St. Mary's PCC has the responsibility of cooperating with the incumbent, The Rev. Prebendary Margaret Cameron, to promote in the ecclesiastical parish of Plympton St. Mary the whole mission of the Church: worship, mission and service. We seek to work together pursuing our mission statement:

“Serving Christ in the heart of Plympton and beyond.”

The Parochial Church Council

Members of the PCC are either ex-officio or elected annually at the Annual Parochial Church Meeting (APCM) in accordance with the Church Representation Rules. During the year the following served as members of the PCC:

Clergy: (ex officio on PCC)

Rev. Prebendary Margaret Cameron, Rev. Roger Beck and Rev. Mark Brimicombe

Wardens: (ex officio on PCC)

Keith Escott and Kenneth Ward

Elected to the Deanery Synod, for session ending 2011 (Ex officio on PCC)

Mrs. Margaret Leigh, Julian Otto, Keith Escott

Elected Members

Elected to 2010

Mrs. Alison Thompson

Elected to 2011

Mrs. Mo Diffey
Mrs. Joan Humphries
Mrs. Karen Le Roux
Mrs. Glenys Otto
Mr. David Nicholls
Mr. Keith Shepperd
Miss Deborah Tozer

Elected to 2012

Miss Mavis Buttle
Mrs. Sarah Duckworth
Mr. David Evans
Mrs. Lin Foster
Miss Lucy Skinner

Co-opted Member: Mrs. Mary Wild, Head of St. Mary's Church of England Infants' School

Keith Shepperd served as Hon. Treasurer and Deborah Tozer as Hon. Secretary. The PCC is made up of: All Licensed Clergy (3), Wardens (2), Deanery Synod Reps (3 [includes 1 Warden]) and 15 elected members, each elected for a period of 3 years. For part of the year there were only 13 elected members, David Farley and Carolyn Wade having resigned. The PCC may co-opt members in accordance with regulations.

Committees & Working Groups:

The Standing Committee is the only committee required by law. It has power to transact business of the PCC between its meetings, subject to any directions given by the Council. The PCC has set up a number of working groups to consider various aspects of the church's work and responsibilities. These report on a regular basis and make recommendations for the PCC to consider in the following areas: Christian Stewardship, The Churchyard, The Parish Centre, Social Events, The World Church and Chaddlewood United Church (CUC). A further group has been set up to plan the celebration of the 700th anniversary of the dedication of St. Mary's Church in 2011. All PCC members serve on at least one of these groups, and others may be co-opted. The Vicar is grateful to them all for their hard work.

The Church School: St. Mary's VA Infants' School

The Vicar is an ex-officio Foundation Governor and visits the school regularly especially in leading worship. Mrs. Mary Wild regularly attended PCC meetings and gave reports. She announced that she would be retiring as Head of School, leaving at the end of the autumn term. During her time as head the school has flourished in every way. The improvements to the school buildings are among her significant achievements. The PCC made a presentation to Mrs. Wild, wishing her well in her retirement. She will be much missed. One of the highlights of the year was a visit by The Bishop of Plymouth in May, part of the celebration of 1100 years of the Diocese of Exeter. Links between church and school have continued to prosper. The school played a major part in the

Church Summer Fete in June, and Mrs. Lesley MacKay brought a group of children to sing at the Christingle Service. She also read one of the lessons at the Carol Service. The school visits the church regularly, with a service at the end of each term and the Nativity Play in December. The Partnership Group, chaired by David Nicholls, meets regularly to provide liaison and mutual support. It is made up of church and school representatives. Church members have served refreshments on various occasions to parents, before the services in church and at Sports' Day. The PCC and Mothers' Union give a Bible to each child leaving the school at the end of the summer term. Interviews for a new head were held in September, the Vicar and three other foundation governors being part of the interview panel. Mrs. Sarah Sennett was appointed head, commencing her duties in January 2010. Lorna Rendle resigned as Chair of Governors. Chris Banbury succeeded her and two new Foundation Governors have been appointed: David Nicholls and Sarah Duckworth.

St. Mary's Pre-School:

This continues to meet in the Parish Centre, and while a separate charity, retains close links with the church. The Vicar is Chairman of the Management Group and two member of the PCC also serve. The Pre-School visits church several times during the year, especially for major festivals. Family members are invited to come, and their attendance has increased. Church members support Pre-School's fund raising events, especially in serving refreshments. The Pre-School continues to run a Parent / Toddler Group, with support from church members, again serving refreshments.

Church Groups:

There are many groups within the life of the church providing support, friendship and leisure activities for a wide variety of people. Among them are the Monday Bereavement Group, BUDS group, Melting Pot, and at Chaddlewood, a Parent / Toddler Group, Friday Friends and Good Company. "Church Watch" enables the church to be open during the week in the summer months. The Bereavement Group organizes lunches on Bank Holidays, some in the Church Hall. This provides good support for lonely people at such times. They have also organized several fund-raising events for the Church's 700th anniversary celebrations. The Stork Club had met regularly on Friday mornings offering a meeting place for mothers with young babies. This has flourished for some time, but came to an end through lack of support. Thanks are due to Roz Allen and the team of helpers she had recruited for the splendid service they provided. With the forthcoming retirement of Mavis Buttle as leader of the Parent / Toddler Group at CUC, and in the absence of someone to succeed her, it was decided that the group would close early in 2010. There are reports on the activities of the various groups in a separate booklet. It is clear that the voluntary sector depends on committed and dedicated leaders and helpers. We are grateful to all who give and have given of their time and talents to these groups, and hope that this can be sustained in the future.

An Overview of the Church Year:

Worship continues to be at the heart of our common life. A small but faithful group supports the daily weekday services, and the clergy value their commitment and prayerful support greatly. The Parish Eucharist moved its starting time from 9.30am to 10am in March. This seems to be a more convenient time for families. There has been a very slight increase the number of people with young children in church. We are able to provide a range of services at the parish church and Chaddlewood United Church (CUC). At St. Mary's we have now established a pattern where the 10am service is for all ages once a month, with children from Sunday Club and their leaders taking a greater part in the worship. Mrs. Lyudmila Grimes spends some Sunday mornings with Sunday Club to help them with the music for All Age services. The bells are rung regularly for Evensong, and for the 10am service at the major festivals. The team of flower arrangers continues to provide stunning displays of flowers in church. Many other people are involved in the maintenance of the church and its worship, among them the Sacristy Team. After many years of faithful service, Mr. Peter Landers and Miss Helena Sercombe have not been able to do as much as they had. Much of their work was of that essential but largely unseen variety, ensuring that everything the clergy needed to conduct worship was ready and in place. We are enormously grateful to them. They have trained up worthy successors in Edwina Smith and David Farley, who are following in their footsteps. Others whose contribution is also greatly valued include the church cleaners, the servers, chalice assistants, lesson readers, sidesmen, "bankers", brass cleaners and the refreshment teams. We are responsible for Anglican worship at CUC on three Sundays each month. The Readers of the Plymouth Archdeaconry have kindly offered their services for Morning Prayer there on the third Sunday. When there is a fifth Sunday in the month, a group of CUC lay people plans and leads a Family Service.

Café Praise: this is a fresh expression of church, meeting in St. Mary's Church Hall, organized and led by people from the two Plympton parishes. It is aimed at younger children and their parents, and has developed well since its first event in October 2008. It is a very informal act of worship, on a café style. Each event involves enormous commitment and energy from those organizing it. A pattern for Café Praise has emerged, including a theme that is attractively advertised. On arrival, there are craft activities related to the theme, and these are often used later in the group worship. There are songs, and story telling, with power point illustration. The standard of presentation is extremely high. Drama, or some other means of involving the children in activity related to the theme usually forms part of the worship. At least one of the clergy is present. Refreshments are served at the end, with home-made cakes another attraction! From autumn 2009 Café Praise is meeting monthly, mostly on the third Sunday afternoon of the month, clearly this style of worship appeals. There are well-resourced bookstalls, to buy and to borrow. It would be good to consider extending it to other age groups, but this would require a significant number of other committed and motivated people.

Music: Mrs. Lyudmila (Mila) Grimes continues as Director of Music and Organist with Mrs. Pauline Nicholls as Assistant Organist. The musical life of the parish church owes much to the commitment and hard work of Mila, Pauline and the Choir. Some members of the Choir took part in the Diocesan Music Festival. Mila gave a successful piano recital in church in aid of the Organ Fund in January. She is concerned to raise money for the organ, as essential work is needed, for which substantial funds will be required. The Choir has taken part in concerts to this end also, with soloists whose support is much appreciated. It is hoped to have more concerts at St. Mary's with a regular programme each year.

Study Groups and spiritual growth:

The Annual Quiet Day was held at Buckfast Abbey in November, led by The Revd. Sasha Pearce, one of the chaplains at Derriford Hospital. It has been an immense pleasure to welcome Sasha to St. Mary's when hospital duties allow her to join us. The parish clergy gave the Holy Week addresses in 2009. Study groups continue to meet through the year. A meditation group meets regularly in church.

This year there was a Deanery Confirmation in May, during the 1100 celebrations of the Diocese. The service was held at St. Mary's and was a truly inspiring occasion, with many candidates from the parishes of the Deanery. There was a significant number, adults and young people from St. Mary's. The Bishop of Plymouth kindly returned later in the year to confirm two adults who could not be confirmed in May.

The Churchyard

We continue to employ Mark Chanter as Churchyard grounds man. Bob Dyer and Alison Martin work very hard in the churchyard with other volunteers. It is an enormous area to maintain. Further helpers would be welcome, together with donations for the upkeep of the churchyard, for which the PCC is responsible.

The Occasional Offices:

The people of Plympton St. Mary look to the parish church for services to mark the significant milestones in their lives. Baptism services are held twice monthly, preceded by a preparation session, held on Saturday mornings. Deborah Tozer retired as Baptism Secretary at the end of the year, having served for 8 years. She has worked hard with this task, and we are most grateful to her. This is a major opportunity for outreach to the wider community, and it is a matter of regret that more of the congregation are not involved in this. Fortunately Mrs. Nicola Dorrall has generously offered to become Baptism Secretary, and Deborah is kindly helping her and continuing to support this work. Recent changes in legislation make it easier for people to be married in the church where they have a connection, such as baptism, previous residence or marriage of parents or grandparents. Several couples have taken advantage of this. Two marriage preparation sessions were held each. These are lively events in the Church Hall on a Friday evening or Saturday morning. The Vicar appreciates the support of lay couples, and Miss Lucy Skinner for organizing the catering. This year the Vicar also held additional sessions for those unable to attend the main sessions. Mila Grimes, Pauline Nicholls and the Choir kindly gave up a Friday evening to provide a programme of wedding music and readings. The clergy have taken funeral services, both in church and at the chapels at Efford and Weston Mill. A Memorial Service for their families was held in November, with refreshments afterwards.

Residential and Nursing Homes:

The clergy take services of Holy Communion in most of the residential and nursing homes. At Christmas, carol services were held in several homes and greatly appreciated by staff and residents.

Schools:

As well as the relationship with the Church School, we also value our links with other schools. Several of the local schools have come to church for educational visits. St. Mary's Infants and Old Priory Junior School hold Harvest services in church. At Christmas these schools, together with Chaddlewood Primary and Ridgeway Secondary School, hold services. The Infant and Junior Schools have all been supportive and encouraging in promoting Café Praise, and we greatly value this goodwill.

The Ecumenical Scene:

The clergy attend meetings of ministers from the various Christian denominations in Plympton, and the Vicar takes her turn in offering hospitality at the Vicarage. We welcomed friends from other Plympton churches for Evensong during the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, with The Revd. Maureen Robinson of Chaddlewood Baptist Church as the preacher. Churches of Plympton had a stand at The Lamb Feast in Plympton St. Maurice in June to promote the churches and to share in the community spirit. In September the Vicar attended the welcome service at Woodford Methodist Church for The Revd. Simon Leigh, the new Superintendent Methodist Minister for the Plymouth & Devonport Circuit.

The Wider Community:

We continue to build links through membership of Plympton Community Council and we support their events wherever possible. We hosted the St. George's Parade Service in April, attended by The Lord Mayor and Lady Mayoress of Plymouth, The Stannator of Plympton and other distinguished guests. Links with the scouting movement are also maintained on Remembrance Sunday with a morning service aimed particularly at younger people. Members of the British Legion attend Evensong and help to lead the Act of Remembrance. The Parish Annual Carol Service is very much a community occasion. Despite the severe weather on 23rd December it was well attended.

St. Mary's 700th Anniversary:

A working group chaired by The Revd. Roger Beck has been meeting through the year, preparing a varied and interesting programme of events that will run from August 2011 – August 2012. Members of the wider community are involved as well as church groups. A Flower Festival will be held 26th-29th August 2011. Separate funds are being built up for flowers and for general expenses, so that the year will be financed in advance, and all proceeds dedicated to the church fabric. With the help of our local builder the PCC has identified essential exterior work that needs to be done, and we are aiming to raise money for this in advance. A group from the Diocesan Advisory Committee visited the church in December to consider our ideas for some internal re-ordering. We are conscious that to advance the church's mission in the 21st century we need better facilities at St. Mary's and a worshipping space that lifts the heart and mind to God. The anniversary year gives us a great opportunity to achieve this.

In Conclusion:

The Vicar wishes to thank all those who have worked hard in God's service during the year, including her clergy colleagues, the churchwardens, the Honorary Secretary & Honorary Treasurer of the PCC, all members of the PCC, Rosemary Crawford the Electoral Roll Officer, David Farley the Safeguarding Officer who ensures that all CRB records are current, David Nicholls the Verger, Bob Dyer the Sexton, the CUC leadership group, the Parish Office staff and many others. We believe that we are called, as our Mission Statement encapsulates, to serve "Christ in the heart of Plympton and beyond." Sometimes, in an age that seems increasingly secular, this can be a difficult task. But as we look back, we can see how God has blessed us in various ways during the past year. Let us look to him for the future, expecting growth in the church, as we trust and pray that we will be more faithful in worship, mission and service and therefore more open to new possibilities and fresh ways of sharing the Good News of Jesus Christ, "in the heart of Plympton and beyond."

