

Annual Reports presented at APCM 2015

Contents

| | |
|------|--|
| Page | Report of |
| 2 | PCC |
| 2 | Electoral Roll |
| 3 | Fabric and Ornaments |
| 4 | Building and Finance |
| 6 | Lettings |
| 6 | Southwark Pastoral Auxiliary |
| 7 | Tooting Deanery Synod |
| 7 | around the table |
| 7 | Saturday Morning |
| 8 | 5 th Balham Brownies & Guides |
| 8 | Junior Church |
| 9 | Senior Church |
| 9 | Serving Team |
| 9 | Stewards |
| 10 | Film Club |
| 10 | Mary's Little lambs |
| 10 | Crafty Flock |
| 10 | Mega Makers |
| 11 | Sacristans |
| 11 | ChTBUT |
| 12 | 2014 Data |
| 12 | Vicar |

PCC Report

Members of the PCC for 2014 / 2015 were:-

Rev'd Wilma Roest (Chair)

Martin Gray (Churchwarden)

Keith Holmes (Churchwarden)

Rev'd Eileen Serbutt

Rev'd Iain Faulkner

Susanne Mitchell

Nigel Collier

AJ Haseley

Pauline Lacey

Keith Mitchell

Anzo Francis

Janet Jones

Jamie Morton

Graeme Calf (Deanery Synod)

Victoria Gregory (Deanery Synod)

Alex Russell (Deanery Synod)

Christopher Serbutt (Deanery Synod)

The PCC was elected at the APCM in April 2014 and has met 6 times. Each member serves for 3 years after which time they can put themselves up for re-election. This means there is a good turn-over of members bringing new ideas, energy and enthusiasm. Meetings take place in the narthex or the balcony room. We start promptly at 7.45 pm and tea, coffee and biscuits keep us going. We always finish by 10.00 pm.

Our agenda covers all aspects of life at St Mary's. Reports are made by the various committees including Building & Finance, Chancel Restoration and Lettings Committee and we are brought up to date with developments at Deanery Synod and Churches Together by our representatives. This year in particular, there has of course been much discussion about our church building in terms of our restoration project.

I would like to offer a particular thank you to Martin for chairing our meetings whilst Mtr. Wilma was on sabbatical and to Rhea Newman for assisting me with the minutes of our meetings.

*Jamie Morton
PCC Secretary*

Electoral Roll

At the 2014 APCM the Electoral Roll stood at 138 people. This year it stands at 142 people. It is always with great sadness that we say "goodbye" to people who leave our St Mary's family, but with joy we say "hello" to those new us.

Please continue to pray for the friends we no longer see, including Betty Boucher and Francis LeFeuvre. Remember to join the St Mary's Facebook page which is a great way to stay in touch with current and previous parishioners. In terms of numbers on the electoral roll (and many other ways) we are a growing church, which is very good news indeed.

*Alex Russell
Electoral Roll Officer*

CHURCHWARDEN'S REPORT:
FABRIC AND ORNAMENTS 2014/5

This is an official report on the present state of the fabric and ornaments of the church. This includes buildings, land, furniture, fabric, candlesticks, church plate etc. Inevitably there will be some duplication with the building and Finance Report, but this cannot be avoided.

This has been a very busy year. Some of our actions have been in response to events as usual but our biggest projects have been conscious decisions to look to the future and in some cases we are talking about the next 100 years.

I started in a small way by restoring the notice boards outside the church to match the front doors. I intended only doing the big 'community board, but by an act of God ended up doing the other four boards as well. I don't have enough space to tell you the full story about Joseph the carpenter.

We have been very successful in keeping the inside of the church dry this year. All essential roofworks have been completed including the liturgical South Porch, the North side necessarium roof and the baptistery dome flat roof area. The baptistery dome have been raked out and repointed for a second time and as I write is still dry.

Consequently, we have been able to paint the narthex toilet, the narthex, the baptistery, the two staircases to the balcony, the north wall of the nave and the Holy Family Chapel wall and the South Porch.

In response to an unfortunate event all the locks on the toilet doors in the narthex and balcony area have been replaced and we now have user friendly locks.

Our BIG project of the year is of course the restoration of the sanctuary and chancel. This has been a one in a lifetime opportunity to do something for a future generation. The last major project in the church, the restoration of the narthex and balcony, was occasioned by a careless or accidental fire. The restoration was funded by insurance monies, fundraising and substantial grants available because of the new community use of the building. That community use provided an additional income for the church that had not been previously known in my lifetime. St Mary's has changed from being a 'Can't Pay, Won't Pay parish to a 'Striving to Pay Our Way' parish.

This latest restoration project, of which phase I is now nearing completion, has been largely funded by us, the church, the parish, the family. People who care for the family of St Mary's have been so generous in their through of the generations to come.

The work in progress at the moment is 'specialist' work. When this phase is over there will still be a lot more work to do. This will involve extensive painting and the sanctuary and chancel will need to be re-lit to further enhance the glory of the space and remove unfortunate shadows.

This still leaves the nave and transept ceilings untouched and does nothing for the carpet in the church and the lino in the pews.

We can raise more income if we present St Mary's as a concert and wedding venue but this would also involve upgrading all the 'necessary facilities'. We are going to need deep pockets for years to come.

Back to earth. The restorers detected a suspect damp beam in the roof. When I visited Irene House with my camera and binoculars I was told we had pigeons nesting in the hopper about the just completed South Porch. The beam was innocent. A week later a member of the public walked in and told us we had pigeons nesting on the north side of the church as well. All sorted? Well no!

The restorers had just painted a window reveal when they found rain coming in. Buckets in place we called back the gutter/roof people and a repair (temporary?) has been carried out. There is never a dull moment at St Mary's.

I'd like to end on a high note (highish). There is little to report on fabric and furniture except that the new memorial green alter frontal is in use at the appropriate times and it is stunning in its vibrancy and simplicity.

Oh yes, as I write the dishwasher has died and by the time you read this will have been replaced.

On everyone's behalf I would like to thank Martin and the entire Building and finance committee for all their wise discussions and decisions. Looking after this building is a BIG job but fortunately it is a job that can be shared.

Finally, I would like to say a very big thank you to anyone and everyone who has helped Martin and me to fulfil our tasks this year, especially during Mtr Wilma's sabbatical.

*Keith Holmes
Churchwarden*

Building and Finance Committee

The Building and Finance Committee is a sub-committee of the PCC which deals with the day to day matters of maintaining the building and finances on behalf of the PCC.

Members of the committee were

Wilma Roest - Vicar

Martin Gray – Churchwarden and Chair

Victoria Gregory – B+F Secretary

Keith Mitchell –Treasurer

Nigel Collier – PCC Member

Janet Jones – PCC Member

Karen Gray - Co-opted

Building

Throughout the year we have continued to monitor our 'regular' contracts for gas, electricity, water, telephones, broadband, insurance, fire extinguishers, fire alarms, boilers, sound system, timber floor polishing and lift, seeking to ensure we comply with legislation and keep the building safe for all to use in a cost effective way.

We continued with the gutter maintenance company and they came and inspected and cleaned out our gutters. Their work includes a full report with photographs identifying some work required in those inaccessible places we cannot get to ourselves. In addition we have our quinquennial report from our church architect, listing tasks that need to be addressed in and around the building over the five year period.

We have undertaken work of a 'routine' nature throughout the year including: monitoring and attempting to solve damp ingress at places within the building.

Our major project for the year carrying on from last year has been tackling the damp to the porch and family chapel which had become significantly worse following the theft of the lead roof. The bare brickwork was finally re-plastered and left to dry before being painted at the end of the year.

The Chapel Dome repair undertaken in 2011 did not work and water ingress was increasing early in the year. After some difficulty finding a contractor to assist with this difficult area we had the dome repointed in the appropriate lime mortar by a specialist contractor. This has had the desired effect and we have not had any water ingress since. The flaking paint and loose plaster was removed from the interior and a period of drying out followed.

Continuing the run of work on the roofs we also set to with replacement of the flat roof over the toilets during the summer. This also turned out to be a bigger job than anticipated which required replacement of the roof covering, the insulation and parts of the decking which has begun to fail due to water ingress. We also replaced the roof light.

At the beginning of 2015 we moved on from leaking roofs to rectification of decorations. This saw us finally decorating the clock tower staircase, the baptistery, making good the entrance staircase decorations, a freshen up of the narthex walls and repair to the damp patch on the nave wall (garden side) and two walls of the family chapel where the re-plastering occurred.

The committee also over-saw the replacement of parts of the sound system with new amplifiers and microphones. Hopefully you can tell the difference now that we have worked out how it all works. There is a longer term plan to replace the speakers as well.

A separate committee deals with the Chancel restoration. However just to record we received the faculty to commence work in January 2015 and this work is now progressing.

At the time of writing we have been alerted to water leaking into the chancel at high level through one of the windows. Further investigation has identified that the gutter has failed in a few places and is saturating the wall. A temporary repair has been undertaken but it is likely that the gutter will require replacement in the next 18 months.

Finance

The main audited finance report for the year to 31 December 2014 is available elsewhere.

The finance team continues to work well with a dedicated group dealing with weekly matters such as paying bills out and monies into the bank. The treasurer produces a variety of cash flows and forecasts for PCC throughout the year as well as drafting the PCC's annual budget and accounts. For that work we are very grateful.

We had a further review with the Diocesan Fairer Share Review this year following our appeal

last year. Thank you to all who completed the returns. It was agreed that we would have a modest increase for this year and next. The diocese is changing how it receives contributions from parishes to a more 'gift' based approach from next year. This is both challenging for us to consider how generous and affordable our gift should be and a major leap of faith for the Diocese that parishes will be generous to a sustainable level for them. Our Fairer Shares review gives us a good starting point but this will require further work from us in the coming years.

On behalf of the Building and Finance Committee I wholeheartedly thank you for your continued generosity.

God Bless

Martin Gray April 2015

Lettings report

We have the following regular hirers, who are very pleased with their lets:

Cristina Pecheanu - Merton & Wandsworth Asylum Welcome

Lucy Paul – Yoga

Lucy Quick – Perform Children's Drama Group

Marta Maciejewska - Yoga

Sonia Forde – Pilates

Phyllis Mills-Barnor – The United Church of the Messiah

Caroline Whyman who hired the Narthex for Qigong on Monday evening has left and

Isabel Hubner will has taken over the class.

We still hire out on an occasional basis to Festival Chorus rehearsals, Ravenstone School and Hornsby House.

Our lettings income for:

January to December 2013 - £19,912.50

January to December 2014 - £21,011.80

Car parking stayed the same with six space rented out.

Pat Nevard

Lettings administrator

Southwark Pastoral Auxiliary report

My role remains much the same continue to share my pastoral care as a Spa between St Mary's and Brixton Prison.

Since the category changes in Brixton I continue to visit men on the ACTS but I am now involved in courses being run by the chaplaincy team in the Future.

These are 4 week courses that are ongoing, the men are encouraged to think about what has brought them into prison, to accept responsibility for their actions, and to look at the options and ways in which they can change their lives so that on release they can make better choices for their future

I also continue with my Archdeacon's SPA role meeting with spas in the Wandsworth/Kingston area discussing any issues of concern also arranging quiet days for meditation and reflection.

My role is to continue being supportive compassionate and to always remember that our Heavenly Father is a God of love and forgiveness and that through prayer he will give us all the strength we need to see us through.

*Daphne Clarke
SPA*

Tooting Deanery Synod 2013-2014

Deanery Synod started its three year cycle in 2014 and so the last session of the old Deanery Synod was an open meeting to explain its work and to attract new people. This was very successful and at a special service of commitment, held at St. Mary's and led by the Archdeacon, Stephen Roberts, just about every parish and chaplaincy within Tooting Deanery was represented. We took a candle back with us to remind us to take the light of the Deanery back into our place of worship.

Tooting Deanery Synod has become much more mission orientated in the last year and our first meeting had speakers from three local charities – South London Refugee Association, the Food Bank in Furzedown and the Spires. The following meeting had a speaker who talked to us about the work of Credit Unions.

We have also just completed a questionnaire to determine the skills and needs of every parish and chaplaincy within the Deanery so that we can start to be able to work together with greater effect.

St. Mary's Deanery Synod members are Christopher Serbutt, who is also Lay Chair, Graeme Calf, Alex Russell and Victoria Gregory. Mtr. Wilma is Area Dean.

*Christopher Serbutt
Deanery Synod representative*

around the table

This is the St Mary's discussion group which meets on the third Wednesday of most months in the evening to discuss issues of faith by taking examples from the Bible and applying them to world we live in. This year we have been looking at the Old Testament. It has included sessions on Leviticus, the Creation and Isaiah's rather well known prophecy about a son being born (who actually was not Jesus).

We discuss in a free and open environment and every opinion is welcomed – there are also plenty of handouts so you can continue to think over these ideas at home.

Thank you to everyone who came and made the evenings so interesting and a really enjoyable learning experience.

Next year we are going to look at the letters of Paul – some that he wrote and some that he did not.

Christopher Serbutt

Saturday Morning

Did you know that the church is open every Saturday morning even when there is no specific event mentioned in the pew sheet? If you want to pop in just to say hello, have a cup of coffee or just spend a few moments in peace and quiet, then everyone is most welcome. If you would like to share in morning prayer, then that takes place at 9.30am in the Holy Family Chapel.

5th Balham Brownies & Guides Annual Report 2014/2015

Both units continue to flourish with 24 Brownies and a waiting list plus 20 Guides.

As 2014 marked the 100 years of Brownies we joined the celebrations and worked hard to gain a special 100th Birthday Badge which included planting the Harkness Brownie Rose in the churchyard garden and culminated in a party attended by both guides and parents. Some of us went to the District Fun Day 'Star Quest' on a very hot Saturday in June. The girls took part in games, performing 'reach for the Stars', cake decorating, glitter hair bands etc.

We have also worked for Brownie Skills, Entertainers and Number Fun badges.

Jointly, the girls have continued to do secret cleans of the church including polishing the Eagle, delivered Christian Aid envelopes and taken part in the very important Remembrance Sunday Service. This year we funded the Gift Aid and Welcome boxes which are now in all the pews.

The guide Unit continues to thrive and the girls enjoy pitching tents, outdoor cooking, indoor cooking, cooking pancakes on baked bean tins and making mince pies for Crisis. This year we raised £130. They also worked with other Guides from the District to take a tour of London on an open-topped bus. They have worked on both the Chocolate and Craft badges.

In January all the Guides, young leaders and adult leaders went out to supper at Pizza Express.

Finally a big thank you to my 4 Young Leaders, my Assistant Guiders (Jo, Karen and Helen), my parent and church volunteers and Keith my facilitator.

Diane Holmes

Junior Church

Junior Church continues to thrive and many children attend regularly. In fact, so much so, that we decided it was necessary to split into two groups with the older children heading off to Senior Church (see below).

The children learn about the Gospel story through a variety of media including storytelling, singing, quizzes and craft. Last All Saints' Day we made icons which were blessed by Mtr. Wilma and then included as part of the procession at the end of the morning service.

We have also had special guest speakers! Carmen Reid came to tell to us about growing up in Jamaica (with lots of tasty treats); Pauline Lacey came to demonstrate First Aid and the children returned to the service with in all sorts of bandages!

Junior Church takes place during the Sunday morning service on all Sundays except for the second Sunday and any child aged between 5 and 10 who comes on Sunday may join us. The invitation is also open to younger children, but we ask that they bring a grown up or an older sibling with them.

Thank you to everyone who helped, led, attended or supported us in any way this last year, but, as ever, we are always looking for leaders and helpers, so if you feel this might be you then speak to Susanne, Chris, Iain or Wilma.

Christopher Serbutt

Senior Church

As mentioned, Senior Church arose out of a need to cater for a group of children who wanted to continue with Junior Church, but had just started attending Secondary School or, in some cases, were already doing so.

Now, if you're wondering 'why Senior Church?', this was the name the children chose for themselves in our very first session.

We meet in the Music Room on the first Sunday of every month where our learning is done over juice and a biscuit and with a lot of discussion! We have also led the intercessions at the All Age Service on several occasions.

Thank you to everyone who has supported us. If you would like to know more, please speak to Chris or to Mtr. Wilma.

Christopher Serbutt

Serving Team Report

For those who may be unsure about what the servers do, as servers we seek to assist the clergy in presenting and offering the worship of Almighty God and in so doing, we aim to enable the congregation to share in the liturgy and we aspire to do so with dignity, reverence and respect.

I am very pleased to be able to say that we have been joined by five new members this year who are rapidly becoming stalwarts of the team and managing to keep the rest of us in check. However even with these additional members, it continues to be challenging on occasion to put together a full serving team for every principal service.

It is an enormous privilege to be able to serve at the altar and whilst the ministry of servers is a quiet one and often goes unnoticed, it makes a significant contribution to worship. If you have never previously served at St Mary's but would like to or even if you would simply like to explore what this essential role in the service of God involves, please do not hesitate to speak to me after any 10.30 Sunday service.

Finally, I would like to thank all members of the serving team for their continued support and dedicated service as well as for their flexibility and willingness to step in at the last minute whilst we are relatively few in numbers, particularly during Holy Week this year.

*Jamie Morton
Head Server*

Stewards Report

For most of the last year we have continued to have 13 stewards on our rota and, therefore, two of us have been available for the majority of services. We are always ready to welcome anyone who would like to join us. At present this involves being on duty once in a period of 4 to 5 weeks.

Two of our team 'retired' last year, Hetta in April and Viv in December. We would like to thank them both for being on the rota for so many years.

Pat has continued to assemble the hymn books, pew sheets and order of service booklets in preparation for the Sunday morning service. Thank you again Pat.

Gillian Bannerjee

St Mary's Film Club

The Film Club has continued to meet monthly on Wednesday afternoons throughout the autumn and winter; and this year, we also included three Saturday afternoon "Specials" in our programme. We would specially like to thank Victoria Gregory and Graeme Calf for lending us some of their dvd's. This season, Film Club will be donating around £200 to church funds.

Sally Nicholls

Mary's Little Lambs

St Mary's parent and toddler group, meeting on Wednesday morning, 10—11.30, continues to thrive.

Mary's Little Lambs is run by the parents, with support from Moira, Annette, Maria, Diane and Mtr Wilma. On average 20-30 'Little Lambs' attend each week with their mum, dad or carer. The children play, take part in craft activities, and there is always a time for story and song. And the adults chat a lot!

Resources from the church crèche area are used and donations of unwanted toys have been much welcomed.

All baptism families are given an invite to Mary's Little Lambs and new members are always welcome.

Crafty Flock

This is not quite another new thing, it is just the group that used to be Crafty Lambs with a lot of added grown-ups who decided they like making craft as well! We meet on the second Saturday of every month for a session of craft, chat and laughter but, most importantly of all, being together as part of the family of St. Mary's.

You don't have to be any good at craft to come and Chris (who is definitely not very good at craft) will make sure you have all the instructions and materials you need. If you want to see what we've been doing have a look at the windowsill in the Narthex.

Thank you very much to everyone who has enjoyed these Saturday mornings this last year but especially to Elaine, who provides a lot of the materials and ideas, and Janet (J) who makes sure all the children have juice and biscuits.

Christopher Serbutt

Mega Makers

Mega Makers was the St. Mary's children's holiday club held over three Saturdays last August. It was all about the miracles of Jesus. There were a lot of activities but special highlights included making bread with Mtr. Wilma, a recreation of the Great Egg Race and a morning spent making musical instruments with a rather special performance of 'This Little Light'. We also had a quiet time at the end of each session so we could think about all that we had learnt.

A wonderful time was had by all – but especially by the grown-ups who decided they wanted to stay and enjoy everything as well!

There are so many people to thank that I cannot possibly list them all, but please ask Chris if you would like more information.

Christopher Serbutt

Sacristans' Report 2015

Our work has continued as usual with no major changes to the team who are Alan, Chris, Jamie, Alex and myself.

However I am planning to stand down at the end of this year so if anyone is interested in replacing me, please talk to Wilma or me to see what is involved.

As usual we are grateful to Keith and Diane for their sterling work on laundering the large altar cloths.

The new Memorial Frontal is continuing to please everyone and work is continuing on embroidering the names to be placed on the back, albeit more slowly than I should like. We have now closed the list for further donations so no names other than those already on the list will be added.

Penny Holloway

Churches Together in Balham and Upper Tooting (ChTBUT)

This organisation continues to work at strengthening and deepening relationships between the members of the 15 churches (8 denominations) which are part of ChTBUT. We have been involved, as usual, in organising united services during One World Week, the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity and Women's World Day of Prayer and through our various reps have provided a vehicle to circulate information about many local events and organisations within our local community.

As usual, there was a very good turnout for the Good Friday Walk of Witness, as we made our way from the first station at the Salvation Army Hall all the way down through Tooting Broadway to the 10th and final station at St Boniface RC church (Amen Corner). This was the first year without a police presence and although things went fairly smoothly we realise that it is especially important that there are plenty of well-trained Marshalls. For this reason we will be requesting early offers of help from each church so that training can be carried out.

As not all churches have a Sunday evening service it has been suggested that on the first Sunday of each month we rotate round the churches that do (with their agreement) to experience different styles/forms of worship. The venues will be advertised, with no necessity for the host church to make any changes to their normal practice. As yet this experiment is in its infancy, but it is hoped that St Mary's will host in June.

Last year it was reported that ecumenical groups during Lent would be organised, giving church members from different denominations the opportunity to study and share together. After some planning, forms were circulated to member churches. Unfortunately, apart from a good response from the churches of Holy Trinity and St Augustine's, and a very limited response from our own church, there did not appear to be an interest. HT and St A went ahead and, despite the paucity of the material supplied, participants found this a fruitful time when they deepened their understanding and awareness of the issues impacting Christians in the Middle East.

Discussions are planned to consider if there is likely to be any commitment from member churches to ecumenical Lent groups in the future (for Lent 2017).

Support was given to New Testament Assembly as recordings were made in their church in March for BBC's Songs of Praise. This was a lively and inspiring experience. The date for the airing of the event will be circulated via ChTBUT reps as soon as it is known.

Moira Hodgson

2014 Data for Occasional Offices

| | |
|-----------------------------|----|
| Baptisms | 22 |
| Admission to Holy Communion | 5 |
| Confirmation | 2 |
| Marriages | 3 |
| Funerals | 12 |

Vicar's Report to the APCM 2015

The reports on previous pages will have hopefully given you a flavour of some of the things this church does. It is by no means a complete list! The life of the church is varied and full.

Some of the activities are a direct result of or are inspired by our **Mission Action Plan (MAP)**. Each parish has been encouraged to think about its mission and to have targets for the coming years. In Balham the PCC had already been thinking along these lines, so were ahead of the game. In short the St Mary's MAP consists of two headings: empowerment of laity and growth.

'Empowerment of laity' made the PCC think about what people need to become more involved at St Mary's, how we can improve our communication and how we can wisely use the skills that so many of you bring.

'Growth' made us think about spiritual growth through discussion groups and teaching opportunities and about numerical growth. For the latter the PCC particularly thought about the many baptisms we have and how we can encourage people to continue coming to St Mary's, after the baptism. For example the work of Mary's Little Lambs is directly linked with this.

One of the challenges we face in Balham is that many young people only live here for a few years, before moving to other areas where housing is more affordable. Every year members of our church family move away, which is a loss to us. To keep a healthy church, we need to work continuously to welcome new people. This is task we share and for which we need God's wisdom and love. Our vision statement says that we aim to be a living and growing church, but it is up to us all to make that happen.

TSM

We continue to value our strong links with Trinity St Mary's, which is the only church school in our deanery. The Foundation Governors and I serve on the school's Governing Body but are also actively involved in what goes on in school. I continue to take weekly assemblies and RE lessons throughout the school.

This year has brought new opportunities for Julie Davey, head teacher at TSM, who was seconded to a school in Margate, which was in need of support and strong leadership. Despite Julie being away from Balham for part of the week, TSM has continued to thrive and is an oversubscribed school.

Balham links

I am passionate about our church being the Parish Church of Balham, accessible for all who live and work here.

On your behalf I am a member of the Balham Town Centre Partnership, meet regularly with other schools (for assemblies, RE and concert), work with clergy and members of local churches (e.g. Holiday @ Home), and engage local community groups.

Organising concerts, with help from others and a dedicated concert team, is also part of making our church a venue for everyone in Balham.

The vicar's twitter account (@Balhamvicar) is another communication tool which has developed in this past year. Most followers are people who live and work in Balham, who may not have an active link with church.

Additional roles

As well as your parish priest and vicar I continue to serve as Area Dean (until November 2015, when after 6 years I am allowed to stand down), as a member of Diocesan Synod and of Bishop's Council, and on Wandsworth SACRE. I also teach one morning a month on a diocesan course for worship leaders.

Significant points in the year

Every year has special moments, but some need to be highlighted here.

- We rejoiced with Fr Iain when he was priested in July 2014 and presided for the first time in our midst. We pray that he will continue to grow in his ministry and that he, together with the Ministry Team, will be able to serve us and lead us for some time to come.
- On Monday 4 August St Mary's was open all day as we remembered the start of World War I. At the centre of that day was the St Mary's Roll of Honour, which deserves to be restored for future generations.
- Sadly we had to say farewell to David with Hatty and Lily in November, after they decided to move to Swanage. David had been a wonderful director of music to us and it was not easy to let the Fawcett family go.
- But we were immensely blessed that Lizzie Hayward was willing to join us and take over as Director of Music.
- During the second half of 2014 I made preparations for my sabbatical (Jan– March 2015), hoping to ensure that normal service could continue during my absence.
- After a number of years of fundraising, it was with great joy that in 2014 we could begin to actively plan the restoration work of the Chancel. Getting a faculty was not easy, but now the work is well on the way and we can start thinking about finding appropriate ways of celebrating its completion.

Thanksgiving

At this important meeting I would like to acknowledge the debt of gratitude we owe to each other:

- to those who beautify our worship – our choir, organists and servers, our sacristans, our stewards, our flower arrangers, our cleaners;
- to those who work with our children and young people, through Junior Church, Senior Church and Mary's Little Lambs;
- to the countless helpers who deliver postcards at Easter and Christmas; to the concert helpers and coffee makers;
- to our Parochial Church Council who share decision-making on behalf of St Mary's;
- to the finance team, led by Keith, for ensuring we live within our means;
- to the Ministry Team, for sharing in leading and shaping the spiritual growth of our church, and for teaching and guiding;
- to Pat who ensures all our lets pay on time and are happy with the space they use, and who in addition to all that does most of the church's photocopying;
- to Martin and Keith, our Church Wardens, whose support and wisdom I value immensely and who work very hard on our behalf.

We, the family of St Mary's Church Balham - Parish Church and Community - enter the next twelve months in joyful expectation. I am glad to be part of this family.

May God bless us all.

*Mtr Wilma
April 2015*