

# APCM Report 2016

## PCC Report

Members of the PCC for 2015 / 2016 were:-

Rev'd Mtr. Wilma Roest (Chair)  
Martin Gray (Churchwarden)  
Keith Holmes (Churchwarden)  
Rev'd Eileen Serbutt  
Fr. Iain Faulkner  
Susanne Mitchell  
Nigel Collier  
Keith Mitchell  
Anzo Francis  
Janet Jones  
Jamie Morton  
Joan James-McGowan  
Delroy McGowan  
Laura Campbell  
Rhea Newman  
Victoria Gregory (Deanery Synod)  
Alex Russell (Deanery Synod)  
Christopher Serbutt (Deanery Synod)  
Graeme Calf (Deanery Synod)

The PCC was elected at the APCM in April 2015 and has met six times. Each member serves for a period of one or three 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 we always finish by 10.00 pm.

Our agenda covers all aspects of our life together 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 and activities at Trinity St. Mary's.

This year in particular, there has of course been much discussion about our church building in terms of the restoration of our Chancel, upgrade work to our sound system, completion of the redecoration of the narthex and staircases together with ongoing discussions relating to the replacement of our organ, which is nearing the end of its natural life.

I would like to offer a particular thank you to Rhea Newman for assisting me with the minutes of our meetings.

*Jamie Morton*  
PCC Secretary

## **Electoral Roll**

At the 2015 APCM the Electoral Roll stood at 140 people. This year it stands at 143 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. 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**

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.

I would like to thank Martin for his very comprehensive Buildings and Finance report. I do not have to comment on Finance and I shall try to keep my comments on Buildings to a minimum.

The Chancel Restoration is complete with the exception of the floor which requires cleaning and some restoration but can be put on hold until sufficient funds are available and it is a job that can be done at any time as no scaffolding or special access is necessary.

The remainder of the chancel and passage and walls as far as the transepts have been painted (non-specialist) and much of the holy Family Chapel has been repainted. The Baptistry (Hull Chapel) and narthex were also repainted.

As I write, our intention is to remove all the old lino from the pews and possibly sand/stain the wooden floor. This is the cheapest interim option and should leave us with sufficient funds to replace the carpet in the nave and transepts.

We still need to upgrade the “necessary facilities” as they were the cheapest available when they were installed and are not up to modern standards or increased use.

The Chancel and Sanctuary will still need to be re-lit at some stage but this is not essential and cannot be prioritised at the moment.

When the insurance policy was reviewed we managed to persuade them that they really would like to pay for the restoration of the cross which was damaged by an act of vandalism. The cross is now looking beautiful again and stands in all its glory behind the high altar.

Thanks to a generous donation we have acquired six candlesticks to stand beside it and they look very grand and as if they have always been there.

If you haven't yet had a good, close look at the Sanctuary, please go as close as you like and take in the amazing complexity and beauty.

Take a look also in the Holy Family Chapel and you will see that the restored St Mary's Roll of Honour has been returned to its rightful place (after restoration, paid for by a generous donor). The St John Memorial has been placed on the other side of the David and Goliath window.

The St George's Flag we fly from the tower has been renewed so please look up as you leave or enter the church.

The ceremonial St George's banner/flag used on Remembrance has been dry-cleaned for the first time in its lifetime.

My thanks again to the entire Building and Finance Committee. The work they do is essential for the existence and maintenance of a building this size and its content.

The coming year will be another very busy one and an important year in the life of the St Mary's family.

May God be with us all.

*Keith Holmes*  
*Churchwarden*

### **Building and Finance Committee**

The Building and Finance Committee is a sub-committee of the PCC formed to deal in depth with the day to day matters of maintaining the building and finances on behalf of the PCC. We report to the PCC where our recommendations are sanctioned.

Members of the committee were

Wilma Roest - Vicar

Martin Gray - Churchwarden and Chair

Victoria Gregory - PCC Member and B+F Secretary

Keith Mitchell - Treasurer

Nigel Collier - PCC Member

Janet Jones - PCC Member

Graeme Calf - PCC Member

### **Building**

Last year's report noted that we had received the faculty for the Chancel restoration and works had commenced. The first five months of 2015 saw the Chancel filled with scaffolding and the work of our appointed conservators progressed on stabilising the damaged paintwork, re-fixing of loose plasterwork to the barrelled ceiling, reattaching the loose urns and pilasters at high level of the sanctuary along with a thorough cleaning and touching in of the decorative painting, repairs to the statues and gilding. It was a joy to behold the finished project once the scaffolding was removed in May. (Granville and Burbidge's report on the restoration can be

viewed on our web site at [www.stmarybalham.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/Restoration-of-painted-decoration.-Treatment-report.pdf](http://www.stmarybalham.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/Restoration-of-painted-decoration.-Treatment-report.pdf) )

Whilst the conservators were doing their work we were pleased to identify that we had sufficient monies available to continue with further aspects of the Chancel restoration which included restoration of the internal domed skylight, an overhaul of the stained glass windows and re-laying the organs speaker wires beneath the floor.

The inevitable disruption caused by the loss of our chancel was magnified by the decision to complete the baptistery dome repairs by repainting the Baptistery and the adjacent vestibule following the apparently successful repointing of the dome in 2014. With this work being done in February both ends of the church featured scaffolding for a few weeks.

However, we were still not finished. With some additional fundraising undertaken during the works we were able to bring the decorators back in the summer (along with more scaffolding) to complete decorations with the re-painting of the less decorative paintwork of the side vestibule and the main arch above the chancel steps. We were also able to complete the decorations in the Holy Family Chapel where we had had the plasterwork replaced in 2104.

Throughout all this very disruptive work the Ministry Team were quick to adapt to the changing circumstances and ensured that our worship continued in as dignified and spiritual manner as we are accustomed to. Our thanks go out to them, and to all of the congregation who continued to support our activities though this disruptive period. I pray that you all appreciate the efforts and are enjoying the result of our labours, and will be able to do so for many years to come.

To conclude these major works, it was a joy to have the service of Thanksgiving and Re-dedication led by the Rt. Revd Christopher Chessum, on Sunday 11 October 2015.

But that's not all. Throughout the year we continued to monitor our 'regular' contracts for gas, electricity, water, telephones, broadband, insurance, fire extinguishers, fire alarms, boilers, sound system, timber floor polishing, movable partition maintenance, refuse collection, lift servicing and gutter maintenance, seeking to ensure we comply with legislation and keep the building safe for all to use in a cost effective way.

We continued with our 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.

Our building insurers undertook their periodic review of our insurance cover and policy terms. This involved a thorough inspection of the building and some of our 'working practices'. They concluded our buildings value should be increased to just over £12million. Fortunately, this has only meant a very modest adjustment to the annual premium. In addition, they required us to have our periodic electrics and lightning conductor inspections (both were due this year) and an evaluation for the presence of asbestos. These have been done. Some small amounts of asbestos were identified (in remote areas) and we are at the time of writing awaiting a visit by a licensed contractor to remove the offending material.

We were also required to review our health and safety policy which we have also done. This has now been approved by the PCC.

Following our annual boiler check the water heater for the narthex kitchen developed a fault which required its replacement. The narthex boiler has also been temperamental and has been worked on throughout the winter.

We were troubled by the fire alarm buzzer sounding periodically. This was eventually identified as a flat battery in the baptistery zone which has been attended to.

The fault on the garden gate key pad was rectified and we are again able to change the code monthly.

## **Finance**

The main audited finance report for the year to 31 December 2015 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.

As reported last year, the Diocese has changed the basis of receiving contributions from Parishes to fund the Diocese which, among many other things, provides an incumbent to the Parish. The new basis has been successful in raising sufficient pledges for 2016.

The PCC considered carefully the sum to pay and agreed to pledge £55,000 for 2016, just ahead of the sum due under the old scheme. The Diocese allocates its relevant costs to parishes that equate to £72,000 pa per Parish, so St Marys continues to be a net receiving parish.

The whole process repeats each year and so the new PCC formed at the APCM will be considering the 2017 pledge shortly.

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

God Bless.

*Martin Gray March 2016*

## **Lettings report for APCM**

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

MONDAY: Cristina Pecheanu - Wandsworth Asylum Welcome  
(South London Refugee Association)

Isabel Hubner – Qi Gong

Josephine Robertson – Yoga (Started April 2016)

TUESDAY: Lucy Paul – Yoga

Lucy Quick – Perform Drama Group for Children

Catherine Drake Wilkes – Exercise Class (Started Jan 2016)

THURSDAY: Sonia Forde- Pilates

Sami – Slimming World (Started January 2016)

FRIDAY: Sonia Forde – Pilates  
Phyllis Mills-Barnor - UCM  
SUNDAY: United Church of Messiah

We also hire out the occasional lets for Festival Chorus Rehearsals, Ravenstone School, Hornsby House, Chestnut Grove Academy.

Our lettings income from:

January 2014 – December 2014	£21,011.80
January 2015 – December 2015	£17,462.00

Car parking stayed the same with 6 spaces rented out.

*Pat Nevard*

*Lettings administrator*

### **Tooting Deanery Synod**

Tooting Deanery Synod is a grouping of eleven parishes and three chaplaincies (St. George's Hospital, Springfield Hospital and Wandsworth Prison) which come together not just for mutual support but to try and work together for the greater good of the community. This year we have been particularly focussing on mission with a talk from the CEO of Welcare, a charity which supports children and families, and an evening spent sharing about what we are doing for refugees and what we should and could be doing to help them. If you would like more information, please speak to one of the St Mary's Deanery Synod members (Graeme Calf, Victoria Gregory, Alex Russell, Christopher Serbutt, who is also Lay Chair) or Mtr. Wilma, who is Area Dean.

*Christopher Serbutt*

### **Golden Years**

Golden Years is a group of all age, lively and interesting people who meet on the fourth Wednesday of each month after the 12.30 Eucharist to talk, learn, share experiences over a light lunch. We have heard Pauline talk about her work in the NHS and Daphne about her work at Brixton prison as well as enjoy holidays abroad with Rose and Graeme through photographs and vivid descriptions. We celebrate Christmas with a meal at a nearby restaurant and for the nucleus of the Lent group. ALL are welcome. Join us for an hour and a half of chat, fun and laughter.

*Daphne and Eileen*

## **around the table**

Around the Table is a faith discussion group which welcomes everyone wherever you happen to be on your journey of faith. It thrives on differing opinions!

We start with a passage of scripture and examine it in the context and culture of the time in which it was written. We then try to see what we can learn from it and understand what it means for us in our own contemporary world. We conclude each evening by saying Compline together. And all over a glass of wine!

This year we are looking at the letters of Paul, some he definitely wrote, some which he may have written and others which have just been attributed to him. The next session is on Wednesday April 20 at 7.30pm in the Narthex and is looking at his letter to the Romans.

For more information, look at the St. Mary's website (under 'What's On' / Around The Table) or speak to Chris.

*Christopher Serbutt*

## **Saturday Morning**

If you haven't popped into St. Mary's on a Saturday morning you're missing out! The morning starts at 9.30am with a simple service of Morning Prayer which is followed coffee (and cake!) and a lot of chat and laughter. What originally started purely as a means of keeping the church doors open has become a time of great fellowship and togetherness, not just for the St. Mary's regulars but for our community who come in to see what is happening, look around the church, get a banns form or even as a stop-off point on a walk. It's been a very long time since anyone came in and said 'I've often walked past this church and I've never seen it open before.' So if you have some time on Saturday morning, why not pop in?

*Christopher Serbutt*

## **5<sup>th</sup> Balham Brownies & Guides Annual Report**

Both units continue to flourish and I am delighted that we now have a new unit helper, Anna Burt, who is considering taking the leadership qualification.

This year the Senior Section celebrate their 100th birthday and the Queen her 90th so both units are working on hostess and party planning badges culminating in a point party in June.

Some of the girls have joined with 8th Upper Tooting Brownies and Guides at camps at Cudham.

The Brownies have been busy with games, crafts and badges including Artist and Stargazer. They have also joined with the Guides in a Fun Sports Evening including wellie throwing, potato and spoon races and a water obstacle race. They had a guest speaker talk to them about bees and bee-keeping ending in a very exciting game being bees in a bee hive.

We celebrated Thinking Day with quizzes, icing biscuits and games and food from around the world.

Both units have continued to do secret cleans of the church and taken part in the very important Remembrance Service.

The guide Unit continues to thrive and they have worked for their outdoor cooking and confectionery badges. They delivered Christian Aid envelopes as in previous years and in October they enjoyed the challenge of going to Sainsbury's to buy Harvest gifts. Working in 4 patrols, each patrol having £10 to spend, I was assured they were very thrifty shoppers! December saw the annual mince pie production team raising £135 for Crisis.

Once again, a big thank you to my 5 Young Leaders, my Assistant Guiders (Jo, Karen and Helen), my parent and church volunteers and Keith my facilitator.

*Diane Holmes, Brownie and Guide Guider*

## **ST MERRYDAY**

St. Merryday was the St. Mary's holiday club that took place last July which this year was aimed at adults as well as children. It took as its theme, the story of 'The Prodigal Son'. As well as making clocks and treasure maps, among other things, we had an amazing time of discussion led by Ann Watkins and some wonderful playing of Bach, by our director of music, Lizzie Hayward.

*Christopher Serbutt*

## **MESSY CHURCH**

Messy Church is not about being untidy, more about being a little less formally structured than the sort of church service you might come to on a Sunday. If you like, it's more about a hands-on approach to encountering God, and it's about being able to do this together in active and creative ways. As well as practical activities there is time for reflection and worship. You can come on your own or with somebody else. You can come once or as often as you like. Whoever you are you, and whenever you come, you will be warmly welcomed.

This year we examined the themes of 'light', 'Christmas' and 'love' with activities ranging from muffin making to icon writing. The next session is on Saturday July 9 and will be looking at the theme of 'rest'.

I would like to thank everyone who helped in every way (there are far too many names to mention individually). If you're still not sure what it's all about, then look at the St. Mary's website (under 'What's On' / Messy Church) or speak to Chris.

*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.

We have been joined by several new members this year who are rapidly becoming stalwarts of the team, for which we are extremely grateful.

I am also very pleased that St. Mary's was represented on the serving team for the second year in a row at the annual Diocesan Servers' Festival Mass in Southwark Cathedral, where Solomon Hinkson-Marks managed to steal the show yet again!

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 or to any other member of the Serving Team over coffee after the 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 should the need arise.

*Jamie Morton*  
*Head Server*

## **Social Event Group**

From quiz questions about gin to suspect bingo calling, pizza and movies to curry night, social events over the last year have provided a wonderful opportunity to spend time with old friends and to get to know new friends. With a remit to organise events which are purely social (no fundraising), the Social Events Group have really enjoyed organising these events and we're delighted that so many of you have been able to join us – we hope you've found the events as much fun as we have!

It's always a team effort on the night and particular thanks to Nicky, Derek and Maria for all their help with organising the events. A special mention to Maria for all her fabulous cooking for curry night!

Looking ahead over the next few months we already have plans for a Spanish-themed evening on 11 May (in honour of Salvador Dali's birthday) and an afternoon tea Saturday 11 June (in honour of the Queen's 90th). There are also rumours of a board games night..... If you have any suggestions of other events you would like to see or are interested in joining the Social Events Group then please don't hesitate to get in touch, we'd love to have your input.

*Alex and Rhea*

## **STEWARDS REPORT**

Annette Brown and Janet Fadayomi joined us after the APCM last April bringing our numbers back to 13. This has meant that, for most of the year, we have had a one-in-six week rota, with two of us on duty each Sunday morning.

If you would like to join us please let us know. The more of us there are, the easier it is to cover sickness, holidays and services other than Sunday morning, such as those in Holy Week and at Christmas time.

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

Thank you Pat.  
*Gillian Bannerjee*

## **St Mary's Film Club**

The Film Club has continued to meet monthly during 2015/6.

Although the general emphasis has been on good quality mainstream films, a ballet afternoon, put on as a "Special" in August, and hosted by Graeme, proved particularly popular. We had a shared meeting with the Advent Study Group to view the film "Pride", in December, and made a joint donation to the Terrence Higgins Trust to mark World Aids Day.

Once again, by the end of the season, in May, it is likely that we'll have donated around £200 to church funds.

The Film Club would particularly like to thank Victoria and Graeme for the loan of their films.

*Rose Harley*  
*Sally Nicholls*

## **Mary's Little Lambs**

St Mary's parent and toddler group, meeting on Wednesday morning, 9.30—11, continues to thrive.

Mary's Little Lambs is run by Moira, Annette, Maria, Diane, Rosie and Mtr Wilma, with help from parents and carers. On average 30-35 '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!

In this past year we have on occasion had to close the front door as we have reached bursting point - 41 lambs and a lot of sheep make for a very full Narthex!

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. New helpers would also receive a warm welcome!

## **Sacristans' Report**

Our work has continued as usual and Alan, Chris, Jamie and Alex have done their customary sterling work.

However, as I said last year, I am standing down as of April 17th and am delighted that Graeme has offered to take my place on the team. As a former sacristan he knows the work well and we are all grateful to him for this offer. I have enjoyed working with all the other sacristans over the past 26 years and wish to thank them for their friendship and support but it is time for me to move on, I feel.

I shall be continuing the embroidery of names to be placed on the back of the green Memorial Frontal and I will be doing occasional repairs on altar linen and vestments as these become necessary.

As always we are grateful to Keith and Diane for their sterling work on the difficult and time-consuming task of laundering the large altar cloths and to Alan for dealing with the laundry of the small altar linen. Alan also orders all candle and wine supplies.

*Penny Holloway*

## **Safeguarding Report**

This report has been compiled by the Safeguarding officers Elaine Joseph and Suzanne Hinkson-Marks from The Parish of Balham St Mary and St John the Divine.

Safeguarding officers Elaine Joseph and Suzanne Hinkson-Marks have been keeping up to date with the ongoing safeguarding process.

### **Parish Safe Guarding Audit:**

There has not been one carried out, however this was on the understanding that an audit tool would be issued late 2015. This however has been put on hold until the autumn as the National Safe Guarding Team (NST) wanted to undertake a nation wide safeguarding self-assessment exercise at parish level.

The Diocese has recently been informed that the questions have now been agreed and they are working with the Church of England Research and Statistics Team to determine how the process will work. More information will follow and this will be available after the Annual Safeguarding Conference.

### **DBS update:**

Introduction of the on line DBS Service has taken place. In 2014 a review for the DBS procedure was undertaken and it was agreed that the Diocese should prepare to move away from its paper based application/ procedure tool and seek to engage with another umbrella organisation which could take full advantage of the online facilities that are available. Arrangements for on line DBS checks using an independent provider (APCS-Access Personal Checking Service) were piloted in early 2015 and by December 2015, 182 parishes have now been set up using this system. The aim for 2016 is to ensure that all remaining parishes are set up to use the on line system in this way as it has been founded to be more efficient and the hope is also that using this procedure that it would be quicker, however to date there have been a few teething problems as there has been a recognised back-log of DBS which have been applied for which are still outstanding.

- Identity Checking Guidance Form has been updated in March 2016.
- Guidance has been issued by the Central Council of Church Bell Ringers on Safeguarding Children in Towers which we are now following.
- A “safe church” is being reviewed to reflect the above changes and to clearly set out guidance as to when this can be applied both within and outside of the parish.

**State of play at present:**

We are currently in the process of applying for 3 parish members DBS’s applications.

We are currently waiting for 1 outcome of our DBS application for a parish member – which we are chasing.

We have recently been successful in receiving DBS’s for 3 of our parish members.

The Safeguarding Team continues to monitor activities within the church via up to date risk assessments.

Examples of these activities that have been risk assessed are:

- Little Lambs
- Film Club
- Serving Team

Of which all of the above were completed August 2015.

In reading this report please note that in order to keep our church safe all those who want to be Junior and Senior Church leaders must be DBS checked.

*Suzanne Hinkson-Marks and Elaine Joseph*

**Junior and Senior Church Report**

Junior and Senior Church groups continue to provide for the younger members of our congregation according to their ages and abilities.

As the number of younger people regularly attending Church continues to steadily grow, and as some of our young people are now not quite so young, we have had to work hard to ensure that we continue to teach the faith at an appropriate level to those attending.

Senior Church for those between 11 and 16 is held normally on the first Sunday of the month in the choir rehearsal room. Sessions are different in format to that of Junior Church and provide an opportunity for worship and discussion about faith in a safe environment.

Over the last 12 months a lot of time and effort has been put into planning ahead for both the Junior and Senior Church sessions. Leaders and helpers meet together quarterly to plan sessions, to share ideas and to organise the rota.

Over the last year we have been blessed with a number of new leaders and helpers. This has helped to provide new ideas and energy at our meetings and on a Sunday morning. Many of our leaders also do other duties within the Church and the leaders are very conscious that they all make time to come and worship together with the main Church congregation to allow them

some spiritual refreshment of their own, as well as fulfilling their Junior and Senior Church duties.

We would always welcome new leader and helpers to work with our young people. Leaders and helpers are usually only rostered once a month and so the duty does not become a hindrance to regular worship within the main service.

Those leading and helping the work with our young people find it a very rewarding role. Both Junior and Senior Church provide a real opportunity to make our young people feel valued as members of our congregation and the privilege and joy of teaching and encouraging them in the faith is reward in itself.

If you feel that you would like to help lead or assist at Junior Church then please speak to one of the leaders.

*Fr. Iain*

### **SPA**

As Southwark Pastoral Auxiliary I continue to share my pastoral care between St Mary's and Brixton Prison. In my roles as Archdeacon's SPA I continue to meet fellow SPAs to discuss any problems or concerns that may arise. Recently we arranged a social evening for them to meet the new Archdeacon John Kiddle, which was fairly well attended. The Archdeacon was able to learn about the roles that SPAs play within their churches as well as their communities.

At Brixton there have been quite a few changes. The chaplain and two senior chaplaincy members have moved on to other jobs and the new head of the chaplaincy is an Imam. I continue to visit the men who are on ACTS. These are men who are alcoholic, drug dependent, self harm or with mental health issues.

Unfortunately, the courses 'Faith in the future' are on hold at the moment, but hopefully they will recommence in the future. They were valuable to the men who were going out and those who are in short term sentences, because it gave them food for thought about how they can change their lifestyles on release back into the community.

A group from St Mary's, including the Ministry Team, had lunch in Broxton Prison restaurant, The Clink, which was both an experience and very enjoyable.

It is important as a SPA to be a good listener, to show compassion and offer support where necessary. I pray that God's love that is unconditional, will surround us all and through prayer he will give us to strength and support that will see us through in times of difficulty.

*Daphne Clarke*

### **Churches Together in Balham and Upper Tooting (ChTBUT)**

This year we have been considering the purpose of ChTBUT and how we should go ahead. Many representatives have been serving for years, and it would be great to have fresh eyes to help us achieve our purposes - especially those of improving communication between member churches and in promoting united evangelism and community service. To this end we opened

up our October meeting to anyone who wanted to be a part as we explored our thoughts on direction and our current effectiveness. We had one extra member of our own congregation who attended and made a constructive contribution.

We are putting together information about areas in which churches are already engaged so that members of various churches can unite efforts, particularly in practical activities. An example of where this already works is Holiday at Home in the summer (hosted by Balham Baptist church) and its sister, Christmas celebrations and lunch, particularly aimed at those who are unable to get away or who really appreciate the company.

During the past year we had a speaker from Wandsworth Community Chaplaincy Team who spoke about their role in Wandsworth Prison, providing, for example, friendship, support, and Bible study. We also heard about the possibility of becoming a befriender to ex-offenders. Following this we have a member of our own congregation who has attended the training and will make this valuable contribution of support and friendship.

As usual, the Good Friday Walk of Witness was very well attended. I had the privilege of spending time afterwards with a Muslim who has been walking with us each Good Friday for many years. His desire to show solidarity with us is a great example of how to share what unites us rather than becoming preoccupied by our differences.

At present, effort is being invested in organising a Flower Festival involving all member churches. The plan is that this will take place in the early autumn. Those involved in flower arranging in each church (or anyone else interested) are encouraged to be involved. Details available from Moira.

Personally, I continue to be committed to do all I can to work with churches, both Anglican and other denominations, in our area and beyond, to bring the good news of Jesus Christ into our communities.

*Moira Hodgson*

### **2015 Data for Occasional Offices**

Baptisms	11
Thanksgiving	1
Admission to Holy Communion	0
Confirmation	0
Marriages	2
Funerals in church	4
Funerals at crematorium	8

### **Vicar's Report to the APCM**

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 our church cannot always be captured

in words. It is about anything about relationships, first with God and then with each other and our local and wider community.

Some of the things we do 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.

A copy of our MAP for 2015-2016 is included with the minutes of last year's APCM.

### **Significant points in the year**

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

- **Sabbatical:** it was a great blessing to be able to take a 3 month sabbatical in 2015, which allowed me amongst other things to being serious study of Hebrew, visit Israel and take time to rest. I enjoyed sharing my experiences with you after last year's APCM. I would like to thank again those who made it possible for me to be away for this length of time, not in the least the churchwardens, my two clergy colleagues and our reader who had to be very creative in dealing with scaffolding in the worship space.
- **Chancel restoration:** the following was written by me in the order of service to celebrate the completion of the works

*Today marks the completion of an ambitious project to restore the Chancel and Sanctuary of our church. This part of the church, with its elaborate ceiling and mosaic panels ('opus sectile') depicting the life of Jesus, was added to the church in 1882, the vision of The Revd Thomas Bates, vicar of St Mary's. Before coming to Balham Bates had been curate at St Peter's Church, Vauxhall, a church built in 1865 by J. L. Pearson. Pearson's view of church was that the beauty of a place should assist people in worship, and Thomas Bates brought that view to Balham. Over time the splendour of the Chancel diminished, due to water ingress, a fire in 1998 and general wear and tear. Many people remember peeling paintwork since the 1970's.*

*I arrived in Balham in 2006, from St Peter's Vauxhall, where I, like Thomas Bates, had experienced the importance of beauty of place and shared his desire to have church at the heart of the community, for all living and working in the parish, irrespective of background or belief.*

*In 2012 St Mary's congregation embarked on a major fundraising campaign to make it possible for the Chancel to be restored to its former glory. In less than 3 years nearly £90,000 was raised, mainly from private donors. We owe many people our sincere thanks for embracing the vision for the restoration. In January 2015 the work was able to start and was completed in September.*

*It has been a joy to work with Jenny Grenville and her team of conservators, and with Robin Cooper, stained glass specialist. Their enthusiasm and passion for the project have been wonderful.*

*St Mary's is used not only by a faithful worshipping congregation but also by many community groups, such as local schools, who visit for RE lessons or school services, by other churches and for concerts (mostly free).*

*I hope and pray that St Mary's Church in all its diversity may continue to thrive - a place of beauty, a place of meeting, a heart for Balham.*

## **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 have continued to serve on the school's Governing Body but are also actively involved in what goes on in the life of the school. I have continued to take weekly assemblies and RE lessons throughout the school, as well as termly services in church for TSM. The children and staff value having a church in their playground, just as we value having a school in the backyard.

Whilst the school is doing very well, with excellent results, we would love to see more pupils. Please encourage those with children to think about TSM as their school!

This coming year will see quite a few changes for the school as the head teacher, Ms Julie Davey, will leave in the summer and the search for a new head will begin.

## **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 and organists Keith and Stuart with director of music Lizzie, our 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, Messy 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 and can be generous in our giving;
- to the Ministry Team, for sharing in leading and shaping the spiritual growth of our church, and for teaching and guiding, for Around the Table and Lent courses;
- to Pat, our volunteer administrator, who ensures all our lets pay on time and are happy with the space they use, and who does most of the church's photocopying;
- to Martin and Keith, our Church Wardens, whose support and wisdom I have valued immensely and who work very hard on our behalf.

## **The year ahead....**

Things are about to change for me and for you. As you know by now, I will leave on 3 July to take up the post of Team Rector in the Richmond Team Ministry on 25 July.

Leaving Balham will not be easy; leaving St Mary's will be much harder. It has been a privilege to minister in this place. Thank you for all you have given me and for all you have shared.

St Mary's Balham is a truly wonderful family.

May God bless you.

*Mtr Wilma*

*April 2016*



*The Parish of St Mary and St John the Divine, Balham*

**St Mary's Church  
is a community of Christian people  
who embrace the commandments  
to love God  
and to love one another.**

We aim to be  
an inclusive church that welcomes diversity  
a thinking church where questions can be asked  
a living and growing church where change can happen

*Reaffirmed by PCC in May 2015*

*Registered Charity Number 1139488*