



## St. Bartholomew's APCM Reports 2020

### Vicar's Letter

It's fair to say that 2020 has been a very different year in the life of St Martin's & St Bart's. The Coronavirus Pandemic was emerging at the beginning of the year, our first national lockdown took place in March, then I was licensed as the incumbent on 30<sup>th</sup> June 2020, and we ended the year having lived through an unexpectedly long period of restrictions. In 2020 some of us have felt hugely isolated, some have been significantly at risk in the work they that have done, and we have all felt many ups and downs. I am hugely grateful to everyone for all the love and care that has been poured into and shared amongst our communities in this past year. This was particularly evident in the fact that whilst we were experiencing a hugely unsettling year, it was easy to see of your love for one and other in the significant amounts of pastoral care that was being offered. Thank you to everyone for the part you have played in the lives of St Martin's & St Bart's in 2020.

During this past year, things have been significantly different, and yet there have still been green shoots emerging in our life together, things like... new online services, times of prayer online & in church, phone calls of support, assemblies with local schools, outdoor services, moments to gather together in celebration. Yet, there have also been significant moments of grief. In 2020 we lost people who were and remain very dear to us. These times of grief have been further weighed down by the restrictions that we have been required to bear during lockdown. And so, perhaps as you read this, you could pause now and take a moment to remember those we have lost, to give thanks for their life and the gifts of love through which they ministered to us.

2020 was also a year in which many plans were made, then adapted, only then later to be set aside. Having to live within such varying circumstances and trying to make plans has been very difficult for those involved, yet this is what we've done. I am greatly thankful to all those who have given so much energy in trying to find ways to bring hope and life in the midst of such a different time. I am hugely impressed that though we have met with such frustration in 2020, there are many people who are already making plans once again, and giving their energies to

seeing what we can do in the year ahead. This is hugely encouraging, particularly as in the last year we have spent time in Scripture considering... our 'front lines', encouraging prayerfulness, exploring the Good News of Jesus, and asking 'where is God leading us?' It is such a joy that the themes on which God has been speaking to us in 2020, connect so significantly to our already present desire for life, service and mission.

So, as you read through these reports, please keep watch for seeds of hope. Pay attention to the things that God may wish to direct your mind to. When there are things that bring you joy, please connect with those groups and offer your thanks to them. When there are things that excite or challenge you, perhaps God is prompting you once again to join in with what He is doing in the place. Please note that the following reports reflect the life and work of St Bartholomew's church during 2020. Due to the pandemic, there were some of our usual groups that did not meet and as such are not represented below. I encourage you to read this document prayerfully, and join with us as we grieve the pains of 2020, give thanks for the joys of 2020, and ask God what He is calling us to in 2021.

Finally, I wish simply to say thank you to each of you. Thank you for your welcome, given so warmly to my family and I. Thank you for your care and support given regularly in so many little ways. Finally, thank you for your prayers and presence as we seek to become more the people and community that God is shaping in our midst.

God bless,  
*Rev Gareth Hutchinson*

### **St Bart's and St Andrews Home Group**

We are a smallish and informal house group left over from the days when our two Churches worked together in the way St. Martins and St. Barts do now. Rev'd Jane Wood started the group and we met in her home for quite a year or two. Her work as a Psychotherapist influenced our group work, along with her two dogs!!

Now, members themselves come up with topics for discussion, or we use material other groups have explored. We have also followed short courses recommended by our church.

Our group has always been very supportive to one another and currently, we are about equal numbers men and women. We don't always agree but we do respect each other's viewpoints.

We've also got our heads round 'Zoom' and so have continued to meet through Lockdown, though we did have some rather disastrous meetings around a smoky fire pit last Summer – another good reason to be socially distanced – cough, cough.

We've recently followed the Guidelines Bible reading notes on Leadership - challenging our thinking and raising questions on ways forward for our church. Right now, we are looking into the Jewish Faith and its relationship with ours.

There's always room for new members, so don't hesitate to give us a call.

*Lynne 0116 2393409 (07908443581) or Alison 0116 2386288*

### **Sparkenhoe East Deanery**

Due to lockdown we were unable to go to any Deanery meetings. However, we are looking forward to meeting up again soon as these meetings in the past have been very informative and rewarding. It is lovely meeting reps from other churches in the deanery and hearing and learning how they operate. Visiting speakers are usually very interesting, it is wonderful hearing from so many people who dedicate their lives to promoting God's message!

*Hilary Wheeldon*

### **St Bartholomew's Church Hall**

For obvious reasons, the Hall has been closed for most of 2020, resulting of course, in the loss of valuable income.

Unfortunately, it also meant that the services of Roy Pearson, our long-standing cleaner, were no longer needed. Roy was thanked most sincerely for his years of reliable and willing service. On a different basis, we employed a local professional cleaning company to carry out occasional specialist cleaning and sanitizing as required.

There was good news in that all the money was raised for the new kitchen and the empty hall provided a perfect opportunity to carry out the work. The new kitchen is looking very smart and inviting and we look forward to putting it to good use as soon as we can. Many thanks are due to the generous donors and all the fund-raising efforts.

We hope that most, if not all, of our regular user groups will return as soon as it is permissible to do so.

*Janet Carpenter*

### **Digging Deeper ... a discussion group: exploring contemporary Christian thinking**

We are a friendly, informal group of (mostly) Kirby folk who meet approximately monthly, normally in homes but currently via Zoom (enabling someone from further afield to join us). Some of us are churchgoers, others not, and some attend Quaker Meetings; none of us are experts and we don't expect answers, but we all find benefit, satisfaction and enjoyment in

sharing and exploring our many and varied views and questions about God, faith, belief and doubt in a non-judgmental atmosphere. We have been meeting 'virtually' through 2020 using resources from Progressive Christianity Network ([pcnbritain.org.uk](http://pcnbritain.org.uk)) as well as videos, books, poetic writings and articles suggested or brought along by members of the group.

Anyone interested in this type of discussion is most welcome to join us. Please ring Janet on 239 2913 or Roger on 238 7674 for more information.

### **Saturday Drop In**

For nearly three decades the 'Saturday Drop In' in the church hall has been a relaxed 'meeting' taking place every first Saturday of the month. But not so during 2020, of course, with Covid 19 causing us to close the hall for most of the year. We are looking forward to getting together again on first Saturdays as soon as it is safe and practicable for us to do so.

*Janet Carpenter*

### **Brass Cleaning Rota**

I made contact with everyone on my rota at Christmas and all are happy to continue when we get back to normal.

*Pam Shuttlewood*

### **Pastoral Care**

In spite of 2020 being a very difficult year for everyone, the pastoral team did manage to keep working and to also hold four meetings. Our October meeting was our only face to face meeting, where we had the opportunity to meet Gareth for the first time.

However, it must be stressed, that the pastoral team have not been idle during the lockdowns. We were very aware that many of our elderly friends and congregation members, who would normally look forward to our outings, teas, calls etc. were going to be very lonely. To try and overcome this, the village was divided into several geographical areas and each member of the team took on the responsibility of having a list of people to contact on a regular basis. The team were briefed with as much local information as we could find to try and help the elderly deal with the ever-changing situation. We felt this was necessary, as many did not receive the on-line Lantern or weekly notice sheet. The feedback we have received has been that these calls have been well appreciated.

Working with a local instructor, we managed to create a series of exercise sheets that could be done whilst seated and these have been made available to those who were finding it difficult to get out for a walk.

We were unable to hold our annual bereavement service in November, but we did manage to organise a Christmas thanksgiving on Wednesday December 23rd.

As a team, we are still ringing our elderly and isolated people in and around the village. The only plans we have made so far for 2021 are for a cream team, to be held in the Church hall on 11th August, if all goes well.

*Chris Fox, Charles Aylward and the Pastoral Care Team*

### **Mission Committee**

Because of Covid 19 we have not met as a committee during the last 12 months, or held any fundraising events towards the support of Ben and Katy Ray at Neema Crafts in Tanzania. However, it was decided to ask people to donate monies that they would have spent on petrol during the lock down. Many responded and £600 was raised, thank you. We also sold masks made by the staff at Neema which were brought back by Ben's mother, who visited the family at Christmas. Sadly, we did not have the opportunity to support the Barnabas Fund and other societies over the Christmas period or through Lent as usual.

If you wish to do so privately, I can provide appropriate addresses.

*Jan Kirkham*

### **Messy Church**

2020 has not been the easiest year for Messy Church, we had just got going again after Christmas 2019 when we were all put into lockdown. Normally, we would meet every other month, but we only managed to hold one meeting during 2020.

The principal of Messy Church relies a lot on the activities and the shared meal and these were not possible during the lockdown.

We have tried to stay in contact with as many of the families as we can, during the lockdown, but most of the families have missed the social interaction.

For the future, with all the limitations in place, we do not know when or if we will ever be able to run Messy again without extra volunteers to assist us.

*Rob & Jill Marsh*

### **Safeguarding**

The 2020 Safeguarding Annual Report was presented to the PCC at a meeting on the 3rd November 2020 and sent to Diocesan Safeguarding at St Martin's House.

An updated copy of the Model Parish Safeguarding Policy, signed off by the Rector, together with a copy of the Church of England Promoting a Safer Church are placed on the Notice Board in both the Church and Church Hall.

Points to note:

All PCC members are now DBS cleared. The total number of 25 PCC members and volunteers now cleared for working with children and adults.

PCC members are completing the on-line Basic Safeguarding Awareness Course and are awarded a Certificate at the end of the Course.

A signed copy of the Model Parish Safeguarding Policy will be given to the Lead Pastoral Care Organiser.

The Parish Safeguarding arrangements are clearly visible on the St Bartholomew Parish webpage, in the Church and in the Church Hall

Charmaine Odlum will continue as the Safeguarding Coordinator for both Children and Adults.

Marlene Hurdley will continue as the Independent Children's Advocate.

*Charmaine Odlum, Safeguarding Coordinator*

### **Teashop**

Teashop closed in March 2020 when lockdown began. It will not re-open until all lockdown restrictions are lifted, which maybe late summer. We hope it maybe sooner.

*Jean Evans and Mary Mosley*

### **The Lantern**

The April edition was already at the printers when lockdown was announced in March, and we reluctantly decided that we could not justify encouraging deliverers to go from house to house. The April edition was delivered with the September one, and nothing was printed in between. However, from May to August we produced a weekly digital magazine called 'Not Quite The Lantern' (available on the website of A Church Near You). This was sent out as a supplement to the weekly notice sheet, and also to all subscribers for whom we had an email address. Sadly, this only amounted to just over 100 households compared with almost 500 copies delivered in February and March. However, those people able to receive it found it enjoyable and a valuable way of keeping in touch. One incidental advantage of a digital magazine was that we could reproduce photographs in colour, as we have long wanted to do with garden photographs in particular. We were sad to lose this when we returned to print in September, so with the agreement of the PCC we had one sheet (four pages) of colour in December. We agreed to put the price up to 70p per issue to allow us to do this two or three times a year in future.

*Carolyn Winkless*

### **Solo'ne Rangers**

The group met at The Royal Oak for Sunday Lunch in March 2020. Lockdown began soon after. Until all the restrictions on the number of people who can meet together are lifted we will not be able to meet. We hope that we will be able to meet again soon.

*Jean Evans*

## **Social Committee**

The social committee has not been able to function during the pandemic. We are, however, delighted with the new church hall kitchen and look forward to being in action again. Members of the social committee worked hard to fund raise for the new kitchen. This launching Star Barts again, and a very successful antiques included evening with Charles Hansen. There were also some generous donations. We thank everyone for their help and interest in this project.

*Sandra Hubner*

## **Flowers**

The church has seemed sad and austere without flowers during this past year but we were able to decorate simply for Christmas. We look forward to having flowers in church very soon.

Mavis is leaving the organisational flower team as she is moving house. We thank her for her help and enthusiasm over the past few years. Mo and I welcome Marlene and Joan to the team

*Sandra Hubner*

## **Bellringing**

It has been a very difficult year for the team of bellringers at Kirby Muxloe. Ringing was suspended after the service on Sunday 15th March 2020. This is the first time in decades that the bells have fallen silent in the village. To keep the team together and in practice we switched to ringing handbells. This was limited to a Saturday morning to replace the usual tower ringing practice and was very weather dependent. We did however ring handbells for Gareth's first full service outside in the church rooms carpark.

Ringing did resume very briefly during September but was limited to 15 minutes maximum and with only 4 ringers and therefore only 4 bells being rung. This was required to maintain social distancing within the tower situation. Ringing was again suspended in November. A single bell was rung for 5 minutes for some of the services that took place in Church during December. The final ringing on the bells took place on Christmas Day with again just 4 ringers allowed.

Over the summer Stan Gardner the tower captain decided that this was the time to step aside. We have finally allowed him to escape this role after just 60 years in the job!!!! This is an amazing achievement that shouldn't go unnoticed. I want to take the opportunity to thank Stan for everything he has done during this time. It has always been a pleasure to ring at Kirby and he has made everyone so welcome. Stan has always strived for high standards and the team have produced some outstanding ringing that is a privilege to have been part of.

The team have split the various tower tasks between them as follows.

Ringling Master - Mark Pendery

Deputy Ringing Master - Harrison Evans

Key Holder - Cathy Highton

Correspondent - Mark Pendery

Church Liaison - Brian Mozley

Maintenance - Mark Pendery

Wedding ringing organiser - David Gardner

Practice/Sunday ringing organiser - Stan Gardner

Recruitment/Teaching - Mark Pendery

The bells are in good working condition and the tower is clean and tidy.

The full return to ringing is uncertain. Kirby tower is cramped and poorly ventilated. It is likely that guidance to resume bellringing fully will recommend good ventilation. If this is the case the situation at Kirby tower will need to be addressed.

*Mark Pendery*

## **M.U.**

Little did we think when we closed our March meeting in 2020 that we weren't going to be able to meet again for 13 months and still counting into 2021! We have kept in touch during lockdown with all our 30 members, by phone calls and individual cards at Christmas and Easter. Our hard working and conscientious secretary Mo Wooding has contacted all the speakers booked for our 2021 /2022 programme, and they were all very happy to be booked again, so we are ready to go, as soon as we can.! Some of our Members have continued to knit blankets, for Intercare and have continued forwarding food for our local food bank. Margaret Rouse, (our previous President) has spent many Lockdown hours restoring our old ,fragile but special banner , and we look forward to celebrating it being back in Church. We also look forward to being able to meet each other again whenever that will be, with enthusiasm, new ideas and an exciting programme.

*Jan and Joan*