

VICAR'S REPORT – APCM APRIL 2017

As I look at the APCM report pack and reflect on all that happened in 2016, I am overwhelmed by thankfulness and praise to God for His gracious provision and continued blessing as we seek to serve Him through the ministry of this Church.



If a year could be summarised by a word, the word I would give 2016 is HOPE.

The 'living' at New Haw was re-instated during a wonderful service of celebration in April, when Archdeacon Paul Bryer came to induct and collate me as a 'Proper Vicar'; since then there have been so many signs of hope throughout the ministry here, it is a challenge to keep count! Even during the times of grief when we mourned the loss of dear friends Sue Huggins and Betty Harding who passed from earthly life to heavenly glory this year, the hope of the resurrection filled the worship during their funerals as we celebrated their lives of faith. Hope is always the hallmark of faith.

This report touches briefly on the ministry developments of the year under different headings and gives some insights into the future opportunities and challenges as the ministry at All Saints' continues to develop.

Youth and Children's Ministry

Thanks to the dedication and leadership of June Knight, Katy Thomas and their teams, every area of our youth and children's ministry grew in 2016. The weekly toddler group and the monthly little Saints service now regularly host 50+ adults & children on Thursday afternoons. Attendance at holiday club grew by 25% and we were bursting at the seams. The start of the children's choir at Christmas, the expansion of Rockers youth group and Messy Church has meant that we have been able to keep in regular contact with many of these children and families. We have seen relationships and a sense of belonging growing as a result, and real movement towards our vision of 'faith without boundaries' in this area.

Katy Thomas transferred from being a youth volunteer to our paid youth intern in September. The extra time and training in this role has considerably strengthened the youth team and the quantity and quality of youth provision that All Saints' can offer. Work with teenagers continued to grow, and Xtreme Sundae provided an excellent forum for questions about life and faith and gave young people an entry point to worship via the Unite services and Polyapes youth camp.

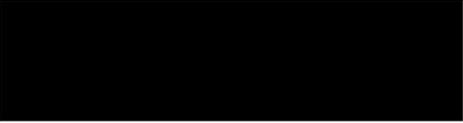
Schools Work – Over this year, Martin Robinson (Heathervale pastor) and I spent a whole afternoon with each class in New Haw Junior school teaching and helping to complement their RE curriculum requirements. With Year 3 we looked at different ways to pray, with year 4 we looked at Christian Weddings, with year 5 we looked at what Christians think God is like and with year 6 we learned about why Jesus had to die. The lessons proved very popular and will now form a regular part of the children's learning each year. There were also lots of opportunities to support the infant school through my role as governor and conducting special assemblies. Each Friday morning, I pray for the schools of the parish and in this prayer ask for an openness to the message of Jesus, I praise God that we can now see this happening more and more.

Mission and Outreach

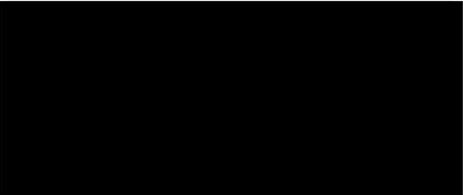
A group set up to look at older people's ministry discovered that there are many different organisations and groups available to support the elderly in this area and that our calling at this time seemed to be to help signpost people to and make provision for some of these groups. Our mission to join in with what was already going on led to three new groups regularly using our facilities (Crossroads Care, Dementia care art group and Parkinson's keep fit). Each of these groups include members of the All Saints' congregation and it has been wonderful to enter into these partnerships and host their activities here. The highlight of Christmas for me this year was the opportunity I had to do a carol service for Cross road care members and their carers in our church. Another wonderful outreach event put on by Julie and the pastoral team was a very popular 'songs of praise' and afternoon tea on the Wednesday afternoon in August (the month silver club do not meet). The Grange nursing home particularly appreciated the chance to bring residents along to this as well.

The Pentecost Prayer tent was another new mission opportunity this year. Situated on the Trower lawn, lots of people popped into see what was going on and some significant conversations about faith and prayer took place there over the week.

During May this year we held the final house to house collection for Christian Aid, it was getting difficult to find enough volunteers and over the years people seemed less likely to give when approached on the doorstep in this way.



G I V I N G



The PCC made the significant decision (in line with our value of being a generous church), that 10% of income from donors would be given away to Mission partners with whom we would build connections and congregational links over the coming years. A mission committee was set up and nominated Christian Aid, Med Air, Christians against poverty and solar aid for Africa as beneficiaries.

Discipleship and Worship Developments

Bishop Andrew visited New Haw in April to conduct a Baptism & Confirmation service for six people (whose ages spanned 6 decades) who had recently come to faith. It was a very special and inspiring service where they each shared how God had brought them to that point.

Another Alpha course was run in September which has now gone onto form a new housegroup, bringing the total number to six. The Spiritual disciplines of Prayer, Bible study and Worship were explored over the year through a lent prayer course, a teaching series on the big story of the Bible (also studied in homegroups) and the prayerful planning of the new Connect service.

The Sunday worship pattern changed in September to 8am & 9:30am Holy Communion services followed by 11am Connect (informal worship) service in the hall. It took a little adjustment and grateful thanks to all who have been willing to change their timings and embrace the opportunities that this new service has provided. One of the joys of Connect has been the participation of different people, different ages and the opportunities for people to try new things out and grow their gifts. 7 different people gave talks, 6 different people led the service, 10 people trained in prayer ministry, more people got involved in the worship group and nearly everyone gets to play an active role in the service. The addition of Connect has given a much wider range of weekly service styles to make Worship at All Saints' accessible to more people.

4 people did the Growing Leaders course this year, all of whom really valued the input and have grown in their leadership as a result. The 3 people who did the course back in 2015 have all felt called to serve in new ways. Pam Bridger started training as a Pastoral assistant in September, Penny Thomas has joined the new CAP group in Addlestone and Louise Oliver has been exploring ordination. In 2016 I joined the Deanery team that led the Growing leaders course and I hope to invite others to join the new course starting in September 2017.

Continuing the journey together – Opportunities and challenges

My grateful thanks to the PCC who have set the course we are now steering as a church which has been laid out in the Parish Development Plan for 2017 (See attached). Several of them are going to be stepping down today and I know a good number of new PCC members are going to be stepping up to take their place. There are a couple of structural changes which have been agreed by PCC and which will take effect once the new PCC is formed.

1. There will no longer be a pastoral committee, this area of work will be picked up by the ministry leadership team that will be made up from the churches licenced ministers and the leaders of various ministry areas.
2. The role of fundraising coordinator (vacated by 'Super Woman' Margaret Broad) will be picked up by 3 different fundraising groups. The Fun Quiz organisers, The May Fayre/Christmas Fayre group, and the Occasional events group. All members of the congregation who are able will be encouraged to be part of one of these groups if they are not already on 'The Friends' fundraising committee. It is hoped that by everyone paying a small part, we may continue to enjoy a good income and good social points of contact and opportunities to witness to the love of Christ to the people who enjoy coming to the All Saints' Charity events.

The PCC has agreed to employ a permanent youth worker (25 hours/week) once Katy Thomas finishes her internship in August 2017. We hope to gain some grant funding to help with this, but it will also require significant investment from the Church, so the new PCC will launch a stewardship campaign to increase donations to finance these mission objectives after Easter. Investing in the ministry to young people and families is one of the key ways we have of ensuring the long-term health and growth of the Parish church and the spiritual wellbeing of this community in years to come.

All Saints' has put in some good building blocks for growth in the last few years, and over the next 12 months we will be praying and looking together at how we can best grow the church through using the material on the 'LYCIG' Course (Leading Your Church Into Growth). This is going to be open to everyone in the congregation and will start in the summer term (watch out for further details). Growth is strategic at some levels, but behind all growth lies the passion and conviction of the followers of Jesus who have experienced his saving grace and long to share it with others. Our verse for the year 'Go home and tell them what great things the Lord has done for you' (Mark 5:19) is an encouragement to us all to become more confident in finding ways to naturally share our faith with others. Let's pray that the Lord continues to show us the way forward and may the God of hope fill us with all joy and peace as we entrust the future of this Church to Him.

Finally, and once again, I would personally like to thank you for all your love, support and prayers this year – despite all that I have thrown at you, you have responded to every challenge with such grace! You are an amazing church family and show such dedication and perseverance in your service of the Lord and His church here in New Haw.

*Thank
you*

