



**ST PAUL'S CHURCH
NORTHUMBERLAND HEATH**

**REPORTS FOR THE
ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHURCH MEETING
ON
WEDNESDAY, 21st October 2020
at 7.30pm**

LOOKING BACK/LOOKING FORWARD

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VICAR'S REPORT **APCM 2020**

To all my brothers & sisters at St Paul's I greet you in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

I find myself not sure what to say for this report. I should be reflecting on 2019 but it seems far away and part of a world we wouldn't recognise today. We were then free to worship in the way we wanted and our ministry and mission progressed throughout the year.

It is also very hard to make plans for the (at least near) future. We don't know what will be happening a week ahead let alone when I come to write the report for our 2021 meeting which should take place in only seven months' time.

What I do want to do is say a heartfelt **thank you** to you all for your faithfulness, support and overall patience as we try to negotiate the situation.

Thank you to Colin for his diligence over the past months and his support over his tenure as Church Warden.

Thank you to Lauraine who continues to be a great blessing to me and the church.

Thank you to Bob & Monica for checking the security of the Church and delivering our Church At Home bulletin to those without a computer.

Thank you to the many who have contributed to our Church At Home bulletins that have kept us in fellowship with each other. Dot, Ann, Carol, Bob, Margaret, Amit, Elaine, Charles and Lauraine all wrote excellent contributions.

Thank you to those who have been keeping in touch with groups of people on our behalf. People like Elizabeth, Elaine, Charles, Bob & Monica, Margaret & Ron, Grace & Bill, Doreen, Chris Minns, Judy, Brenda Thompson-Murray, and I'm running out of space so forgive me if I left anyone out!

Thank you to Grace and Sue Earley for their continued work with St Paul's Food Bank throughout the pandemic.

What this time has shown is that we can "be" church regardless of what the devil throws our way. Let's pray that continues into 2021.

May the Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

Amen.

Rev Clive Beazley-Long

ST PAUL'S CHURCH, NORTHUMBERLAND HEATH
Annual Parochial Church Meeting
with the Meeting of the Parishioners
Wednesday, 21st October, 2020 at 7.30 pm

PREPARING TO MEET TOGETHER

Meetings to open with prayer & worship.

MEETING OF THE PARISIONERS

1. Minutes of the meeting held on April 24th 2019. – Clive
2. Election of Churchwardens.

ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHURCH MEETING

1. Appointment of Secretary for the APCM.
2. Apologies for absence.
3. Minutes of the meeting held on April 24th 2019.
4. Report on Electoral Roll: Peter Green
5. Report of the activity of the PCC – Christine Minns
6. Treasurer's report on the financial statements of the Church in 2019 – Charles Brooke
7. Church Warden's report on the Fabric, Goods and Ornaments of the church – Colin Smith
8. Report on the proceedings of the Deanery Synod – Peter Green.
9. Election of 2 Deanery Synod Members (every three years)
10. Election of PCC representatives
11. Election of Sides people - Monica Lindridge
12. Appointment of Independent Examiner for year 2020.
13. Vicar's report – Clive
14. Question on Parochial Church Matters - Clive
15. Vicar's concluding remarks
16. Concluding Prayers.

There will be a short meeting of the new PCC straight after the APCM to elect officers.
Next PCC Meeting: Monday 14th December, 2020 at 7.30pm.

ST PAUL'S CHURCH, NORTHUMBERLAND HEATH
MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHURCH MEETING
HELD ON WEDNESDAY 24TH APRIL 2019

PREPARING TO MEET TOGETHER

Clive welcomed everyone to the meeting and those assembled sang a hymn. Clive asked Lauraine to open the meeting with some reflections. Lauraine prayed and read from the Gospel of St Luke, Chapter 10, verses 1-9, about Jesus sending out his followers into mission. She spoke about being a mission-shaped church and to share the Gospel with the wider community in both word and deed. Another hymn was sung and Lauraine prayed.

MEETING OF THE PARISHIONERS

1. Minutes of the Meeting held on Wednesday, 25th April 2018

Clive referred to the minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday, 25th April 2018 which had been circulated. **Those parishioners present were asked to formally agree the minutes as a true record of the meeting. This was proposed by Bob Lindridge and Seconded by Lauraine Wells. There was a unanimous show of hands in agreement.**

2. Election of Churchwardens

Clive said there had been only one nomination for the position of Churchwarden, which was Colin Smith. Colin had agreed to continue in that post.

Clive proposed from the Chair that Colin Smith be elected as Churchwarden. There was a unanimous show of hands in agreement and he was duly elected for the year.

ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHURCH MEETING

1. Appointment of Secretary for the APCM

1.1 Clive proposed from the Chair that Christine Minns be appointed as Secretary for the APCM. There was a unanimous show of hands in agreement.

2. Apologies for Absence

2.1 Apologies for absence were received from Philippa Beazley-Long, Joan Handy, Marjorie and Eileen Hoare, Sue and Tim Luff, Alison McGill, John and Veronica Ralph, Jane Stafford, Jeanette Watts and Martin Yates.

3. Minutes of the Meeting held on Wednesday, 25th April 2018

3.1 Clive referred to the minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday, 25th April 2018 which had been circulated. **Those present were then asked to formally agree the minutes as a true record of the meeting. This was proposed by Peter Green and Seconded by Colin Smith. There was a unanimous show of hands in agreement.**

4. Report on the Electoral Roll

4.1 Peter reported that last year ended with 99 people on the electoral roll. As a new electoral roll had to be done this meant we now had 68 people on the roll, of which 39 were resident in the Parish and 29 were outside. Clive remarked that some new people had come to church and would be added to the roll.

5. Report on the Activity of the PCC

5.1 Clive referred to the report of the activities of the PCC which was on page 8 of the booklet of reports. No questions were raised.

6. Treasurer's Report on the Financial Statements of the Church in 2018

6.1 Charles Brooke referred to his report on page 8 of the booklet of reports and to the Annual Report and Financial Statements for the year ended 31st December 2018. Charles remarked that it would help if people gave by Standing Order, details of which were given on the weekly news sheet. He said it would also help if people gave their details for Gift Aid as we could claim money back from the Government. He said that he would be stepping down as Treasurer and needed someone to volunteer to take on the role.

6.2 Charles thanked all those who helped with the collections: Dot Turner, Brenda Reid, all those who did the weekly counting, Bob and Monica Lindridge, and Ron Handy for all his support. Grace Allan thanked Charles concerning Mission giving and the money sent for disasters. Ron Handy passed on thanks from Keith Varney, our Independent Examiner, for how the accounts had been set out.

6.3 All those present were asked to agree the Annual Report and Statement of Accounts. This was proposed by Charles Brooke and Seconded by Peter Green. There was a unanimous show of hands in agreement.

7. Churchwarden's Report

7.1 Colin said he hoped that everyone had read his report in the booklet and thanked everyone for their support.

7.2 Grace Allan asked about the car park and Colin told her that it was a complicated thing to do and to get funding to match what we were able to put in. It was hoped to have an ecological system where the water soaked into the ground. Bob Lindridge remarked that a man from Resin Stone Driveways had done a presentation to the PCC. Bob asked if there were any examples of the type of product that had been spoken about. Colin told him that it was a new product which was more effective, but there were no examples locally. It was a more effective type of installation which was a resin based surface which would be an improvement on what we had already. As it would be more ecological we might have a better chance of getting grants. Regarding the cost of re-surfacing the car park, Colin said we didn't want to go back to having tarmac as it wouldn't last that long and various systems had been looked at. He said that we had money in our funds at Rochester and hoped to get funding, but it could cost about £60,000. Ron Handy asked about Thames Water and Colin told him that the water went back into the groundwater. Jonathan Rose remarked that the soakaway was the problem as it was silted up and wasn't good to start with. He said the wider church would be consulted for a final decision on going ahead with the plan. Alan Brockwell asked how long it would take and Colin said it would be at least another year: we did have half the money but would need to find funding for the rest of the cost. Grace Allan remarked that Dot Turner did a lot of fund raising and asked if Dot was going to do it this time. Colin said that Dot wasn't going to do the fund-raising but was giving him advice. Colin said that the PCC had decided to go down the road of finding a funding medium which would tell us the best possible choice for finding grants. Clive said that any help with this matter would be welcomed. He also asked that our thanks to Colin for all his work be minuted.

7.3 Grace asked about the church roof. Colin said that a quinquennial inspection by a surveyor would take place on 6th June. Other people had looked at the roof and said that no urgent work was required. The gutters needed to be done and quotes were being sought.

7.4 Colin said that there had been some problems with the heating system. Jonathan Rose had looked at it and had identified that the radiators needed bleeding. This was more of a maintenance issue and it had taken 3 days to clear air out of the radiators. Colin remarked that he was confident that the problem was being solved.

8. Report of the Proceedings of the Deanery Synod

8.1 Clive referred to the report on the Deanery Synod on page 9 of the booklet of reports. No questions were raised.

9. Election of 2 Deanery Synod Members

9.1 Clive reported that there were no elections necessary this year. Brenda Reid and Peter Green were our current Deanery Synod representatives.

10. Election of PCC Representatives

10.1 Clive said that one nomination to the PCC had been received. Carol O'Connor had agreed to be nominated. Her nomination had been proposed by Ron Richards and Seconded by Margaret Richards. **Clive Proposed from the Chair that Carol be elected to serve on the PCC. There was a unanimous show of hands in agreement and Carol was duly elected.**

11. Election of Sides People

11.1 Monica reported that during 2018/19 there had been 23 people on the rotas for stewards and greeters rota at the 9.00 am and 10.30 am services. They were: Grace Allan, Alan Brockwell, Charles Brooke, Catriona Cole, Sue Earley, Ann Easter, Elaine Fermer, Peter Green, Ron Handy, Sue Luff, Tim Luff, Christine Minns, Veronica Ralph, John Ralph, Brenda Reid, Margaret Richards, Ron Richards, Jackie Robinson, Janet Rose, Judy Smith, Joanne Tyler, Elizabeth Williams and Jeanne Williams. During the year Sue Luff had joined the team and Veronica Ralph, John Ralph and Joanne Tyler had stepped down. At present there were 20 people on the rotas stewards and greeters. Monica thanked everyone who had volunteered to be a steward or greeter and said that it was important that our congregation felt welcomed at St Paul's. There were rotas to cover greeters, stewards, serving coffee and counting money. There were 35 different people on the rotas with lots of them being involved on many of them. Monica asked that if anyone would like to help and be on a rota they should talk to her. Grace Allan thanked Monica for all her work.

12. Appointment of Independent Examiner for year 2019

12.1 Clive said that Keith Varney had acted as our Independent Examiner this year and had said he would be willing to continue in that role. Clive proposed that we appoint Keith as our Independent Examiner for next year. **Those attending were asked to agree to the appointment of Keith Varney as our Independent Examiner for 2019. This was proposed by Charles Brooke and Seconded by Ron Handy. There was a unanimous show of hands in agreement.** Clive asked that our thanks to Keith Varney be minuted and a letter of thanks be sent to him.

13. Vicar's Report

13.1 Clive said he could safely say that 2018 had been a tumultuous year for our country, but Christians had a part to play. He said that we had said goodbye to friends, some moving away and some who had died. We had also seen new people coming to our church and changes to services, including some great events. Children were being more involved and our numbers have remained steady. Remembrance Sunday and the Christmas services had been well attended. Unfortunately we were short of leaders for the children's groups and were falling behind on our Mission Plan in some areas. On the other hand, other items were coming up, for instance a Proclamation event in November with Dai Woolridge, a poet and author, who worked for Scripture Union. Clive encouraged people to come along and to bring at least one person who didn't attend church. There was going to be an Alpha course for people to explore their faith. Prayer Sundays appeared to be popular and they would be held on the 5th Sunday in a month, except in December. The next Prayer Sunday would be held in June. We needed to continue to pray and to welcome newcomers; we had a gift for hospitality and welcome each of them in the name of the Lord. We also needed to encourage each other.

14. Questions on Parochial Church Matters

14.1 Ron Richards said he felt that communications between the Vicar and the congregation and staff was important, but that telephone messages often went unanswered. Clive said that he tried to answer as many call as he could but didn't respond on his day off or when he was on holiday. Lauraine remarked that calls may not be immediately answered but that in Clive's defence he would eventually answer. A call to remind him could be made if there was no response.

14.2 Brenda Reid said that, when she had suffered a stroke, many people had sent cards saying they were keeping her in their prayers. She had been disappointed that her name had not been put on the prayer list on the back of the service sheet. She had asked Judy about this who had explained about Data Protection and only being able to put names on the list if that person agreed. Brenda said that there may be others who live alone in the Parish and asked how one could get round the Data Protection Act. Clive said that it was early days with the legislation and had caused hours of work and was complicated. It meant that we couldn't use people's data if someone was ill or if a relative was ill. It made the work of the church more difficult, but as things were smoothed out and we had clearer advice on what to do it would get better. Brenda remarked that it should be brought to people's attention that it was complicated. Clive said that an e-mail to Judy would

help. Grace Allan said that within the closer community the Prayer Chain passed news on more quickly. Clive said that, without permission from the person concerned, no-one's name could go on a list, but people can pass the word around and pray. Peter Green said that he had experienced problems with the Data Protection Act regarding a relative who was in a care home and remarked on how complicated the Act made things. Clive commented that we did have some booklets about Data Protection.

14.3 Monica Lindridge said she had concerns about the church website and getting information put on it. Clive said that Chito Nwulu was in charge of the website and was working on a way for people to get items put on the website.

14.4 Bob Lindridge raised the point that following the closure of the Pop-in Parlour in Mill Road the people who went there now came to Coffee Call and wondered if this was an opportunity for us to offer our facilities to provide a space for the community to meet. It would need people to administer it and serve coffee/tea and biscuits. Grace Allan remarked that Sue Earley, who works for Age UK, had said that new arrangements were in place at several churches and libraries and other places. Grace also said that people at our church who helped out weren't getting younger. Brenda Reid commented that our Coffee Call was a form of outreach and the people who came to it expressed gratitude and appreciation. Grace said that Coffee Call raised about £900 over a year. Clive said he would like it noted our thanks to those who gave up their time to run Coffee Call. Carol O'Connor suggested targeting a different age group and to bring in younger people. Clive said he would like to hold a parent/toddler group at some point and was praying about it.

14.5 Grace Allan raised the fact that Charles Brooke was stepping down as Treasurer and Colin Smith being the only Churchwarden and asked if the Leadership Team was considering this. Clive remarked that it was a concern and asked if anyone knew anyone who would be willing to take on the role. He said that Miria Smith was working with Charles on taking over as Treasurer. He mentioned that she was not able to attend every PCC/Standing Committee meeting as she needed a babysitter, but he hoped she would be able to do the job and we needed to pray for her and the situation.

15. Vicar's Concluding Remarks

15.1 Clive thanked all those who carried out various roles in the church, Colin for all his work as Churchwarden, Lauraine for all her work and support, Judy Cunnew for all her work in the office, as they all did a tremendous amount of work.

15.2 Clive said that the Spring Harvest event held every year was an opportunity to meet other leaders: Pastor Adi and peoples who ran other churches. There was a strong feeling that we were about to have a revival in this country and nation. He said we had to pray for our community to repent and turn to God: 2019/20 could be an exciting time for the church.

16. Concluding Prayers

16.1 The meeting closed at 9.00pm with prayers by Clive. 25 people attended.

Christine Minns – PCC Secretary

CHURCH WARDEN'S REPORT 2019/2020

A Church Warden is a legal officer entrusted with the responsibility for the church fabric and maintenance of our buildings and this past year St. Paul's has continued with one Warden. This is now not so unusual in the Church of England and some churches have no appointed wardens; however, the church, being a family, comes together to ensure that the church building remains open, safe and welcoming, with many members of our church family carrying out key roles.

Day-to-Day

On a daily basis the heating is in regular demand and we have had a number of problems with its reliability. A solution has been identified and it is hoped that shortly, the problem affecting it will be resolved. We continue to increase in the number and variety of groups and individuals who choose St. Paul's as a venue; this helps to support the church financially.

Week-to-Week

Maintenance and cleaning is undertaken on a regular basis and a review of how we clean the interiors was completed and is now being implemented.

Month-to-Month

Sue Luff and Kevin Baker (Fire officer) do a monthly check of our Emergency lighting, the fire equipment throughout the premises, as well as inspecting the condition of the fire doors in church.

Year-to-Year

The exterior of the grounds and building continues to cause concern. The Quinquennial report has highlighted a number of issues that will be addressed in the coming year. The need to upgrade the car park to replace the surface, is under review.

As my third year as Church Warden concludes I must give my thanks to Jonathan Rose, as deputy Warden, Sue and Kevin for their many acts of help and kindness and especially Judy, my wife, for her love, support and understanding.

Colin David Smith – Church warden

TREASURER'S REPORT

In 2019, St. Paul's spent over £7,000 more than we received.

If you are a taxpayer and are not already signed up for Gift Aid, you could increase your giving by 20% just by signing a form and paying your offering by standing order. Last year, £10,000 was taken in collections on a Sunday. The Gift Aid for that amount would be £2,000, reducing the deficit on our accounts.

Thank you to all of you who increased your giving last year.

In 2019, nearly 30% of the church's income came from hiring the hall, the lounge and the old Baptistry. If you know anyone who is looking for rooms to hire, please let Linda Mayes know. I am grateful to Linda and also to Monica Lindridge who both do so much to make sure that our premises are used during the week.

Also, thanks to our Gift Aid secretary, Dot Turner, who makes sure that we get the money due to us from the government.

Our church cannot continue to spend more than we receive. In 2020, our buildings are likely to be closed for at least 3 months because of Coronavirus. We may lose £11,000 in hall rents (or £20,000 if the church is closed until the end of the year). If you are able to, please prayerfully consider increasing your giving to the church.

Charles Brooke

PCC REPORT 2019

The Parochial Church Council meets regularly, alternating with meetings of the Standing Committee (a merger of the Finance and Fabric Committees), to discuss and make decisions on the running and upkeep of the church and its buildings.

The PCC considers many key items, including adopting safeguarding regulations; resurfacing the church car park; updates on the Pre-School; progress of the Mission Action Plan, as well as reports from the Standing Committee on the upkeep and repairs to the church buildings.

Our finances are a constant concern. Charles Brooke, our Treasurer, continues to do a tremendous job in keeping the PCC up to date on the state of the church finances and works very hard in dealing with our church accounts. In December the budget for 2020 was discussed, including how much we pay to Rochester for the Parish Pledge. The PCC agreed the recommendations of the Standing Committee, which included the church fees for weddings, funerals and baptisms, the rental for hiring the hall as well as the wages of the Church Administrator and the Cleaner.

The minutes of the PCC meeting are put on the notice board (by the window with the cross) for everyone to read.

Christine Minns – PCC Secretary

SAFEGUARDUNG REPORT APCM 2020

You will have been aware of the continuing reports of historical abuse by those in positions of power in the Church. Quite rightly the church continues to put in place processes and structures that are aimed at eliminating this evil from our organisations.

In 2019 we were asked as a PCC to do an official audit to make sure we as a parish were compliant on all accounts. It also introduced further stringent processes that we need to be compliment with.

You can find information, guidelines and forms in the safeguarding folders. There is one at the rear of the Church and one in the Church Office.

If you are a role holder in the church who comes into contact with children (those under 18) or vulnerable adults) you should have completed some level of safeguarding training. You should also have completed a recruitment process (we are still working through some of these!).

There is also an increased awareness programme and you may have spotted information and posters on these issues in the church.

I know for some, these measures feel like an “over the top” reaction to the problem. Can I assure you that I fully support the Church and Diocesan response. If these measures save the suffering of just one child or vulnerable adult in the Church of England, then they will have been worthwhile. Please, if you are asked, take the time to fill in the required documentation, complete the required procedures and take the required training so we can ensure our church is seen as a model for good safeguarding.

Rev Clive Beazley-Long

ELECTORAL ROLL REPORT

At last year’s APCM there were 99 members on the Electoral Roll. After the meeting the Roll was wiped clean and members had to sign new forms. There were 67 new forms received and during the year, one member died, Ingrid Walsh. This leaves 66 names on the current list

P.T. Green - Electoral Roll Officer

STEWARDS AND GREETERS

At present there are 23 people on the stewards and greeters rota for 9.00am and 10.30am services.

At St Paul’s we have rotas to cover greeters, stewards, coffee and counting money. You will be very welcome to join any of these rotas. Please talk to me if you are interested in learning more about what is expected.

Monica Lindridge – Rota Organiser

DEANERY SYNOD REPORT

The Deanery Synod met 3 times during the year.

In June at St Martin's the Erith Deanery Youth Trust gave an update on the Youth activities going on in the area. Presentations were given by Laura Webster, the Youth Worker for the Deanery, and some of the youth members of her team.

The October meeting held at All Saint's, was on "Estates Ministry in Urban Deprived Areas" and was given by Rev. Sharon Copestake, Vicar of St Francis of Assisi Church, Strood. She spoke on the ups and down side of such estates and the challenges of the parishioners in such areas.

The February meeting, held at Bishop Ridley Church, Falconwood, was addressed by Rev. Bunker who gave a brief history of the Mental Health provision from the 1960's, when most mental health issues were dealt with in hospital and then in the 70's and 80's this changed to a Community based provision. Neil then went on to inform Synod of the current provision in Bexley and where and how to access help when needed by Clergy for people in their parishes.

The Parish was represented by Brenda Reid and Peter Green

Peter T. Green, Deanery Rep. for St Paul's Church

PRAYER MINISTRY

The Prayer Ministry Team (PMT) has been operating for some time to encourage and promote prayer within the life of the church. A training event to understand the role and generate interest was held on 23/11/2019. As a result, the team successfully increased to 10 members. Subsequent to this the Coordinator was appointed for the team.

The rota was completed in January 2020, it adopts a quarterly format covering the months Feb-May which combines 2 people per service. The Clergy and Lay readers are also included sparingly which assists with ensuring there is a PMT member available during 9:00am and 10:30am Sunday services.

The PMT have pre-arranged team meetings within the year. The first meeting will be held on 19/4/2020 leaving 2 scheduled meetings to take place in August and November 2020. The meetings are in place to provide the opportunity to discuss and solve problems, to report progress of PMT, implement particulars for rota planning and to inform about new procedures regarding ministry development. For the purpose of this report, the consensus is the rota appears to be working well to date. Although, it would be beneficial to have more people available to support the 9:00am services.

"For where two or three gather together in my name, there am I with them"

Matthew ch18 v 20

Brenda Thompson-Murray

PASTORAL CARE REPORT 2019/2020

Pastoral care is an important ministry at St Paul's, with a very caring church family: some make visits, telephone contacts, offers of lifts to and from hospital appointments, and run errands for church members who are sick and/or housebound. We are very grateful to them for all that they do. We offer our grateful thanks also for their prayers.

It is with great sadness that I report the sudden death of my colleague and friend, Ingrid Walsh. We will all remember her with much love and sadness. We give thanks for all that she did here at St Paul's. May she know eternal rest and peace. We pray for her children, grandchildren and extended family as they mourn. May they be aware always of God's presence and unfailing love.

The number of church family we visited this year is about six. During each visit, as I remember God's promise of care through to old age in Isaiah 46:4, I pray that the Lord would make me and other visiting members the channel of His peace, love, comfort and understanding towards those whose homes we visit. I pray also for Lauraine who brings Holy Communion to our members too.

Now that we as a nation, as well as the rest of the world, are experiencing an anxious time without precedence, we need everyone's prayers for the blessing and protection of our Father and Saviour more than ever.

'The Lord reigns, he is robed in majesty; the Lord is robed in majesty and is armed with strength. The world is firmly established; it cannot be moved. Your throne was established long ago; you are from all eternity.' (Psalm 93:v1-2).

Elizabeth Williams

CHILDREN'S CHURCH

There are four groups within the Children's Church: Creche,(Bubbles), for children under school age; Splash for children in infant school (4-7yrs old); Extreme for children in junior school (7-11yrs); The Grid lower secondary school / KS3 (11-14 yrs). Since the start of the new school year we have combined the Splash and Extreme groups to make one group covering primary school age children both due to the number of children attending each week and available staff (a leader who plans and prepares the session and an adult helper). Over the last three years the themes have been set by Clive to tie in with the themes in the main church and are based on the scripture union syllabus. This year we have spent more time on the key events in the Church calendar including the Christmas story and Easter which has been very beneficial as the children have more time to consolidate their knowledge and this build up in levels of complexity as they progress through the groups. Activities vary according to the age groups but include craft, non-cook cooking, discussions and games. Dependent on the age group we take part in communion to varying degrees. Often it can be difficult to fit everything in!

For the last few years now there has been no Children's Church Co-ordinator and this has meant that there has often been no one person to whom to take any issues for discussion and who can ensure that all staff involved in Children's Church are aware of what is happening or liaising with the diocese. We are also short of leaders. We require two adults per group to ensure safeguarding, and also given the sometimes challenging nature of some of the children. The Grid group covering 11-14 age range is a large well attended group and we feel it would be beneficial a have a programme perhaps involving mentors whereby the young people have a supported transition from the group to the main church at 14 years old. The young people have developed positive skills as they have grown in faith and it would be a shame not to allow these to continue to develop to the benefit of both their own spiritual development and the growth of St Paul's. It may be possible to begin to integrate the young people with mentor support in roles of reading, prayers or stewarding.

Thank you for your support and prayers as the children grow in faith.

Lorraine Metcalf



Starship Crew Report 2019

We have had a mixed year at Starship Crew. The year started with numbers much as they had been in 2018. Sadly, we saw these decline until at the end of 2019, we decided we need to try to do something. We changed the meeting time to Monday's in an afternoon slot. So far this hasn't help to elevate numbers so we need to pray about what to do next. On a positive, those who attend are nearly all from outside of St Paul's and many are new in the past six months. Pray for us and if you would like to get involved please speak to Clive or Pippa.

Clive Beazley-Long



ST PAUL'S PRE-SCHOOL

This year has been a good year for Pre-school. We currently have 51 children on roll and a few more starting after the Easter break. We have 7 members of staff, and Lauraine Wells as our Director. We have a good stable staff base.

At Christmas we held our annual Nativity in the church which went well and many parents came along to support us. Bob and Monica helped us with the children to learn all the new songs.

The children have been learning about various stories and nursery rhymes.

We are in the process of "fundraising" to have our garden re-vamped.

Nicola Porch – Manager

BEREAVEMENT SUPPORT GROUP: 'PICKING UP THE PIECES' LUNCH REPORT 2019/2020

The Bereavement Support Group 'Picking up the Pieces' lunch continues to be a lively and optimistic group. We meet in the church lounge on the second Friday of the month at 12.30 pm.

We share a meal together in a welcoming and relaxed atmosphere. The aim of the Bereavement Support Group is to offer ladies and gentlemen from our church, other churches and from the local community, an empathetic listening ear, support and friendship as they go through a difficult time in their lives after a loved one has died. It is an opportunity to get together with those who have similar experiences, help them to move on at a gentle pace. They say they appreciate the chance to share their experiences on topics other than bereavement sometimes, in a friendly setting, and give them an opportunity not to eat alone. The number of people who attend regularly is between 14 and 20.

Our grateful thanks go to Ron Handy for all his support throughout the year. Our grateful thanks also go to the ladies for assisting with clearing up and for doing the washing up each time.

The Group's card extending an invitation to those who may be in need of our support, with lunch, is available in the Link.

Elizabeth Williams and Jeanne Williams

FELLOWSHIP TEA REPORT 2019/2020

Fellowship Tea continues to offer an opportunity for our church family and others from local churches to meet for fellowship and an afternoon tea with freshly made sandwiches and cakes in a welcoming and relaxed setting. We meet in the church lounge on the second Sunday of the month at 4.00 pm. The afternoon tea is followed by a short worship which is appreciated by many, especially those with limited mobility, for whom it is the only opportunity for them to meet with friends, unlike in previous years when they met at Sunday Services and/or Home Groups. Our numbers are reduced this year due to some members becoming housebound.

As in past years when, as a group, we have been able to put part of members' donations towards a small charity, we were able to make a contribution of £50 pounds to the Greenwich & Bexley Hospice in support of the excellent work they do. Most of the balance was put towards our Christmas Tea including Christmas presents. My (Elizabeth) special thanks to Jeanne for all she does in making the presents available. Our grateful thanks to our members for their donations.

The Christmas Tea was well supported by our church family – thank you. An afternoon tea with delicious food, followed by a quiz, recitations and storytelling, singing of Christmas carols and our Father Christmas bearing presents, made it a fun afternoon. We are very grateful to Colin Smith as master of the event, Monica Lindridge, Brenda Reid and Jeanne Williams. Our grateful thanks also to Colin and Judy, Doreen Gilson, and other church family for all their support during this event and throughout the year.

If you are free on the second Sunday of the month and would like to join us, please check the Notice Board or let us know.

Elizabeth Williams and Jeanne Williams

COFFEE CALL REPORT 2019

COFFEE CALL has continued to grow in the last year and is much appreciated by all who come along. It provides a warm and welcoming place for those in our congregation as well as those who do not attend church regularly. It has become a much-valued community resource and an important part of our church.

We are very grateful to all those who continue to volunteer on Wednesday mornings, but new volunteers would be very welcome. Many of us are quite elderly now, although still very willing to help. The variety of food served is amazing!

Thanks to the generosity of our volunteers in providing the food at Coffee Call, we were able to pay in donations of over £1000 in 2019.

I hope Coffee Call will be able to resume providing a valuable service to our community and church members when the coronavirus outbreak ends and restrictions are eased. In the meantime, we remember in prayer all those who would normally join us on Wednesday mornings.

Grace Allan

FOODBANK REPORT 2020

Our Church Foodbank has continued to support Bexley Women's Aid each month and also help people in need in our congregation. We were shocked to hear in March 2019 that Bexley Women's Aid (BWA) had lost their contract with the local authority. The contract was awarded to SOLACE and they became responsible for most of the refuges. Despite attending an Open Afternoon organised by Bexley Council and SOLACE no one has made contact with the church.

BWA has continued with fewer refuges, but still doing a lot of outreach work in the Community. We have therefore continued to support them monthly, although we have reduced what we give them. They continue to be grateful for all our donations, including toys, Advent Calendars and Easter Eggs. I attended the AGM of BWA in December and was very encouraged to hear their future plans.

Several bags of surplus tinned vegetables were given to the main Bexley Foodbank in the summer and when it was decided to close our restricted Foodbank Fund, £400 was given to them. This was very welcome, as demand for the Foodbanks in Bexley has grown massively. Provision will be made in the church budget, so that we can purchase supplies, as and when necessary for our Foodbank.

Although a lot of very welcome donations were made at our Church Harvest service, very little was received from schools in our parish. We did get a substantial amount from two classes at Barnehurst School, who were doing a project on FOOD. We were very grateful for their donations and thanked the teachers and children for their generosity.

As always, I am very grateful to Sue Earley, Bill and Judy for all their help and support. Sue and I are also very grateful for the generous donations given by members of the congregation. With the coronavirus outbreak likely to disrupt lives for several months, we face many challenges and it will be quite difficult to keep our Foodbank stocked to enable us to support those in need.

Grace Allan

'HOME' GROUPS

A 'home' group consists of a group of people sharing and caring for each other while having open and lively discussions about different aspects of the Bible and Christian life. At the beginning of 2019 we had five groups meeting either weekly, fortnightly or monthly. Most meet in the evening, but one meets in the afternoon. Two groups meet in homes, while three groups have been meeting in the church lounge. There are approximately 35 people at St Paul's who belong to home groups.

One group is called Pathway. They meet monthly in the church lounge on a Wednesday afternoon. The Theology Discussion Group meet in the church lounge every week during term time on a Thursday evening and study in more depth.

Bob and Monica Lindridge host a group in Merewood Road, Barnehurst, that meets fortnightly on a Wednesday evening. They have members from other local churches too.

The Barnehurst Avenue home group, until recently based at Karen and Robin Silver's home, meet fortnightly on a Wednesday evening. They now sometimes meet at Ron Richards' home.

Charles' group has been meeting on a Monday evening but has now ceased to meet due to lack of numbers.

Some of the topics explored in our home groups during 2019 have been: The Lord's Prayer and what it means to us as we say the familiar words, Women in the Bible...Priscilla, a Christmas study looking at the role and significance of animals in the Nativity story, St John's Gospel, Samuel, David, the Holy Spirit, Pakistan Christian girls sold to Chinese, Temptations of Evangelical Worship in US, Atheists dating Christians, Advent traditions and background, St Augustine, Synoptic Gospels, Prayer, The TV series "Sacred Wonders", C of E guidance on Abortion, 75 Anniversary of bombing of Dresden, Easter rituals, studying the C of E Lent Course - Live Lent - Care for God's Creation, A 40 day challenge, Peter, Stars, Simplicity, Light, Ephesians, Jonah and God's comfort.

Some groups go out together for meals or visits such as Ely Cathedral, Maldon, St Alphage Church in Greenwich, Eltham Palace while others enjoy a barbecue and bring and share suppers.

All the groups would love to have more members. They believe that it would be good for the church and for every person who comes to church, to belong to a home group.

Groups choose their own material to study, some with a study guide, CD or a DVD. Some groups have one leader, while others take it in turns to lead. Most meetings start with a time of worship, which may include a song and also a time of prayer. There is also a lot of cake eaten!!

Members support each other as life throws us challenges and celebrate our joys and successes together. They support each other especially with prayer. It is always comforting to get a phone call, text or email showing support when people are having a difficult time. One group hope to learn to be disciples.

New members are always welcome to join any of these home groups. Why not join a group in 2020?

If you want to find out more, please look on the Link church notice board, on St Paul's website for venues and times, or ask someone about our home groups.

Monica Lindridge

CAMEO

Cameo encourages ladies of all ages from our church, community and beyond to meet together in the church lounge in a welcoming and relaxed atmosphere.

We normally meet on the first Monday of each month. As the ladies arrive, at approximately 8.00pm, we offer them a drink of wine or a soft drink. Our talks start at 8.15pm and last about one hour. We then serve hot drinks and finish the meeting about 10.00pm.

During 2019 we had between 25 and 30 ladies attending our meetings.

As always, we have a varied programme including: John Turner's famous quiz evening, Wall to wall vinyl with Martin Yates, The Passover with Andy MacDonald, Stuck for words with Hazel Percy, The Suffragettes and the Suffragists with Melanie Gibson-Barton, Bibliomania with Jo Livingston, and Christmas – A Celebratory History with Andy Thomas. The Men's Group joined us for the Life and times of Samuel Pepys with John Halligan. We have also enjoyed a Bring and Share Supper and a Bring and Buy for Christian Aid

We arranged meetings that took us for a Christmas meal at Sophie's Choice and visits to Erith Playhouse with the Men's Group to see A bunch of amateurs, Sweet Charity, Confusions, A slice of Saturday night and Bombshells. We also went on a country walk with the Men's Group around Otford. In 2020 we have already enjoyed a talk by Evergreen, Bexley and another quiz evening with our resident quiz master – John Turner.

At our meetings we always advertise what is happening at St Paul's and encourage our members to join us at church events and services.

If you would like to know more about our activities, please pick up a programme from the Link, look on the church notice board or St Paul's website for more information.

Monica Lindridge – Coordinator

MEN'S GROUP REPORT - 2020

Bob and Tim would like to thank all those who have continued to support the Group over the last year.

Our "away" meetings have included:

A visit to the Hornby Museum and the Spitfire and Hurricane Museum at Margate.

9 holes of golf at Birchwood near Swanley

An evening country walk in the Kent country side with Cameo

We all enjoyed our usual Valentines and Christmas meal

Our "in – house " meetings have included a variety of subjects including:

One of John Turner's Quiz Evenings

The History of Northumberland Heath with Bonita Chamberlain

Being a Military Chaplin with Andrew White

The "Iron Duke" – Bob Lindridge

The Spar Valley Railway – Brian Halford

We also enjoyed a darts and games evening and a fish and chip supper.

We shared an evening with CAMEO (the ladies group) where we learned of the life and times of Samuel Pepys

We look forward to another year of sharing friendship and fun, with an invitation for any men to join our group where you will find a warm welcome.

Bob Lindridge and Tim Luff



ART CLUB

We are a small group which have recently had new members come and enjoy meeting together for a chat, paint, or any craft related item.

If you would like a couple of hours to completely relax in a peaceful friendly atmosphere, then come and join us on every other Saturday afternoon from 2-4pm in the lounge, where you will be made welcome.

Joan Handy