

St. Mark's Church Hitchin



**Annual General Meeting
8th March 2009**

REPORTS

Contents

Page

- 1 Vicar's remarks
- 2 Church Wardens' Report
- 3 District Church Council

Committees reporting to the District Church Council:

- 4 Communication/Publicity Group
- 5 Fundraising Group
- 6 Health and Safety Report
- 7 Mission Committee
- 7 Pastoral/Bereavement Groups
- 9 Worship Committee

All other St Mark's Reports:

- 9 Baptism Visitors
- 10 Breakfast Club
- 10 Flower Arrangers
- 10 Hall
- 11 Little Lions
- 11 Monkey Club
- 12 Mothers' Union
- 12 Music at St Mark's
- 14 Music Group
- 14 Sacristans' Report
- 14 Sunday School and Crèche
- 15 The Tea and Coffee Fund
- 15 Thursday Group
- 16 Uniformed Groups

Reports from beyond St Mark's

- 16 Parochial Church Council
- 17 Churches Together in Hitchin
- 18 Hitchin Deanery Synod

19 District Church Report to Parish Annual Meeting

Vicar's Remarks

On the basis that I've only been Vicar here for five months of the last twelve, I've worked out that I only need to write five-twelfths of a 'Vicar's Remarks' this year! So here are my five-twelfths succinctly ordered in five points.

Firstly, **thanks**. Thank you for allowing me not to be your Vicar for seven months of this last year and for allowing us all still to worship within the church family without drawing me into things. And thanks to all who kept things going during my maternity leave. Thank you to each and every member of St Mark's for whatever you do, particularly just being part of us. Without each and every one of you, St Mark's would not be the church family that it is.

Which brings me to my second point, **goodbyes and welcomes**. Because each member of St Mark's is important, we really feel it when we have to say goodbye to people and this year we have had to say goodbye to Paula Walters, as she has recently moved to Dubai to join Pete, and we've had to say our final farewells to Marjorie Males, Betty Field, Kay Evans, Hazel Dixon and James Yates, all of whom are sadly missed. We've also stood alongside other members of our family as they've said goodbye to loved ones and we continue to hold them in our prayers, including Michael Orton, Pam and Mike Davies, Shirley Goldsmith, Sue Ennis and Diane and Ken Porter.

As well as the goodbyes, there have, of course, been some joyful welcomes. We've welcomed the births of Phoebe Lally, Isla McCreath and Amelie Mainwaring, along with other new members of our church family. We have also welcomed the opening of the Breakfast Club, the start of Wednesday Morning Prayer and, very recently, the opening of a Beaver colony.

This leads me smoothly onto my third point, **the parish and team**. By the time you read these reports we will have welcomed the new Team Vicar at Holy Saviour Church, Ian Todd. Ian's arrival means that we will once again have a complete clergy team across the parish, which will make life a little easier for all the clergy. I'd like to take this opportunity to record my personal thanks to my colleagues for the support they have given, particularly during my maternity leave. Although we can at times seem very self-contained as a church family, we are part of the larger church family of our parish, and there are times when that becomes very evident, such as when the Vicar insists on having another baby!

Talking (or writing) of people who helped to cover my maternity leave, moves me gently into my fourth point, **the Wardens**. This year Joy Hukin and Helen Richardson will stand down as Church Wardens, having served St Mark's in this capacity for the last six years. What can I say about Helen and Joy?! St Mark's owes them both a huge debt of gratitude for all the hard work and dedication they have put into carrying out their role. Just looking around the building itself is testimony to all they have done, overseeing all the enhancements in the environment in which we worship, including most recently, being on their hands and knees with tins of *Vanish* getting stains out of the carpet! But, as Wardens, they have done far more than just look after the building. They have looked after the church family as well and have looked after me (no mean task!). So, on behalf of us all, I take this opportunity to formally and whole-heartedly thank them for the service they have given our church family in these last six years as Church Wardens and to wish them well in all they will continue to do as they stand down from this role.

And so, finally, to the **future**. The week after the AGM many of us (I hope) will be heading off on Saturday morning to consider the future work of St Mark's. During the last six years we have grown as a church family not just numerically, but in so many other ways as well. It is now time to step back for a moment (or a morning!) and to think and pray about where we believe God wants us to go in the years ahead and about our parts in that future. So I

encourage you to come and join us for that morning or to pray for us if you can't be with us, as we say,

For all that has been, 'Thanks'.

For all that will be, 'Yes'.

Jane Mainwaring

Church Wardens' Report

The wardens' year was as follows:

1 Wardens Joy Hukin and Helen Richardson were officially sworn in as St Mark's Church Wardens at a service on 22 May 2008 at St Mary's in Hitchin. We are pleased to have Adrian Groves and Sandra Stokes as Assistant Wardens.

2 Two heaters from the nave were repositioned in the side aisles and two power points were installed in the Children's Corner. Work was carried out by Peter Wright Electricals.

3 First aid training was undertaken by Clare and Melvyn Redd on behalf of St Mark's. They are now our official first aiders.

4 Church inspection was carried out in July by Terry Warbey.

5 The trefoil and cross decoration in the stonework above the choir stalls area was painted red and gold to match the bosses on the ceiling. Thanks to Adrian Groves for enhancing the stonework in this way.

6 The walk-in cupboard at the back of church was cleared of rubbish by Joy Hukin and Helen Richardson and the ceiling, which had gone mouldy from a water leak some time ago, was cleaned and painted by Helen.

7 Hoppers and drains were cleared of autumn leaves. Thanks to Roger Sandy for this annual task. The gully running alongside the church building was cleared of rubbish and redug by Helen Richardson.

8 Stair nosings were installed across the three fawn carpeted steps. Unfortunately, it is not possible to do the same on the red carpet for two reasons: firstly, the nosings would be raised and cause a tripping hazard and secondly the floor beneath it is unsuitable. It has been decided, in consultation with Mark Wilson of Charles Wilson Carpets who installed the nosings, that painting black lines would be the best option. Meanwhile black tape is in place as a temporary measure.

9 Entrance lobby repainting was carried out prior to new flooring. Thanks to Joy Hukin, Deirdre Parr, Helen Richardson and Sandra Stokes.

8 New flooring was installed in the entrance lobby and toilet areas. Charles Wilson Carpets were chosen from quotes obtained earlier.

9 Annual fire equipment inspection was carried out by Chubb in February and the new certificate displayed on the church notice board.

10 Sidespeople Thank you to all who carry out this ministry of welcome. St Mark's has a reputation in the town for being a welcoming church.

11 Church cleaning Thank you to all those on the cleaning rota who carry this out. It makes a difference to all church and hall users if the place is sweet and clean. Special thanks to Roy Dixon who vacuums the church every Saturday.

12 Church garden Thanks to Peter Russell who keeps the garden looking good.

This was the last of six years that Joy and I have been Warden. We have both found the experience rewarding and a privilege as we have served at a time which has seen great changes to the visual aspect of St Mark's. The support from Jane and the congregation, as well as the teamwork when working parties were needed, has encouraged and helped us as we have undertaken our tasks. We hope that all we have done has enriched the church family and its worship just as we have grown and been enriched on our own Christian journey. We wish the new wardens and assistant wardens well and hope they are as blessed by the job as we have been.

*Helen Richardson and Joy Hukin, Church Wardens
Adrian Groves and Sandra Stokes, Assistant Church Wardens*

District Church Council

The DCC met seven times during the year. The average attendance at the meetings was 75%. The increase in the electoral roll in the last three years has allowed the DCC to grow by one additional member each year and, with our full complement of 3 Deanery Synod representatives this year, the council now consists of 20 members. For the first three meetings of the year the Vicar was on maternity leave and it was with great pleasure that we welcomed her back at the September meeting.

Conversely, we were greatly saddened by the illness and subsequent loss of Kay Evans, a long-time member of the congregation and a committed and positive member of the council for over two years.

The decisions which the DCC has had to make on behalf of the congregation have been as varied as ever, covering worship issues, mission and links with the wider community, communication within the church and with the wider community, working with other churches, the 'family life' of St Mark's, financial matters and those relating to the building and fabric of the church. The outcomes of the DCC's deliberations on these last two matters are well documented in the Treasurer's and Wardens' reports.

Worship – The DCC agreed on some small but significant changes intended to improve accessibility: that the unwieldy large print service folders should contain hymns only and a paper booklet of the relevant service should be available each week; that the pulpit and lectern should be re-sited and, in response to requests from the congregation, that intercessions should be led from the front of church. The Council also welcomed the Vicar's proposal to introduce a weekday service of Morning Prayer followed by coffee in the hall. This has taken place each Wednesday since October and has been much appreciated by those who regularly attend.

Mission and links with the wider community – The council was grateful for the congregation's practical support of the 'REACT' fun day in the Market Place last August. It has agreed to take part in 'Back to Church Sunday' in September this year, when people

who no longer attend church are given a personal invitation to return for a service on that day. As it had met with very little response, the DCC took the decision in September to end the 'Open Church' initiative which had run from the previous October with the aim of offering to the community a place of retreat on Thursday evenings and Friday mornings. The Council was pleased to support a new community link in September in the form of the St Mark's Breakfast Club for schoolchildren which takes place every day in term-time. It was also pleased to be able to help Oughton School with a fundraising dilemma. Money which was being raised to pay for the funeral of the parent of a former Oughton pupil could not be processed through the school's account so, with the Treasurer's agreement, it was decided that it should go through the St Mark's account.

Communication within the church and with the wider community – there has been an increased focus on improving communication, particularly through the website, where, for example, the weekly newsletter is now available. The Council is grateful to Peter Watson for his work in this area.

Working with other churches – In addition to the usual support of CTH events and inspired by last year's paint-enforced, impromptu joint service with St Faith's, the DCC has suggested this be an annual event taking place in February with each church taking it in turn to host.

The 'family life' of St Mark's – The DCC welcomed the proposal to organise a church weekend away which duly took place in August and was much enjoyed by those who participated. In January the Council agreed to the setting up of the 'St Mark's Discretionary Fund' which, in this period of economic crisis, will provide support to members of the church family suffering financial difficulties.

Vision for Giving – The DCC welcomed the Vicar's suggestion that, starting in 2009, there should be a stewardship programme every 4 years with a renewal/review of giving letter being sent out in the intervening years.

Future planning – It was agreed that an 'away-morning' for the DCC and any interested members of the congregation should be organised for a Saturday in March. The purpose of the morning will be to set a vision for the next 10 years for St Mark's as a church family.

This DCC, like those in preceding years, has been a very positive, forward-looking and united group. I am certain that, under the Vicar's inspired and inspiring guidance, the next DCC will continue in this vein and will enjoy implementing the ideas which will undoubtedly emerge from the March planning morning.

*Deirdre Parr
DCC Secretary*

Committees reporting to the District Church Council

Communication/Publicity Group

The group has 8 members, each linked with church groups and liaising with their groups for communication/publicity purposes. Our objective is to keep you informed of the various church activities.

Many of you will recall that, as part of the deanery review process (2004), a questionnaire was circulated to members of the congregation asking how we could improve communication within the church and to the wider community and, as a result, this group was formed three years ago.

We continue to strive to provide the following:

- Contact with all groups using the church, ensuring their activity information is widely circulated.
- Management of notice boards and quarterly publication of relevant information regarding new/ongoing/future activities.
- At the beginning of each quarter, distribution of publicity regarding activities for the forthcoming three months to all members of the congregation, thus enabling them to note dates in their diaries. This distribution complements the individual group's own publicity for events.
- 'Your Church and how it is run' notice board at the rear of the church which gives continuous information regarding:
 - a) decisions made by your church council (DCC minutes)
 - b) leaders/contacts details of the various church groups
 - c) the Hitchin Anglican Team (St Mark's is part of this team!) and where we are placed in the Deanery and Diocese.
 - d) Church Finances – 'How are we doing?' Quarterly figures indicating what we need in order to pay our way, showing how we have performed in the last quarter and giving a forecast of any possible shortfall.

We continually review our activities following valuable feedback.

'Your Church and How it is Run', including 'Finances – How are we doing?' – Both continue to receive positive feedback and will continue.

'What's on?' – It was generally felt that the church website should be more active and that, perhaps, this information should be regularly published on the site, particularly for the benefit of those looking for a church to attend. To this end we have been working, and continue to work, on improving our church website. Peter Watson (manager of the website) and our group regularly meet to 'view' the website and seek to implement improvements. This process we acknowledge will take time to achieve and we have realistically set a target of two years to accomplish the task. All material submitted for inclusion on the site is subject to screening and the final 'approval' is given by the vicar. We believe that it is important that the St Mark's website should reflect activities which are 'approved' as St Mark's activities. We hope that all of you reading this report will have taken the opportunity to visit the site www.stmarks-hitchin.org.uk and we would value your comments.

Do **you** feel we are achieving our objective? If not, please tell us.

Group members: Pauline Banks, Mike Davies, Joy Hukin, Jane Mainwaring, Linda Sandy, Shirley Street, Paula Walters and Peter Watson

Mike Davies

Fundraising

Once again the year passed with many a cake being made for the cake stalls either in the Market Place or at coffee mornings in Church House. Although there is a somewhat negative attitude towards coffee mornings at Church House, they are the mainstay of our fundraising, netting approximately £300 per session. The main complaint has been with regard to the cost of using the hall. I am pleased to report that, from now on, the cost has been reduced to £25 for a morning booking for the parish churches.

The use of the Market Place has become so popular that it has to be booked a year in advance. This has proved to be an arduous task so enquiries have been made into having a stall on the main market. A stall can be hired for part or all of Tuesday, Friday or Saturday at

a cost of £12. One has been booked for 7 February and we look forward positively to a good result from this trial run.

The 'Friendly Lunches' still prove to be very well received. These give members of the congregation a chance to mix and become acquainted with each other in a relaxed atmosphere and have become more of a social get-together rather than a fundraising event, with a nominal charge being made to cover the cost of the food provided.

Our first 'Church Family Holiday Weekend' for many years was a great success, in spite of a few hiccups behind the scenes. Wansford near Peterborough was the venue where we stayed in a guest house set back from the road which offered a very private location and lots of space for people to pitch their tents. Around 30 church members and their families joined in with much merriment over mealtimes. The weather was quite atrocious during the weekend but, with true British spirit, we all made the most of the time away. The Sunday morning service which Jane had arranged in the lounge was a very moving time, with the children taking the greater part in the proceedings. Much to our disappointment, the trip on the Nene Valley steam train was spoilt by the weather and our picnic had to be curtailed. Rather than organise such an event again this year, we are considering looking for a really nice day trip to suit all ages.

The 'Mad Hatter's Tea Party' was a real challenge for us. It would either go really well or be a damp squib. Very much to our delight, it was a great success with around 35 people attending, 18 of whom were in fancy dress. The characters came from across 'Nursery Rhyme Land' and included Little Miss Muffet, 2 Queens of Hearts and Dick Whittington and his cat – sorry if I've left you out but there were too many to list! Thank you to all who took part and made it an afternoon of real fun.

The Fundraising Committee will be busy setting out the programme for 2009 soon after the AGM and we hope we can come up with an interesting list of events for everyone to participate in. With the gloomy outlook that we are having to listen to and read about, let us all try to brighten our lives by continuing to join together in fun and fellowship within and beyond our church family.

Joy Hukin

Health & Safety Report

In April 2008, The Electrical Safety Group plc carried out a free visual electrical inspection and a limited random check of some electrical circuits in the Church. They confirmed that there were no problems immediately affecting safety but commented on the antiquated fuse boxes in the vestry. They also recommended that we replace the main earth wire from the fuse box in the hall to meet current standards and have a full electrical check on all the wiring. Their quotation for all the work recommended was £980 + VAT; this has since lapsed.

I am planning to carry out an annual visual check on the electrics in April 2009.

Roger Sandy

Mission Committee

The purpose of the Mission Committee is to help St Mark's in its task of sharing the gospel of love in the wider world. Over the year, its activities have included:

- Recommending the mission and charitable organisations to receive grants from St Mark's funds
- Organising the church's Lent appeal - Garden Africa in 2008.
- Preparing a cycle of prayer for use by church members during the year
- Organising the response to the Bishop of St Albans' Harvest appeal – for fishermen in Mali in 2008
- Arranging for the prayers on the front page of the weekly notices
- Reminding the church of the need to support people facing financial difficulties in the current economic climate

The Committee members are Eileen Morden, John Richardson, Austin Smith, Sandra Stokes and Edward Stone. It meets three times during the year after a morning service and new members are always welcome.

John Richardson

Pastoral and Bereavement Groups

Pastoral Group

2008 has been another eventful year for the Pastoral Group, six members serving to keep a watching brief on the life and commitment of St Mark's people. We hope, in conjunction with the other church groups, that we have been able to make any newcomers feel welcomed into the family of St Mark's. As in other years, we again must stress that we need the commitment of the whole congregation in this important welcoming role. Your help is pivotal to our success as the pastoral group has only 6 members.

Our Pastoral outreach connection with Laburnum House (Hitchin Hospital) continues with the Saturday cakes. More volunteers always welcome! This year we also commenced a link with Westbourne Residential Home as some of our church members now live there. A huge 'thank you' to all who supported the Christmas appeal and for the very generous gifts you donated which really are appreciated by the patients and staff. Our Laburnum House/Westbourne link person is Pam Davies.

We also continue to support the North Herts Sanctuary. Again this year, the Harvest non-perishables and the Christmas hamper were given to this very worthy cause. As always, a huge 'thank you' to all who supported this venture and gave so generously. Our North Herts Sanctuary link person is Helen Richardson.

We receive news of many who are ill and/or housebound, as well as of those in hospital. As far as possible we try to follow up all those we hear about but we stress again that we need the help of the whole congregation to ensure that we miss no-one. To assist this process, we rely on the church 'prayer sheet', where people requesting prayers for individuals are asked to fill in the 'Requested by' column, thus giving the prayer co-ordinator, Judy Page, a contact name for any follow-up which may be needed. Please do help Judy by continuing to respond in this way. Following requests, in the weekly notice sheet of the 4th Sunday of the month we print the names of those people who are on our 'continue to pray for' list so that this list can be used in personal prayer.

We continue to allocate members of the pastoral group to specific individuals who need to be contacted or visited. This scheme ensures that the workload is shared more evenly and

will allow for some continuity for the people being visited. Several years ago Jane (the Vicar) commissioned 5 members of the Pastoral and Bereavement Group to assist her to administer home communions. This has also helped our groups maintain contact with those who have been unable to attend church.

Val Conetta continues to co-ordinate the Care Scheme and sends out appropriate cards to the sick etc. Again, this will only work if the group is given the necessary information. Ann Wakefield generously continues to provide flowers where Val indicates the need.

This year's Memorial Service will be held on July 5th 2009, with tea being served beforehand. More details will follow later in the year. It is good to see that this service continues to meet a real need.

Pastoral Group membership: Pam and Mike Davies, Val Conetta, Judy Page, Helen Richardson and Shirley Goldsmith.

Bereavement Visitors Group

As many of you will know, St Mark's has a group of bereavement visitors who follow up the families of all funerals conducted by the staff of St Mark's and will also follow up those funerals taken elsewhere if the families live in our parish. At present this role is carried out by 6 visitors.

During 2008 we carried out 52+ visits/contacts, some just one-off, others requiring further follow-up. To assist the visit, visitors are given client information sheets and, where possible, a copy of the eulogy; this enables our visitors to be more informed prior to their contact/visit with the bereaved person. A Bereavement Support booklet is also issued to the bereaved by the person doing the pre-funeral visit, informing them that the visit will be offered. These initiatives, we believe, enable us to feel more confident in our role and allow those being visited to understand what we are able to offer in the way of support during this difficult period.

Among those who have died this year, were some long standing members of St Mark's congregation, all of whom will be sadly missed, but not forgotten.

Visitors continue to follow a training programme of topics related to Loss, Grief and Bereavement, which we hold jointly with Our Lady's RC church, and it has been good to welcome folk from other churches belonging to Churches Together in Hitchin and, latterly, from the Deanery. This enables us to cross-fertilise our experiences and adds to our own knowledge base, hopefully equipping us with the necessary skills to carry out our role effectively and thereby helping the bereaved through this difficult time.

We are looking forward to organising a training session during 2009 exploring children's bereavement issues both from the child's and parents' perspective. Rev Fizz Gibbs, who, as a past hospital/hospice chaplain, has a wealth of experience in this area, will lead the session and we are approaching the 'Compassionate Friends' bereavement organisation to support it.

The annual Memorial Service, held in July, to which our visitors invite all those contacted during the year, appears to serve a very positive need and fosters a feeling of belonging in those, often very vulnerable, members of our community. It is particularly rewarding to see so many of the families returning each year.

As always, our grateful thanks are extended to Ivan Page for all the work he carries out maintaining the memorial plaque plinth. The memorial book continues to be added to and we thank Dennis Hammond who maintains this book. We are also very grateful to Peter Russell, for all the work he does to keep the Memorial Garden looking so special. This is appreciated by those visiting and using the memorial garden seat, which affords them the opportunity to sit quietly and reflect in very peaceful surroundings.

Bereavement Visitors: Pam and Mike Davies, Cynthia Satahoo, Ann Wakefield, Helen Richardson and Val Chamberlain.

On behalf of the Pastoral/Bereavement groups, I thank you for your help and support throughout 2008.

*Mike Davies
Co-ordinator
Pastoral/Bereavement Groups*

Worship Committee

The Worship Committee, consisting of Jane Mainwaring, Joy Hukin, Naomi Morris, Andrew Parr, Melvyn Redd, John Richardson, Shirley Street and Sandra Stokes, has met twice during the year. Its activities have included the following:

- Helping with arrangements for services during Jane's maternity leave
- Contributing to the planning of services for Holy Week, Harvest, Remembrance and Christmas
- Keeping the weekly orders of service under review and making suggestions for improvements where appropriate
- Constantly checking the PA system with Peter Watson's help
- Introducing the use of CDs for hymns when no organist is present
- Supporting the Vicar in arrangements for children and communion
- Helping to introduce Wednesday Morning Prayer
- Helping with arrangements for the parish service in July
- Considering the possibility of marking 'Back to Church Sunday' in 2009

The Committee rejoices at the increase in numbers attending St Mark's services and looks forward to continuing working with the Vicar to enhance the church's worship.

John Richardson

All other St Mark's Reports

Baptism Visitors

There have been 20 baptisms at St Mark's from last March to date. We welcomed a new baptism visitor, Karin Dodds. We now have eight baptism visitors but are always happy to welcome anyone else. If you would like to become a baptism visitor, please contact me and I will be happy to talk to you about it. I would like to take this opportunity to thank all our baptism visitors for their sterling work in this important area, particularly during Jane's maternity leave.

*Linda Sandy
Baptism Co-ordinator*

Breakfast Club

The Club commenced on 8th September with funding of £2000 from two grants from the Priory School's Extended Schools Project.

The club's aim is to provide both a good breakfast and a safe calm space for young people before the start of the school day. Those who come always have a good time.

We would like to thank those who come along regularly to help and also the congregation for their support and prayers.

Joy Hukin and Sandra Stokes

Flower Arrangers

The flower arrangers' team has worked hard and enjoyed decorating the church for each Sunday, especially for the Holy Days of Easter, St Mark's Tide, Harvest and Christmas.

We also entered displays in St. Faith's Church flower festival in support of the Bible Society in June and provided a pedestal in the 'church' for the Parish Service in July in the Priory grounds.

We were saddened by the death of Betty Field but know some of her expertise has been passed on to us.

Thank you to the congregation for their generous donations which have kept our fund 'topped up'. Please remember we love to 'dedicate' the main flower pedestal to mark a special occasion.

*Ann Wakefield
Flower Co-ordinator*

Hall

This has been a year of ups and downs with regard to hall bookings with these fluctuations coming mainly from non-church groups who hire the hall in the evenings for keep-fit activities or slimming clubs. Towards the latter end of 2008 these groups found that their numbers were dropping off and so could no longer run or that new leaders were required and, when found, they chose to organise their club in a venue which was more convenient for them.

The following groups, however, are still with us:

Jo Jingles – Tuesday mornings and early afternoons

Monkey Club – Thursday mornings

Yoga Class – Thursday evenings

Thursday Group – first Thursday of the month

Little Lions – first and third Friday morning of the month

The Neighbourhood Watch and Residents' Association continue to hold their AGM meetings in the hall.

The hall is proving to be a popular venue for children's parties at weekends.

Anyone wishing to use the hall for an 'in house' meeting should check on its availability rather than assume it is free and should also be aware that, during the week, there may be a funeral or special service taking place.

Joy Hukin

Little Lions

Little Lions Baby & Toddler Group continues to meet on the first and third Friday of every month from 9:30 to 11:15. It remains an informal gathering with a play session at the beginning, followed by refreshments, a story from the Bible and a song and nursery rhyme time.

To begin with, numbers were quite erratic and in September a few children left to join nurseries. However, we now have 'regulars' who attend most sessions, with numbers averaging ten children with their respective parents. Their ages range from newborn to three years and, now that we have the use of soft floor mats, the children, especially the babies, have something slightly more comfortable to play on!

We arranged for a shoe supplier to visit last September and a photographer came to our final session before Christmas. The photographer proved popular and a commission was earned for every photo pack sold.

This year we will be arranging activity sessions for certain days, including pottery decorating, to keep the older children amused.

Should anyone know of a parent or guardian who would like to come along, please encourage them; there are leaflets on the table near the entrance to the church. Each session is 50p per family and includes refreshments.

Deena Jenkins

Monkey Club

Monkey Club is a small and very active toddler group who meet at the St. Mark's Church hall every Thursday morning during term time. The maximum size of the group is 20 adults, due to insurance restrictions. For the early part of the year our joint chair people were Paula McCrystal and Sara Butcher and our treasurer was Anna Christie. At the club AGM in July, Emma Morris and I, Tracy Westgate, became the new joint chair people and Anna confirmed that she was happy to continue as the club treasurer.

We currently have 16 members and we have had 4 potential new members visit us in the last two weeks, so, hopefully, we will be full to capacity shortly.

The club fees remain at £1.50 per member per week payable at the start of each term. The fees pay for the hire of the hall, our insurance, the weekly refreshments, a party at the end of each term, one outing each term and birthday presents for each child. We feel that the club provides excellent value for money. To supplement the fees, we actively raise additional funds in several ways, including cake sales, raffles, commission from book sales and the commission from the Tempest photographer who visits us in the Autumn Term.

We are grateful to receive the continued support of Rita Pettyfer who comes along each week to make our refreshments. Rita was sorely missed at the start of the autumn term when she was unable to come for several weeks. This was due to the building work being carried out on her house after it was damaged by a nearby gas explosion during the summer holidays.

In October we had lovely trip to Willows Farm at London Colney. It was a fantastic day and especially memorable as it was Rita's 75th Birthday. At lunch we sang her a resounding chorus of 'Happy Birthday to you' and all enjoyed a slice of birthday cake.

The highlight of our year has been the Christmas Party which was enjoyed by all. Notably it wasn't the food or the presents that were the most popular part of the party with at least one child - when asked what he enjoyed most, he said, 'The lady's story' – so again a huge 'thank you' to Jane Mainwaring for joining us and delivering the Christmas Story to the children.

The adults enjoyed a 'grown-up' Christmas Meal at the Orange Tree. The adults' nights out, usually once a term, are valuable for getting to know each other better and discussing club matters.

We are looking forward to another active term with our outing planned for 19th March to go to Standalone Farm, hopefully in time for the lambing. We hope to have an Easter Service and an Easter Egg Hunt on 2nd April, our last meeting this term.

*Tracy Westgate and Emma Morris
Joint Chairpersons*

Mothers' Union

St Mark's Branch of the MU unfortunately suffered with the problem of falling numbers, the result of members' ill health and other members moving away. The decision was made to meet in members' homes which left the church hall free for the use of other organisations.

We had, as usual, some very interesting meetings with visiting speakers. The year began again with our visit to the Sun Hotel for a good lunch and we were pleased to have the company of Jane, together with husbands and friends of members. In the summer we enjoyed a visit to the Garden Centre at Willington where we had lunch. We had the pleasure of being driven in a minibus by a gentleman from Helping Hands. Unfortunately, due to their not having a Vicar, the planned link with Holy Saviour for the Advent Service did not happen and was postponed until next year. Members enjoyed an Advent Service with the help of recordings at the home of Margaret Gibbs.

We continue to parade our banner and compose the prayer on a monthly basis. Like all branches, we are looking to recruit more members. We meet, as stated above, in members' homes between 10.00 and 11.30am on the second Friday of the month, except in August and Good Friday if it falls on that day. Everyone, either female or male, is welcome to come along to meetings. We will endeavour to report where meetings are being held in the weekly notice sheet. Please come along – there is no obligation to join and we really would love to see you.

*Diane Porter
Branch Leader*

Music at St. Mark's

The pattern of the year has naturally remained much the same as ever. We have been joined by Linda Nunn and by John Field on an occasional basis. Val Chamberlain has also

returned to us. We had the usual support of the brothers Stockbridge, Danny Basford, Tim Hobman and Rebecca Morris at Christmas; this really relieves much of the pressure, especially since ill-health has dogged many choir members this year.

In the organist's absence, Naomi Morris rehearsed a new piece, *Like the murmur of the dove's song* by Alan Smith, for the Churches Together Choir Praise in October which was very well received and has been sung twice since, including at the most uplifting CTH service held at St. Mark's to close the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity in January. This anthem is taken from a new collection bought for the choir: *Flexible Anthems* from the Oxford University Press. This eclectic set of anthems spanning many centuries and traditions has been produced to cater for choirs when there may not always be enough singers to provide the normal 4-part singing. This, together with our existing collection and separate sheet music stock, gives us a much increased range of possibilities. Another pleasing source of material comes from Collins' *Carol Praise* which provided two very charming new pieces for the Carol Service: *No wind at the window* from John Bell and the Iona Community and *No small wonder* by Wigmore and Edwards.

It is sad to report, as music is discussed, that our librarian, Kay Evans, died in November. Kay had contributed enthusiastically to our church life and her periodic sorting and filing sessions were much appreciated and are now much missed. If any member of the congregation feels able to replace her in this capacity, an offer will be gratefully received.

The 'black box' CD writer/recorder reported last year has been used in one Sunday communion service and two baptism services. The organist is building up a collection of hymns and other music which can be used when no-one is available to play. There are still technical lessons to be learned but there is considerable potential for being able to offer families music at baptisms and funerals without an organist necessarily being present.

The open air service on Good Friday at which St Mark's musicians played for the second year running was again well-received and it was good to be able to support musically our 800 or so fellow Christians who were witnessing to the redeeming sacrifice of Jesus Christ.

We celebrated St Mark's Tide with a Taizé-style service. The choir find this style of worship very therapeutic and we hope the congregation do, too. Partly as a result, the organist has been invited to join the diocesan Europe Group, where, if the need arises, he can maintain his rapidly rusting French to help foster relations with the Taizé Community in our twin region of Burgundy.

This has been the first year in which the organist and Reader have started occasionally to exchange roles and the former thanks the latter for making this possible.

We extend the usual invitation to those who can sing in tune and, if not sopranos, hold a part against a melody, to consider joining the choir at 7 pm on Wednesdays and for occasional Sunday services. As with all aspects of St Mark's church life, this group is welcoming and friendly and always produces the goods for our special services. We have this special privilege of worshipping and helping others worship through music. We all value this tremendously and feel better for the opportunity to contribute in this way.

Andrew R Parr
Organist and Choirmaster

St. Mark's Music Group

The Music Group (also known as the church orchestra or band) continues to contribute regularly to the worship at family services and other church celebration services. It was good to be part of the special Churches Together service at St. Mark's in the week of prayer for Christian Unity in January this year and anyone who came to the Christmas morning service could not fail to notice the impact a pair of cymbals can have in the right hands!

The members of the group represent a cross-section of abilities (beginner to professional) with children and adults working together. It is good to see the growing skill and confidence of several of our members of different ages. Numbers fluctuate as some move on or have other commitments but, as usual, I would like to offer heartfelt thanks to everyone who has played with us during the past year. Our efforts are really appreciated by the church family and inspire some of our youngest members to want to contribute their musical talents to our church worship. You may have noticed a very young drummer recently.....!

Naomi Morris

Sacristans' Report

It has been an interesting year at the front of church working with so many different priests. We were kept on our toes trying to learn each vicar's different methods of working. Thanks once again to all our fellow servers Sue, Paul, Clare, Deborah, Megan and Rebecca for all their hard work during the past year. Our thanks also go to Margaret Hammond and Diane Porter for the laundering of the purificators and the altar linen.

This year we shall lose Deborah from the servers' team as she pursues her education but we are glad to welcome back Diane Porter. Despite appeals in church, we have not been able to attract any more servers. It is not a hard job and at most times can be very enjoyable. Full training would be given and at no time would anyone be left on their own. If we can get our quota up to 8, each server would be called on only once a month.

*Sandra Stokes and Melvyn Redd
Joint Sacristans*

Sunday School and Crèche

The crèche and Sunday School form important parts of the welcome that St Mark's provides to families within the church community. For parents and grandparents it gives a safe place for their children to enjoy themselves, while they can participate more fully in the main service. For the babies and children themselves it shapes their earliest experiences of the church as a family. The crèche and Sunday School have been growing in numbers over the past year: on one recent Sunday there were eighteen children attending. The enthusiasm they have for their time there is clear, and they have often shared their experiences with the main congregation, whether in making Easter gardens or acting in tableaux in the Crib Service. Anne Watson has put in many hours devising activities for the children, with a team of helpers attempting (and often succeeding) in putting them into practice. Our thanks are due to all of them.

Since the numbers are growing, we now split the Sunday School into two groups. This means that the older children can have material that deepens their understanding of Christianity, while the younger ones continue to enjoy a more straightforward introduction to Bible stories and the smallest members of the congregation can enjoy themselves in the crèche.

We would, therefore, like additional volunteers to come and help us with this valuable work, so that the current team is not overloaded. The hope is to have four adults available for each session, with a rota so that they are not called on more than once a month. No experience is needed, just a liking for children and a flexible approach. If you are interested, please talk to Anne Watson or me.

Rachel Stone

Tea and Coffee Fund

During the past year, the fund has provided the following items, in addition to the usual provisions for the Sunday and special services and some sundry items for the store cupboard:

Pedal bin for the toilet area

Two replacement kettles

Bolts for fixing the St Mark's gates to the wall

The remainder is to be used for contributions to the memorial garden plinths and refurbishment of the kitchen.

Once again, a big 'thank you' to all the hard-working helpers for their continued support. However, offers of help from members of the congregation for refreshments following the special services would be very much appreciated. The time spent with a 'cuppa' and a chat with friends seems very beneficial to all concerned. If anyone would like to join our 'happy helpers', please contact me as I will be glad to hear from you.

Judy Page

Thursday Group

The year started with our visit to the pantomime at the Gordon Craig Theatre. Due to illness, not all members attended but those who did enjoyed the chance to join in and shout along with the cast of 'Cinderella'.

This year, our meetings have included: a flower arranging demonstration given by Val Chamberlain; an outing to Stevenage bowling alley, so popular we are repeating it this year, and a talk by Ken Burton entitled 'A Light Hearted Look at the 20th Century'. How fast things have changed! We all shared our own memories with Ken.

In 2007 we had had a talk about the new buildings at Elmside Care Home and were invited to visit. This we arranged for 2008 and were made most welcome with specially prepared refreshments after a tour of the new facilities. The modern design and décor we found to be very impressive and the calm relaxed atmosphere made us realise how important the residents' feelings had been in influencing a new approach to caring.

A talk from a fire prevention officer resulted in members booking home visits for fire safety checks and advice. This service is freely available for everyone and very worthwhile. A talk from Keith Hoskins of the Hitchin Initiative has been rearranged for this year after Keith had to cancel his previous engagement with us because he was suffering from flu. We were sorry to disappoint visitors from St. Mark's congregation. However, hopefully they will come to the rearranged date which will be announced in the Sunday notice sheet. In Keith's place we had an author and local historian, Pam Shields, who told us historical facts about our

town and has written books on the area, her most recent one having been published last November. We were pleased she was able to stand in at the last minute.

The 2008 meetings were well received and I look forward positively to our new programme for 2009.

*Val Conetta
Treasurer*

Uniformed Groups

Guides have had a good year with their new leaders. There are now 17 in the company and they are in touch with pen pals in Canada.

Brownies have also been busy with a bowling trip at Christmas and with working hard towards their badges. Their numbers have also improved this year with many Rainbows moving up.

Rainbows have entered the Christmas Tree Festival once again and have enjoyed many craft events. They went to the Four Leaf Clover for their Christmas tea. We hope their numbers will increase.

All groups have had a good and busy year and, with a new Beaver group starting in January 2009, things are looking good.

The building has had a new kitchen and every room has been given a face lift. Two new windows have been installed but we need to raise over £1000 to replace the main windows which we hope to do next year. The outside of the building also needs attention but we hope to get a group together to do this ourselves.

We always welcome visitors from St Mark's and if you have a talent you can share with us or fundraising ideas to help us get our windows, that is even better.

We are pleased that all units want to attend church parade services again and we are very much looking forward to a good year in guiding.

*Val Chamberlain
Group Guide Leader*

Reports from beyond St Mark's

PCC

The main subject of the last couple of PCC meetings has been the financial way forward, including Vision for Giving. The suggestion was that the four churches adopt a paper which would help focus our energies and allow us to plan beyond 2009. It was recommended that we need to be imaginative, enthusiastic and forward-thinking in producing a 10 year programme, which will become our vision-setting targets and in considering how these targets may be achieved.

As far as St. Mark's is concerned, there is to be a Vision for Giving review every 4 years starting during Lent 2009. A group is looking at sending out different types of letter at

renewal of giving time and at who should receive which letter. A half-day away has been arranged for Saturday, 14 March 2009 at Barton-Le-Clay, when, it is hoped, as many of the congregation as possible will attend and give their views for the future.

Work was required to remove asbestos from 67 Whitehill Road, currently home of Rev. Oliver Learmont. This has now been carried out satisfactorily.

The first Re-ACT family fun day was held in the Market Place during the summer and it was thought that everybody had a good time. Members of Holy Saviour thought it ought to be tied into parish life.

Pauline Davis was invited to the October meeting to advertise the annual parish retreat which she has faithfully organised for over 20 years. Only 9 people attended the retreat and, as numbers have got so low, Michael Roden asked the PCC for ideas to help to increase future participation. Jane Mainwaring suggested having a day retreat with Barton-Le-Clay as a possible venue. There was also a need for the retreats to be advertised well in advance on Church notice boards and published in Contact.

The confirmation service was held in St. Mark's on 12 November 2008 with the Bishop of Bedford presiding. There were 13 candidates ranging in age from early teens to a lady of 82, which proves it is never too late to join God's family.

The appointment of a vicar for Holy Saviour Church was made - Rev. Ian Todd from Lancaster in the Diocese of Blackburn. He has been ordained for 3½ years and will be licensed on the 22nd February 2009 in Holy Saviour Church.

Michael Taylor suggested that, as Churches get used quite often by schools, a team could get together to formulate something to go out to all schools to show what the churches have to offer. Jane suggested asking RE teachers from primary and senior schools to see what would be of interest and what would be in their syllabus.

Oliver Learmont and Steve Wood were priested on the 28th September at St. Albans and were welcomed at the October PCC meeting in their new positions.

*Melvyn Redd
P.C.C. Representative*

Churches Together in Hitchin (CTH)

Churches Together in Hitchin continues to organise or support ecumenical activities in the town. Since the last St Mark's AGM, these have included:

- Lent groups studying the Lord's prayer
- Training day on meeting the needs of people with dementia
- Good Friday walk of witness and service in the Market Place
- Easter card delivered to most homes in Hitchin
- Christian Aid Week, raising over £15,000 – a record amount
- An outdoor Pentecost service at the Bancroft bandstand
- A service of music praise, involving the St Mark's choir and three others, at St Mary's
- Carols in the Market Place as part of the town's Christmas gala weekend
- Pulpit exchanges, daily prayer and a united service at St Mark's during the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity
- Ash Wednesday lunch for Christian Aid

The following were ongoing during the year:

- Monthly 'Moving prayer' meetings at different churches
- Support for the work of PHASE, the Hitchin churches' schools' worker project
- Support for the Black Squirrel Credit Union
- Regular meetings of the town's ministers

Ideas currently being considered include:

- A 'café church' in a town restaurant
- Support for people currently unemployed or facing redundancy
- More engagement between the churches and the Hitchin business community
- Bringing together all involved in meeting the needs of the homeless in Hitchin

There have been four Council meetings, each dealing with business at the beginning and then focusing on a theme in the second part. Over the past year, the themes have been 'Fresh Expressions', Quaker peace witness, inter-church families and Christchurch's 'café church'.

The Rev Philip Turner of Christchurch has taken over from Lorna West as Chair and Helen Richardson is now Vice-chair, becoming Chair herself in 2010. I continue as Secretary. Jane Mainwaring, Alison Smith, Anne Watson, together with Helen and myself, are the St Mark's representatives on the Council.

John Richardson

Hitchin Deanery Synod

We had three official meetings during 2008.

In January the new Rural Dean, Rev'd Michael Roden, Team Vicar of St Mary's, Hitchin chaired his first Synod meeting. It was reported that Archdeacon Helen Cunliffe was retiring due to ill health. The Bishop of St Albans was retiring in January 2009, Rev'd Jane Mainwaring, Team Vicar of St Mark's, Hitchin was on maternity leave and Rev'd Jane Fox was leaving Holy Saviour Church, Hitchin to go to the benefice of Harrold in Bedfordshire. Rev'd Teddy Faure Walker, Herts. Agricultural Chaplain, was the speaker. He spoke about how life on farms has changed over the years.

In May there was a deanery evensong in St Mary Magdalene Church, Offley; the preacher was Peter Lilley MP. Rev'd Tony Ruffell, Workplace Chaplain for Hertfordshire Police, Fire and Rescue, was the speaker at the Synod meeting. He spoke about his work and mission within the emergency services.

Deanery evensong in September was in St George's Church, Norton; the preacher was the Bishop of St Albans. There was also a gathering after the service for members of the deanery to say their farewells to the Bishop.

Deanery elections took place in November. Several members of Synod attended a first aid course in St Faith's Church, Hitchin. Rev'd David Dewey, Vicar at St Paul's Walden, retired. At the November Synod meeting the speaker was Jim May, Pastoral and Advisory Secretary. He gave a very informative and interesting talk on 'Making the most of your Church building'.

During the year Synod business was covered at each meeting.

*Dorothy Grieves
Deanery Synod Secretary*

ST.MARK'S CHURCH, HITCHIN - ANNUAL REPORT 2008/2009

Background

St. Mark's DCC has the responsibility of co-operating with the incumbent, the Revd. Dr. Jane Mainwaring in promoting in the ecclesiastical district the whole mission of the church pastoral, evangelistic, social and ecumenical. It also has maintenance responsibility for St Mark's Church and Hall, St Mark's Close, Lancaster Avenue, Hitchin.

Membership

Members of the DCC are either ex officio or elected by the Annual Church Meeting in accordance with the Church Representation Rules. During the year the following served as members of the DCC.

<i>Incumbent:</i>	The Revd Dr Jane Mainwaring	<i>Chair</i>
<i>Reader:</i>	Mr John Richardson	
<i>Wardens:</i>	Mrs Helen Richardson Mrs Joy Hukin	
<i>Elected Representative on the PCC:</i>	Mr Melvyn Redd	
<i>Elected Representatives on the Deanery Synod:</i>	Mr Mike Davies Mr Brendan Devitt Mrs Barbara Pennicott	
<i>Treasurer AGM 2009</i>	Mr Jim Weist	<i>Co-opted as non-voting member until</i>
<i>Secretary:</i>	Mrs Deirdre Parr	
<i>Elected Members:</i>	Mrs Diane Blundell	<i>Until AGM 2011</i>
	Miss Sue Ennis	<i>Until AGM 2010</i>
	Mrs Kay Evans	<i>Until AGM 2009</i>
	Miss Shirley Goldsmith	<i>Until AGM 2010</i>
	Mr Adrian Groves	<i>Until AGM 2009</i>
	Mrs Alix Hazell	<i>Until AGM 2010</i>
	Miss Jean Jenkins	<i>Until AGM 2010</i>
	Mrs Naomi Morris	<i>Until AGM 2009</i>
	Mr Andrew Parr	<i>Until AGM 2009</i> <i>Lay Vice-chair</i>
	Mrs Shirley Street	<i>Until AGM 2011</i>
	Mrs Christine Stockbridge	<i>Until AGM 2011</i>
	Mrs Anne Wakefield	<i>Until AGM 2011</i>

Committees:

The DCC operates with responsibility delegated from Hitchin PCC, through a number of committees which meet between full meetings of the DCC:

Standing Committee:

This is the only committee required by law. It has power to transact the business of the DCC between its meetings, subject to any directions given by the Council.

Worship Committee:

Attends to any matters concerning the worship of the church.

Pastoral and Bereavement Visitors Committee:

This committee oversees the provision of pastoral care both within the church and in outreach to the wider community. It organises help for those, who through illness or age need it, and for the recently bereaved.

Mission Committee:

This committee organises support for mission work, overseas, locally and ecumenically.

Fabric Committee:

This committee works with the Wardens and Vicar to maintain the fabric of the church building and vestry.

Fund Raising Committee:

This committee oversees fund raising for the church.

Communications and Publicity Group

This committee co-ordinates publicity and communication across the church and its groups.

Church Attendance.

There are 110 people on the Electoral Roll, representing 83 households. The average Sunday attendance was 89, with the average number of communicants being 70. Numbers at festivals and special services increased, with the largest number being 308 people at the Crib Service.

Review of the Year.

The full DCC met seven times during the year and was chaired for most meetings by Andrew Parr in his capacity as Vice-chair, during the Vicar's maternity leave.

The various sub-committees met between full DCC meetings and minutes/reports of their deliberations were received at the latter and discussed where necessary.

Support and follow-up of the occasional offices has continued to be carried out by the bereavement visitors and the baptism visitors.

The Pastoral Committee, as always, maintained a watching brief on those within the congregation in need of pastoral care, while also continuing to support the North Herts Sanctuary and to maintain its link with Laburnum House (Hitchin Hospital). A new link was made with Westbourne Residential Home, as members of St Mark's are resident there and the response from the congregation to all three collections at Christmas was very good.

The Worship Committee have planned the services marking the major festivals. The committee has also reviewed the church's worship following each major festival.

The Fabric Committee has kept a watch on the maintenance of the building. Small items of maintenance have been undertaken to keep the building in good order, including placing nosing on the three steps inside the church and replacing the flooring in the entrance corridor and toilets.

The Mission Committee has continued to oversee the charitable giving made on behalf of the church, which this year was over 10% of our income.

The Communication and Publicity Group has focused much of its work this year on improving the flow of information to the church's website.

During this year the Vicar took time off for maternity leave, being absent from the end of January 2008 to August 2008. Other than this absence, staffing and officers have been consistent throughout the 12 month period, the church being served by two Church Wardens, assisted by two Assistant Wardens, the Vicar, Reader and Reader in training.

During the first half of the year, St Mark's enjoyed a range of visiting clergy, many from the team and the deanery, at the Sunday acts of worship and is very grateful for all the help offered during the Vicar's maternity leave.

Over the last few years, St Mark's has carried out a series of major maintenance projects, which are now bearing fruit, as for the year 2008/09 only small maintenance projects were needed, including re-flooring the entrance and toilet areas. At the close of 2008, St Mark's was able to meet its financial commitments, and ended the year with a small reserve.

The major area for growth this year has been in our Sunday School and crèche, with a plea for extra helpers needing to be made. Little Lions (babies' and toddlers' group, with Bible story-time) has also seen steady growth throughout the year, with a good number of parents attending, but still within the limits of maintaining a 'small and friendly' feel.

In August, St Mark's had a church weekend away, with people choosing either to have a solid roof over their heads or to brave the elements under canvas. The weekend, although primarily a social time together, was drawn to a close by an Iona style communion service, which many people, young and not so young, took part in leading.

In September St Mark's Breakfast Club opened its doors for the first time, providing breakfasts for young people every morning in term time before they head off for school. Through the dedication and hard work of the team of volunteers the club now has a small but faithful number attending each morning, with future funding secure and the hope of increased numbers.

In October 2008, the Vicar, Reader and Reader in training, decided to meet together once a week for Morning Prayer to pray together for the life of the church and community. This service immediately blossomed into one where a good number come to pray at this mid-point in the week.

In January, St Mark's saw its other 'new beginning' as St Mark's Beavers was re-opened, the boys' uniformed groups having been absent for a number of years. The new Beavers paraded, alongside the Rainbows, Brownies and Guides, for a re-instated Christingle Service at Candlemas – a tradition which St Mark's had suspended for the last few years.

Work with the three local primary schools has continued during the year, these connections and the trust established between the school community and church leading to St Mark's taking a significant role in a community fundraising effort for a particular family in need on the Westmill Estate.

The autumn and winter of 2008/09 has seen a great deal of sadness in St Mark's with the loss of a number of our congregation, and bereavements for other members. However, through this time of sadness the care and support of one another has come through strongly and the church has attempted to stand together as a family as best we are able.

In January, St Mark's hosted the CTH United Service for the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity and it was good to be able to welcome members of the other churches to worship with us. The full range of the musical tradition of St Mark's was used and, as throughout the year, the contributions made by all the musicians greatly enhanced the worship we offered to God on that occasion.

The year 2008/09 has been one of consolidation for St Mark's, in which much of the hard work of previous years is now bearing fruit, both in terms of the building and our worship and life together. In mid-March we will gather together for a half-day away to consider where God is leading St Mark's in the coming years, as we seek to continue to grow together, serving and witnessing of God's love to the community in which we live.

*On behalf of the DCC
Jane Mainwaring and Andrew Parr
Chair and Lay Vice-Chair*