

Dear friends,

Rev. Deborah's magazine article for this month is the annual report, which was presented on Sunday 15th April.

The APCM is a time to look back and reflect on the year, giving thanks to God for all that has happened and also a time to look to the future and what we would like to see happening in the coming year.

So, what has happened in the past year? What are the things that we celebrated? What are the things that we want to develop?

As with all the parishes in the diocese, we have developed a mission action plan, an initiative which aims to encourage growth, nurture and service in parishes across Manchester.

As you know the priorities for our MAP are

- growth in numbers and spirituality
- Increased involvement in the life of the church and outreach within the community of Prestwich and beyond
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- Improved communication, including social media
- Continued development of partnerships including the Prestwich mission partnership. The Prestwich and Radcliffe deanery and Prestwich and Kersal Churches together.

These are all on going, but we also have a year dedicated to our top priorities. Last year (2017) was our year of spiritual growth, this year (2018) our year of mission. In the coming years we have a year of service and a year of creation (stewardship of the world's resources). All are linked to the five marks of mission and underpin what we do.

Worship has to be at the centre of all we do as we seek to serve and follow Christ. Our services over the past year have been varied and creative ranging from traditional Holy Communion to the more contemplative, reflective

services. Weekly Stations of the Cross throughout Lent, Quiet afternoons, Holy Week services, special services, Bible fellowship, Peregrini Prayer and our annual retreat been some of the opportunities to deepen our faith. I would like to thank all those who have been involved our worship. our servers, acolytes, crucifers, lay assistants, to Andrew G for co-ordinating this, intercessors, readers, our sidespeople to Ray and Pat who work so hard in preparing the church for worship, our baptism team, our flower arrangers, gardeners and cleaners. I would also like to thank Tom, who has taken on the full time role of our organist. His musical skills and talents have been crucial in leading our worship. I would also like to thank Misha for his beautiful piano playing. Thanks also go to Carol P and 'Maggie's music makers' for their contributions to our worship.

I would also like to thank the Gillian and our Sunday school leaders for their role in nurturing and developing the spirituality of our children. Over the last year the children's singing in our worship has blossomed and is beautiful. Thank you to all our young people and all involved.

Over the past year we have seen the flourishing of Revd Caroline in her role as curate. As you know, she has successfully completed her training and has moved on to pastures new. I thank God for the many ways in which she has blessed us here at St. Margret's and St. George's and we all wish her well in the next stage of her ministry.

Sue will be finishing her ordination training in a few months and will be ordained on 1st July, after which she will be serving her curacy with us here. Thank you for all that you do now Sue, and we look forward to working with you in the future.

A big thank you Christine, our reader for all the contributions that she has made to our worship throughout the past year. A big thank you also needs to go to Carol O, in her role as ALM both in prayer and pastoral care. Carol has regularly led our healing and wellbeing services, Peregrini and mediation both in our parish and she has led our quiet afternoons. She has also helped to co-ordinate our pastoral care. Carol is currently enhancing her skills by

completing the ALM course of worship. Laurel is currently undergoing the admin module of ALM, in term of warden training.

As well as worship of our Lord we are also called to be a missional people. So how have we done this over the past year, our year of spirituality?

During our year of spiritual growth there have been numerous opportunities for enhancing spirituality including those things that we already do and some of the newer opportunities that we have explored in the past year. Our Lent course (2017) focused on creative prayer. Lent lunches have been and continue to be a good way of mission, providing food and fellowship, reaching out into community and raising funds for Christian Aid. A big thank you to the social committee for all they do.

Dedication Sunday was extended to a week in which church was open three times a day for prayer. Our annual retreat focused on the theme 'growing in prayer and spirituality'. Last year Harvest ran over the weekend with a theme of 'harvest of talents'. Members of the congregation brought in items to reflect their skills and talents which were displayed in church over the weekend.

Espresso Church has been going for several years now. Developed by churches together and led by Andy and Mark, Espresso church meets at Costa in Prestwich and is an opportunity for different sort of worship.

Messy Church, based at St. George's, is one of our success stories. We regularly have approx. 20 children and 17 adults plus our volunteers. There is a core group of regulars that is growing. Messy church caters for children and families not familiar with church. It was good to see Messy Church so involved in the St. George's Day Parade and we hope that it will be the same next week. Thank you to all those who help out both practically and in terms of providing resources and food.

The events to try and engage post baptism children started off well, but the last session was poorly attended. We will continue and then review at the end of the year as to its effectiveness.

Staycation week was immensely popular with visits to Hollingworth Lake, Imperial War Museum, La Roma, Rawtenstall and the MU afternoon tea at Church House. It was a very good week and the consensus was that people would like to do it again next year.

What else did we do to enhance worship and spirituality? We have reviewed worship/music. We now have a group that plans the music we use in church. The congregation have had the opportunity to suggest hymns and at the back of church are new sheets for suggestions of hymns. Carol P has had intensive training on leading a choir and one of the consequences of this has been the establishment of 'Maggie's music makers'. We have had the opportunity for not just piano and organ, but also drums and guitar at some services (mainly family services).

Weekly stations of the cross have been and are an essential part our journey through Lent. This year each session was led by different people, Rev' Deborah, Revd Caroline, Christine and Carol. We extended this to have Stations of the Cross in Heaton Park. We also took Stations of the Cross to Parrenthorn Secondary School both last year and this year with classes exploring modern artwork depicting stations of the cross and then exploring the themes for themselves through their own artwork. Y8 prepared questions for a Q and A session on the Christian faith.

Our prayer blanket ministry continues to thrive both as a means of mission and of prayer. We have currently given out 172 blankets to people from within Prestwich, the wider Manchester area, around the UK and internationally. The response from the recipients of the blankets has been that of gratitude – with letters, cards and text of thanks. We now also give prayer blankets to the recently baptised. Thank you to all who have contributed in many ways.

Carol provides a monthly prayer calendar, prayers for the parish and our daily bread (a selection of readings and thoughts for the day) which is on the website and there are hard copies in church. These give support and encouragement to the congregation in their daily walk with the Lord.

Thanks to Carol P our integrated social media continues to thrive. Our website and church APP have provided prayer diaries and daily readings on the APP, sermons have been uploaded and some sermons have been videoed. These provide the opportunity for those unable to attend church maintain and develop their relationship with God. Information about our worship can be found on our website – a simple but effective form of mission.

Our church magazine is a good source of mission. I would like to thank Richard for his work as editor and for Barbara and the magazine team who put it together. Richard is unable to continue in this role due to work commitments, so we are looking for someone to carry on the role of editor. Please do consider this seriously, as it is an important part of our mission.

We have been into the community with user friendly Christingle services for the uniformed organisations, the Y6 children of St. Margaret's, Messy Church and in our own services. For facts and figures and a review of the Christmas services please see the annual report.

Occasional offices are also very much part of our mission. We have had 41 baptisms, 8 weddings and 21 funerals.

We have continued our missional activities with porch boxes, Christian Aid (Lent lunches), Children's society, Leprosy, Life Share, Tear Fund, MU charities, Barnabus and Porch Boxes. Recognition should also go to those individuals who co-ordinate the above and those who seek to serve by the social action work they do outside of church.

Our outreach has also included the deanery refugee and asylum seekers group. Although there was good uptake initially, we found that there were a limited number of guests and our volunteers outnumbered guests. Many thanks to all our volunteers, especially those at All Saint's, Stand and St. Hilda's who have worked very closely with us. Although this group is no longer in existence, I do attend the Bury Asylum seekers group so that we are familiar with what is going on and can offer support when and where necessary.

Our fellowship and social activities continue to thrive, and I would like to thank everyone who helps in this way. The social circle, mother's union, social events committee, staycation, the Christmas Fair, St. George's Festival, young at heart party, Sunday School anniversary BBQ and events at church house and the vicarage. We are so fortunate to have so much going on.

In practical terms this year, we have a Quinquennial Inspection at both churches which were, overall, positive and the upgrading of the paths around the church grounds – which have been commented on positively by both members of the congregation and members of the community. The garden of remembrance is an important place for the local community.

We have also gone from our parish having the title of priest in charge to incumbent.

So, what about the future?

It has been good to see new people attending our services both at St. Margaret's and St. George's and we pray that it will continue. It has also been good to see the continuing growth of our Wednesday morning Holy Communion and fellowship service where we have between 20 and 30 on a regular basis. It would be good to see this continue, especially in terms of children and young people. We need to explore what that means to us in terms of how we can provide and enhance opportunities for people to come to church for whatever reason and for us to reach out to those who possibly won't come into church by bringing the message of God's love different contexts and venues.

We would also like to continue to develop our Prestwich Mission Partnership and deepen the relationships that we have with St. Gabriel's and St. Mary's and to continue working with Churches together in Prestwich and Kersal and of course our deanery links.

One of the key areas we need to look at is that of stewardship, especially in terms of giving. Money, or giving, are those kinds of words that make people glaze over and yet giving is our response to God's love and grace. It is good to

review our giving on an annual basis – not just how much we give, but how we give standing order, direct debit and the envelope scheme – weekly giving whether we happen to be in church or not. Gift aid is also a good way in which we are able enhance our giving without having to give extra. In the coming year, James Emerson, the diocesan stewardship officer will be coming to speak to us. Anne does an amazing job of ensuring that we get value for money (ask her about utility bills!). However, we also need to be looking at ways in which we can generate income so that the onus is not just on our congregations.

Thank you all those who have taken on positions of responsibility over the past year, our treasurer Anne and to Danni, our child protection officers – Jacqui and Andrew, to Joan, who has taken on the role of secretary, Hedley, Angela, Gillian and those involved stewardship and gift aid, PCC members and our wardens and deputy wardens. I would especially like thank Carol, David and Laurel for all that they have done as wardens over the last year here at St. Margaret's and to Joan Knott for all that she has done at St. George's. All have put in many hours of hard work and dedication to St. Margaret's and St. George's.

Please accept these flowers as a small token of my thanks to you for what you have done for our churches, and for your support over the last year.

I was going to apologise for the length of this report – but I am not because it shows just how much has been done in the past year and the number of people that take an active role in the life of the church, both at St. Margaret's and at St. George's. We have much to celebrate and to give thanks to God for. We pray for God's continued guidance for the future of St. Margaret's and St. George's.

And so, I would also like to say a big thank you to all of you and all our congregations. It is all of you who make up the church of St. Margaret's and St. George's, we the body of Christ in this area of Prestwich and I am proud to be part of this Christian community as we all seek to follow Christ through our welcome, worship, fellowship, and service. Amen.



Thy Kingdom Come May 10th-20th.

During the 11 days of Thy Kingdom Come, it is hoped that everyone who participates will deepen their friendship with Jesus, bring other to know Jesus or know him better, and come to know that every aspect of their life is the stuff of prayer.

Thy Kingdom Come is a global prayer movement that invites Christians around the world to pray for more people to come to know Jesus. What started in 2016 as an invitation from the Archbishops of Canterbury and York to the Church of England has grown into an international and ecumenical call to prayer

Read the prayer which thousands of people across the world will be praying during *Thy Kingdom Come*, and which will be at the heart of every event.

*Almighty God,
your ascended Son has sent us into the world
to preach the good news of your kingdom:
inspire us with your Spirit
and fill our hearts with the fire of your love,
that all who hear your Word
may be drawn to you,
through Jesus Christ our Lord.*

Please collect your prayer book from the back of Church from May 2nd.