

A summary of the year written in collaboration by the Associate Priest and Church Wardens (in lieu of the Rector's report)

Mandy

In view of the Rector's absence the associate priest, Sandy and the church wardens, Howard and I, have together compiled an account summarising the year in the church's life and looking forwards to 2017 to 2018.

Clergy

Firstly I would like to thank our Rector, Helen, for another year of overseeing the three churches in the Benefice. We wish her well and pray for a full and swift recovery. Thank you to all of the clergy who have so ably supported Helen in this role and a special thank you to Sandy, who with Deborah's and Linda's support, is, in the words of Archdeacon Jackie 'making sure that ongoing mission and ministry continue as normal'. We also need to thank the retired clergy for their ongoing involvement and for their willingness to help at this current time, especially Alison Guy, John Hunnisett, Mike Tucker, Ann Morris, Brian Andrews and Anthony Roberts. Last July, it was a pleasure to welcome the Revd. Deborah Curram as our curate. It has been a joy to have her in our midst, in fact she is so well integrated it feels like she's been with us forever. We very much look forward to the service and celebration on July 16th when Deborah will become priested. It has also been a pleasure to have John Thompson join us during the last few months as part of his transference from the Methodist to the Anglican church. We shall miss him when he completes his year in July but wish him well in his continued and important role as the hospital chaplain.

The Church Office

The church administrator, Christine Gibson, is owed a very great debt of thanks for her smooth management of the church office despite the frequently unpredictable nature of the work entailed. During the year the church office has become the Benefice Office: Christine has taken on some work for Amberley Church, mainly the booking and arrangements for funerals and weddings and baptisms and producing their Pewsheets for Sunday services. She always manages to maintain a friendly approach for which we are grateful.

The Verger

Colin has been doing the verger's job for almost 20 years. It is very easy to overlook the fact that this work goes on as it always happens! The church is opened and closed and made ready each day, for religious worship and for a wide variety of activities and events. Colin is ably supported by Anne in his roll. We thank them both.

Church groups

Another busy year where there has been, by necessity, a strong focus on the reordering and refurbishment of Holy Trinity Church and raising the necessary funds. This has in no way reduced the achievements and activities of the various groups in the church as is reflected in

the reports from each group. Please take the time to read these reports from 21 different groups! The number of people involved in contributing to the worship, outreach, mission, organisation and maintenance of our church is quite amazing and frequently includes people who are not regular attenders at the traditional services of worship but who want to contribute to the church in this community in some way. A point for celebration in the Minchinhampton and Box communities is the seamlessness between church and community and the atmosphere of collaboration that exists between different organisations within the town and village.

Hand over to Sandy for an overview of the past year in the life of the church.

Mission:

Mission is about taking God's love out into the community and engaging with people to share in that love.

An excellent example of mission over this last year has been through the work of the Building Group and Fund Raising Group where their activities have engaged with the community, for example, the Newly New Sale and Auction of Promises at the Golf Club which attracted a great deal of support from the community, resulting in a real buzz as to what we are trying to achieve.

Relationship across the benefice:

Continues to flourish. There have been shared services and social events around festivals, especially Trinity, harvest, confirmation service and preparation, shared Lent groups and Lent lunches, and a Marriage preparation course.

The Benefice and team ministry flourishes with all contributing so much to the wealth and experience of being blessed with a team offering different styles of ministry and preaching. With the clergy, including retired clergy and our Reader willing to travel to all churches across the Benefice, this also enhances the richness of our worship experiences.

The House for Duty Priest for Amberley was announced and Revd John Spiers will be joining the team. Although he will be primarily responsible for Amberley he will also act as an Associate Priest within the team. However, it must be remembered that the Associate Priest / House for Duty role is only two days a week, plus Sunday.

Our curate Revd Deborah Curram joined us in June, and has been an excellent asset to our team. She is part time and offers us 28 hours per week in Minchinhampton and Box Parishes. Deborah will be ordained priest on Saturday 15th July and will preside at her first Eucharist on the Sunday, a great occasion for joy and celebration.

Churches Together in Minchinhampton, Box and Amberley. CTMBA We meet every other month to share ideas and pray together. We shared an informal gathering in Christian Unity week, the dawn Easter day service on the common and an act of worship on Remembrance Sunday at the War Memorial.

Work with Families and Young People:

All Age services continue to be well supported and Messy church continues to thrive. Junior church struggles with low numbers of children attending on Sundays. The teenagers who have been confirmed have requested to remain in the service and engage with the sermon. It is so affirming that these young people are continuing to grow in their faith and spirituality. As a result of this Deborah and Sandy who led the Confirmation classes have consulted with the young people and are starting a Youth Group commencing this month.

Building up our family and children attendance on Sundays is a long term approach. Our curate Revd Deborah Curram has joined the Primary School Academy parent's facebook page as a way of fostering and building up the important relationships necessary to engage with families. This is proving to be a success in the gaining and sharing information. To build further our relationships with young families, Sandy and Deborah are commencing a Porch Café in May on the first and third Tuesdays of each month from 9-10am for parents or grandparents dropping off children to come to the Porch room for coffee, tea and croissants and informal chat.

Minchinhampton school: we continue to have a well established relationship with the school and Deborah and Sandy regularly participate in leading school assemblies now referred to as Collective Worship. We hope in the next year to enhance the parish school partnership.

Experiences such as Experience Harvest, Christmas and Easter continue to be highly valued by the school.

School Services in church continue to be at Harvest, Christmas, Easter, and School Leavers' service where there is shared worship. The School children feel so relaxed about coming into church that often they will drop in by themselves or with parents to pray and write messages in our prayer book to be read at worship services.

Occasional offices: weddings, baptisms, funerals:

We continue to hold Baptism preparation sessions engaging with Christian faith. Opportunities to engage with non church families are so important in developing relationships of care enabling them to find church and the life of the church in the community something they then feel able to accept and know how approachable church life and individuals can be. Further development is needed in this area and there is a need to explore this further and to think about developing a baptism team for support and follow-up. This next year there may be the possibility of setting up a bereavement group to help with the aftercare clergy give already.

Communications:

We always endeavour to work hard and effectively with communications but there is always need for improvement. We are very fortunate to have an excellent website thanks to our Webmaster Mike Gwilliam who keeps the website updated and ensures all events are advertised.

We are fortunate to have a dedicated Parish Magazine editor in Kathy Hurst and for Wizzy Lapping and her team of dedicated distributors who ensure our news is delivered to well over 900 households on a monthly basis. We are ever grateful to them all.

Pastoral work:

The Pastoral Care Team (PCT) under the leadership of our Reader Linda Jarvis has been a real asset to the life of our parish. Their continuing hard work has enabled us to be aware of the needs of most people, with perhaps only a few slipping through the net. This is why the PCT rely on individuals to be vigilant in reporting your concerns to them.

Prayer life: Worship and learning:

Worship is about celebrating God's love and remembering the times when we may have failed to do this. Asking for and getting the opportunity to start again in celebrating God's love with all is not just on Sunday, but on every day of the week. Enabling people to explore and commence their spiritual journeys in faith and love with God and eventually to share their faith journeys with others, must be one of our goals.

Please read the Committee's report.

Sharing and developing of vision:

The Vision day last July enabled us to explore and consider a way forward for the mission and ministries of our churches. It was refreshing to see the similarities and stumbling blocks we all shared. It was hoped that we would be able to launch our Vision Document this evening at the APCM but with the Rector having an extended period of sick leave it has not been possible for individual comments and feedback to be addressed and acted upon. Then the final document must be approved and supported by both the Standing Committee and the PCC before it can be officially launched.

Hand over to Howard

Reordering

The fund raising and building project teams have been working hard this past year to continue to build on the generosity of the David Thomas Trust and to ensure the project can go ahead. Thanks are due to the generosity of the many donors who have and continue to respond to the 6Ps appeal. The opportunity to contribute in this way remains open! Some generous grants have also been acquired, however, there is still more to do here: grant applications by the project team are ongoing. The fund raising group, whilst planning and coordinating events, have been fully supported by a variety of individuals and groups undertaking different projects: the mother's union ran the newly new sale and have more planned; Diana and Peter Lapping were the main instigators of the auction of promises with amazing results; Hilary Kemmet has produced an illustrated book of poems relating to church and church life which will be on sale soon; Hilary Bellhouse volunteered to run a series of yoga classes which, have not only raised a significant amount of money, but have also contributed to the health and well being of the people in the group. The classes are ongoing as is the fund raising.

There is a real sense of people drawing together to see the first phase achieved. Underpinning all of this work has been the agreement last year of HRH the Princess Royal to act as our Patron. We were delighted to welcome HRH to the church recently, accompanied by her husband, Vice Admiral Sir Timothy Laurence, to officially launch the 6Ps campaign and to hear about the planned work ahead. This became a great opportunity, after three years of consultation and planning, to share with representatives from across the community the more detailed planning and the imminence of the work ahead.

The reordering project has come to a natural decision point with the delivery of our plans for consideration by the Diocesan Advisory Committee in Gloucester. Initial response, still unofficial, has been very positive: they think that our process, and our consultation is the best in the Diocese(!), and we expect a positive outcome when the committee considers the application on April 7th. At that point, the timetable is largely out of our hands, as the application goes to various statutory consultees. Their role is to find areas that would go against their particular interests, and about which they would like to complain. The most important are Historic England and the Church Buildings Council: happily both of these are generally supportive, as are Stroud Council in the specific areas they are concerned with – what can be seen from outside. However, we still expect opposition from the Victorian Society, since that is what they normally do, and possibly from the Twentieth Century Society, and the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings. If there are formal complaints from any of these, the plans will have to go to the Diocesan Chancellor for a decision, yea or nay. The DAC officers believe that she will agree with our plans and support them, but that may introduce a delay, simply to make the process happen. We hope it doesn't come to that!

Remembrance Garden

The Wildlife Group have been developing the far end of the churchyard, to make it more environmentally friendly. As part of that they have suggested that there should be a remembrance area in the churchyard, where people could go to think of relatives or friends who have left us. The suggestion has been to use an open area just beyond the line of pleached limes, near the middle. We have identified a particular landscape architect (an ex-doctor) who has come up with an exciting outline scheme, using the same three-fold pattern, signifying Holy Trinity, that is planned for the centre of the nave. Happily, we have also found a sponsor who is keen to support just such a development as this. Further discussion is planned with the DAC landscapes advisor, before finally developing the scheme for discussion with the PCC, and then forwards for sanction.

Music

The church music goes from strength to strength. Main services are well-supported by Julian Elloway, the choir, and, on occasion, the music group. We have known for some time that the organ has been modified considerably over time, but is now among the best instruments in Gloucestershire. The church space is also particularly rewarding for choral music, is now the official home of the Cappella Singers, an important venue for the Stuart Singers, and, but for the pews, would be attractive to Stroud Choral Society. Further work is planned on the acoustics to make the space more tuned to speech as well, but that is not possible until the reordering of the floor and associated work is complete.

Hand over to Mandy to finish off

Thankyous

Four people have retired from specific roles in the church and we would like to acknowledge their contribution as well as welcoming their successor.

Mary Codling (in her absence) Head Sacristan. Alison Whitaker replacement – experience of various roles in the church including church warden. Mary is a member of the Building project group and returning as such to the PCC.

Sally Byng – has been our PCC secretary all through her time on the PCC. Ably guided through church rules and managed Standing and PCC committees. Jamie Dalrymple-Hamilton has replaced – also has church organisation experience - church warden.

Joan Goldsmith – nominated person; brought policies up to date and DBS checks; smoothly running system. Judy Little replacing.

David Goldsmith – PCC but remains on the Building group: longest serving member; best overview of the journey that's been done over the past five years: from the first opinion survey through the kitchen and toilet refurbishment to further consultation and planning to the present day.