

ST THOMAS APCM 2021 CHURCHWARDEN'S REPORT 2019-2020/2021

Looking back over the past years the thing that is most encouraging is the way in which we managed to hold things together during the pandemic, despite the challenging circumstances, church building closed and lockdown in place. We have managed to continue with daily prayer, meetings, fundraising, Sunday Eucharist and having fun on Zoom. The attendance at services has increased and new members have joined the electoral roll.

The year 2020 started off well, the benefice was planning a weekend away to get to know each other and work on benefice mission. Even though things came to a stand still, church matters continued such as the PCC and Finance, Building and Risk meetings.

The churchwardens had meeting with the churchwardens from St Luke's to discuss matters relating to reopening the church buildings after periods of lockdown. We also meet with the Rector when necessary or if there is an emergency issue needing attention.

We have a wonderful financial committee – a combination of members from the community who find ways to keep our church finances in order and a big thanks to those people for sharing their gifts with us. We are sure they would be named individually by our Rector. Now the COVID restrictions are easing gradually, discussions will resume to find ways of maximising the use of the buildings.

In July 2019, we made our usual trip to Leigh and they came to us to share the Advent Carol Service. And all December community service services went ahead as usual.

Since then, we welcomed a new curate (Adelaide Davies) in our benefice, and we are still getting to know her in person or on zoom.

In December 2020, our Link parish (Leigh) joined us for Advent Carols on Zoom. The Community Carol Service went ahead on Zoom and service for the Care Homes were pre-recorded.

Building

Although the Church has been closed for a large part of the year there has still been maintenance and repair work being carried out. This has been done by a small group of volunteers who faithfully show up every week. They are members of the Tuesday group and are all retired trades men giving their time and skills to the Church and as we are not a wealthy Church this group saves us calling in outside contractors to do some of the minor work that the building requires.

Over the last year we have been doing some of the minor works outlined in the Quinquennial report 2019. Most recently we have had scaffolding erected to carry some of this work and a local roofer is carrying out the roof work that is accessible from the scaffolding. There is major work that is highlighted in the QR, but this will require a major grant, And on the topic of grants

a big thank you to Rev Liz for time and skills in putting together grant applications that have been successful and others that she has applied for that hopefully will bear fruit.

Our lovely neighbours, Arek and Kinga in the vicarage have been so helpful with their time and talents over the last year and we feel blessed that they have been sent to us. Such a lovely family who complement our lovely community which has been so supportive to us over the last year with their generous giving to raffles that Sheila organized and via a just-giving page.

Apart from keeping the building waterproof and safe we also are embarking on creating a Contemplative garden in the Church yard with the help of some local volunteers. This is a long-term project but we are excited about finding graves and parts of tomb stones that have been buried for many years. Liz Buck is also going to get Thoms Times involved in creating a wild area next to the proposed garden.

So, after this long period of Covid 19 restrictions where humankind have stood still, our buildings and gardens have not - they have carried on needing care and attention.

James Kinsella & Miriam Kakembo (Church Wardens, St Thomas)