



Objectives for 2016

Our Partnership Council propose the following:

Discipleship focus

- Develop teaching themes that can be used across our churches in services and possibly home groups
- Regular times of prayer for one another within the Partnership and a commitment to blessing one another's work.

Mission focus

- Ensure that all churches take responsibility for enabling the Youthwork groups, Messy Church and Primary School outreach events to be properly staffed and supported.
- Make a financial appeal for a specific project within our youth or children's work

Prayer for our Partnership

Eternal Father, Creator, Son and Spirit;
At the start of a new year within our Church Partnership
We ask for your help in letting go the past
and looking to our future together.
We would lay down our failures and weaknesses
And step joyfully into the future you are creating with us.
Be with us whenever we meet;
in twos and threes,
as congregations and
as a united Church family.
Strengthen us all to work for
the coming of your kingdom with
faith, courage and gentle determination
Through the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ

Amen

West Swindon and Lydiard Tregoze Church Partnership



Annual Report
for the year ending 31 December 2015

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This report should be read in conjunction with the reports from the 4 local churches, available at <http://wswinlyd.org.uk/council/report>

Across the Partnership, we have had 20 Weddings and Blessings, ably administered by Brenda including 2 by Candlelight.

The joined up thinking that is developing between our Messy Church, Schools work and Emerge is encouraging. We are all grateful to the three leaders of these pieces of work Mary Poole, Claire Camm and Gayle Bryon for their prayerful service, and creative gifts and skills.

Stipendiary ministry can be a lonely place especially when circumstances change, however the arrival of Trevor Day as a self-supporting minister has been a real blessing to us all across the whole Partnership, myself included.

I am extremely grateful to the Partnership Council for allowing the development of an executive which not only gives me pastoral support, but also has some delegated authority to discuss ways of working in the future, and to be the first point of call for the denominations and the sponsoring body. Without that trust, we would not be able to function as a whole whilst we work at fluidity of communication between the Executive, the Partnership Council, our multiple Denominations and the Sponsoring Body. I personally want say thank you to the other members of the executive Sue Green, Mark Dowling, Trevor Day and Chris Scarisbrick for their support, fellowship and candour, who with the wardens of St Mary’s and the people of the Partnership, have been supportive to me and my family.

I believe the movement towards hubs has made us stronger and more focused and as we see the gifts of God continue to be revealed, accepted, held and used by his people for building up the Kingdom of God. We will face another year of challenge (as, we hope, the Deanery finally resolves the future of the Parish) but with the assurance of God’s presence with us we can continue to make effective strides in our pilgrimage of faith.

...from him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work.

Minister's Report (Clive Deverell)

Eph 4: 11-13 15b -16

So Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.

Speaking the truth in love, we will grow to become in every respect the mature body of him who is the head, that is, Christ. From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work

A year of growth:

Many might say, "What growth?" and statistically it would be small if any, however we have seen a continued growth in the breadth of our ministry, which in the medium term will deliver growth.

The movement towards Hubs has led to the introduction of fortnightly midweek worship, more Schools work and related activities. The beginning of a Youth Fellowship directed at those young people attending our Churches. New welcome leaflets being introduced and new resources for visitors like those from Tim Tiley.

Approving Mike Dilly as a locally appointed Minister in Westlea gave some recognition to Mike after many years, the Worship leading course enabled people to develop their skills and gifts and our job is now to use them.

As I look back at past year, the uncertainty that has continued around boundaries has not stopped us developing and growing our Ministry.

As a whole, the renewed confidence across the whole Partnership is very apparent, this became more obvious whilst I was on extended study leave (whilst the cat's away...).

There have been so many highlights in this year of growth as the gifts of God in and through his people have been lifted up.

Worship Leading training for people from across the Partnership (our grateful thanks to Mark and Rachel Dowling for leading this). An interesting and well delivered Lent course in association of the Bible Society (thank you Andy Bissex and team).

The monthly Partnership, Prayer and Praise has brought people closer together as has the worship enabling group (now renamed "Veg Patch") and a big thank you to Sarah Wilmott for being its secretary.

Charitable Objects

The purpose of our Partnership is to advance the Christian faith in West Swindon and Lydiard Tregoze in accordance with the principles and practices of the Participating Churches. In achieving its purpose, the Partnership will engage in a range of activities, either on its own or with others, including (but not restricted to):

- the celebration of public worship;
- the teaching of the Christian faith;
- mission and evangelism;
- pastoral work, including visiting the sick and the bereaved;
- the provision of facilities with a Christian ethos for the local community, including (but not restricted to) the elderly, the young and other groups with special needs; and
- the support of other charities in the UK and overseas.

Administrative

West Swindon and Lydiard Tregoze Church Partnership is registered in England as a charity. Charity Reg no; 1141341. Our address is the Partnership Office, c/o Holy Trinity Church, Shaw Village Centre, Ramlease Drive, Swindon SN5 5PY

West Swindon and Lydiard Tregoze Church Partnership is a registered data controller for the purposes of the Data Protection Act. Our registration number is Z2669468.

The Partnership is registered to claim gift aid enabling individuals to give tax efficiently either to the general fund or to the work of Emerge. Our Bank Account is with CafCash P.O. Box 289, West Malling, Kent ME19 4TA. Our Independent Examiner is Steve Fraser, Monahan's, 38 – 42 Newport Street, Swindon SN1 3DR.

This report is produced by the Partnership Council in accordance with the Charities Act 2011 Part 8 and the Charities Statement Of Recommended Practice (SORP) 2015, specifically the Financial Reporting Standard for Smaller Entities (FRSSE)

Credits

Thanks to: Gayle Bryon, Claire Camm, Clive Deverell, Mark Dowling, Sue Green, Brenda Hicks, David Hoar, Jan Partridge, Mary and Ed Poole, Julie and Chris Scarisbrick, Richard Williams.

Organisation

The partnership comprises four churches, acting together:

Holy Trinity Church, Shaw (HTS)
St Mary's Church, Lydiard Tregoze (SMLT)
Toothill Church
Westlea Church

We are classified by Churches Together in England as a Single Congregation Local Ecumenical Partnership. The Partnership is part of the Baptist Union, Church of England, Methodist Church and United Reformed Church (URC), and looks to the Swindon Churches Together Sponsoring Body for guidance and oversight.

Our clergy comprise those who have been duly authorised and appointed by our participating denominations. Rev Capt Clive Deverell is Team Minister (Church of England) with responsibility across the partnership and posted at St Mary's Lydiard Tregoze. Rev Trevor Day is Assistant Minister working across the partnership.

Our partnership comprises one district of the Anglican parish of West Swindon and the Lydiards. The second district is comprised of All Saints Lydiard Millicent. The two districts have their own District Church Council (DCC) meetings to conduct Anglican business. We meet together occasionally for full Parochial Church Council (PCC) meetings, though most functions are effectively delegated to the DCCs.

Trustees

The trustees are the members of the Partnership Council (PC) (Article 8 of the Constitution). Anglican Members also constitute the District Church Council (DCC) when needed to conduct Anglican specific business, and we nominate representatives to the Anglican PCC.

The charity trustees have had due regard to the guidance on public benefit published by the Charity Commission in exercising their powers or duties.

The Partnership Council (PC)

The PC is the main governance and representative body. Its responsibilities are Regulatory, Oversight and Governance. Other responsibilities, Ministry / Mission, Pastoral care and local Leadership, are delegated to the Local Church

Partnership Financial Review (Sue Green)

The Partnership's main source of income is the share from the churches. We also collect money from office use and weddings and funerals fees. Virtually all of the fees income is then passed back out to the diocese or clergy, organist, vergers, clerks and the churches for the use of the building. Office income covers office supplies and photocopying costs etc.

The Partnership's main expenditure is the contributions to the parent bodies, the administrator salary, the schools worker salary and staff expenses. This is where the bulk of our charitable aims are met, however an increasing amount is done by volunteers which is not financially quantifiable. A small amount is then left for general partnership expenses including Hook cemetery maintenance.

In 2015 the Baptist Pension scheme gave us the figure needed to repay our employer debt which we duly repaid.

The URC SW Synod holds funds on deposit relating to the West Swindon Manse, the money received is from rental income and is expecting to be used for repairs and maintenance. At the end of 2015 the amount held was £20,570.

The Partnership looks after Emerge's finances in a restricted fund. In 2015 they received grants from URC and Highworth URC church as well as income from our churches, other donors and the young people. This money is then used to run the youth groups, training, the workshops for children with special needs, and covering salaries, expenses, running costs and equipment.

Our building funds, generated from grants, donations and fund-raising events, though consolidated into the partnership's accounts, are held and administered locally in each of the relevant churches. Responsibility for these funds is delegated to the individual churches' treasurers.

In the consolidated accounts the total unrestricted income was £158,416 and restricted was £17,430. The unrestricted income was up £30k on last year mainly due to the rental income on the manse but also some was from donations. The total unrestricted expenditure was £111,824 and restricted was £20,825. The unrestricted expenditure was down £66k on last year but this was mainly due to All Saints figures being removed from our accounts although church activities costs were up a bit.

The reserves being carried forward were £131,410 for unrestricted and £63,397 for restricted. The restricted funds are being held against future building related work and the youth group funds.

The individual churches and the partnership try to keep 6 months of expenditure as reserves. The churches are slightly under this but the partnership has more reserves than this as there was uncertainty over the level of the Baptist Pension repayment and what our future staffing levels would be. The extra reserves will be used for increased staffing.

Our financial controls were found to still be sufficient.

At St Mary's there are many lay people involved with clergy in supporting the occasional offices and we are grateful for their ministry. We also here record our thanks to Brenda who has done so much to administer Baptism preparation and Marriage preparation courses.

Partnership Office, Newsletter

Our Administrator Brenda Hicks prepares service sheets for several churches and edits and prints the partnership magazine.

Publicity and Communication

- We advertise monthly in the local Link Magazine, which includes information about our Partnership, the Office telephone number, web address and email address.
- We especially promote our major festivals of Christmas, Lent, Holy Week and Easter. Brenda produced joint information cards showing all the special Services and Events of the Christmas period.
- Generally each local church is responsible for its own publicity – this is through their Monthly Magazines or Weekly Notice Sheets. Our web site traffic increases year on year.

In Partnership

Our monthly magazine "In Partnership", contains news of church and local events and has information and news from the wider church. It is currently produced 11 times each year and is published both as a paper magazine and on the Partnership web site.

Local Church activities

There is much more that happens in each of our local churches. The local activities are well described in their local Annual Reports, copies of which can be obtained from the Partnership Office or available online at <http://wswinlyd.org.uk/council/report>

Committees (LCC) / Leadership Teams. A fuller description of the current functions of the PC, DCC, PCC and LCCs can be found in the Partnership Constitution (2015) and in draft Standing Orders.

Clergy (ex officio)	Revd Capt Clive Deverell Rev Trevor Day	
Partnership Council Chair	Mark Dowling	
Partnership Council Vice Chair	Vacant	
Treasurer	Sue Green	
Secretary	Chris Scarisbrick	
Churchwardens and Synod reps (ex-officio members of PCC and DCC, co-opted to PC)	Pat Watson Jacqueline Kirwan Mary Poole	
Circuit Superintendant Minister and Senior Steward	Rev Keith Osborn Andrew Fleet	
Elected Members	Gayle Bryon Claire Camm Janet Clark Rev Mike Dilly	Peter Gilder David Hoar Steve Kershaw Rev Jan Partridge
Minutes secretary	Brenda Hicks	

The PC met 5 times in 2015, including once with the full PCC: February, April, June, July and October. This was in addition to the Annual General Meeting on 12 April. Main PC topics during the year were:

- Safeguarding
 - Income and expenditure; review of budget planning process
 - Youth activity reports and review of our Emerge youth work, attempts to augment our leadership
 - Childrens activities and review of our primary schools work
 - Approving foundation governors and candidates for ordination
 - Messy Church
 - Our parish boundaries, under discussion with the CofE Deanery leadership
- The Partnership Executive met 13 times in 2015, at intervals between PC meetings – to plan agendas and follow up on PC decisions.

Appointed Sub Groups handled specialist areas of work on behalf of the PC, and gave reports on progress. They included for 2015:

- Emerge Management team
- Messy Church team
- Worship Enabling Group

Risks

The Partnership has a number of risks to its activities which have been assessed at either PC or the Executive. These include:

- Risk of financial commitment, particularly relating to clergy. Reserves cover approx 6 month's stipends and expenses.
- Financial commitment to Baptist Pension Scheme shortfall, resolved during the year.
- Limited resources available for work delegated to the Partnership Executive.
- Organisational and accountability risks relating to the Partnership's Policies and Procedures
- Structural risks due to the Partnership's Ecumenical nature, and membership trends in some churches.
- Unpaid voluntary contributions are not quantified in the report, but are substantial, almost all of our activities depend heavily on voluntary work.

The PC considers that these risks have been mitigated to the best practicable extent. They are monitored within the Partnership's governance processes.

Induction and Training of Trustees

There is no formal process for training of new or existing Trustees. However new PC members are made aware of their role and responsibilities through discussion and briefing before and at meetings.

External Representation

Swindon Churches Together Sponsoring Body

The Partnership has no formal representation at Swindon Churches Together Sponsoring Body (SCTSB). We have had constructive discussions with several of our denominational parents' representatives on that body, and they are all aware of our dependence. We are confident of their understanding and support.

Anglican Deanery and Diocese (Mary and Ed Poole)

Mary is the Partnership representative on Swindon Deanery Synod where there has been good clergy and lay representation at all meetings. We have met to discuss issues affecting the Anglican Church and beyond. The meetings have been times of worship, reflection and positive learning from one another. Topics covered included:

- News from General and Diocesan Synods involving the wider concerns of the Anglican Communion.
- Disability awareness – all churches are asked to consider how inclusive they are for those with additional needs.
- Evangelism – what are the most effective ways of reaching out to others and how can we co-operate better to share the gospel.

Messy Church (Mary Poole)

Messy Churches <http://www.messychurch.org.uk> are popping up all around the world. In West Swindon we are a very small part of something that's still growing. We are blessed with an established team of helpers, and still welcome some families who have been with us since our inception over 5 years ago. Looking back we thank God for some marvellous opportunities and ask for his guidance in facing up to challenges.

Opportunities

- We have met together for encouragement and fellowship with other Messy Churches in Swindon. We all do things differently but all love working with families in creative ways.
- We have welcomed 13 families to make, worship and eat with us in the past year. Some are already part of our churches, others not.
- We work together from across all our churches in a team that's genuinely 'all age' from teenagers to those 70+
- We are starting to develop a sense of discipleship, our families have helped support the Shoebox Appeal and Water Aid this year.

Challenges

- Creating a 'take home' faith. We need to encourage everyone to take our 'messy themes' back home and let them shape their daily life
- Letting West Swindon know who we are and attracting more families to join in our fun.
- Linking those who have become too old for Messy Church to other church activities

We are not alone in facing challenges like these - and we are always on the lookout for new ideas, skills and mess-making opportunities which we can share. Talk to a helper and find out more!

Occasional Offices

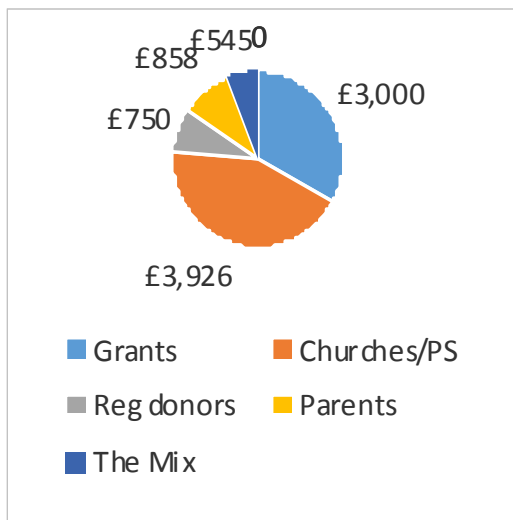
Across the Partnership over 40 Baptisms and Dedication services have taken place. We do specific Baptism preparation for couples having their children baptised, and adults considering this move

We put forward 1 person for ecumenical confirmation in 2015.

Weddings at St Mary's continue to be popular, we try very hard to have the building open when there is a Wedding Fayre in the adjoining conference centre, and a lot of couples take advantage of the Walled Garden for photographs.

Working with couples preparing for marriage is a real privilege and it is a joy. We conducted a marriage preparation course in January attended by 11 couples.

Finance



Approx 84% income was spent on staffing youth work; training; meetings; admin & comms. The remainder on resources and equipment.

Income was £3,000 down on previous year at £9,079, as one grant came in late. All other income sources much the same as previous year, parents contributions increased by £300.00.

Working with the rest of the Partnership

Claire, Mary Poole and Gayle Bryon continued to meet together to pray about and discuss children's and youth work in the partnership, supporting one another in our work. We created a joint publicity leaflet community to promote the different projects which we lead for the partnership, to encourage cross-over of families between them. We held a partnership prayer afternoon for the work in Autumn term which was well attended.

Outcomes and aims for the year ahead

Emerge project has continued to fulfil its project outcomes:

- To provide a positive focus in the community for young people in West Swindon.
- To provide a safe and caring environment for young people.
- To provide a programme which facilitates development of relationships to support their emotional, social and spiritual development.
- To enable young people to develop their gifts, skills and relationships through a sustainable programme which meets their needs.

We would like to welcome more volunteers from the churches of the partnership to come and join us. In order to fully meet the fourth outcome above and ensure sustainability we need to increase our volunteer team by 2 regular members. Current Volunteer ages range from 21-70+ so age is no barrier!

- Social media – how it can be used to create interest in the good news of Jesus.
- Uganda link – how it can benefit Christians in the Luwero Diocese and those back here in Swindon.

The big issue of sustainability remains. The population of Swindon is growing and the Deanery takes up the challenge of reaching out in all areas. However clergy numbers may shrink further in the years ahead, this is a continuing challenge that we know we face together.

Ed has continued as joint Lay Chair of the Swindon Deanery Synod which ends its current term in 2017; in addition he serves as a member of the Deanery Leadership Team. We are revising the current Deanery Strategic and Deployment Plan for 2016 to align it further with the latest Diocesan Strategy. Recurring themes are

- Greater commitment to following Jesus
- Growing and nurturing servant- hearted spiritual leadership
- Connecting with younger generations

This tunes well with what concerns us in the Partnership – it's still about Growth (in Partnership, Influence, Numbers and Commitment). The diocese is also encouraging churches in Collaboration, Covenanting and Accountability, among the strengths of much Ecumenical activity in the Deanery.

Baptist Area

WEBA run the Partnership payroll for our administrator, youth and children's workers. The local Baptist churches do not meet together regularly, relying more on email communications in between occasional more open meetings. Two of our members attended WEBA Annual Meeting, though we still aim to have more regular contact

Methodist Circuit

We have enjoyed the continued input from the Circuit to our council meetings and to the staff team from Superintendent Keith Osborn and Senior Steward Andrew Fleet. This has helped us to begin to focus on possibilities for the future shape of the Partnership. It has also been good to welcome Local Preachers from the circuit to lead worship in our churches.

In October we thanked Gordon Partridge as he has retired from preaching but he continues in his role as church treasurer etc, etc!! The Circuit has hosted several study days, one at Holy Trinity Shaw when we had members of the Carlisle Vineyard Church lead the day.

URC

During the year David Hoar has continued leading URC worship in the four churches of the Partnership and two outside, as well as continuing with Home Communion. Three of our local churches have lay people trained and permitted to preside at URC communion.

Janet Gray will be giving up as our the Synod Pastoral Adviser in summer next year to take on a similar role in Cornwall and North Devon. We wish her well with the change. We look forward to working with Revd Gerald England, the new SPA for the Swindon and Wiltshire Area.

We are intending to start sending a representative to URC Synod meetings.

School and College Links

New College

The Chaplaincy at New College is a Local Ecumenical Partnership. The ecumenical team of 7 includes 2 College staff, co-ordinated by one of our Partnership members. As well as supporting students of all faiths and none, the year saw activity to respond to the Government's 'Prevent' initiative; and the start-up of a regular weekly prayer and support group for Christians on the College Staff.

Oliver Tomkins CofE

The governing body is made up of representatives of the Staff, Parents, the community, the Church, as well as having some members appointed by the Local Authority (LA). They are all volunteers who give up their free time and have various legal responsibilities and duties. During the year we appointed two further foundation governors, but could still use further expertise.

Safeguarding (Julie Scarisbrick)

We have 80 DBS-checked volunteers working regularly or occasionally with those who need safeguarding. We have received no new Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks this year, but are concentrating on institutionalising our safer recruiting methods and transitioning to the new online DBS checking methods.

We struggle to keep up with our own commitment to regularly refresh everyone's training, we anticipate online courses helping with this.

We have had just 2 minor issues this year involving a worker acting outside our policy guidelines and one further issue with an unwise post to social media. 2 of the 3 issues were dealt with immediately, one incident is under discussion to make sure appropriate training is done and supervision in place. No children were put in danger, lessons were learned, and no further actions will be required.

Emerge Youthwork (Claire Camm)

During the year we engaged with 42 different young people aged 10-22 through the Monday, Tuesday and Saturday youth groups at Shaw. This is a reduction of 33 from previous year because this year we did not have a Gap student, and so were unable to continue our work with SYFC in Bradon Forest and LPA or our Sunday Church youth work. We did, however, engage with several hundred youth at the Mix Festival.

Staffing

Claire continued as Project Manager (12.5hrs pw) with Lily Townsend working part time as an Assistant until July 2015.

Training

Claire completed her Special Needs Level 3 course and St John's First Aid refresher course. We appreciated the regular help of Lindsay Gilder who continued working with us on Mondays and Saturdays finishing her DOE bronze award and deciding to stay on to take the silver award.

"The Mix"

In June we held our 5th biennial festival at Shaw for the local community. It was good to see new faces from the partnership churches getting on board as well as non-church friends getting involved. More people involved this year: 24 children/young people from emerge & churches involved & 35 performers from community = **total 59 children & young people**. 26 adults were involved from emerge project and partnership churches (all churches involved) & 6 reps of local charities; 3 unchurched friends/parent; 2 from SYFC. **Plus 10 adult performers = total 47 adults**. It was the first year that the festival was based totally indoors but, despite initial concerns as to how well this would be received, we were very pleased with the overall atmosphere of unity and vitality created by having everything on one site. This also meant that, for the first time, we broke even without any additional grant.. This is a very good use of volunteer time in terms of reaching out to our local community and making connections.

Group news

The usual end of year downturn in numbers at Remix happened in July, but Autumn term saw good growth across all groups with many new year 7-8's attending Remix and several new referrals from 'Aiming Hi' to the Special Needs groups. Remix young people enthusiastically engaged in fundraising for 'Toybox', raising £800 through a sponsored run and Christmas Show. We were also able to develop our spiritual reflection sessions this term at Remix which were based mainly around Remembrance Day and 'Toybox'.

We welcomed Mike Heal (Dad of an attendee) as a volunteer at Remix. Mike has extensive skills in teaching performing arts and community work eg with Young Carers. With Mike's help we were able to develop our music sessions once again which fed into the Christmas show. Drama, badminton, cookery and discussions continued to be popular – as well as the usual crazy kickabouts!

Usual Weekly Attendance

	2015		2014		2013		2012		2011		2010		2009	
	Adult	Child	Adult	Child	Adult	Child	Adult	Child	Adult	Child	Adult	Child	Adult	Child
St Mary's	59	12	72	12	69	12	85	12	71	15	46	6	39	8
Holy Trinity	36	8	36	16	27	3	25	5	26	5	28	6	28	7
Toothill	25	5	27	5	28	4	32	7	31	5	29	7	36	6
Westlea	24	7	25	9	23	9	24	10	23	11	22	12	22	12
Total	142	31	160	42	147	28	166	34	151	36	132	31	125	33

Figures adjusted to include Messy Church other non-weekly services etc

Joint Partnership Worship

Several joint Services were organised again in 2015:

- 29 March, at St Mary's with Capt Jim Currin Secretary for Evangelisation at Churches Together in England and officer in the Church Army
- 2 April Maundy Thursday Communion and feet washing at Toothill
- 3 April Good Friday morning all-age service at HTS
- 3 April Good Friday Holy Hour and Tenebrae at St Mary's
- 5 April Easter Sunrise at St Mary's
- 12 April at HTS, included Partnership AGM
- 31 May at Westlea
- 30 August at Toothill
- 29 November at HTS
- 20 December Nativity workshop and service at HTS
- 27 December Carol Service at St Mary's

In 2015 our joint Partnership Prayer and Praise service has continued in the afternoon of the last Sunday of each Month. We meet at St Mary's, usually in the walled garden in Lydiard Park during the summer, and at Holy Trinity Shaw in the colder months.

Toothill Church have organised and hosted midweek services at 11:30 am on Wednesdays, every 2 weeks. These are open to all.

We met as a partnership on Wednesday evenings during Lent for shared study "How to read the Bible better", and preparation for Easter

Objectives for 2015

Our areas of particular focus in 2015 were:

- Work on training and enabling of other areas of ministry, especially schools worker training
- Expand our relationship with Bible Society
- Fine tune our working model - PC, Exec and church leadership teams - to further explore and refine our local hubs of mission and ministry.

We report on those, here.

Training and Enabling Schools work (Gayle Bryon)

2015 has been a year of learning and discovery for everyone involved in our Partnership School's Work, aiming to open a window into our Christian faith for children, teachers and families.

Serving the needs of our local schools

30 acts of Collective worship have been delivered across our local schools. A wide variety of themes and Festivals have been covered. Approximately 2,200 children in West Swindon have shared in termly acts of Christian based Collective Worship.

Supporting and enhancing Religious Education

A variety of RE lessons have been developed to support areas of the RE curriculum. The lessons we were invited to support were enhanced by having the voice of a Christian in the Classroom. The children enjoyed the experience of a visitor and were always eager to listen and ask challenging questions. Teachers have found it useful to ask questions both in the classroom setting and via email. HTS, St Mary's and Toothill have offered a warm welcome to visiting schools learning about the Church or visiting for a specific RE activity. I have developed a package of resources for school visits, including hands on activities, worksheets and the Time Travellers Trail for St Mary's.

Working in Partnership with Teachers

It has been an absolute privilege developing relationships with teachers in all our local schools and working in Partnership with them. This year I have had conversations with all of the Head Teachers which has been extremely valuable. The schools are appreciative for the support we are able to provide to bring RE alive for their pupils. Schools are increasingly asking for support with how to make RE more engaging for their pupils which is a positive indication of the value they place on working in Partnership.

Creating new learning experiences

The most exciting projects of the year have been the creation of new learning experiences. The Transition 'Change, Challenge, Choice' Session, Easter Reflection, Advent Reflection, Prayer Workshop, Tales from the Jesse Tree, Posada, and Christmas Unwrapped have all proved to be very popular with children and teachers. We have received lots of positive feedback about how these activities have enhanced the children's learning. All of these experiences took considerable time to prepare and many of them needed significant volunteer adult support for them to be effective. The schools have really appreciated the interactive nature of these learning experiences and the significant volunteer adult support we have been able to provide.

"All children were fully engaged in the session. It was particularly successful due to the great volunteers that you had supporting each group".

(Christmas Unwrapped – Mrs Taylor Deputy Head)

"The children thoroughly enjoyed the experience; both the theology and the bringing it to life. They liked the hammering, card scratching and the food!"

(Easter Experience - Mrs Williams, Teacher)

"It made me feel warm and fuzzy and I didn't want to stop".

(Prayer Workshop - Mrs Primrose, Teacher)

Using a local team of willing and skilful volunteers

We have had 30 people help at events over the year, there is a strong core team of volunteers who are committed to helping regularly. However, it often takes a number of pleas before sufficient offers of help are given for larger events. The Prayer afternoon in November brought a number of us together to pray and share our experiences. I hope this can be built on next year with further training and development opportunities. Claire, Mary and I have continued to meet regularly for support, sharing of ideas and joint planning.

Community Events

It has been fantastic to celebrate with our local community in lots of fun community events. The holiday clubs at Easter, October and the Nativity Workshop brought us into contact with approximately 50 children and their families. The PlayZone and Story Telling Tent at The Mix Festival gave us a wonderful opportunity to spend time talking to local families. The Big Sing in September saw HTS full to capacity with Goldies, who were served by Church volunteers and entertained by children from Brook Field and Westlea School making it a truly spectacular afternoon. RE in action was witnessed by the residents of George Tweed Gardens when Brook Field Year 3 spent a morning gardening, serving cakes, sharing written work and entertaining them with songs.

We are grateful to the following members of the Partnership who lead activities across our churches:

Denominationally Authorised Ministers	
Rev Jan Partridge	(Methodist Circuit Supernumary) - pastoral training
Mr Gordon Partridge	Methodist Lay Preacher
Mrs Rachel Dowling	Methodist Lay Preacher
Mr Mark Dowling	Methodist Lay Preacher
Mr David Hoar	URC Lay Preacher

At the end of the year we celebrated the work of Gordon Partridge, who stood down from his preaching ministry.

Locally Appointed Ministers		
Rev Mike Dilly	Congregational Minister, local pastor at Westlea	
Mrs Claire Camm	Youth Work Manager	
Mrs Gayle Bryon	Schools worker	
Mrs Mary Poole	Messy Church Leader	
Heather Benn	Jacqueline Kirwan	Lay worship leaders
Gayle Bryon	Angela Mak	
Ian Bryon	Ed Poole	
Janet Clarke	Mary Poole	
Wendy Deverell	Mark Taylor	
Sue Green	Pat Watson	
Stephen Kershaw	Sarah Wilmott	

Other Groups:	
Westlea Leadership Team	Holy Trinity Shaw Worship team
Local Church Home Group	Worship Enabling Group
Team Toothill	St Mary's Ukulele ladies
St Mary's Worship team	

Our Administrative and support team

Administrative and Support	
Mrs Brenda Hicks	Partnership Administrator
Mr Mark Dowling	Partnership Chair
Mrs Sue Green	Partnership Treasurer
Mr Chris Scarisbrick	Partnership Secretary
Mrs Julie Scarisbrick	Safeguarding Coordinator

The Community

Membership is expressed through the Local Churches, and each congregation is responsible for encouraging regular attendees into membership. Within our different church traditions there are slight differences in understanding of membership.

Membership Summary

	2015	2014	2013	2012	2011	2010	2009	2008	2007
St Mary's	73	75	76	74	70	59	73	69	76
Holy Trinity	28	33	31	36	42	38	40	42	37
Toothill	34	36	32	39	42	40	39	37	35
Westlea	27	30	31	26	26	27	28	25	25
Total	162	174	170	175	180	164	180	173	173

(Historic figures in the table for comparison, are adjusted to reflect altered organisation of the partnership in 2013)

Ministry and weekly services

The worship rota is arranged across the Partnership. The Clergy, Local Preachers Lay Ministers and our extensive team of locally trained lay people all lead services and preach not only in their 'home' church but also in the other partner churches and some lead worship in churches in the Methodist Circuit. The Methodist circuit also contributes worship leaders.

Our partnership's main services take place on a Sunday Morning with each of our Churches having a thriving and enthusiastic congregation, several with crèches, children's and young people groups also being provided. The communion services generally vary between Anglican order and Free-Church styles. Messy Church is a missionary congregation aimed at families with young children. It is lay-led and resourced from the other "Sunday morning" churches.

Denominationally Appointed Ministers	
Rev Capt. Clive Deverell	CofE Team Minister
Rev Trevor Day	CofE Assistant Minister

As our schools work journey continues.....

- May we help to bring Religious Education alive in our local schools through our care and creativity.
- May we continue to explore new ways of being Church in our local community.
- May we be ambassadors for Christ as we develop new and stronger relationships with all those we meet.

Other Ministry Training

Following on from pastoral care training and bereavement counselling training last year, this year we have created and run a training course for those interested in leading worship in our churches. This was an interdenominational course, sourced from CofE material, but recognising the differing traditional worship styles and approaches to liturgy of our denominations. On Advent Sunday we celebrated the achievements of 14 people who completed this course. Many of them will be leading worship in their church and others, some already are.

Relationship with the Bible Society

Andy Bissex Head of Community Giving at Bible Society, who is a member at St Mary's leads worship across the Partnership. He and Clive led our Lent course, looking at how to read the bible

One of our churches has invited a member, who also works for Bible Society, to take an occasional slot in services, and keep us informed of the organisation's work. He has explained the aims of the Bible Society, life in the Swindon office, overseas initiatives and some highlights of their work in the UK, and how the church attendee can support Bible Society including its long running Bible a Month Club

We distributed the Christmas story children's literature through our churches and groups

Other local working relationships

This year we have tried to make and deepen relations with other local churches in West Swindon and across the wider town.

In conjunction with Gateway, Discovery and All Saints LM, we have begun to plan a Swindon wide Alpha course for the New year 2016

We are also planning to run the Marriage Course again in 2016, in conjunction with Gateway Church. Some of us joined with Gateway church in worship in September, and supported their joint carol singing efforts.

Good News for Swindon is an evangelical group based around a ministers prayer breakfast and regular shared prayer and worship meetings. This intends to find ways for churches to cooperate in bringing the gospel to Swindon. We agree with

the aims of this group and are in regular contact, but cannot commit to many more Swindon wide initiatives at the moment.

Hubs for Mission and Ministry

At the beginning of the year we tasked the different local churches in the partnership to take on different roles; to become “hubs” for certain forms of mission and ministry. Our church communities are all different, almost everyone should be able to find a home with us.

St Mary’s finds itself already in the centre of a diverse community of visitors to Lydiard Park and house. Some of these are occasional visitors, we minister to this community by providing a welcome. We present the gospel through the building and provide space for people to explore their spirituality through prayer, in a place where prayer has happened for 800 years. We now have a 6ft banner at the entrance saying “Jesus. The Same Yesterday, Today and Forever” and a new visitors’ leaflet directing people to the prayer area, and emphasising the church’s current role in worship. Initial response is encouraging. Regular visitors may engage more frequently with the church community through festivals and such activities as remembrance, memorials, occasional offices, summer hospitality, fayres and exhibitions. St Mary’s enjoyed hosting the Nativity Festival, over 100 displays of art, craft and festive cheer. The congregation saw over 2000 people through the church over the Christmas services and though its total numbers are slightly down the number of Christmas communicants held up. With the Swindon Borough Council discussions about finding a commercial organisation to run Lydiard Park we have concerns about continuing to get a right to free car parking adjacent to the church. Negotiations have started.

The primary schools work is very important within our Partnership. Holy Trinity Shaw continues to host, enable and support this crucial outreach, alongside Messy Church and the young peoples work. Holy Trinity also hosts our Partnership Prayer and Praise services throughout the winter months. We both need and welcome more practical support from more folk across the Partnership, especially for events where we have invited visitors. We continue to work on the welcome and general “feel” of the building itself, in order to better serve our local community.

Toothill was asked to be the Partnership centre for Midweek Worship. It was decided that the services would be on the 2nd and 4th Wednesday of each month starting at 11.30 am and lasting between thirty to forty-five minutes each with the pattern of service being worship for the first Wednesday and a Communion for the

second Wednesday. All the services are different in style depending on who is leading the worship. Since that first Wednesday in June the numbers have grown from six people at the start to twelve regulars each week and sometimes more. The after school “Christian Union” style club for primary school children continues to be well supported. The Lunch Bunch midweek lunch club started as mostly a church activity, its now 30-36 people, about 2/3 or whom are from the local community, and it does introduce people to worship and the church. Our team of helpers has declined over the years and now we need a new team that Toothill cannot provide.

Westlea Church has been running our new home group for young people from our “Sunday” church community. This discussion group is developing its own identity and gathers young people from across our whole partnership with the agenda driven by the young people themselves. It is not something that any one of our churches could justify running just for their own community, it only works if our communities overlap. The Westlea community is planning to convene our Partnership Lent course for next year, and one member is involved planning a Swindon wide Alpha course for the spring. The Partnership are beginning to see Westlea as a hub for discipleship and teaching.

It’s a bit early to evaluate the success of these changes, we have a long term plan and commitment to this form of working