

SWINDON DEANERY SYNOD

This has been a year of transition within the Swindon Deanery. Several parish clergy have left and after over 20 years in office Bishop Mike retired in September 2017. To inform the diocese about the background and skills needed in the next bishop a deanery-wide consultation was held and members of our church partnership presented their views. As a result of input a statement of need has been created which can be viewed at:

www.bristol.anglican.org/documents/statement-needs/

When the Area Dean Rev. Simon Stevenette stepped down Clive Deverill took up this role. In addition several members of the Deanery Leadership Team stood aside after several years' service with new members serving.

The overall emphasis within the Diocese has been on encouraging growth in some important areas.

- Growing children's and youth work. Dan Jones (Diocesan advisor) has been available to help create a long-term strategy; he has also conducted a review of the work we do within West Swindon and Lydiard Tregoze.
- Links with Uganda and in particular with Luweero Diocese and Kampala. Trips have been organised and our own partnership is supporting a primary school.
- Investing in Growth demands a financial contribution from us all and churches are encouraged to adopt the Parish Giving Scheme.
- Renewal and Reform initiative is country wide and encourages churches to work on new ideas for growth. They provide help and financial support to invest in the numerical and spiritual growth of churches.
- The role of lay people in growing faith within our communities was underlined by Matt Frost a member of the Archbishop's Council. He encouraged all churches to see that lay people and their witness at work, home and leisure is the greatest resource the Church possesses.

The year ahead will be an interesting and challenging one; new church schools are planned and Swindon is still expanding. Synod meetings will reflect this and recognise the need for prayer for changes that lie ahead.

Mary Poole

St Mary's Church, Lydiard Tregoze

St Mary's is part of the West Swindon
and Lydiard Tregoze Church Partnership



**Annual Report and Financial Statements
of the Church Ministry Leadership Team
for the year ending 31 December 2017**

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FLOWER GROUP

The flower group have continued to produce the usual 2 arrangements in the church each week throughout the year (except during Lent), and more for the events in the church calendar for: Easter, Harvest, Remembrance and Christmas.

We took a break from having a flower festival during 2017. We have offered assistance with weddings when required and recent trends have included having bows or hearts along the aisle, as well as the floral arrangements. We also have sets of pink,,and sets of blue artificial silk flower arrangements which a number of couples have used to decorate the church for these occasions.

We would like to thank those members who joined the team in 2016 and continue to produce arrangements. We would also like to welcome a further new member, to the team who has skills in floral arranging. Thank you to all those in the team for your ongoing commitment and support to this role within the church. It is always lovely to have some arrangements to add that welcoming touch to the building especially for the many visitors that come to see St Mary's during the week as well as at the weekend.

We would also like to take this opportunity to say a big thank you to Morag for all her commitment to the flower group, being the backbone of many recent flower festivals. We send her our best wishes as she moves away to another part of the country. Thank you, Morag.

Our thanks go to Lyn for organising the rota for the flower team along with the many other roles she has within the church.

Jacqueline Kirwan

WEDNESDAY HOME GROUP

The Group has met through most of 2017. The group remains small but stable, and meets so long as no more than two members are absent.

This year, we have continued with DVD courses as usual. The video format followed by group discussion and references to scripture suits our members.

This year, we have looked at:

John Ortberg (one of our favourite authors):

‘Soul Keeping: Looking after the Most Important Part of You’

and ‘I’d like You More if You were More Like Me’

Lee Strobel (a best-selling American author of Christian resources, and former Chicago Tribune editor):

‘The Case for a Creator: Investigating the Scientific Evidence that Points toward God’

Max Lucado (another of our favourite authors):

‘You’ll get Through This: Hope and Help for your Turbulent Times’

We continue to enjoy the discussions, fellowship, and prayer within the Group. I thank Pat and Lisa for allowing us to use their homes for Group meetings.

Ian Whitworth

COMMUNICATIONS GROUP

Following the successful HLF bid in December 2016, the Communications Group has met only as part of the Communications Focus Group, run by Sarah Finch-Crisp, who is heavily involved in planning the next stage of the Conservation Project.

As members of this wider Group, we met twice during 2017, to be briefed by Sarah on the progress of the Conservation Project, and to give our views on some of the plans for the future, such as restructuring the West Entrance to St Mary’s to give better access and a less obstructed view of the interior of the church as visitors enter, adding informational notice boards to either side, and creating a clear visual branding for the church.

Until the Conservation Project develops the ideas of the user experience for visitors and members, the Communications Group will continue with current material such as the Church Guide and Education Pack.

Lyn Morgan

ST MARY’S LYDIARD TREGOZE AGM AGENDA, 11.30AM, 04 MARCH 2018

Opening worship,

God is good, all the time

All the time God is good.

Psalm 19 read by Lynwen Morgan

Prayer

Apologies

Minutes of the last AGM

Vestry meeting: Election of Churchwardens

Members of the MLT

(Election of Officers takes place at first MLT meeting)

Representative to join Wardens on Partnership Council

**Representative for Deanery Synod, Methodist, WEBA
and others.**

**Ratification of those administering Communion and reading
banns**

Reports with responses as appropriate.

Questions to the Team Minister

A.O.B.

Closing Prayer

MINISTRY LEADERSHIP TEAM

Trustees

Wardens: Pat Watson, Jacqueline Kirwan

Elected Ministry Leadership Team Members:

Pat Watson
Jacqueline Kirwan
Paul Gardner
Tish Vass
Lyn Morgan
Mat Koelz
Mike Watson
Paula Roach
Doreen Henderson
Sarah Pritchard
Adrian Matthews
Andy Bissex
Vanessa Parfitt (Minutes Secretary)

Ex-Officio Ministry Leadership Team Members:

Revd Capt Clive Deverell, Team Minister
Revd Trevor Day, Associate Minister
Sue Green (Treasurer)

JUNIOR CHURCH

2017 was a year of transition as we prayed for guidance and negotiated challenging times. With the number of children attending continuing to fall, we had discussed the future, but resolved to continue to provide this ministry at our church. We have all put in extra work, preparing sessions and coming on a Sunday, even when no children attend. Through it we received a renewed sense of joy teaching the children about Jesus, not to mention learning with them! As a result, the younger end of Junior Church is stronger with four regular members. However, meeting with families in July, the older children decided that Youth Group should only run with at least two per session, so as this didn't happen, we stopped by Christmas. Please continue to value and pray for our young people as part of our church family.

In July our latest cafe raised an all-time-record £72, which we split between our funds and Jacqueline's Bethany Trust walk. We also had fun running a summer party and Christmas bowling outing.

Janet and Connie joined, bringing a much welcomed strengthening of the team; Jude had to step down because of work commitments and we are very grateful to her for many years of cheerful and creative leading. We greatly appreciate new features of services: the children's 'Show and Tell' when they return for communion and the extra input that has gone into running lively Family Services.

We found it inspiring and humbling to draw up a list of children past and present who have come through Junior Church; we reflected on the precious opportunities we have, even if short term, to have an input for God in their lives. Each of us thought about our key motivations about working with the children and drew up a Vision Statement 'LIFE' - do have a look at all this information and the children's craft work on our noticeboards in the Stable Room.

Susan for the Junior Church team: Sarah, Mat, Jacqueline, Jude, Julian, Janet and Connie

**Susan White for the Junior Church team:
Jacqueline, Jude, Julian, Mat and Sarah**

MOTHERS' UNION

2017 was a successful year thanks to our committed members who attend our monthly meetings regularly.

We have enjoyed a variety of interesting talks including one from our Diocesan President, Aurea Hart, who shared her spiritual experience in Holy Week at Lee Abbey. In contrast Mr Bill King recounted the life of Glen Miller and played some of his music.

A Deanery Festival held in April at St Mary's was well attended with every Branch in the Deanery represented. The service was followed by a strawberry tea.

A 'wave of prayer' service in September was shared with members of Mothers' Union around the world.

Our members also participated at Toothill Church in a Womens World Day of Prayer and took part in prayers for '16 days of activism against gender-based violence'.

Our branch gives support to the MU, Swindon project, Swindon Service Users Team (SUST) where we support and befriend recovering alcohol and drug addicts.

A 'Quiet Day' at Highworth was well attended.

Our members are very active in the Fellowship of St Mary's church and are involved in flower arranging, church cleaning, serving tea, coffee and soft drinks after morning services, and providing refreshments when required. Members also contribute sandwiches to the Filling Station for the homeless in Swindon. Under the auspices of the Samaritans Purse we also fill Shoe boxes with gifts for deprived children overseas who might not otherwise receive a Christmas present.

The year ended with an Advent Service led by the Revd Captain Clive Deverell. Following the service mince pies were available.

Although we do not have a large membership our members are generous with their Time and Gifts whenever and wherever they are needed.

**Jean Brock
Branch Leader**

MINISTER'S REPORT

"Alone we can do so little; together we can do so much"

— Helen Keller

For the first time, I have written as your only stipendiary minister one single report. This report for all our Churches will seem strange to some.

This report gives you a snapshot of what it means to belong to the community of your Church and fellowship. Think of the many different ways in which we engage with one another and the wider community, as we seek to live out our faith in Christ Jesus. Some of which I have been part of, others not.

I hope that this report provokes you to think more widely. I ask that because I am having to broaden my own outlook. For many of you, 2017 has been difficult, with illness and bereavements taking a heavy toll in our Partnership Churches.

Yet as I reflect on events that have occurred since I arrived over seven years ago, I see that a massive amount of transformation has taken place across the partnership. To my mind, the people of God have been set free to use their gifts. Every member Ministry through mutuality through and in our Baptism.

A few examples would be:

This year alone we have a number of people pushing forward with vocational training "the cork is well and truly out of the bottle".

We share our buildings with others.

Our work with younger people has expanded considerably, and we recognise the importance of the opportunities that our buildings and our people bring, however old they and we might be.

Each and every day, the normal things continue and I am grateful for every piece of work that you do, from Pastoral Care to leading worship.

We have major challenges ahead, but the words of Helen Keller at the beginning of this report remind me very much of the way we work in our Churches. Look at how we host refreshments, how we tidy and clean, and how we care for our buildings and people. As God's people, we have stepped out of our own contexts. Working together has transformed our work with younger generations.

I want to say thank you to each and every one of you for the support you give the Church you are a part of, for the leadership roles you undertake, for the prayers you make, all this for our communities' sake.

So my thanks to our Wardens, Steve, Sue, Doreen, Jacqueline and Pat, our stewards and senior leaders, including Chris. You have enabled me to continue to take wider roles. My thanks to those in formal roles: Mary, Jan, Trevor, Claire, Gayle, Rachel, Ian, David and Brenda.

At the beginning of February 2018, the formal separation of Lydiard Millicent from the parish and Partnership will take place. It is a time of sadness for us all. Mark Dowling, when appointed Partnership Chair, agreed to see us through to this eventuality (the separation), with all its pain and heartache. He has done so and now he has stepped down. In this report to each Church I can record my own personal thanks to him for his leadership and wisdom.

Our challenge will be to read this report and reflect how many others helped deliver each event and activity, in our own context and more widely. God is moving; vocations are growing, so from litter picking to Emerge, ask how can we join in and expand what we are doing, as we join in God's Mission.

Clive

"Four things to learn in life: To think clearly without hurry or confusion; To love everybody sincerely; To act in everything with the highest motives; To trust God unhesitatingly."

— Helen Keller

PASTORAL CARE GROUP

This group has continued to meet regularly throughout 2017, providing support for the church family of St Mary's, and within the wider Partnership of West Swindon and Lydiard Tregoze.

The meeting starts with a time of prayer for the church family members including particular individuals who are unwell, bereaved, or in any other form of difficulty. We also pray for Partnership issues, for our clergy, lay readers and other worship leaders including those involved with our schools work, and any other issues raised by the group.

The main part of the meeting is when each pastoral friend shares with the group any concerns or contacts they have had with those on the family / membership list.

There is a list in the stable room on the noticeboard of who the pastoral friends are for St Mary's. Any one of them can be contacted by members of the congregation if you would like support, prayer, to ask questions about the church, or to find out who is your pastoral friend. If you would prefer a different member of the group to offer support then please let us know and you can be allocated your preferred person.

All members of the team have been issued a certificate from the 'Disclosure and Barring Authority', to work with vulnerable adults. They are all aware of the guidance around confidentiality and the need to abide by the information given by the Diocese in the 'Policy for Vulnerable Adults'. Further pastoral training this year did not take place, due to a number of factors. (Arrangements for 2018 will be explored to perhaps provide joint training with the other pastoral teams within the partnership).

The pastoral friends would like to take this opportunity to thank all members of the congregation for their support. We would urge all those in the congregation to help the pastoral team to extend a warm welcome and fellowship to newcomers and visitors to St. Mary's, so we can continue to live up to our mission statement of being a 'living, loving, worshipping community in an historic building'.

The pastoral friends are: Jacqueline Kirwan, Pat Watson, Sarah Pritchard, Tish Vass, Ron & Jean Brock, Revd Trevor Day.

Jacqueline Kirwan

BELL RINGERS GUILD

We continued to ring the bells to call people to worship at St Mary's and that remains our primary objective. Despite our relatively small cohort of ringers, the number of occasions on which we are unable to ring for Sunday services are thankfully few and far between, although we often have a spare rope (or two) on Sunday mornings.

Retention, Recruitment, Training and Publicity

In September, we lost one of our ringers to the university life as Dena embarked upon her Master's degree in Social Work in Bristol. The new year also greeted us with the news that 2 of our ringers have moved to new jobs away from Swindon, a bitter blow for us. We wish Diana well in Telford and Ben in Utoxeter and thank them all for all they have done over the years to keep our bells ringing. On the bright side, we have welcomed 3 new recruits during the year, Jeff and Hazel, and more recently Tim, who responded to the full-page article in September's Link Magazine.

Gloucester and Bristol Diocesan Association of Church Bellringers

St Mary's tower is a member of the Swindon Branch of the Gloucester and Bristol Diocesan Association of Church Bellringers. St Mary's hosts ringing for the Swindon Branch on an annual basis.

Peals and Quarter Peals

One full peal and a total of 15 quarter peals were rung through the past year. The majority of the quarter peals were rung on the third Sunday of the month by our local band but we have also had visiting ringers ringing quarter peals including one organised by Julie Miles who aimed to ring quarter peals in every tower in the Swindon Branch in a week in June for the Julie McDonnell Strike back against blood cancer campaign. She scored 18/18 and raised a considerable sum towards the cause.

Weddings

During 2017, we rang for 11 weddings. Ringing for weddings and blessings is one of the few ways to earn money to invest in Tower maintenance, and is an important source of income for us. This year, we ordered a set of new ropes in January and delivered in October at a cost of just over £1000. that's an awful lot of weddings we have to ring!

Visiting ringers

We had 4 sets of visitors in 2017. Visiting ringers traditionally make a small donation which helps towards our Tower funds.

If anyone is interested in learning to ring, please contact Jenny at jem277@yahoo.com.

Jenny Moore

ASSOCIATE MINISTER'S REPORT

"There is only one Lord Jesus Christ"

Two years ago, I wrote about my initial journey from my curacy at Highworth, Blunsdon, etc [2012-2015] towards our West Swindon Partnership [2015 – present]

Last year my annual reflection was about our pastoral work in the partnership.

The last 12 months have been more of the same, yet my journey [all our journeys] continue; following God's calling. If there is one thing I'm adamant about, and the reason I felt so drawn to our Partnership, is that it is not of any particular denomination. It encompasses several denominations, and although I'm formally licensed through the Church of England, I'm here as a Christian to serve as God wills.

I know these may sound like glib or easy words to say, but as I indicated two years ago, it is ecumenical or partnership ministry to which, I believe we are called. It's good that we each have different feelings about how we are called, what we believe, what gifts God has given us to use and how we use them. It's the differences that colour and enrich our ministry together.

The following is just a summary of some 2017 activities:

During 2017, I had an opportunity to step out of my comfort zone [relatively speaking] and help to service some of the Methodist Church communities across and around the North Thames District [of which we are also part] ... which has included Evening Prayer and Holy Communion at Highworth, Shrivenham, Cricklade, Braydon, to name but a few. How did I feel? Challenged [Yes!] ... yet it was amazing ... enriching ... building new relationships/fellowship ... meeting old friends.

During the early Summer of 2017 I was asked to help for 3 months with 'Exploring Christianity' at Lydiard Millicent, while Tudor was on sabbatical ... I mentioned our journeys and I'm pleased to say that several of those attending the course, have started to consider next steps on their own faith journeys and vocations in ministry ... these might include Lay and Ordained Ministry in both/either Anglican and Methodist churches.

November's Remembrance was a key focus for the year, with our maintaining services [11am and 2pm each day] in the Royal British Legion Walled Garden of Remembrance [Lydiard Park] from the formal opening on 10th November to the formal closing at 3pm on the 19th November.

This year [2018] will be more special perhaps, because it is 100 years since the end of WWI. It will be a privilege to continue our work with the RBL in this respect and for Remembrance across the town.

I think, if there is one aspect of our ministry that is up there with most; it is that of being able to share Holy Communion in the homes of those, who are house-bound. For me, it is part of really, where church is; not just in our 'church buildings' but where-ever we meet people.

Thank you for our partnership in Christ.

“Trev the Rev”

MUSIC AND UKULELE GROUPS

2017 has been another busy one for the Music and Ukulele groups; as well as leading music for services once a month, we participated in the Flower and Music festival in the summer, and as ever, enjoyed playing for customers of the Strawberry Teas.

Yet by far our busiest time during last year was December, and we thoroughly enjoyed providing festive musical accompaniment for the Saturday of the Nativity Festival; trekking with our instruments through the snow to play for the Christingle service; and our annual favourite, the Crib Service. We have, however, struggled a little this year with dwindling numbers, sometimes exacerbated by illness in the group. Although we certainly haven't had trouble making a loud noise as a small group, it is our goal for 2018 to recruit new members, especially for the ukulele group, and we are planning to run another beginners' workshop to encourage congregation members to join our ranks - if you are interested, please ask Paula or Connie!

Above all, we hope that we have enabled our church members and visitors to worship God through music - we certainly value the fellowship and friendship which both the Music and Ukulele groups share, and would like to extend a massive thank you to all of our members who dedicate their time to practices all year round, as well as to Hilary and Adrian for their keyboard playing, and Jean for her much appreciated singing.

**Paula and Connie Roach, Music and Ukulele Group
Leaders**

PRAYER GROUP

Prayer Group have met regularly over the past twelve months on a fortnightly basis, and we continue to pray for St Mary's, for the West Swindon and Lydiard Tregoze Church Partnership, for the world, and for each other. We have also responded in prayer to requests that have reached us from visitors far and wide.

Prayer Group has continued to be supported by the same group of regular attenders, and I would like to thank Julianna Ridsdale for her support in leading the Group with me.

We would love to welcome new faces, and I encourage you, as we start a new church year, to make a resolution to join us at Prayer Group, once a fortnight, and make prayer a priority.

Wendy Deverell

CHURCHWARDENS' REPORT

2017: Yet another exciting and eventful year!

Spring heralded the usual Easter celebrations. At the end of May we supported 'Thy Kingdom Come' a global wave of prayer, with a labyrinth in the Walled Garden. Our thanks to all who supported the event.

'Strawberry Teas' were again held on all Sundays in June and the first Sunday in July. All were well supported, offering the opportunity for fellowship. Thanks again to Doreen and the team for catering, and to the bellringers for allowing the public into to the Tower to have a go at ringing.

In July we welcomed Strictly Recorders and Wentworth Voices providing a wonderful evening of entertainment. Our thanks go to all involved.

There was a full programme of events in the Walled Garden, led mainly by Trevor, with support from other members of the church for Remembrance with 2 minutes silence at 11am and 2pm. An opportunity for outreach towards those who visited the 'Garden of Remembrance'.

During Advent we held a Nativity Festival with over 100 crib scenes. The Festival was visited by most of the local schools as well as the general public. Schools visits were organised and supported by Gayle and the Partnership team involved with children's work. Thanks go to them and helpers from St. Mary's congregation. for their commitment to this event.

Our Christmas services had mixed attendance at the different events due to inclement weather, the most affected service was our Christingle. Christingles were able to be distributed to other events in the partnership. The Mid-week Carol Service occurred as planned outdoors, at the front of the house and was an uplifting evening with many attending. The evening of the Crib Service the church was full, with many families attending. We need more sheep this year (2018) so request any knitters for assistance!

During the year Clive added to his ministry the role of Area Dean, this being so successful has now become a permanent post for a period of time. Our thanks and prayers are with him, Wendy and family as well as Trevor and his family for their ministry to us and the partnership.

The restoration project of the church is ongoing. We would therefore like to take this opportunity to thank all those people who offer their time to be stewards in the church allowing visitors to light a candle, say a prayer as well as enjoying the vibrant history. The history of the church has also been part of the curriculum for groups of school age children.

We would also extend our thanks to all those who help with the many tasks on the rota that keep the church in smooth running order.

Pat Watson and Jacqueline Kirwan

TREASURER'S REPORT FOR THE YEAR ENDING 31 DECEMBER 2017

The general fund this year had a slight decrease of £1,018. The fund is now at £12,648.

The total general fund income this year was down a bit again and this time it was giving and no flower festival that produced the reduction, ministry fees were up a little bit to £3,900. Planned giving increases from those that were able to, did nearly make up for the reductions from those who had left us.

With expenditure, we weren't able to give the amount we had hoped to give to the Partnership but did give the same as last year (£36,000). There was slightly more building maintenance needed this year so as to get the building electrically safe and the building fund helped out with some of these costs. Other expenditure was again pretty much in line with my fairly tough budget. The amount given in missionary and charitable giving was £5,000 in tithes, £1,300 from Christmas collections and £120 to the Manchester appeal.

We have £4,939 in the general fund which has been given for the sound system.

The building fund had income of £79,925 and expenditure of £104,952. The building fund is now at £16,701. But this is just the year end figure, some of the pledged money comes in as it is needed. Looking forward to 2018 the budget has been set at a similar level to this year, however this will result in reserves being used if we don't get additional income.

Sue Green

BUILDING REPORT

Following the award in December 2016, when St Mary's church was successful with the application to the Heritage Lottery Fund, the Development Phase has progressed on timetable throughout 2017, with the appointment of all the consultants including that of Conservator Jane Rutherford and her team to undertake conservation of the medieval wall paintings and monuments. All necessary surveys and reports required have been undertaken. In October 2017, Jane & her team undertook a detailed survey of the wall paintings, polychromy and monuments.

At the beginning of 2017 Marys still needed to raise £155,000 to complete the funding of the Delivery Phase. Fund raising has continued throughout 2017 with grant awards from Garfield Weston Foundation, All Churches Trust, The Leche Trust, Wiltshire Historic Churches Trust, The Alan Evans Trust, St Andrews Conservation Trust and continued public fund raising. The balance to raise now stands at £75,500. In the spring of 2018 St Marys will be applying to the Heritage Lottery Fund for the Delivery Stage grant of £615,000. The scheme will restore St Mary's historic interiors and make it more accessible to the public with access improvements, imaginative interpretation and lively education programmes, and will include a new heating and lighting system.

Throughout the summer, Volunteers from Nationwide & The Arval Group supported the Corporate Volunteer Programme of the Conservation Project. Work has included clearing and preparing a new wild flower bed and other works in the grounds, and painting St Mary's railings and gate.

The main focus of the Delivery Phase is the conservation of the extensive medieval wall paintings, identified by the Church of England as one of the 100 artworks currently most in need of conservation in their **100 Church Treasures Appeal**. Rt Reverend Dr Lee Rayfield, Bishop of Swindon said "We are delighted that the Heritage Lottery Fund has given us this support. St Marys is a national treasure and preserving its unique features will benefit both local and the nation's heritage"

During 2017 the church has been opened & stewarded on every weekend throughout the year from January to December including public bank holidays. Furthermore, the church was open and stewarded on Fridays from April to the early November by Arts Society volunteers This has resulted in over 8257 visitors to the church from all over the world.

Paul Gardner