



ANNUAL REPORTS 2017

APCM 2nd April, 2017

**ANNUAL REPORT 2016-17
ST. PETER'S CHURCH, YAXLEY**

The Vicar's Report

2016 Review

I believe that we have much to celebrate and to be thankful for as a church family as we look back on 2016. Inevitably, a review of this sort will miss out some things, but perhaps I might start at the end of the year with Christmas. The church was packed for our annual Carol Service; there really was no room at the inn for the Crib Service attended by around 500 people and many of our other services were well attended too. However, one highlight of Christmas for me was *Beer and Carols* at the Three Horseshoes. This was the first time we had held an "event" like it and we were overwhelmed by the numbers who attended. Again, it was standing room only in the pub. A wonderful evening of carols, reflection and fellowship enjoyed by pub regulars, others in the local community and members of St Peter's. I am grateful to the landlords, to Mark Fuller and to our worship band for making this evening possible. I hope it will be the first of many such occasions.

One aspect of *Beer and Carols* which excites me is that it is a direct response to Jesus' command to "go and make disciples". At no time did Jesus say that we were to sit in church and wait for people to come to us. For sure we should welcome people when they do come in to the building for services or for any other reason, but our primary call is to take the Gospel outside of the church building and into the local community – be that the pub, the shopping centre, the doctor's surgery or wherever. I hope and pray that we will all be inspired by the success of *Beer and Carols* to do more to take the Gospel into our communities. Our faith is something we should wear on our sleeves and not hide wherever we go.

I have never thought that the number of people attending Sunday services in a church was the only (or even the best) indicator of a thriving church. However, at a time when church growth nationally appears to be in continuing decline we should be encouraged that numbers attending St Peter's have risen to their highest level since 1994. On a typical Sunday 116 people attend a Sunday service here. This increase is despite the numbers of people taking the Gospel out of the church (with for example prison ministry) on a Sunday.

We spent the early part of the year exploring a sermon series on Covenant and Kingdom. We reflected on our relationship with God (Covenant) and the responsibility which this brings (Kingdom living). When we know who we are in Christ then we can but go out and share the Good News. I continue to pray that we would all know deep within that we are secure, accepted and significant in Christ and that we would look to take part in or set up missional communities (or similar) and take our Kingdom responsibility seriously.

In the autumn we looked at a number of biblical paradoxes. For example, we explored how Jesus can be both fully human and fully divine. Life is certainly full of paradoxes and I hope that wrestling with these biblical ones gave us much to reflect on. I hope this series also showed us that sometimes there just isn't a simple answer to every question.

It was really encouraging to see our outreach into both the local community and wider world continue to flourish. Both Food Bank and Community Projects (see reports elsewhere) continue to provide a really valuable service to the local community and are both a very practical demonstration of God's love. We have also run some CAP money courses to help families with financial management.

I was delighted that we held our first women's invitational event *A Stylish Christmas* in December. For obvious reasons I didn't attend, but I hope that this will be the first of many such events. We were able to invite women to an enjoyable event in the church building. Thanks to everyone involved in organising this.

We continued to play a significant part in mission to the wider world. We used the tithe (£10,000) from our building project in 2013 to fund a pastor's house for our partner church St Peter's Kabahire in Rwanda and a couple of smaller projects in Rwanda.

Finally, I cannot let this section of the report end without acknowledging the enormous financial commitment which has been made by members of St Peter's. I mentioned last year that we needed

to continue to increase our giving to the Diocese by 10% pa until 2019 to cover the costs of our ministry. Thanks to your generosity we were able to do this in 2017. If we continue to give generously I expect us to reach our goal of meeting our ministry costs in full in 2019 for the first time in a generation.

Challenges for 2017

I wrote last year that one of our challenges for 2016 was to re-consider our vision as a church. As I reflected and prayed on this throughout the year and listened to your comments I concluded that there was nothing wrong with our vision. What is needed is not a new vision for St Peter's. Rather, what is needed is to encourage more of us to help implement our vision.

I recently attended a course in which the speaker was suggesting that a church's vision needs to be spelled out on a very regular basis if everyone is to know what it is and engage with it. So, please accept my apologies if I haven't communicated our vision frequently enough. Our vision is clearly described on our website and elsewhere. For completeness, here it is:

We believe God's message is more than relevant for our lives today. We therefore have a strong emphasis on connecting with God through the Holy Spirit, looking not only to read and dwell on His Word, but also engage with Him on a daily basis. That's why our vision is:

- To be a **vibrant and welcoming church** at the heart of the community, reaching out in love and faith.
- To enable individuals to **deepen their relationship with Jesus** and to live for Him.
- To engage in inclusive, Spirit-led **worship of the living God**.
- To encourage and equip all our members to **use their God-given gifts** in the life of the church.
- To provide an inspiring and stimulating ministry through which our **children and young people encounter Jesus** for themselves

We also believe that every member of the church has a role to play – no matter how big or small. That's why we personally invite you to become part of working towards our vision.

Our biggest challenge in 2017 is, I believe, to embrace fully this vision and to live it out 24:7

Revd John Randall

Pioneer Minister's Report

A central part of my role as Pioneer Minister here at St Peter's has been to consider how we can engage with those who would never "darken the doors" of the church. However good our services are, the reality is that most people in our community are not sitting at home wondering what we can do to attract them to church. So, we need to find different ways of engaging, of building relationships, talking about Jesus and forming church which starts where people are, not necessarily expecting them to come to us. Over the course of my time here I have dedicated time to encourage and to learn from the great missional work St Peter's is already doing, and to model and equip us in pioneering ways of doing and being church in and for Yaxley.

A starting point for this ministry has been listening both to the local context and to God, and to discern what opportunities might present themselves. And doors have certainly been opened! One of the fruits from this process has been the creation of the *Encounter* community which I discuss in greater length elsewhere in this report.

Another significant area where this ministry is bearing fruit is our relationship with The Three Horseshoes. Indeed, I'd like to extend my thanks to those who see the value in letting the Pioneer Minister spend an evening a week drinking Guinness! But it is this time spent building relationships, simply being there and listening to people which has paved the way for the church to be a consistent and welcome presence.

In 2015 we gifted the 'Shoes 100 Beer Mats which encouraged people to think about the Christmas story and which were put out in the pub over the Christmas period. In 2016 we went a few stages further and worked in partnership to put on the 'Beer and Carols' event. This was very well received by all who attended and I have had a number of comments since from those who frequent the pub saying how great it was to bring the church culture and pub culture together in such a natural and joyful way. For me, the great success was not that we put on a great one off evening but that it took place in the context of an ongoing relationship. The big challenge now, as highlighted by a member of our congregation, is that 'we've got to build on this'! As I write we are preparing to hold a monthly 'Table Talk' evening with the hope that it will initiate conversations around life, faith and spirituality. Speak to me to find out more.

There is no quick start guide to any pioneering ministry. It takes time to build relationships, to be where people are and create space for them to consider starting a journey of discipleship. Please do continue to pray for this work, that God would continue to bring about further opportunities and for the courage to take them!

Revd Mark Fuller

CHURCHWARDENS' REPORT

Quinquennial Inspection

This last took place in August 2014. The report did not highlight any urgent works - with the next inspection due in 2019.

Lighting & Redecorating Fund

All our costs were paid off by the end of 2016.

We would take this opportunity to thank everyone for their generosity – especially those who's continuing pledges are contributing towards our new 'Project' Fund – which already stands at ~£28k.

Terrier.

Most of our documents are now held at the Huntingdon Records Office – where they can be viewed by anyone – leaving us with only the most recent records for our use.

Heating.

Heating costs are still being kept in check through our 'use it only when you need it policy' and not depending on the timer for every activity in church.

The problem of gas supply to boilers, which causes one to trip out, continues, but it seems that the supply pressure fluctuates with increased use in Yaxley so we now have measures in place to deal with it.

Organ

The organ has had its annual service and no problems discovered.

Bells

The bells had an annual check in June when the bearings and pulleys were greased and oiled. The stays and ropes are checked on a regular basis about three or four times a year or if a rope needs adjusting. The only slight concern is the clapper on the treble which has some sideways play in it. We will continue to check its condition and decide on the best course of action, it maybe that some costs will be involved.

A special thank you to the bell captain and his team for the ours they put in to maintaining the bells.

General.

The ongoing problem with the pump which operates the drainage system, which results in it 'tripping out' and the alarm sounding in the toilet, continues. We shall continue to monitor and have the engineers attend to it if the situation deteriorates.

We reapplied for Planning Permission to install external doors to the South Porch in 2016, but this was again rejected by HDC's Conservation Officer despite Historic England's acceptance of the suitability of the scheme over any others...!!

The Churchwardens would like to take this opportunity to thank all those members of the congregation who have assisted them throughout the year.

Paul Russell & Mark Jarrett – Churchwardens

TREASURER'S REPORT

You may remember that last year's accounts showed a surplus of £3,368. However, we spent a large chunk of this quite early-on in the year, when we carried out a planned roof repair at a cost of £2,600. But of course, that spend is included in this year's figures, so we are showing a small loss of £1,447.

Expenditure includes insurance premiums of around £5,500 and utilities of circa £3,400. We continue to benefit from the bulk buying powers of the Church of England Energy basket for both gas and electricity.

We paid our parish share of £33,000 in full, plus an additional contribution of £3,000, and have boldly pledged to pay £40,000 in 2017.

We continue to fund Berthe's ministry in Rwanda, and make regular payments to sponsor Hope, and we also support Christians Against Poverty, both locally and nationally. We have sent our final donation of £10,000 to Mission Possible. After discussion with Richard Wallis and Bishop Nathan, it was to be spent as follows:

- £1,000 to support Mission Possible's work with the Batwa people
- £7,000 to build a pastor's house next door to St Peter's Kabahire
- £2,000 to build a walkway to the dining room at the Star School, Kigali

All of this is possible thanks to your generous giving, whether by standing order, weekly envelopes or one-off donations. On behalf of the PCC, may I take this opportunity to thank everyone who supports the work of St Peter's – both in Yaxley and in Kabahire.

Many thanks, as always, to those who assist me in producing these figures.

Debbie Jarrett - PCC Treasurer

REPORT OF THE PROCEEDINGS OF THE PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL

The PCC has met six times since the 2016 APCM. The meetings always start with a prayer, and finish with The Grace, and members have discussed a variety of matters, including:

- The work with children & young people, including "Sticky Faith", "The Youth Group" & "SPREE"
- "24 hours of prayer" days
- Fund-raising
- Social events
- Community Sunday and Community Projects
- Stewardship
- The Electoral Roll
- Financial matters
- Maintenance, repairs and improvements
- The William de Yaxley C of E Junior Academy
- The Impaired Senses group
- The MU Engage group
- Food Bank
- Yaxley Festival
- The Compass Group
- Christians Against Poverty

- Rwanda/future trip in 2017
- Defibrillators
- A Spiritual Leadership Team
- The Holiday Club
- Missional Communities
- Church Away Weekends
- Revival Prayer Meetings
- The new website
- The Pioneer Minister, including his ordination
- Soul Survivor
- The “Encounter” Group
- “Door-to-door” Flyers
- Assistant Wardens
- New Accounting System
- Our Vision
- The use of DVDs for Worship, and the Performing Rights Society
- The security of the church building
- The hand bells
- The organist
- The Discipleship Course
- Jon’s appointment as Rural Dean
- Parking on busy Sundays

Fran Russell - PCC Secretary

CHILDREN’S MINISTRY

Junior Church

It has been great to see the number of younger children in Junior Church increasing. Thanks to Jenny Hall for introducing a time of sung worship in Junior Church. We are also delighted to have some more of our young people on the Junior Church team. Tina Webster kindly continues as Junior Church Co-ordinator.

Youth Church

Our lively Sunday morning youth group meets in the vestry and now includes young people from Year 5 upwards. This is working well.

We are very grateful to ALL our leaders on the children’s and youth team for their dedication and enthusiasm. Thank you all so much. Your ministry is of eternal significance.

Holiday Club

Around 70 children attended our Junior Heroes Holiday Club at the end of August. Thank you to our wonderful leaders and helpers without whom we would not have been able to reach out to our local community in this way. Our thanks, also, to Yaxley Scouts and Guides for allowing us to use their great new building, which was ideal for us.

Sparks

Sparks, our group for under-fives and their parents and carers, continued to meet once a fortnight throughout the year. Special thanks to our growing team of faithful helpers who have worked so hard to make Sparks a happy, friendly and hospitable environment in which people of all ages from babies to great-grandparents can engage with the Gospel. We are delighted that Sparks continues to be very well attended and that several parents whose children have outgrown Sparks have joined the team.

Ingrid Randall

YOUTH GROUP

One key focus of our ministry at St. Peter’s is teaching and engaging with the young people in our community.

In September 2016 we changed the format of the Tuesday night youth group, to meet at St. B's for a more informal, less structured and sociable time together. The move out of the church building was a big change for the group, but we have seen a lot of positivity both in terms of a fantastic increase in

the number of young people coming along, as well as engagement in activities that we run. We now regularly have between 10 and 15 children coming along - with around five or six of those from outside the church - and continue to meet between 7.00-8.30pm. Just before Christmas we ran a social and took the youth group to Bounce, which was great fun.

We also continue to meet on a Sunday morning during the 11am service and are very grateful for an increase in volunteers to help lead that ministry. Both these groups are aimed at young people from year 6 upwards, and are open to youth both inside and outside the church.

This summer, we are hoping to take a group of our young people to Soul Survivor, which is now taking place at the Peterborough Showground - watch this space for more details!

Claire Grant

FOODBANK

We continue to have great support from local churches, schools, and the Yaxley community, in terms of supply of food. Also thanks to the parish council for their continuing support.

In the school summer holiday, we were able to provide weekly food parcels for some families who would have otherwise struggled, due to no school meals being provided during the holidays. An emergency call for food at the end of this period, when stocks were really low, brought a great response. One grateful client said "I don't know what I would have done without this".

At Christmas we gave out 29 hampers to needy families. Over a ton of food was distributed. Our volunteers generously give of their time, for which we are very grateful, and we are always glad of more help.

Unfortunately, Linda Smith is no longer able to give vouchers at Yaxley Group Practice, but God in perfect timing, has provided a volunteer who will be in the practice from 10-11am on a Thursday morning distributing vouchers. Anyone who is in a crisis situation, and needs an emergency supply of food, should enquire at reception, and will be given an appointment to see our volunteer, who is also trained in signposting to other agencies.

We are grateful to Godmanchester for all their support, and are pleased to say that we passed our "Quality Assurance" visit from Trussell Trust with flying colours.

Thank you to all who support this work: as Jesus said, "Whatever you do for one of these you are doing for me".

Susan Grant

MOTHERS' UNION

The work of the Mothers' Union often goes unseen as we aim to for fill the Aims and Objectives of such a large worldwide charity. At St Peter's, members help in many different roles, and through prayer.

During the past year, we have held our Teddy Bears' Picnic for the newly Baptised and other pre-school children, also providing Baptism information leaflets for parents; our travelling Nativity sets visited several families who attend "Mums and Tots" at Queen's Park; we held a Prayer Vigil and gave out prayer leaflets for the "16 Days of Activism Against Gender Violence"; Our "wheelbarrow" collected items for the Cambridge Women's aid and Huntingdon Women's Refuge; we donated

towards Christmas gift packs for local hostels, and made "Fiddle Blankets" and "Fiddle Muffs" for dementia patients in local care homes.

Fund raising events have enabled us to support the work of the Mothers' Union Worldwide, and promote the "Make a Mothers' Day" campaign for Mothering Sunday. We were delighted to be able to make "Pocket Crosses" for the St Peter's team to take to Rwanda. Recently we have set up a Wedding Prayer group who pray for couples on their wedding day.

Our notice board at the back of church has information about the Mothers' Union, our monthly meetings, MU-Engage meetings and our weekly prayer diary. All our meetings are open to non-Mothers' Union members, and we look forward to welcoming new people.

Irene Porter - Branch Leader

CAP COURSES - RUN BY ST. PETER'S

In 2016 we ran one CAP Money course at Yaxley Infant School with only one delegate, which at the time we felt was disappointing. However, as a result of that course, we have become good friends with the lady attending, who was Baptised at St Peter's in September and now regularly comes to Encounter and helps at Sparks.

We ran another course at Yaxley Infant School in January 2017, but again numbers were low.

Through contacts made as a result of the foodbank, we have established a good relationship with Farcet Primary School, and are currently running a CAP Money Course there with seven delegates, which is extremely encouraging. There is also a strong possibility of running a CAP Money Course for children in year six at Farcet School. If successful we will also seek to run a children's course at Fourfields School later in the year.

We remain convinced that the benefits of the CAP Money course to the people of Yaxley are immense. Attracting potential delegates and reaching those people who would most benefit from the course remains a challenge. To find out more about the ongoing work of CAP and the CAP Money course visit www.capuk.org

Pauline Wallace
CAP Money Coach

THE CARE IN THE COMMUNITY PROGRAMME

Community Sunday 2016.

This year the Care in the Community team had another excellent turnout on Community Sunday - which matched last year's record number of 25 jobs competed in the one day, serving a total of 17 households.

This year we saw another record beaten, with 68 volunteers turning out on the jobs and carrying out support roles on refreshments, cakes, sandwiches, and photography.

Again - a big thank you to all the members of the congregation who helped, on the jobs, and as support, by providing food and refreshments for the returning workers.

Care in Community programme during the year 2016/17.

Last year we trialled running the Care in the community as a scheduled event on every 3rd Saturday, with the hope that the congregation would be able set aside a known date to volunteer; it seems to have had the opposite effect to that intended, in terms of both the number of volunteers coming forward, and the amount of work being requested.

A further 10 jobs were carried out during the year in addition to those carried out on Community Sunday, down from 15 last year.

People requesting help don't want to wait an extra month or two if there aren't enough volunteers to carry out the requested work, or if they have just missed the event for that month...even though it is a volunteer service, they understandably expect a certain level and speed of service to their requests.

As such, I have reviewed the group and have reverted to an *ad hoc* arrangement. I need your help and prayers to kick-start this referral process again, and to set up a **pool of keen and active volunteers** again.

Community Sunday 21st May 2017

As we gear up for the main event this year I need you all to be thinking about people in Yaxley '**In real need**'; it is only through your '**quality referrals**' that we can give the quality of help and care we strive for to deserving cases.

As the eyes and ears of St Peter's in the community, I need you to be making these referrals.

If I don't have your 'pool of requests' it is very difficult to be selective; the number and quality of jobs is very much allocated on the basis of everyone being active on at least one job on the day - this may be multiple jobs at the same household.

Only through your help will I be able to look at the referral process and its interaction, possibly by limiting the number of jobs carried out for any individual household.

I truly feel we can expand the Lord's word through our deeds even further into the community, and look forward to continuing his work in the coming year(s).

**Andy James
Co-ordinator**

IMPAIRED SENSES GROUP

The Impaired Senses group has been running, in partnership with Deafblind Enablement, since December 2012. The aim has remained the same: to bring people with a hearing loss, Deaf, Blind, visually impairment, without speech, and deafblind people together from Yaxley and the surrounding areas, for conversation and fellowship.

The meeting has taken place every third Saturday in the month, (apart from August) from 2-4pm. The number of group members have decreased within the last year, with 11 sensory impaired people committed to coming to each meeting, with 9 regular dedicated volunteers and 10 ad hoc volunteers.

For the group to facilitate essential communication and guiding, we are seeking more volunteers (and drivers). Full training will be given.

The format of the meeting has not changed over the last year, and continues to be chatting/catching up with new and old friends over refreshments. Bethany (aged 13 years) is our Games Co-ordinator, and has had some fun quizzes, tactile games and our famous Domino Bingo. Volunteers act as scribes/note-takers due to assisting Braille users. We encourage members to learn different BSL signs (signing happy birthday each meeting) and every member of the group can use Deafblind Manual. Voice-over, deafblind manual and writing numbers on a white board are all used to aid communication.

We are very thankful to Jean & Jeff, members of the group, for organising the raffle, as this raises about £30-40 per meeting. These funds are used to pay towards the cost of the subsidised coach for the annual Hunstanton trip, and the annual Christmas party.

Norman sets the pitch as the leader for singing 3 hymns; the sound of all of us singing lifts the roof, and brings unity to the group. Margaret brailles the hymns for the group, and large-print copies are always available. Prayers at the end of the group are given by various group members.

In June, we celebrated the Queen's birthday, with everyone wearing red, white and blue, and on a cold windy day in September a BBQ was held at Debbie and Andy's house. Again, on a sunny day in July, our popular seaside outing was enjoyed in Hunstanton, with 27 people attending (this includes 4 new people). Fish and chips, sitting on the prom, playing on the beach, chatting and eating ice-cream, made a fantastic change for many of the group members.

A big 'thank you' to everyone for all their support, making the Impaired Senses group such a success.

Debbie James

ENCOUNTER

Encounter began in April 2016 with the aim of creating 'an informal space to think about life, faith and spirituality', particularly for those for whom traditional models of church might be inaccessible. Meeting on alternate Fridays, a typical morning involves people sharing conversation over good coffee and cake, and then watching a short film which leads into a time of discussion. A core group of about 15 people regularly attend with other occasional attenders.

We are very encouraged by how people are engaging with **Encounter**. It has provided a comfortable space for those from a range of backgrounds and faith perspectives to discuss openly and honestly, and to begin to make connections between God's story and their own. We have recently started to give people 'prayer bags' which include a short prayer activity they can do at home.

In October 2016 we started '*Encounter Extra*' which meets on alternate Wednesdays, and involves a chat around a bible story. It's been very encouraging to see attendees of **Encounter** connect with this, and we have some very interesting discussions! Since the new year, we have begun to host monthly 'Encounter brunches' to continue to build the **Encounter** community and to connect with wider families of **Encounter** attenders, who may not be able to be there at other times. So far these have been joyful times together, and have included interactive prayer activities which have been well received.

Please do pray for the continued development of **Encounter**. Give thanks for those who attend, for the space it has provided and for the committed team of volunteers who make it happen. Pray that it would continue to be a place where people can start or continue their journeys of discipleship. Pray that we would strike a good balance between welcoming new members, and deepening relationships with current attenders. Finally, pray that we would always be open to the promptings of the Spirit in how **Encounter** moves forward.

Mark Fuller – Pioneer Minister