

# St. Mark's Forest Gate Annual Reports 2019



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## Motto for 2019

**To everything there is  
a season, and a time  
for every purpose  
under heaven.  
Ecclesiastes 3: 1**

**God's Love at the Heart  
of the Community**



**St Mark's**  
Forest Gate



The Church of England  
in Essex and East London  
Diocese of Chelmsford

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# Wardens Team

When we all set out together on this journey almost a year ago, none of us were entirely sure what to expect. However, it soon became clear to us as a team that there were two things we could count on and celebrate - the Lord's constant and clear guidance and the prayers of our church family, and we cannot express enough our gratitude for these.

We are also grateful to all the members of St. Mark's who have served our family during the year, and to those who have so willingly taken on extra duties during the interregnum.

We have been privileged to learn so much about who we are as a church and a family, and as we have gained in understanding it has become clearer to us in our weekly meetings how to prepare the way for our new vicar.

While doing this we have tried above all to ensure we are all still able to minister to each other both spiritually and practically, and would like to thank everyone who has helped us do this in so many different ways.

We have deliberately not changed too much outwardly, as we believe it is part of our next vicar's role to set out the Lord's new vision for us. With help from outside and within the church we have been able to maintain the variety of services and activities that have always been a strength of St. Mark's, as well as introducing new features such as prayer walks and trying out some new kinds of worship, particularly on Sunday evenings.

We have, however, done much behind the scenes relating to exactly who we are as a family, what goes on at St. Mark's and how it happens, to present to our new vicar. This is not to try to persuade them that we as a church have got everything right, but rather to enable them quickly to see who and where we are right now, so that they can lead us on in our journey - maybe to places and in ways that we have not yet thought of.

We have also tried to separate things that we as a family can do from things that in the past were done by our vicar, so that our new vicar can concentrate fully on their spiritual work and lead us in ministering to each other and evangelising to the local area.

We have liaised closely with the deanery and the diocese, and have tried to keep everyone informed of developments and decisions. When there have been times when we have been uncertain as to how best to act, we have been grateful for the feedback members of our church family have given us.

We would like to thank our Archdeacon, Elwin Cockett, and our Area Dean, Jeremy Fraser, for all their prayer, advice and support, and especially for ensuring that there has always been someone available for us to lead our communion services. We would also like to extend our thanks to all our visiting ministers, and for the new insights into Anglican traditions they have brought us.

Two immediate challenges remain for us:

First, our financial income is not keeping up with our expenditure, and as you will see from the Treasurer's Report, if we do not address this the church will run out of money within the next year or so. It costs money to run St. Mark's on a day to day basis, but also after 32 years in our building some things will need replacing over the coming year, such as our boiler and the moving walls between the church and the hall, which are expensive items. While the PCC have looked at how we can cut running costs and have done so, we as a family also need to increase our financial giving wherever possible so as to ensure we can continue the Lord's work.

Second, there is an urgent need for people's time to serve each other willingly and faithfully. We are extremely grateful to everyone who has signed up to do this on a

rota basis or as and when necessary. However, we can never have enough people, and the more people who sign up, the more the work is shared out fairly and the more we know we can sustain it.

By now you will have read the ‘St. Mark’s & You’ booklet setting out everything that needs to be done, and you will have seen that some activities will need to be reduced or stopped if more people do not come forward to help out. Our prayer therefore is that before our new vicar starts, every member of our church family will have signed up for at least one activity in the ‘St. Mark’s & You’ booklet.

It is never easy to ask for more money or time from our church family, so please seek the Lord’s guidance as to what he is calling you to do.

Finally, despite the challenges, the Lord has taught us again and again this year to trust in his timing. Although we are all disappointed not to have appointed our new vicar yet, we can celebrate that the Lord has used this

experience to teach us and prepare us until he knows we are ready to move on, and he has certainly fulfilled his promise not to test us beyond what we can endure.

Interviews for our new vicar will be held again on Monday 20th May, and we know that every member of our church family will be praying fervently that the person the Lord has chosen will apply and be appointed. Once this happens – and it will be in the Lord’s time rather than ours – the next exciting stage of our journey will begin, and we must be ready for the changes it will bring.

In the meantime we must pray and wait with anticipation, remembering the words of our motto for this year:

To everything there is a season, and a time for every purpose under heaven. Ecclesiastes 3: 1

**Sharon Yates, Ellen Kemp,  
Mike Richardson, Ann Arnold,  
Charlotte Mouzer  
Wardens Team**

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# Churchwardens

We humbly thank God for this past year and for all the many blessings he has poured out upon the family of St. Mark’s.

This year of interregnum came as a surprise to us and we had to respond quickly to the challenges it presented! The formation of the Wardens Team has been a huge blessing to both of us. The support that Mike, Ann & Charlotte have all given along with their range of expertise and skills has been invaluable to assist us in ensuring the smooth running of the church. We extend our most sincere thanks for their hard work and commitment.

We have been fortunate to have been able to maintain our regular Sunday worship, both morning and evening, without too much

disruption and are grateful to all the ministers who have visited us to share the Word and lead our Holy Communion services. They have each brought their own particular tradition, style and expression of worship, which has widened our experience, enriched us and on occasion challenged us to evaluate our own tradition and expression. We were especially fortunate firstly to welcome our Area Dean Jeremy Fraser in November to lead a morning service and conduct baptisms by immersion in our pool and traditionally at the font, and then to welcome Bishop Stephen in December - when we shared a wonderful morning where five of our young people received their First Holy Communion after completing their pre-confirmation course.

The period of interregnum has encouraged our prayer life both individually and corporately. The early morning mid-week prayer has continued, and an evening hour of prayer was added as an encouragement to get more of us to pray together for our church and community. Though the numbers attending both of these times are fairly low, nonetheless those who come together have found a common bond and blessing from joining together in the presence of the Lord. In November we had a 24 hour prayer vigil ahead of the first round of interviews, and we thank the Lorne Road homegroup for all their work in setting this event up for us. We know that the Lord truly blessed that time and spoke clearly his way ahead for us through it. Then in February we held a prayer morning, which again was a fabulous time of blessing to those in attendance. During the year we held two prayer walks around the parish - both of which were wonderful times of prayer on the streets amongst those whom we seek to serve in the Lord's name. Please do make a point of joining us when we next go out on the streets to pray.

Our building continues to be used extensively, which means that those who care for it are always busy, with much to do in order to ensure that it is clean and safe for all users. To them our grateful thanks - we had an 'autumn clean' clearing out both inside and outside the building - a day of hard work but very rewarding! Thank you to those who helped us with this.

We had new carpet laid in the Meeting Room, Prayer Room and entrance lobby and, following gifts from two individuals, new easy chairs and bibles were purchased for the Meeting Room. New blinds were fitted to the south-facing windows in the hall to provide shade on sunny days and hopefully keep the hall a little cooler. The office computer was very old and beyond any reasonable updating and so a replacement was bought to coincide with the arrival of our new internet router, which now provides faster internet access for church use. Many thanks to Mike Richardson for setting these up for us.

In the summer of 2018 the quinquennial inspection of the building did not provide any nasty shocks but did highlight the age of our building and the need to look at replacing certain items. This was subsequently confirmed following boiler and movawalls maintenance checks. The boiler is now struggling to keep us warm and will definitely need replacing in the very near future - we await quotes on a replacement which will be smaller and more economical. Similarly, the movawalls at their yearly inspection only just passed the safety test and need replacing very soon; we have asked for a quote to replace the walls which form the Link Room, and although this will be costly, it is vital to our maintaining the flexibility of our wonderful building. The regular servicing of gas, electric and fire appliances was carried out as required.

The church's Log Book and Terrier have been maintained and are up to date.

In 1 Corinthians 12 we are reminded that we are all ONE BODY with many parts. This past year the BODY of Christ at St. Mark's has continued its work both within the church and out in the community - our prayer is that this will continue in the year ahead. But in order for this to be so, it means that we ALL must fulfil our part.

Maybe you know your role? Maybe you feel that your role is changing? Maybe you are discovering your role for the first time. Wherever, you fit in, there is a place for you to fulfil YOUR ministry in order to ensure that we are a healthy body - that we are ALL sharing the work together. Please pray about your role and share the load so that we may in unity build the Kingdom of God in this place, for the glory of Jesus his Son.

We join our prayers with yours that the Lord's chosen one will be with us very soon, fulfilling their role as our vicar - we anticipate their arrival with excitement and look ahead, hopefully knowing that the Lord's hand has been, is, and will continue to be upon us. Praise his holy name!

**Ellen Kemp & Sharon Yates**  
**Churchwardens**

# PCC

The PCC this year was composed of 10 elected members, the two churchwardens, two deanery synod representatives and one co-opted member.

As there were two vacancies, those of the vicar and one deanery synod representative, and as the church was beginning a period of interregnum, the PCC decided to co-opt two further members, bringing the total number of members to 17.

Usually the vicar chairs the PCC, so as the elected vice-chair, I took over as acting chair from May 2018.

Between May 2018 and March 2019 the PCC met nine times on Monday evenings from 7.45 pm until around 9.45 pm. Additionally, there was a Saturday morning workshop in June to gather ideas and material for the Parish Profile, and a special meeting in September to elect the two representatives for the interview panel and to sign off the Parish Profile. In September 2018 PCC members also attended a useful resource day organised by the diocese at the University of East London campus in Docklands.

As well as discussing the recruitment process for our new vicar and general matters relating to our church life, the PCC has considered the following matters over the past year:

- Addressing the deteriorating financial situation of St. Mark's, both in the short and long term
- Our budget for 2019 - 20
- The use of a legacy received in 2017

- The diocesan 'Serving with Accountability' framework regarding evangelism and spirituality
- The diocesan safeguarding framework, including online and face-to-face training sessions
- Youth work at St. Mark's

You may remember that prior to April 2018 all elected members of the PCC served for one year. To bring St. Mark's into line with the Church of England's preferred practice, a change was agreed at the annual general meeting in 2017 and implemented last year, with terms lasting for three years. This means that this year elections to the PCC will be held for four places, plus for the vacant Deanery Synod representative, who is also a member of the PCC. There is also one co-opted vacancy. Once a new vicar is appointed, the PCC will consist of 17 members if all places are filled.

PCC minutes are published on the board near the office. If you would like the PCC to consider anything, please look out in the notice sheet and the email news bulletin for how and when to do this. The PCC chair can also be contacted in church, by letter or by email at:  
[pcc-chair@stmarksforestgate.org.uk](mailto:pcc-chair@stmarksforestgate.org.uk).

The PCC members would like to thank the family of St. Mark's for their prayers during the year, and I in turn would like to thank the PCC members on behalf of the church family for their work over the past year.

**Mike Richardson**  
**Acting PCC Chair**

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## Did You Know?

Running St Mark's costs around £97 each month for every adult attendee.

Find out what this means for us in the Treasurer's Report starting on page 6

# Deanery Synod

The churches within our deanery are working together and seeking God's leading as the borough is rapidly changing. We have the challenge of serving many more households, as large building projects are appearing. The financial situation of a deficit facing the diocese will also shape the future pattern of churches.

We attended as a PCC a day designed by the diocese to resource and equip our PCC members.

A recent initiative has been the establishment of a group to support the ministry of older members of the congregations, particularly retired members.

Please continue to pray for your representatives and the Church in Newham.

**Janet Bone & Peter Arnold**  
**Deanery Synod Representatives**

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# Safeguarding

At the beginning of our interregnum it was decided to establish a Safeguarding Team, so Jane Ridout and Ian Thomson joined Ellen Kemp, the Parish Safeguarding Officer, to ensure there is always someone available to give advice and guidance.

In October 2018 the Church of England launched their new Safeguarding Policy, which suggested churches appoint safeguarding leads and introduced new guidance, procedures, training and support. They also said parishes should have a person who is a point of contact for any advice and support on domestic abuse. Barbara Lumsden has agreed to undertake this role. Therefore Barbara, Ellen, Jane and Ian are St. Mark's Safeguarding leads, agreed by the PCC.

We meet regularly and have informed members of the PCC and all who are involved

in working with our children and young people of the training they should undertake.

Notices are now in place in our building, and recruitment packs, information and guidance papers will be circulated in early May.

All who are involved in our children's and young people's work have completed the necessary forms, and there are currently 34 who have government disclosure and barring service (DBS) certification.

There have been no reportable incidents during the year.

**Ellen Kemp, Jane Ridout,**  
**Ian Thomson, Barbara Lumsden**  
**Safeguarding Leads**

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# Treasurer

Once again, I would like to start by thanking everyone who gave money – whatever the amount – to St. Mark's during 2018. At St. Mark's, like many Church of England parishes, we are totally dependent on the generosity of ordinary church members who contribute financially towards the running of the church. Without the money given to St. Mark's – whether by Parish Giving Scheme, monthly standing order, regular envelopes, or in the collection box – most of our work and activities would come to a stop.

In 2018 our total income was £185,461, and our total expenditure was £95,185. However, these figures include Vi Woollard's very generous legacy of £99,774 and the £2,032 which we spent from her legacy.

Without this legacy our income was £85,686 and we spent £93,154. Thus we spent £7,467 more than we received, which was funded from our diminishing reserves. This was the third year running in which we spent more than our income. **Put simply, our income is not keeping up with what it costs to run St Mark's.**

Our income is divided into Restricted and Unrestricted Funds. Unrestricted Funds are money which can be used for any legally permissible purpose, whereas Restricted Funds are money which is given for a specific purpose and can therefore only be used for that purpose.

In addition, the PCC decided that Vi's legacy should be treated as a Designated Fund – in other words to be spent on specific purposes by which we could remember Vi – rather than being treated as general income.

The bulk (85%) of our normal income is money which is given to the church by you and me. Including the tax refund which we received in respect of money given under the Gift Aid scheme, this amounted to £81,611 for Unrestricted Funds.

The other substantial items of income were £3,311 to be passed on to specified charities and £764 for building maintenance.

Excluding money given to St. Mark's to pass on to specific charities, we gave away £9,165 in 2018, including money given to support Asha, the Asian Friendship Centre, Christian Solidarity Worldwide, ELAM Ministries, Faith in Schools, the London City Mission, the New Way Project, Newham Youth for Christ, Tear Fund, and the Mugoma Trust.

We spent £34,067 on the church's wider ministry i.e. the diocese and deanery, almost all of which (£34,007) was the Family Purse which we paid to Chelmsford Diocese.

Expenditure on youth work was £14,165.

We spent £7,536 on utility bills (compared to £6,828 in 2017, £7,555 in 2016 and £8,753 in 2015).

Repairs to the building and fittings came to £6,842.

Almost everything we do as a church costs money – heating, water, rubbish collection, insurance, repairs to the building, paper, photocopying, phones, youth work, Sunday services, publicising Easter, Christmas and Harvest, training, Sunday tea and coffee, being part of the diocese – these all cost money.

As I said earlier, last year was the third year running in which we spent more than our income – we are spending on average £7,500 more each year than our income, and we are likely to overspend by at least that much in 2019.

We have some money in reserve from previous years, but **if we carry on like this we are going to run out of money either next year or in 2021.**

There are a number of reasons for this gap between our income and our spending:

- Many of our costs increase each year
- Over the last few years several people who used to give regularly to St. Mark's have moved away or died
- Many people who give regularly to St. Mark's are giving the same amount now as five or ten years ago

The only ways we can deal with this problem are:

- We could increase our income – but there are very few grants or similar available to us
- We could reduce our spending – but nearly all of our spending is for things we cannot reduce (e.g. the diocesan share), or would not want to reduce (e.g. heating or youth work)
- Or we somehow achieve a combination of these

The PCC has looked at how we can narrow the gap between our expected income and spending:

- As a church we are going to talk more about money than we have in the past, and how giving is a Christian discipline
- We have considered the Diocese of Chelmsford's Christian Giving Strategy and how we can apply this to St Mark's
- Orange Gift Aid envelopes have been put out on the back of chairs in church,

as a reminder of the Gift Aid facility and of the need to support God's work at St. Mark's financially

- A donations box is now available at Parent & Toddler sessions three times a week, and this raised £347 between January and March
- Existing standing order givers have been contacted with information about using the Parish Giving Scheme (PGS) instead of standing orders, as PGS has a number of advantages
- We have registered with Easyfundraising
- We are limiting the times when the central heating is on

However, I would stress that this is a problem for all of us, not just the PCC.

I will finish this report with two reminders to everyone:

Firstly, that running St Mark's costs around £97 each month for every adult attendee. If that £97 does not come from me, then someone else needs to contribute £194.

Secondly, that the Church of England's recommendation is that Christians should give 5% of their disposable income to their local church. If we all did that, then that would certainly resolve our financial problems.

**Peter Arnold**  
**Treasurer**

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# Accounts 2018

Our annual accounts can be found [here](#).



# Electoral Roll

As of 30th April 2018 our electoral roll stood at 127 members. Since that time:

- 5 people have moved away from the area
- 1 person has passed away
- 3 people no longer attend St. Mark's

The Church of England stipulates that all churches must renew their electoral rolls every six years, and 2019 is a year when this had to be undertaken.

As of 7th April 2019, the date the new roll became effective, the number stands at 94 members:

- 13 people joined the electoral roll for the first time
- 81 people were on the previous register

- 47 people live in the parish
- 47 people live outside the parish

We are awaiting responses from a number of people. When we hear from them we will add them to the Electoral Roll when it opens again on 29th April, and we will add new members as and when they wish to join.

The electoral roll will be revised every year in March, before our Annual Review and Celebration, and again in November prior to reporting our numbers to the diocese.

**Mike Richardson**  
**Membership, Electoral Roll**  
**& Data Officer**

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## Church Groups & Organisations

All our groups and organisations were asked to to discuss and choose one word relating to something the Lord had shown or taught them over the previous year.  
This is what they said ...

