

**ST MARK'S CHURCH FOREST GATE**

**Annual General Meeting**

**2016**

**On**

**Sunday 24<sup>th</sup> April, 2016 at 4.00pm**

***"We want to see Jesus. Can you help us?"***

***John 12 v20-21***

## **Vicars Report**

Again I am so encouraged reading through all the reports and seeing all the different parts of the church at work. There are 42 reports and still there are new groups beginning; 130 people are on the electoral roll plus 20 or so people on the fringe of our church and it is especially great to see so many families and young children. Our numbers are growing and a large part of this is due to you who are committed to working in our church and sharing your faith.

We said farewell to Sarah and thank her for all her work she did with our young people. We then said 'hello' to Dan who is our new youth worker and has been with us for 8 months, please support him with your love and prayers.

We currently have 8 mid week Homegroups/Bible Studies that cater for 40-50 members of our church and I continually pray for the day when all on the electoral roll attend either a Homegroup/Bible study. It is at these groups, I believe, we can share day to day difficulties, support and encourage each other in a more specific and personal way, and build up our spiritual walk with God. So if you are reading this and do not go to a Homegroup/Bible Study please consider trying one out!

Both our Christmas and Easter Services were well attended and I received a lot of positive feedback about them; as I have also for our 'All Age' and 'Messy Church' services. God is doing wonderful work in our church, so we might think we are weak and ineffective sometimes but God's Will is being done through you.

We continue to keep our connections in the community by having barbeques that are open to everyone; Carol Singing at the Slate Yard; Pentecost Party in the Park; Forest Gate Festival and our Good Friday Walk of Witness. So many opportunities for us to reach out to our neighbours and show them the love of God.

I continue to meet regularly with the church leaders in the area and our Joint Services have been a blessing to all who come along.

We welcomed our Bishop, Peter, to our Confirmation Service when 5 people were confirmed and he will be coming again on 26<sup>th</sup> June to preach.

I want to thank Roger and Tom for wisdom and encouragement when they help out with the preaching and also Samson who is training with us hoping to do fulltime ministry in the Church of England.

I also want to thank Peter our very efficient Treasurer and Ellen and Sharon our church wardens, for all the hard work much of which goes on behind the scenes.

Lastly thank you to everyone in St Mark's because of **you** we shine in the darkness and God is praised and glorified. God Bless you.

**Pete**

#### **Treasurer's Report**

I am pleased to report that in 2015 our income was £5,171 more than our expenditure. This is much more than I had expected, and was mainly due to a very large (£10,000) one-off gift received towards the end of the year, and also to spending less than originally planned on repairs and other work on the building.

As in previous years, I want to thank everyone who gave money – whatever the amount – to St Marks in 2015. Without the money which is given to St Marks – whether by monthly standing order, by regular envelopes, or in the collection box – most of our work would come to a stop; thus, without the money given to St Marks we would:

- Have a cold church every Sunday;
- Not have a paid youth worker;
- Not be able to repair or redecorate our building;
- Not be able to pay our Family Purse to the diocese;
- Not have a harvest barbecue or other community events;
- Be unable to publicise our Easter, Harvest, and Christmas events.

Our total income was just under £105,000, and 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.

The bulk of our Unrestricted Funds 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 £79,643 for Unrestricted Funds.

The other substantial items of income were £13,147 for the parish holiday and £3,579 to be given to specified charities; this includes £1,787 for Mugoma.

Excluding money given to St Marks to pass on to specific charities, we gave away £5,265 in 2015, including money given to support Asha, the Asian Friendship Centre, Newham Youth for Christ, Christian Solidarity Worldwide, and Mugoma.

We spent £31,263 on the church's wider ministry i.e. the diocese and deanery, almost all of which (£31,203) was the Family Purse which we paid to Chelmsford Diocese.

Expenditure on youth work was £12,672.

Church expenses on utility bills was £8,753, and on repairs to the building and fittings was £3,985.

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

Looking ahead to 2016, our expenditure is likely to exceed our income as we expect to spend significantly more money on the building and the Family Purse which we pay to Chelmsford Diocese has again increased.

I would like to remind everyone about using the Gift Aid Scheme, because it is so very beneficial to the church. It really is money for nothing from the government – and it does not cost you a penny more! Gift Aid is extremely simple and flexible to use, and means, for example, that if you give £10 per week for a year, St Marks will receive £130 from the government.

You can either give on a one-off basis using the orange envelopes, or give a regular monthly amount. You must pay UK income tax in order to use the Gift Aid scheme. If you want to know more about how to give using Gift Aid, please have a word with me.

**Peter Arnold**

### **St. Mark's Magazine**

There have been 11 editions of the magazine in 2015, and 350 copies are printed each month.

We try to make the magazine a witness for the church, and hope we have got a good mixture of material that will cater to a variety of taste, that is both interesting and has a Christian content. We have continued to make use of Parish Pump, which is a website run by the Church of England News Service to provide materials for church magazines.

I am always happy to receive material or photographs to put in the magazine, or if you have any ideas of what we could include to broaden the content. I would like to thank those who have contributed material this last year; it does make my job a lot easier.

Special thanks go to Pete for doing the printing, and to Anne who helps to fold and staple the magazine, anyone interested in helping out with this would be welcome, and to those who distribute each edition locally. Also thanks to Glenda who mails out magazines to distant and former members of St Marks.

The magazine is part of the communication used by the church and we are working with the communication group to ensure we are consistent in the information that is produced.

Material for the magazine can be left in the church office or emailed to [magazine@stmarksforestgate.org.uk](mailto:magazine@stmarksforestgate.org.uk).

**Ann Arnold**

### **Church Wardens Report**

Once again we begin our report by giving thanks to the Lord for His faithfulness to us His family at St. Marks Church during this past year.

Our Church Council has met regularly throughout the year to ensure that we fulfil our legal responsibilities as well as ensuring our building and finances are sound. Items for discussion have ranged from the Bishop's 'Serving with Accountability' questions to the admission of children to Holy Communion. We thank them along with our Assistants for their support and work this past year.

Building wise it has been a fairly quiet year; the annual checks on electric, gas, fire appliances and the boiler have all been completed and basic maintenance done including repair to the masonry walls in the hall. The new noticeboard and signage were put up in Lorne Road and provide an attractive welcome to all who use the building. The plans for the Prayer Room have been submitted to the Diocese for their approval and we hope that very soon work will begin on this project. Two major projects are still pending; the renewal of a large section of our roof and refurbishment of the kitchen. We anticipate that both of these will be completed within this next year. Please pray for wise decisions as we undertake all of these improvements to our building which is used extensively every week.

As well as going out into the community we have welcomed many into our building for many differing reasons; the harvest barbecue which was well attended, jumble sales, coffee mornings, the Forest Gate Art Trail and a new venture as a Polling Station. All these 'one off' events and the regular weekly activities allow us opportunity to show the love of Christ in a practical and tangible manner.

It is a privilege to work alongside Pete our vicar and we thank him for his ministry to us and pray for the Lord to bless him and his family.

Working through the Bishop's questions he set PCCs made us think that we should be ensuring the church operates with continuity. So we would like to suggest: -

1. We do as some churches have done and amend the length of term of service for one of the Churchwardens so that in future one would be appointed annually (as now) and the other appointed every two or three years.  
This would ensure 2 new wardens are not appointed at the same time as we were.
2. That we set up a method of working with/ shadowing those in leadership roles (Succession Planning). This would mean emergencies would be covered and post holders when wanting to step down would not have to worry about who would take over. It would also help people get experience and feel more confident to take up roles especially the more complex e.g. Treasurer.

We plan to have a discussion at the AGM and, if you agree, vote so point 1 could start next year.

Looking back and taking stock is often valuable and is particularly so for us as the Body of Christ here in Forest Gate as we see how the Lord has been at work; enriching, healing, upholding, nurturing, loving, providing, guiding, caring, and protecting. Our living God who is indeed with us always has been at work, is at work and will be at work in us and through us – we just have to allow Him. So our prayer today is that the Lord will continue to bless us and we share with you the words in Colossians 3:17 -

‘And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him. ‘

**Ellen Kemp & Sharon Yates**

### **Prayer Meetings in the Church**

8 – 10 people meet regularly at 7.00am – 7.30am Wednesday morning to pray for the needs of our church and beyond.

We pray for those who have asked for prayer in our prayer corner and also for those in our Daily Prayer Church Booklet. We also have a time of open prayer as we pray for our church and community.

Prayer is the foundation and backbone of the church it is the powerhouse.

**We also have a prayer meeting at 7.00pm – 8.00pm on the 1<sup>st</sup> Wednesday of the month.**

Please join us if you can.

**Pete Stow**

**Getting Involved**

Four times a year we invite those who are new to our church but who have been coming regularly. We explain to them 'how the church works'; what goes on and how they could possibly be involved if they are ready to do so.

**Pete Stow**

### **Home Groups**

Our group has been meeting together for a year now. We gather at 8pm, have a drink and then spend an hour or so discussing a passage from the bible or an issue. Through this we hope to learn more about God, develop our faith and encourage each other. We have looked at Philippians, part of Romans, a series on being Christians in the local community and are currently looking at the Creeds.

We finish with prayer time and try to record our prayer needs. We have been heartened that God hears our requests and has given us so many answers.

**Ian and Julie**

This year we have continued to support and encourage each other through the different challenges that life has brought. It is this opportunity to share our struggles (and joys) and to pray for each other regularly, that feels such an important part of what home group is about. We have studied a number of different subjects and themes through the year and are currently looking at John's gospel.

**Geoff & Ros**

We still meet on a Thursday evening, even though Karen and Graham have gone to Burma and our numbers are low.

We have been using a booklet which goes through the Bible chronologically, in important segments, looking at the bigger and smaller picture of God's narrative. We read the Bible, discuss questions and pray for each other.

**Alex and Karen**

We meet at Shanthi's home and look at a Bible passage most weeks. We went through Romans at the start of the year, then a summary of the Old Testament and a focus on Elijah and Elisha. This often leads to a discussion about wider issues. We also share needs and pray together. Others are welcome.

The Monday home group meets at the home of Peter and Ann. Since September we have been studying St John's Gospel but took a break for an Advent course called The Coming of the Saviour. We then continued with St John until our Lent course, entitled Jesus' Final Week. We are continuing with St John but intend to use the series called Pilgrim: The Creeds, for a few weeks during the summer term, which some groups used during Lent.

**We are: Peter, Ann, Lynne, Glenda, Anne S, Jean, Joan and Jane.**

Our numbers vary but 5 – 10 regularly come along on a Wednesday lunchtime. We have a light lunch of soup, bread, tea and coffee and this is followed by an interactive, lively bible study with lots of discussions on scripture and everyday topics.

If you are around during the day or work close by do come along and join us.

**Pete Stow**

Sheila kindly welcomes us to her house on a Thursday afternoon and we have a bible study which I lead. We are making our way through the New Testament. We have a time of prayer, tea, refreshments and fellowship. Please join us if you are free on a Thursday afternoon.

**Pete Stow**

A small group of 6 meet regularly at the vicarage on a Thursday evening. At the moment we are looking at Genesis. We will be doing Bishop Steve Cotterall's Bible Study called 'Pilgrim', looking at the Ten Commandments, The Lord's Prayer, The Beatitudes and others.

We support, encourage and pray for each other. All are welcome to join us.

**Pete Stow**



## **Food Bank**

For over a year St Marks has been donating to the Newham Christian foodbank outlet at Woodgrange Baptist church. Bruce Stokes who runs the outlet has requested household items, so that is what we focus on. We collect two different items each month (details can be found in the news sheet and the magazine) and these are placed in the designated box outside the office. I then take them to the food bank outlet.

Bruce has said how grateful he is for our support. Thank you to all who donate. Please keep doing so!

## **Julie Thomson**

## **“LADIES WOT LUNCH”**

Every four or five weeks Barbara Lumsden, Julie Thomson and myself try and make contact with all ladies in the church that are free to meet for lunch. We choose a different day of the week, to enable part time workers and those with regular commitments in the week, to attend. Our venue is the Golden Fleece, the prices are quite reasonable and we do get a special discount. Lifts are available - just let us know. We have had four or five of these lunches so far with 14 to 21 of us in number. Let us take over the whole of the Golden Fleece next time.

## **Karen Paxton**

## **E7 WOOLCRAFT**

We meet on a Thursday morning from 10-11.30am during school term time, for knitting, crochet, refreshments and chat. Some new people have recently joined us, and they seem to particularly appreciate the opportunity to meet with others.

## **Ros White**

## **Communications Team**

We are responsible for ensuring information is shared within the church, as well as for spreading the gospel in the local area and further afield. We do this through publishing the church notice sheet each week and the magazine each month, and through regular updates of the noticeboard outside the church, our website ([www.stmarksforestgate.org.uk](http://www.stmarksforestgate.org.uk)), our Facebook page (St. Mark's Forest Gate) and our Twitter feed (@stmarks\_e7). We also produce flyers and posters for church events.

Please speak to one of us if you have any feedback or would like details of any of the above, or email [stmarkscomms@gmail.com](mailto:stmarkscomms@gmail.com).

**Ann Arnold, Christine Brown, Helen Palmer, Mike Richardson**

## **Listening Ear**

We are available in church on Mondays from 10.00 to 12.00 to listen to anything anyone would like to say. This may be something that's worrying them or someone they know, or a request for practical advice such as how to access council services online. Often people find that simply talking can really help.

We can often also provide specific information or refer people to other agencies that can help further. Everything is confidential and people can choose to talk to a female or male member of the team, or to more than one person if they wish. We also pray with people if they would like to.

We are open to members of St. Mark's, their families and friends and to the local community.

However, you do not need to have something on your mind to join us – do feel free to drop in any time during the two hours for a cup of tea and a biscuit.

**Barbara Lumsden, Karen Paxton, Mike Richardson, Pete Stow, Ian Thomson, Julie Thomson**

## **Audio-Visual Support**

We hope that the sound and data projector continue to enhance the services in the church, and that we are able to provide material that benefits the congregation and helps our worship and sharing during the services.

During the year we have upgraded the software on the computer which has improved the quality of the images.

Currently there are only three of us doing the rota for data projector; and two for the sound desk, both would benefit from more people joining in with the rota, so that we can continue to use the systems at all Sunday morning services.

**Ann Arnold**

## **Mornington Hall**

Our dedicated team of volunteers take a service a Mornington Hall on the first Sunday of each month. The residents enjoy singing hymns, listening to a Bible reading and hearing a short message. But perhaps the part they enjoy most is the informal chat we have with them afterwards. They enjoy conversation with us, and love human contact. At Christmas, Easter and Harvest we usually give them a small gift and the Scramblers make seasonal cards for them, which are greatly appreciated. If you want to share Jesus' love with other in a practical way, do feel free to join our team.

**Annette, Roger, Jane, Wendy, Elizabeth P, Helen, Kathy, Ann, Glenda, June, Elisabeth A**

## **Jumble Sales**

Three Jumble Sales are held every year – October, February or March and May or June. In 2015 we made about £1,088. Sales are a good way of recycling goods and making money at the same time. After a sale leftover items are given to other charities so that they will also benefit. (Ann has also sold leftover items on e-bay and the proceeds have gone into church funds).

We are in need of help at these events. Are you able to give up a couple of hours of your time on a Saturday afternoon once, twice or three times a year?

Sales bring in customers from all over the borough – people come regularly and always ask for the date of the next one.

We have refreshments – tea, coffee and home cakes and we are often thanked for a “nice afternoon out, when is the next one?”

A big “thank you” to the helpers who come along each time. Will you be able to count yourself in as a member of the team in 2016. The next sale is on 18<sup>th</sup> June 2016.

## **Elizabeth Palmer**

### **Coffee Mornings**

Coffee mornings usually take place on the 1<sup>st</sup> Friday in the month (except August). All money raised goes to the charity concerned. In the last year £1300 has been raised for a variety of charities. Some of the toddlers come regularly with the parents/carers.

I am very grateful to Elizabeth and Wendy for setting up and running the toddler room and to Ellen, Kathy and Jill who help to set up and run the main hall. Also to Wendy and Flo who bake a cake each month. If anyone else would like to bake a cake/cakes all contributions would be gratefully received!

## **Helen Palmer**

### **Tuesday Fellowship**

Although few in number, we meet every week on a Tuesday evening and alternate the venues on a rota basis. We play board games and enjoy an evening of fellowship. We would welcome anyone who might like to come along and join us.

## **Elizabeth Palmer**

### **Nifty Fifties**

It is now 24 years since the Nifty-Fifties Club began. Although members are now very few, we continue to enjoy meeting on Friday afternoons, We have various interesting and educational subjects, followed by the popular Scrabble games. During last year we met twice at the Golden Fleece for a lunch and a Christmas dinner. Most of all we enjoy our fellowship together. Ages now range between 70 and 95 years old. Many thanks to Elizabeth for her valuable support, and help from the members.

### **Flo Cobain**

### **St Mark's Players**

Our number are low but we try to meet regularly on Wednesday evenings to practice songs which we will be able to use at any shows we may do. We took part in the "Dickens's Evening" in 2015 and hope to put on an evening's entertainment in a few months time.

For further information please see Helen Palmer.

### **Elizabeth Palmer**

### **Flower Guild**

The flowers in the church are provided by the Flower Guild which pays for them with donations from members of the congregation. If you appreciate fresh flowers in the church perhaps you would think about contributing regularly, giving a one off donation or providing flowers on dates of your own choice in memory of relatives, commemorating special occasions (birthdays, anniversaries, etc).

At the moment funds are low! Flowers are bought from donations given and not from church funds. There used to be a list of about 30 members but now there are under 12 so there is an urgent need for more members and donations at any time (an ideal amount is £2 a month). A flower rota is on the main notice board in the foyer – please sign it if you would like to provide flowers on specific dates, or see me if you want to make a donation.

### **Elizabeth Palmer**

## **Child Protection**

As I anticipated last year there have been yet more changes during this year which makes keeping up to date quite a task.

A new category of Church Charity Trustee has been introduced and there have been changes to what is classed as Regulated Activity resulting in all involved with children and young peoples work requiring once again to be DBS checked.

This means we currently have 34 members who have current checks. What we must do this year in to ensure everyone had completed training.

**Ellen Kemp**

## **Communication Support**

We are available each Sunday morning to give a welcome to the deaf members of St. Marks and have continued to provide access to the morning worship through communication support. This is done with written notes, pictures, gesture and sign language.

During this year there was an opportunity to attend a Deaf Awareness workshop which was open to all. This gave time for both the Deaf and hearing at St, Marks to share experiences and learn some more about communication skills.

It is a challenge to cover each week. We encourage you to consider if this is a role you could take up for the coming year.

**Dawn, Miranda, Clare**

## **Cradle Roll**

Children on the Cradle Roll are children who have been baptized or dedicated in St. Mark's up to their 5<sup>th</sup> birthday. They are each sent a card on behalf of the church on their birthday, at Easter and at Christmas until the Christmas after their 5<sup>th</sup> birthday. However if they are members of our church family (attend Creche/Scramblers/Sunday club) then they will continue to receive cards until they go to Secondary School. At present there are 20 children on the Cradle Roll and an extra 19 children who also receive cards.

**Helen Palmer**

## **Crèche**

Crèche is for babies up to the age of 3 years and takes place during the Sunday morning service. We aim to give parents the opportunity to go into the service knowing their babies are looked after in a safe and happy environment.

However, recently we have only had enough helpers to have one person available each week which is not ideal.

I am standing down from crèche at this AGM so if you feel you could help in crèche or co-ordinate it then please talk to me. In common with everyone working with children at St Mark's you need to have a DBS check completed and attended child protection training.

Thank you to everyone who helps in crèche and please pray for the babies and youngest children in our church family as well as their parents.

**Alison Aston**

## **Messy Church**

Messy Church has been running for some years now with a small team of planners and a larger team of volunteers who make it happen. We try and have 3 or 4 Messy churches a year, often linked to major festivals or events. They happen on a Sunday afternoon from 4-5.15pm approx. It is open to all ages but in practice it appeals most to families with young children, often those who have come to the Parent and Toddler group. We hope to engage those who come with something of the gospel message in a relaxed and fun environment. There is an emphasis on craft as well as a short time of worship and presentation of a simple Christian message. We always end with the 'Grace' and refreshments.

Lots of good conversations happen during the afternoon and often there are quite a few dads with their children. Numbers vary from 30 to over 60.

If you like craft or chatting to people and communicating your love for Jesus with people then please volunteer to help.

Please pray for us as the planning team, that we continue to have the energy and enthusiasm to carry on as well as come up with creative ways to communicate God's love.

Thanks to all the volunteers who come and help set up, man craft tables and clear up at the end. We couldn't do it without you!

**Alison, Charlotte and Sharon**

## **Scramblers**

Despite several of our little ones moving on to the next group this year we still have 12 on roll with an average weekly attendance of 6 and an age range from 2 – 5 years.

We meet in the meeting room during morning services using a variety of table top and construction toys, puzzles etc together with a large selection of Children's Bible story books. We always have a craft activity, usually related to the Bible story which is part of the Scripture Union Bubbles programme. We have a mid session break for prayer and refreshments. When there is a Communion service we join the congregation for the Lord's Prayer and a blessing at the altar rail and for celebratory services we join at appropriate times.

My thanks go to all those who help me so faithfully each week, without that help we could not run this group, especially putting out the toys. As I am getting older I am not as mobile as I was and am grateful for extra help.

If you feel that you would like to help with or even lead these little ones please see me or Pete.

**Anne Stevenson**

## **Junior Sunday School**

We have five regular leaders for the 5 to 10 age group: Sharon, Charlotte, Yvonne, Kathy and Jane with a number of helpers to give us a third pair of hands. We have seen the group really increase this year and regularly have 20 children attending so it has been very helpful to have the assistance of Bola, Shanti, Julie, Alison, Jessica, Bethany and Luke. We follow a Scripture Union programme which takes account of the church's year with both NT and OT stories. We do as many practical activities as we can with the children.

**Jane Ridout**

## **The Children's Society**

The box collections from St Marks raised £393.10 during 2014/15. Thank you very much to all those of you who regularly collect small change to fill up a box. It is always surprising what the end total amounts to as we work together. The Children's Society does excellent work throughout the country and especially in London and is always very grateful for the money that we raise. Please continue to pray for the work of the Society and for God's blessing upon those who devote their lives to it. Do contact me if you'd like to have a box and please start bringing them in for opening from now till the end of June.

**Jane Ridout**

## **Parent and Toddler Club**

We welcome all parents/carers and their children who want to come to any or all of the four sessions we run every week in term time.

Parent/carers appreciate being welcomed with a drink and feeling supported and cared for. For the children it becomes a familiar place where they can play and make friends.

From the numbers who are coming, the group is meeting the need of people to come together to find mutual support in the challenges they face in the care of their children, at the same time it creates an opportunity for us to express the love of Christ in a simple practical way.

Thank you to everyone who has helped us to keep going during the past year. We do need more people to come and work with us in all the sessions. Pop in sometime and see what we do maybe you will feel you want to join us.

## **Wendy and the Team**

### **Youth Work**

At St Mark's we run 4 youth groups a week, working with young people in school year 3 (age 7) to school year 13 (age 18). Our Tuesday Club is for those in school years 3 to 6 and we have been looking at various bible passages over the past 8 months including the fruits of the spirit, Jesus' life and parables and have just started looking at bible characters throughout the old testament. Tuesday Group, which is for those in school years 7 to 13 has been well attended by young people from various faiths and backgrounds. We have looked at Identity, current events and several topics related to life and faith. In our Thursday Group (for those in school years 7 to 13) we have explored what it means to be a Christian, we have recently looked at the spiritual gifts and even been able to practise some of them. In November we saw 5 of the young people get confirmed and make that declaration of faith to the church. The final group is our Sunday Morning group (for those in school years 6 to 9), we have been studying various passages in the bible and have recently finished a series on Ephesians, looking at the love God and what that means for us.

It has been a great 8 months with the St Mark's Youth and that is largely down to our volunteers that help the groups to run. So Thank-you to all those who have helped out and are continuing to do so. We would love to grow our team of volunteers to ensure we can deliver the best youth work possible so if you are interested in getting involved please do not hesitate to sign up. Feel free to contact me at 07505 722 471 or [dan@stmarksforestgate.org.uk](mailto:dan@stmarksforestgate.org.uk) or grab me at church for chat if you would like to find out more.

**Dan Jeffery**



## **Mugoma Health Centre**

The Mugoma Health Centre in north-west Tanzania is planned as part of the work of the Kagera Diocese and the Murgwanza mission hospital. It is intended to provide services to an area remote from the main hospital.

Following roofing of the building, the next phase of the building is windows, doors, plastering and wiring. Thanks to the generous donations of the church and many at St Marks and other friends, we have raised funds for this phase. Our Tanzanian partners send thanks for these funds, and have put the building work in hand.

We also value the wide range of other giving, encouragement and practical support of St Marks members, including the Forest Run, Dickens evening in January, the 20s event, and supporting Ciaran's London to Brighton run!

We hope to raise funds during 2016 for a final phase of construction to complete the work. We also hope to visit the project in October, and to update on our return.

**Ciaran Joyce, Chris Aston,**

## **Pastoral Team**

The Pastoral Team was set up by the PCC to consider 'pastoral care' issues in the church. It has met every 2-3 months. It comprises Pete, home group reps and others – Wendy, Jane, Sheila, Ros, Elizabeth P, Karen P, Julie, Dan and Chris.

The church shares care and encouragement informally in many ways, and we are all grateful for Pete's care for us. The team also seeks to make and keep informal links with members and those associated with the church. This includes those new to the church, occasional visitors and those not in regular groups. 'Getting to know St Marks' sessions have also been offered for those new to the church.

We would like all members of the church family to feel valued and cared about. If you have not seen someone for a while then you could give them a ring or knock, or have a word with Pete. If he cannot visit, there is now a small team of visitors who he can call on. Or if you would like to talk to someone yourself, speak to Pete. You can find contact details of other members through the Electoral Roll list. The Prayer Diary also shows those who worship at St Marks, so we can all play a part in knowing and remembering others in the church.

**Chris Aston**

## **Persecuted Church**

Prayer for the persecuted church takes place on the second Sunday evening of the month. We meet together to remember fellow believers who are in trouble because of their faith in Christ.

We use news of current situations which help us focus our prayers on events that are happening in specific countries and to individual Christians.

It isn't easy to read the news items that inform us of what our brothers and sisters are going through in unprovoked attacks, and injustices and imprisonment, but it's our duty and our privilege to use the mighty weapon of prayer to stand with them in their suffering and in their stand for Christ. We also pray for those who are persecuting the church.

As we stand with Christ for his persecuted ones we ourselves are strengthened and challenged to follow him more closely as well.

## **Wendy Tandy**

### **Electoral Roll**

The Electoral Roll lists all those who are full members of St Marks. Membership of the Electoral Roll is necessary in order to be able to vote at the AGM or to stand for some roles. It is also a way of expressing commitment to the church and its mission.

At time of writing there are 129 on the Electoral Roll, 74 within the parish and 55 outside it. This is an increase of 6 on last year. Any further change will be reported to the AGM.

## **Chris Aston**

### **Banner Group**

All of us continue to enjoy making and refurbishing the church's banners.

Our biggest piece of work this year was the door set for the beatitudes, and we enjoyed making a beach hut summer banner with some bunting. We were also able to join with Faith in Schools to provide a craft activity as part of an Easter Experience, where we were able to share our faith with a multi ethnic group of schoolchildren

We have also made and sold some craft items to raise some funds for the group – although most of the material is donated, some of the haberdashery is quite expensive.

We hope that our work has enhanced your worship, we make them to glorify God and to share his message with the many groups that use our church.

**Joan, Glenda, Linda, Ann, Lynne, Valerie**

## **Brownies**

Brownies began the year doing activities for the World Thinking Day badge, this included looking at Girl Guiding from a worldwide perspective and problem-solving in groups.

Also by popular demand the Brownies performed an Easter show for the local Mornington Hall care home, after a very successful Christmas Carol show in December.

We have also recently arranged an activity day in Chigwell Row for the girls which will include water zorbing and games.

New Brownies will be making their promise soon at a "Hawaii Themed Night", and every girl is encouraged to keep demonstrating the key Brownie elements.

In the near future, the girls will also be doing Father's Day and various art activities.

**Andrea**

### **5<sup>th</sup> Forest Gate Guides**

Our numbers have ranged from 10 to 14 guides and one senior throughout the year. Our activities have included Code of Conduct, Space ship, Go for It Teamwork, Pamper Night, Firework Night, International Evening, Thinking Day, Electronics, Gardening, Independent Living Badge, Easter Egg decoration/hunt and a Film Night.

Guides are encouraged to work as a team and plan their own activities.

Four girls went to the Big Gig, a concert at Wembley just for Girl Guides and three girls attended the Look Wider event at Gilwell Park. We are planning a weekend camp in July which has many outside activities.

Several guides received Jack Petchey awards. We are also now looking for a new adult helper at guides.

**Catherine Wilson and Helen Palmer**

### **Traidcraft (Gifts and Jewellery)**

Created gifts ceased trading last year and I now sell jewellery and accessories through Traidcraft. So Peter Arnold sells food and household items and I sell anything else. I will continue to sell my Created stock at reduced prices alongside new stock from Traidcraft.

**Helen Palmer**

### **Traidcraft**

As in previous years, during 2015 the St Marks Traidcraft stall was open on Sunday mornings after the monthly family services and at the Christmas Fayre.

We sold over £1,600 of fairly-traded goods from Traidcraft in 2015; this was nearly £300 more than in 2014, which is encouraging.

We aim to give everyone an opportunity to put our Christian faith into practice by buying from a selection of fairly-traded foods, goods made from recycled paper and Christmas cards. Buying fair trade goods benefits the producers who receive a decent share of the purchase price, plus good conditions of employment, educational opportunities for their children, and a premium which the producers can choose how to invest in their community.

We can supply a copy of the Traidcraft catalogue to anyone who would like one, and we can order any item in the catalogue for you. Please ask us if you would like a copy of the current Traidcraft catalogue.

**Peter and Ann Arnold**

### **Music Group**

The music group meet on Tuesday at 8pm. We spend our evening rehearsing old and new songs and we regularly have times of open and led worship. We pray each week for God to lead us and equip us to make God known through sung worship. Recently it seems that we have been challenged to work on song-writing skills which hopefully the whole church will be able to engage in. We've got a lot to learn but by God's grace He will lead us on in His ways.

**Phil Ridaut**

### **Men's Group**

The Men's Group is a very informally organised gathering of the men of St. Marks. We have enjoyed a handful of evenings together which have included a visit to the 'Global Buffet' and a 'Youth Club for grown ups'.

Although food is often a central theme; mostly it has been brilliant to get to know each other and share our stories of faith.

Although we have mostly taken the lead in organising the gatherings, it is open to any man to suggest or organise a time together. We have a Saturday morning breakfast organised for the start of the summer.....all men welcome!

**Tom Dale & Joe Yates**

### **Deanery Synod Report**

Newham is flowing over with challenges and opportunities for the Church. Some parishes' populations are growing at a tremendous rate with new housing. Others are outnumbered by people of various faiths. This year we have continued to explore 'A Transforming Presence' the Bishop's vision of how to live a distinctive Christian life. Our four main topics were the installation of the new Area Dean, feedback from 'Time to Talk' day, the team partnered with the NHS to cater for the spiritual needs of patients and what can Chelmsford Cathedral do for us. Talk to your reps if you want to know more. Pray that we can face the present demand for reorganisation with wisdom and expectation.

**Peter Arnold and Janet Bone**

## **ASHA TRUST 2016**

Asha Trust is over 10 years old now. The work in Athidiya, the community at the edge of Colombo where most of the activity takes place, continues to grow. One of the most satisfying developments in recent years has been the increasing confidence of the local team there to try new approaches and new initiatives. They have been testing a support group for people with mental health problems and a men's programme. Some initiatives take off, others lose momentum after a few months, but the most encouraging thing for us is that the team have the confidence to try new things.

In the summer of 2015 the local team organised a holiday programme, where the children took part in all sorts of creative activities. They also organised a fundraiser, offering low cost clothes and toys – all donated by supporters in Colombo. (Local supporters also provide the funds for the daily snack at the after-school club.)

In recent months a new employment project has been started, in partnership with a local charity, students and a business. A local stationery business provides all the materials for the production of folders, and a couple of enthusiastic students from the University of Colombo have been training and supporting a group of local women to produce the folders to the standard required. They can work from the Asha Centre for a few hours a day, to fit around childcare and other responsibilities, and they get some much-needed income.

The Centre is a well-used, valuable resource to the local community. There are gasps, and sometimes a tear, each time we take UK visitors down there for the first time. That there is a large attractive community building in the middle of this tough place is a miracle. Getting it built was a huge effort from so many people in Forest Gate and beyond. But a building is only of value if it is used – and the programme of activity requires staff and resources. We continue to be deeply grateful for all the support from many at St Marks – all this is only made possible because of your generosity and prayers.

[www.ashatrust.com](http://www.ashatrust.com)

**Radhika & Steve Bynon**