

Churchwardens Report 2021

Reflection on the year of 2020

It is fair to say that 2020 was a very, very different year from any other.

We started the year in a very strong position. Our hall and rooms were being heavily used by many different groups. Our services were very well attended. Plans were being prepared for the great year ahead where we could all meet at St Gabriel's in Jesus' name.

Then in March our hirers started to cancel their bookings, the numbers attending services reduced and finally the doors of the church had to close as our first national lockdown started.

Although our doors were temporarily closed, much of the life of the church was able to continue - albeit remotely. Marion has continued her pastoral care work, reverting to phone calls for the time being, supporting many people in need in our community. This is a vital part of the ministry at St. Gabriel's it is hoped that this will continue to develop and will be able to be face to face once again very soon. If you feel you would like to be part of this ministry then please talk to Marion. Arthur worked very hard to maintain Sunday services. This was achieved first by streaming pre-recorded services on our YouTube channel, and then by streaming live services at 9.30am and 10.30am every Sunday once the church had reopened in July. For many this ability to join in worship from their homes has been a blessing, helping them to maintain their links with the family of St. Gabriel's and this is something we plan to continue into the future

Our 2020 APCM was held very late into the year in October and Marion and Kelvin were once again privileged to be elected as your Churchwardens. This year the Archdeacons Visitations, where people are officially admitted as Churchwardens, was conducted over two Zoom calls as meeting in person was not permitted. The calls were chaired by The Venerable Richard Brand, Archdeacon of Winchester. The calls had their capacity opened to two hundred callers!

Although the building was closed for much of the year the church wardens have had many maintenance issues to take care of over the past year. We now have new lighting in the Sanctuary, the doors damaged in the break-in a few years ago have been replaced, and we now have hand driers in the toilets.

Both Kelvin and Marion have continued in the role of acting Treasurer for the last year working together to ensure that the money the church raises is spent wisely to maintain our building and further our works in the community.

The Log Book and Terrier were lost when the safe was taken in the break in. A new one is still being prepared and will be available once current restrictions are eased.

Looking forward

We will be looking at many aspects of Church and community life in the coming year. A big part will be continuing to focus on Stewardship, Giving and fundraising.

Stewardship put simply is the conscious act of how we give/use our time, skills and money in thanksgiving to all that God has provided. The Familiar offertory response "all things come from you, and of your own do we give you" reminds us that all that we have is sourced from God's provision. Offering these gifts is a joyful act for the sake of God's world and can be experienced and expressed in many ways.

We are encouraged to give time, skills and money to support the work of St Gabriel's Church and that of other charities that build God's Kingdom. Much of this giving may be regular giving from our income, but we should also consider what we will do with the wealth we accumulate.

As part of our rebuilding and forward planning we are asking everyone to search their hearts and find the best way they can give to the family life here at St. Gabriel's. Wherever you have time to help out, whether it is tea making, flower arranging, grass cutting, painting, cleaning, helping with children's activities, or supporting others in need, your help is always very much appreciated. Giving doesn't have to be just about the money, and we are sure that everyone has a talent to offer to St. Gabriel's. We need dedicated people to fill the roles of Sacristan - preparing the church before the service - and Sidespersons - helping guide the congregation through the service. Currently these responsibilities have been fulfilled by the church wardens, but we need other people to commit to taking them on.

Last year we said, " ... 2021 may bring challenges and difficulties and we hope and pray that we at St. Gabriel's will continue to help and support each other with love and care." This message is just as appropriate and still holds for 2021/2022 but we now have the government road map which is seeing us through this unprecedented situation, and our faith keeping us strong.

It has been our privilege to be your representatives for another year.

Marion Davies and Kelvin Lewington

Churchwardens for St. Gabriel's Church

In Memory

Due to the restrictions that we have all had to abide by we have been unable to come together as a church family to commemorate the lives of a few of our much loved members who have sadly passed away over the last year.

We would like to take this opportunity to remember

Noel Osmond, Angie Athanasiou, Wayeta Pilgrim Garrett,

Rose Humphrey, Pete Harris and Mary Herbert

They are always in our thoughts and in our hearts

