

## PARISH OF LINSLADE



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## APCM Report

### March 2007/8

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## **Churchwardens' Report**

This report from the churchwardens covers the period from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2007 until 31<sup>st</sup> March 2008 and relates to the churchwardens' responsibility for St. Barnabas Church and Grounds, the Parish Hall, the Cottage, and St. Mary's Church Old Linslade and its Churchyard.

Keith Saunders resigned as churchwarden in October for personal reasons not associated with his post. We very much regret Keith's resignation and greatly miss his clear insight, enthusiasm and hard work. His 'signature' can be found in almost all of the progress the parish has made recently. He was replaced at a Special Parish Meeting by persuading Dave Darvill back from retirement!

### **The Interregnum**

The Reverend Catherine Dyer left us in February 2007. We have been able to maintain a full set of services throughout the year mainly due to the efforts of the Reverend Wyn Jones to whom we express our thanks. We would also like to thank the Reverend Roger Hales who presided at the 8 a.m. and 10 a.m. services once a month and our friends in the Ouzel Valley Team Ministry. We are grateful to the choir for maintaining the service of evensong on Sundays.

Keith Saunders produced, almost single-handed a splendid 'Parish Profile' the Archdeacon of Bedford said 'was one of the best that he had ever seen'. We interviewed two candidates in November at a time when there was no heating in the church and the hall windows were boarded up, yet they both seemed keen to come!

The reverend Bernard Minton was selected to be our new Vicar but as his bishop will not release him until the end of April his licensing will take place on the 12<sup>th</sup> May.

### **Fabric of St. Barnabas Church and St. Mary's Church, Old Linslade**

We believe the fabric of St. Barnabas Church to be in reasonable condition. This should be confirmed or not this year as we are due for a quinquennial inspection. We have suffered the theft of lead from the link roof and the flashing on the porch. There was also an attempt to steal the lead from over the north door. We are grateful for the work of John Deighton and Dave Darvill who turned out on Boxing Day to relay the lead that had been rolled up prior to removal. The lead on the roof has been marked with 'smart water' and we are currently investigating ways to make this more secure. A number of tiles were dislodged from the roof of the north aisle and these have been replaced. The church boiler failed in October, caused by a faulty

thermocouple and a broken burner. After the repair the engineers discovered that the gas pressure at the boiler was insufficient for safe and efficient operation. A new gas pipe had to be provided from the meter to the boiler. A new roof has been constructed for the hall. We now feel confident that roof will not fall down around our ears! The west façade has been re-pointed, the window apertures have been lengthened and after much delay new windows have been fitted. The hall is now secured against the elements. We are pleased with overall effect both inside and out. At the time of writing work is beginning on the installation of a new central heating system and lighting in the hall. This should be completed by the time of the APCM. It is important that we now redouble our efforts in fundraising to complete the next phase of the restoration.

We have received the much delayed quinquennial report on St.Mary's. The report has identified a number of items requiring attention. The most serious being a repair needed to the stonework above one window. We have had a quotation for this and other stonework repairs and a faculty is being sought for permission to carry out these repairs. All the other items mentioned in the report are being dealt with.

### **Move to St. Alban's diocese to join the Ouzel Valley Team Ministry**

The move to St.Alban's occurred on the 1<sup>st</sup> February and went very smoothly and quite a bit faster than had been predicted. We have left Oxford with the approval and the blessing of the Bishops of Oxford and Buckingham and have joined St. Alban's with the enthusiastic support of all within the diocese. We would like to record our thanks to all within both dioceses that facilitated this change. We have already benefited from being within a team ministry in several ways. It should be emphasised that the way in which the team has been organised means we retain our own autonomy as a parish, with our own PCC and our own finances. We are currently adjusting to the way in which the administration of the diocese and a team Ministry work, which is inevitably different from being an individually administered Parish within Oxford.

A good working relationship is being established with Mrs Linda Guess the Ouzel Valley Team Administrator and a consensus achieved on Fees and accounting.

We have held a most constructive meeting with Mr Jim May who is the St Albans Pastoral Advisor, and his secretary Judith Calvert who is also the Assistant Diocesan Secretary. Jim has a "second hat" as secretary to the Diocesan Advisory Committee for the Care of Churches – which is where our delayed Faculty applications will shortly be heading!

## **Church Goods**

We can report that there have been no sales or disposals of church goods in the past year.

Dave Darvill & Nick Moore (Churchwardens)

## ***Secretary's Report on the Business of the Parochial Church Council***

St. Barnabas's PCC has the responsibility of co-operating with the incumbent in promoting in the ecclesiastical parish of Linslade the whole mission of the church, pastoral, evangelistic and social. It also has the maintenance responsibilities for the churches of St. Barnabas and St. Mary's, (Old Linslade) and the Parish Hall on the St. Barnabas site.

## **Membership**

Members of the PCC are either ex officio or elected by the Annual Parochial Church Meeting (APCM) in accordance with the church representation rules. At its first meeting following the APCM, PCC officers are elected to serve for the year.

During the year 2007 to 2008, the following served as members of the PCC.

Ex Officio

Priest-in-Charge	vacancy
Ordained Local Minister	Revd. Wyn Jones
Reader (co-opted)	Prof. Russell Stannard
Reader (co-opted)	Mrs Pat Faulkner – from September
Churchwarden	Mr Nick Moore
Churchwarden	Mr Keith Saunders – to September
	Mr Dave Darvill – from December

Deanery Synod Members Elected in 2005 to serve for three years

Mr Nick Moore	Mr Simon Soper
Mrs Marian Dye	

Deanery Synod Members Elected in 2007 to serve for one year

Mr Bruce Benedickter

Elected in 2005 for 3 years

Mrs Valerie Stewart  
Mrs Jo Thompson

Mrs Carol Oakman

Elected in 2006 for 3 years

Mrs Janet Miller  
Mr David Throssell

Mr John Deighton  
Mrs Marlene Richardson

Elected in 2007 for 3 years

Mrs Maureen Gadsby  
Mrs Miranda Soper

Mrs Vicki Faiers  
Mr Bruce Benedickter

Elected in 2007 for 1 year

Mrs Carolyn Birch

During the year, Keith Saunders resigned as churchwarden and Dave Darvill was appointed to serve until the next APCM. Valerie Stewart resigned in November as she was leaving the area in January, and Marian Dye resigned for personal reasons.

## **Committees**

The PCC operates through a number of committees, which meet between full meetings of the PCC. In particular:

### **Standing and Finance Committee**

This is the only committee required by law. It has power to transact the business of the PCC between its meetings, subject to any directions given by the full Council. It also prepares the agenda for subsequent PCC meetings.

### **Worship Committee**

This committee exists to work with the clergy to establish and review the forms of worship for use in the parish.

### **Outreach Committee**

This committee attends to matters relating to the ministry of the church to the community and to the world, such as ecumenical links, evangelism and the support of mission and relief agencies. It organises fundraising activities to support its work and reports regularly to the PCC.

### **Friends of St. Mary's**

This organisation attends to matters relating to the upkeep of St. Mary's Churchyard, Old Linslade, in support of the Churchwardens and the PCC. It operates a membership scheme and organises fundraising to support the activities. During 2007 it continued to focus all its fundraising to the Hall project.

### **Buildings Committee**

This committee has the responsibility for carrying out minor repairs and upkeep to the Churches and associated buildings within an annual budget decided by the full PCC.

### **Stewardship Committee**

This committee has an ongoing responsibility for identifying tasks and roles throughout the year and to fill them in consultation with the clergy.

### **Other organisations**

Many other organisations function within the church, all of which are accountable to the PCC. These include the Bell ringers, the Choir, the Mothers' Union and the "Baby Barnacles".

## **Church Attendance and Electoral Roll**

The Sunday attendance during October 2007, the period when the diocese collects attendance figures on behalf of central church offices, varied from 103 to 129 adults, and 6 to 20 under 16 year olds. Total attendance on Easter Day was 166, and on Christmas Eve and Christmas Day 465. The Crib Service on Christmas Eve again proved to be very popular with about 180 people attending.

At the APCM of 2007, John Vickers, the electoral roll officer, reported that there had been a complete renewal of the electoral roll this year. Of the 174 names on the old roll, 36 people had not applied to the new roll. There were 22 new applications and the roll stood at 159. John reminded everyone that they could apply to join the electoral roll at any time during the year.

## **Review of the Year**

The full PCC met on 9 occasions between the APCM of 15<sup>th</sup> April 2007 and the APCM of 27<sup>th</sup> April 2008. Average attendance at PCC meetings was 15 members, with the lowest attendance 14 and the highest 17. The standing committee met on nine occasions. The main issues under discussion have been as follows:

### **Linslade Parish – our future**

Much of our meeting time has been devoted to discussing the transfer into the St. Alban's Diocese and joining the Ouzel Valley team ministry. The draft proposals for the pastoral Measures – transfer of benefice – were seen at the June meeting and the transfer finally came into effect on 1<sup>st</sup> February 2008, although much of the administration was in place before that date. The PCC accepted the team Ministry constitution as part of the process.

### **Appointment of new minister**

The work on the Parish Profile was the first part of the process to appoint a new priest. Other items were the advertisement and planning the interviews. This was a complex situation involving the Bishops of Buckingham and Bedford. One meeting was devoted entirely to the vacancy. The interviews finally took place on 9<sup>th</sup> November and our new priest, Rev Bernard Minton, was appointed.

### **Worship**

Bibles are available for use in the services.  
A special service to mark “Back to church Sunday” was held in September.

### **Buildings**

The Linslade Hall redevelopment project has continued during the year. There is now a new roof as well as new enlarged windows that have enhanced the view of the park. A new heating system is in the process of being fitted.

The boiler in church was deemed unsafe and extra work was carried out to install wider diameter gas pipes.

The question of security arose after lead was taken from the roof. Extra lights were installed.

The quinquennial review of St. Mary's took place.

We were approached by QS4 with a proposal for telecommunications equipment to be installed at St. Barnabas. They finally withdrew their request after finding difficulty with the health and safety requirements in the bell tower, where it was proposed to install the equipment.

## **Finance**

The church's financial situation continues to be a regular discussion item especially about the parish share. (See Treasurer's separate report). The PCC are continually looking at ways to improve the financial position and to encourage the increase in giving.

The PCC would like to express its gratitude to the Office staff for photocopying papers for those members without e-mail, and for supporting the Clergy and Parish officers.

Carolyn Birch, PCC Secretary

## ***Treasurer's report***

As you may have noticed, at the end of 2007 the way of reporting the accounts changed. This was to bring them into line with the other parishes in our new diocese so that like comparisons can be made. You may have noticed the difference – the total of unrestricted funds at the end of the year looks remarkably high and could lead us all to think that our finances have flourished beyond belief. Unfortunately this is not the case – it is simply that the figure for accounts receivable, in other words tax relief which we expect to receive in 2008, is included in the 2007 figure. This is correct in that it includes money that we are entitled to; we just haven't received it yet. The pattern will seem more normal next year when only the amount for one year will be shown, rather than two years, as is the case this year.

One item to note this year is that the amount of planned giving has gone down – that is the amount that is given regularly through envelopes and standing orders. Collections and donations are slightly increased, as are our fundraising activities. Comparisons can be made with last year's figures by looking at the Detailed Statement of Financial Activities which gives a breakdown of each section of the accounts. Fundraising for the hall was lower in 2007, although donations were slightly increased. Given that we

were without a priest for most of the year financial activity has remained fairly steady, but we were unable to pay the parish share in full. The total amount due was £62,034.00, and we paid only £40,000.00. It is imperative that we regularly review our giving if we wish to remain financially solvent. Although in 2008 the parish share will be less than we have been used to, other costs continue to rise, as in the rest of the economy.

This report will be my last as Treasurer. I intend to step down from the post before the end of 2008 and so will not be presenting the accounts next year. I have been Treasurer for the past six years and feel sure it is time for a fresh perspective. Please give some thought as to whether or not you are able to volunteer for the task.

In conclusion I would like to thank all those who help with financial matters in the parish including Sallie Brandham, Joe Dunsford, Elaine Evershed, Janet Miller, David Darvill, Vernon Smith and our independent examiner Katrina Boyce.

Jo Thomson, PCC Treasurer

## ***Bellringers***

I would like to start my report by recording the debt we St. Barnabas ringers owe to Phil Dunn, our ringing master and his efforts to improve our ringing over the year.

Team spirit in the tower is good even if the ringing is sometimes less proficient than either Phil or we would like. Attendance at practice nights often dictates what we can attempt. Our joiners from last year are still with us and making progress.

Notable during the year were celebratory rings for the Installation of our new Bishop of Oxford; Revd Catherine's farewell Party; Phil's 50<sup>th</sup> Birthday; Jan and Andy Cornfoot's 40<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary and The Scout Association Centenary year. The band for the latter appropriately included an ex-Akela, an ex-GSL, an Explorer leader, the District Appointments Secretary, and an ex-Scout. We also rang to celebrate the 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Bells Restoration. A visiting band of young people rang to commemorate Ruth Carsons who died aged only 17.

We entered Guild and Branch competitions for Striking (at Whitchurch, which we again won and retain the handsome wooden trophy); Ringing Competition at Stewkley where we came 3<sup>rd</sup>; and the Orchard Cup inter-branch competition where against some strong opposition we came only 6<sup>th</sup>.

The tower was open for the Summer fair for interested visitors and background ringing to the event in the park.

The band took part in two outings during the summer. Our own one, organised by Janice, took us around south Oxfordshire and into the Chilterns weaving through country lanes to some romantically named villages. The Branch outing was poorly supported apart from a strong Linslade contingent. Once again Janice was the organiser and the route took us around Goring, Reading and Henley finishing at Shottesbrooke (a church on a private estate where Lynn Pughe lived as a child).

During the year we hosted 5 bands of visiting ringers, rang for 5 Weddings, Christingle, Midnight Mass and Christmas morning. The band was sometimes thin on the ground for Sunday services but we always managed to ring.

Our entry into the Christmas Tree Festival – this year at All Saints – was another triumph for Janice's inventive designs.

Regrettably the year ended on a sad note with the passing of Richard Barton who joined us with a background of ringing in northern dioceses. His health problems deteriorated badly during the latter months of the year.

Heather Darvill

### ***The Cell of our Lady and St Joseph***

Our Walsingham Mass and Benediction was celebrated throughout the year.

Our pilgrimage took place in October. Fr. Vernon Smith from All Saints, Leighton Buzzard led us this year, as our Superior Fr. Peter Lymbery was unwell.

We were saddened to hear that Anne Green, Michael's wife (and Fr. Peter's sister) passed away just before the pilgrimage. Michael very bravely came with us in October and we hope that we were able as a Cell to help him at this sad time.

We are pleased that our new vicar has been appointed and will be coming to us in early May. His name is Fr. Bernard Minton and he is a Priest associate of the Holy House of Our Lady of Walsingham.

Our membership now totals 20.

Maureen Gadsby

### ***The Choir at St. Barnabas***

The choir at St. Barnabas now consists of 9 choristers, and we are in urgent need to recruit more members (particularly youngsters) to maintain a choir for St. Barnabas for the future.

We attend two Sunday services per week (Parish Communion and Evensong) and occasional weekday services as required. There are also weddings where we are requested to sing. Every month we sing a Festal Evensong to stimulate interest for our members. This normally consists of a setting to the Magnificat and Nunc Dimittis, and also an Anthem.

Evensong has been sung weekly in our Church since its consecration, and the Choir have maintained the tradition ourselves, and are disappointed when the numbers of the congregation is very small. (One of our previous incumbents used to remark –“Tonight we will sing to the angels”) There are occasional choral events such as those sponsored by the Royal School of Church Music that we attend if within reasonable distance of Linslade.

Choir Practice is normally held on Friday evenings at 7 pm for one hour. Anyone who wishes to join our Choir should contact Tony Edwards our Organist/Choirmaster.

John Vickers, Choir Secretary

### ***Deanery Synod Report***

Most of the 2007 Mursley Deanery Synod Meetings were concerned with re-organising the Deanery with fewer stipendiary clergy. These changes are not being triggered by Linslade’s proposed move to St Albans but arise from the difficulties that the Oxford diocese have in funding. With the expansion of Milton Keynes over the next few years, it is probable that major restructuring of deaneries will become necessary. All those at Mursley Deanery Synod expressed their best wishes for our future in St. Albans.

One of the Linslade Deanery Synod representatives attended a Dunstable Deanery Synod towards the end of 2007. Those present were delighted and most welcoming to see someone from St. Barnabas.

Simon Soper

## ***Friends of St. Mary's***

The Friends of St. Mary's is still going strong, with our numbers standing at about 130. We always lose a few from people who join on impulse on a Sunday visit, but we gain with new people each summer.

The work goes on down there with work-parties every first Saturday of the month. We would love to see some new faces!

We had the large right-hand part of the churchyard levelled early in the year, but it isn't really level enough for a mower yet and needs more work on it. We have been greatly helped this year by Vernon Smith who has spent a lot of hours beavering away. Thank you Vernon. The snowdrops have put in a lovely show once again, with daffodils to follow.

Most of the information is in the AGM minutes with the diary of events near the end. The strawberry teas are getting very popular and we have music organised for both Sundays this year. All the events went well last year, although the cheese and wine party was not as popular as other years and we have decided to give it a miss this time

There will be a Gift Aid form with your membership form this year. If you pay tax it would be appreciated if you could see fit to sign this. As in the past, membership fees go into "Friends of St Mary's" account. We will be paying the expenses for petrol etc for the work done in the churchyard because we have depleted the churchyard fund during this last year.

We look forward to another busy year with, we hope, some lovely summer weather.

Sheila Deighton

## ***Leighton Linlade Churches Together***

The LLCT continues to meet at quarterly intervals to discuss ways of bringing the churches together in joint activities.

In 2007 these included running Lenten courses, the Good Friday service at the market cross and the annual "Praise in the Park" that took place in All Saints Church. The theme was "Top Ten Hymns". This proved extremely

popular with the church full to overflowing. The Salvation Army provided the music while All Saints provided very welcome cups of tea afterwards.

In November the Methodist Church held a “Hymnical” – a dramatisation of the lives of the Wesley brothers interspersed with extracts of some of their hymns. Again it was well attended, North Street Chapel was full to capacity and it was obvious everyone enjoyed the event very much.

With regard to Town expansion, representations have been made to the Town Development sub-committee about LLCT’s concerns that adequate infrastructure should be provided ahead of house building.

Carol Dixon

## ***Outreach***

The Outreach group is a small committee of six to eight members, plus a group of extra willing helpers when there is a need. Two valuable members are no longer actively involved with the group – Sheila, who has been secretary for a number of years, felt she needed a break (although she still acts as correspondent for USPG) and Valerie who has moved away. We are extremely grateful for all their work for Outreach over many years.

We have met formally five times this year, mainly to organise functions to raise funds for our charities. St. Barnabas supports three charities, one international, one national and one local. The international project is USPG and we continue to support a specific project within this organisation. This is Ruth and Saulo de Barros in Brazil, with their young son Thomas. Saulo is the Bishop of Amazonia and Ruth is involved in local issues. We get a quarterly newsletter from USPG and an occasional newsletter specifically about the work of Ruth and Saulo.

Our national project is “Kids Out” whose headquarters is in Leighton Buzzard. This enabled a representative from them to visit us and take part in the Advent lunch. We also send harvest gifts to Emmaus at Carlton village. Our local project is the Leighton Linslade Homeless trust.

Our fundraising this year has included two lunches, a harvest supper, a barn dance, a variety show and carol singing at the station. We had a Fair Trade stall at the May Fair in the town and at our Summer and Christmas Fairs. We occasionally have a stall in church after the 10 o’clock service but there is not the same need to promote fair trade now there are so many shops promoting it in the town. Although we try to raise funds for our projects, we feel that part of our remit is to encourage the congregation to socialise and to reach people, where possible, outside our congregation.

Carolyn Birch

## ***Parish Hall Project***

The project to refurbish the Linslade Parish Hall at St. Barnabas Church continues to move forward. A great deal has already been accomplished by the architects and builders commissioned by the Parochial Church Council towards providing a much needed community facility for Linslade residents and community groups.

Stage one of the project saw the completion of a modern “Link” building between Church and Hall which has set the tone for the ongoing works providing a light and easily accessible entrance to both buildings. Stage 2b is now almost complete, comprising a new roof complete with new insulation, replacement of some of the beams and new redesigned windows which give a stunning new aspect to the frontage and greatly enhance the natural light within the hall. Interior modernisation is about to provide completely new central heating together with new lighting. Both systems will be capable of extension into the re-sited kitchen and new toilets which will be the next phase once funding is established.

We were fortunate to receive funding from WREN which covered the majority of the cost of the roof replacement, together with funding from the Steel charitable trust, the Wixamtree trust, our various fundraising activities and donations from local supporters from the congregation and beyond. More funds are required for the extra work which has been included at this stage rather than wait for stage 2a.

We hope very much that there will not be too much of a delay before we can start on the next stage, which with a new kitchen and new offices will give us much more versatility in our usage and income offered by the hall. It will be possible to apply for a number of grants, as we have done previously, but as always we must raise funds ourselves in order to match what we are given by charitable trusts. It is imperative to maintain the enthusiasm and dedication which has carried us so far already and to remember that the end is in sight, even if at present rather distant.

Let us work together to achieve the aim of a first class modern hall for Linslade which will provide a superb facility for the whole community.

Jo Thomson

## ***St. Barnabas Mothers' Union***

By the time of our Annual General Meeting in February 2007 we had become familiar with the fact that our year 2007/8 would be run by a Branch Correspondent and a Branch Treasurer with much help from 'Key' members.

The previous years' committee had devised a Questionnaire suggesting to members ways in which they felt they might support the Branch and this was discussed at our A G M in February.

At our March meeting, we reported back to members as to how the questionnaires had been received together with an Agenda for the Year. In general, it worked well though there were concerns at the time as to how the Branch could possibly continue to keep going under these circumstances.

However, because members did not want the Branch to close, the support to the scheme has worked very well.

Thanks to all members, we have been able to keep our regular monthly meetings going with a variety of interests.

Every one with their own particular interest has continued to pursue their activity and so we keep going.

Wyn has asked me to express her thanks to those of you who have been so supportive of the Mothers and Toddlers group and also for the tea given to support bereaved members of the Congregation and Community at our June meeting. Thanks also to those who supported the October Family Service when members led the Service explaining and demonstrating with the aid of posters the work of Mothers' Union at home and abroad. She is very, very grateful.

Members of the Mothers' Union also had an input into the Communion Before Confirmation project.

I am also pleased to say that the 'Coffee get together' after our Corporate Communion continues and is enjoyed.

Members and families enjoyed our Annual Lunch in January.

I feel the 'cooperative' arrangement we have developed is a credit to our Branch and really creates cohesion among us and I thank every member for their Spiritual and practical support.

We are now looking forward to making new friends in the St. Albans Diocese.

Vicki Faiers.

## ***The Servers and Sacristan***

At present, we are a band of sixteen servers but in reality only fifteen. One is away at university and only available during the holidays. With two committed to assisting at the 8 o'clock Holy Communion service, this leaves thirteen for assisting at the Sung Eucharist, which works out attending approximately two services in a typical four Sunday month. In those months where there are five Sundays and other mid-week 'high days' the team will find themselves rostered more frequently. Whilst the present number is adequate for current needs, new 'blood' is always welcome. Since last year's report Bruce Benedickter and Louisa Smith have joined us, which has brought down our average age, which is no bad thing. Louisa's sister, Kimberley, has expressed an interest and we hope to have her on board before too long.

Immediately before Christmas and Easter, we have a high level clean of the church. One of the ladies can spot a cobweb at 300 yards on a good day! The silverware is washed and polished on these 'cleaning' evenings. Once a month we have the Office in the Lady Chapel at 8 p.m. on the first Tuesday with each server taking it in turn to lead the Office. All are welcome to this short service after which we discuss how to improve what we do in our duty. We have our annual Server's Supper in the Hunt Hotel in the quiet post Christmas months of January and February. This year we welcomed the servers and partners from All Saints making a 'party' of 38.

One of our number has undertaken the washing and ironing of the small linen i.e. purificators, corporals and lavabo towels. We attend to our own washing of the albs. Sandra Moore kindly attends to the washing of the large items such as the fair linen for the altars and credence tables.

Each Saturday and before major festivals preparation is made for the services. Supplies of wine and wafers are maintained as is the order of special items such as palm leaves for Palm Sunday that are made up into palm crosses by the Barnacles.

Chris Hart

## ***Sunday School***

I have now been leading the Sunday School team for 5 years and I would like to thank the wonderful people who have shared that responsibility with

me throughout the year. So **THANKYOU** to Liz Thomas, Miranda Soper, Avril Gunner, Fiona Throssell, Joan McDowall and Wyn Jones for their enthusiastic assistance and support that has enabled Sunday School to continue supporting the children who come to our church either as visitors or on a regular basis.

This is what we have been up to this year:

We have run our stall at the Summer Fair – this year we chose to make it a Lucky Dip, which we felt was more successful than our usual toy stall.

On the 30<sup>th</sup> September we organised biscuit icing, during coffee after the 10am service, as part of Back to Church Sunday.

At the Autumn / Christmas Fair we repeated the Lucky Dip and added a “Pick A Lollipop” to our stall. Again we felt that this had been more successful than the original toy stall.

In December we made the Christingles and produced the Nativity tableau for the crib service on Christmas Eve. Sadly, we also said “Goodbye” to Liz Thomas who felt that the right time had come for her to leave the Sunday School team.

In February we were very pleased to welcome Rebecca Clarke as a new member of the team.

We have made the posies of flowers for distribution on Mothering Sunday.

Throughout the year we have been running Sunday School every week for 7 children who come on a fairly regular basis.

This brings us to the end of another successful, if slightly quieter, year with Sunday School.

Jenny Smith  
Sunday School leader

### ***Fair Committee and Busy Bees***

It has been a very satisfying and successful year for the Fair Committee. We were blessed with a beautiful sunny day for our Summer Fair held in June of last year and while the weather was not so warm on the outside for our Christmas Fair in November, it was a tremendously ‘warm’ day for everyone on the inside.

The committee members have gathered together a number of times throughout the year to hold meetings to keep us focused and organised for our two fundraising Fairs. We have strived on raising the overall standard of the fairs while trying to bring a more joyful community spirit to each Fair.

We are promoting new ideas and sending out more community invites to local schools, music group etc. to help with entertainment and of course to encourage our local charities and business to participate if they wish. It has been tremendous for the committee to find out the many talents within the congregation – cross stitching, lace making, woodworking, painting, knitting, sewing and the list goes on and on. Because of these talents the Fair Committee decided to start ‘Busy Bees’. This has been a very successful activity with a number of us meeting on Saturday afternoons, not only to work on our particular handicraft talents and produce items to be sold at the Fairs but, to have the opportunity to socialise with each other. We have not failed to enjoy a good laugh each afternoon we are together.

In the past few months ‘Busy Bees’ has also tried to focus on the greater community and what St. Barnabas can do to help others. We have learned that the number of premature babies being born each year has risen considerably and many parents in such situation find themselves with nothing to fit the baby. Therefore, our latest project has been knitting many items for the ‘little’ babies. We will be donating our finished products to Luton & Dunstable hospital in the near future. Rest be assured we will have the items on display for each of you to see before giving our donation to the hospital. We are also considering other organisations/charities where we may be able to assist in the future. We realise not everyone can make the ‘Busy Bees’ afternoons and would like to thank those that have helped while remaining shut in at their own home.

Our Fairs’ successes do not happen because of good organisation, it happens because of each of YOU! We are extremely grateful to our many volunteers and wish to express a sincere **Thank You**. Just as importantly, we are grateful to each of you who come and support our many different stalls on display at the fairs.

We invite any new ideas you might have in making our upcoming fairs an even greater success. We would also be delighted to have you join us at our ‘Busy Bees’ afternoons. Any questions or suggestions can be discussed with committee members Carol Oakman, Sandra Moore, Mary Johnson, Carolyn Birch and Marlene Richardson.

Marlene Richardson

### ***The Wednesday House Group***

The Wednesday House Group consists of 9 regular members and we meet on the first and third Wednesday of the month. Our time is spent in prayer, fellowship, Christian nurture, meditation, bible study and the occasional party. During the last year we have studied Sabbath Principles which inspired us to lead the informal Eucharist in November, group study courses “Growing through Change”, “Ready and Waiting” and “Revelation”. We come from a variety of backgrounds and ages ranging from commuters with young families to those who are retired. We involve our children with the group as much as possible and we particularly enjoy our summer and New Year parties when our children are able to fully participate.

Jayne Humphreys

### ***Julian Meeting***

The Julian group meet once a month on the last Wednesday of the month and the meeting starts at 8 pm.

The group take it in turns at leading the meeting. The point of the meeting is to have 20 – 25 minutes of complete silence for meditation. We are led into this silence in various ways and then brought out of it again in the same way. The Mystic Mother Julian inspired this type of contemplation. Anyone wishing to know more should contact Maureen or Mike.

Sally Finney

### ***Theological Study Group***

This group meets every third Thursday of the month and is led by Mrs Pat Faulkner.

At our first meeting we were shown several books and had to choose one of them to reflect on. Members of the group take turns at leading a session under the guidance of Pat. We take a section of the book at each meeting and look at what is being said theologically.

Anyone interested in joining should speak to Pat or Wyn.

Mike Finney

## ***Thursday House Group***

This group meets at Wyn's house on a Thursday evening. We meet on the second and fourth Thursday of the month.

A wide range of subjects is discussed, aimed at learning what we don't know, refreshing our knowledge of what we thought we knew, and applying it to our individual circumstances.

As well as learning about the scriptures, this group also has a social aspect to it. The group look forward to getting together for a chat and supporting each other.

If you feel that this group may be what you have been looking for then please talk to Wyn or Mike.

Mike Finney

## ***Sunday Barnacles Report***

Barnacles is intended now for 10-13 year olds, though members may continue with us to age 14. The group at present has five members, Kimberly, Jennie, Maja, Emma and Simon, with Louisa recently having 'graduated' to be a Server. It is a special pleasure to note that many previous Barnacles have continued some contact and the number of those wishing to come to St. Barnabas to be married as 'their church', continues to increase.

We have met on Sunday mornings at 10.00 a.m. in our room in the Cottage, and Leaders have met for prayer and preparation each Thursday evening. The group begins with a suitable short prayer of Confession followed usually with a New Testament reading, then discussion/DVD material and busy activities follow, until we make a determined scramble into church, hopefully but not inevitably, in time for the Eucharistic Prayer. (Group time is short for all there is to do; we have become expert at predicting the vagaries of different preachers in preferred sermon length! Many thanks to the in-church spies who come to warn us when to begin our dash into the service).

This year we have again sought to help Barnacles increase their understanding of Easter, and of the meaning of Holy Communion. Several Barnacles now take Communion, others receive The Blessing. Before Holy Week we studied the Passover and held a Passover Meal in the manner of a Jewish family. Thanks to our Jewish friends who loaned us their Seder dish. We used the Passover Meal as a basis for understanding the New Covenant

and the meaning Jesus gave to Bread and Wine. On Easter Day we made Easter Gardens to display the Empty Tomb.

During the past year we thought about the Lord's Prayer, with Barnacles writing their own individual versions. At Christmas they built their own puppet Inn and Stable, acting the parts in an excellent short Nativity scene written by Simon, with background Recorder music, and Kimberly orchestrating the whole thing in front of parents. We thank Jennie who showed her outstanding cake making skills for this occasion! Four weeks in the year were spent deciding what makes a Saint, with material about Stephen, Peter, Barnabas and Paul. Due attention was given to Christian Aid Week also.

Barnacles have sought to serve the Church. They participated in stalls at the Summer and Christmas Fairs, made 300 Palm Crosses; they have taken main parts in the monthly Family Service and been active in a display for Back to Church Sunday. One very notable achievement this year is to have carried out a major cleaning of the Barnacles Room! No doubt the fish and chips lunch, lemonade and cakes provided gave them strength for this.

The Barnacles are a delightful group. Morale seems high; there is evidence they enjoy our meetings. Certainly they appreciate the room in the Cottage and value the quality artwork materials etc. we are able to provide. However, as Leaders we do have concern that the group is smaller than previous Barnacles cohorts and drawn only from our church families. We need help from the PCC, Sunday School and all St Barnabas Church to tackle this issue as priority, if we are to number in the future young people full of faith.

Jayne Humphreys & Derek May. (Leaders).

### ***Junior Barnacles Friday Club***

In September 2007 we volunteered to work with this Club for 5- 10 year olds so that it might continue even though its previous energetic leaders were no longer able to carry on. The club had for a considerable number of years offered a much valued chance for children /young people to unwind and have fun at the end of the school week. It also offered an important chance for St Barnabas to maintain contact with families in surrounding roads that in many cases have little other contact with Church. The PCC were supportive of this continuation. Among parents of club members there was a nurse with the necessary First Aid training required for continuation of the Club. All seemed well and indeed up to December some twenty-five Junior Barnacles were obviously enjoying the evening of games

and the tuck shop in a suitably boisterous fashion. We also had begun to develop the Epilogue just a little and relationships with both Junior Barnacles and parents were excellent.

At that point serious family illness and injury struck each of our own two families and made it impossible to continue to lead the club. We had to stop. Despite an attempt to re-start the Club after a few weeks numbers did not then pick up; furthermore we lost our necessary First Aid cover. So we have decided to delay any further attempt to resume the Friday club until September, which is the time when many parents set about finding regular activities for the winter evenings for their children.

When the time comes we will need to have found someone who can provide regular weekly First Aid cover and really we also need several further helpers as only two people acting as leaders is not really sufficient for the safe/legal operation of a club numbering up to thirty young people attending on a Friday evening. Volunteers and suggestions please!

The service provided by the Club, and contact with families it creates, remains important potential growth points for both the young people and their families, and for our Church.

As our project to improve the facilities the church hall develops as a service to Linslade, let us not pass up this opportunity to establish contact with the community.

Jane Slater & Derek May.

### ***Christian Aid at St. Barnabas***

Sometimes churches do get things right! In 2007 St. Barnabas once again had every one to be pleased with the amount raised in Christian Aid Week. The total collected was £5008 (£1885 of it further Gift Aided), which was a new record, an improvement on the previous year's total, which was itself a record amount. Being able to provide some sixty collectors covering almost every road in Linslade is a splendid effort on the part of the Church. Our amount collected and the number of collectors is the greatest among any Church in the town - the total represents over one third of the whole total for Leighton Buzzard.

Almost every year since at least the 1990s and earlier we have increased our amount steadily and substantially. A real achievement. We say sincere thank you to all who collected in 2007 and to the Outreach Group and others who packaged up collectors' materials.

However we also recognise that any team is only as good as its last result! Christian Aid Week 2008 is from May 11<sup>th</sup> – 17<sup>th</sup>. We hope and pray for a

new record once again this year, for the need for the work of Christian Aid, with projects in over 50 countries as well as within the national Disasters Emergencies Committee, never seems to diminish. During the past year we have lost five collectors and supporters in the Church who cover major rounds. (Mainly through their having moved away or fallen ill.) We need to find new collectors to replace these losses, in addition to covering collectors who in a particular year cannot manage to cover their round.

So new volunteers urgently needed, please. We will offer every support to help you.

This year the town Christian Aid Service will be at 6.00pm on Sunday May 4<sup>th</sup> at All Saints. Please may we have a full turn up from St. Barnabas? Russell Stannard will give the talk on Climate and Aid.

Derek May, St Barnabas Christian Aid Co-ordinator/ Chair Leighton-Linslade

### ***Baptism Preparation, Wedding Preparation and Bereavement Group***

We have continued working as last year during the interregnum until recently. These groups are now working together with the groups from the other Churches in the Team Ministry. Meetings are held in the various Churches in turn and attended by clients from all the Churches. All the Churches are represented at each meeting.

Wyn Jones

### ***Mother and Toddlers Group***

With a lot of help from the Mothers Union, our Mother and Toddler group has continued to run throughout the year with numbers attending remaining steady. On the first and third Wednesday of every month we meet in the church for a short service followed by refreshments and playtime in the hall.

Wyn Jones