

# Ouzel Valley Team Ministry

## PARISH OF LINSLADE



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## Annual Parochial Church Meeting 2011

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ

The format for producing our Annual Report has not changed since last year's meeting. As last year, you will find included within this document the agenda for our Annual Meeting on March 27<sup>th</sup>, the minutes of last year's Annual Meeting, and all of the reports relating to this year's Meeting. All reports cover the period between January and December 2010.

It is very important that everyone in our Church family takes an active interest in all of the areas of our life together, so that we can support one another on our Christian journey, and take responsibility for our shared life and mission. We therefore encourage everyone firstly to take away and read a copy of this bundle, and secondly to attend our Annual Meeting, which this year will be held after our 10 am Parish Eucharist on Sunday the 27<sup>th</sup> of March, starting at around 11:20 am. If you cannot come to this meeting, please give your apologies and any other comments to our PCC Secretary Carolyn Birch (tel 01525 756874, email [carolyn.birch4@ntlworld.com](mailto:carolyn.birch4@ntlworld.com)).

Bernard Minton  
Team Vicar

Ian Woodward  
Churchwarden

John Deighton  
Churchwarden

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**ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHURCH MEETING  
27<sup>th</sup> MARCH 2011 AT 11.30 am  
IN THE CHURCH**

**AGENDA**

ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

1. Election of two Churchwardens for the coming year.

ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHURCH MEETING

- 1 Apologies for absence
- 2 To elect 3 members to the Deanery Synod for 3 years
- 3 To elect 6 members to the Parochial Church Council – 4 for 3 years and 2 for 2 years.
- 4 To elect Sidesmen for 2011 – 2012
- 5 To consider:
  - a. Minutes of the last APCM
  - b. Matters arising
  - c. Changes to the Electoral Roll
  - d. A report on the proceedings of the Parochial Church Council
  - e. A report on the financial affairs of the Council
  - f. The accounts of the Parish for 2010
  - g. To appoint an Independent Examiner
  - h. A report by the Churchwardens of the Ornaments, Fabric and Goods of the Churches
  - i. Reports of the Deanery Synod and other church organisations
  - j. Chairman's report

**MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING HELD IN THE CHURCH HALL ON**  
**18<sup>th</sup> APRIL 2010 AT 11.30 AM**

Fr Bernard opened the meetings with a prayer.

1. There were two nominations for the position of Churchwardens for the coming year: John Deighton, proposed by Nicholas Moore and seconded by David Darvill, and Ian Woodward proposed by Carolyn Birch and seconded by Prof Russell Stannard. There being no other nominations they were duly elected.

Fr Bernard expressed his thanks and gratitude to John and to Nick Moore who has completed his term of office as Church warden, for all their work and support throughout the year. He is especially grateful to Nick for being such a support in his first position as vicar; previous incumbents had more experience and therefore there has been more pressure on Nick, as the more experienced warden.

Nick said the position held considerable responsibilities and few powers but he had enjoyed being church warden. He particularly thanked Sandra for her help, understanding and forbearance over the 6 years; he couldn't have done it without her.

**MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL PAROCHIAL MEETING HELD IN THE CHURCH HALL ON**  
**18<sup>th</sup> APRIL 2010 AT 11.45 AM**

**Present:** Fr B. Minton, N. Moore, S. Moore, C. Birch, T. Birch, V. Smith, J.Thomson, S. Woodward, I. Woodward, M. Connew, M. Crowe, W. Crowe, D. May, Ian Hogg, B. Marshall, B. Marshall, J. Deighton, A.Tracey, P. Faulkner, M. Johnson, R. Johnson, M. Titcombe, A. Tigg, J. Tigg, J. Vickers, B. Dunsford, J. Dunsford, A. Curtis, N. Griffiths, A. Griffiths, H. Rose, J. Staples, T. Claydon, R. Minton, P. Morris, J. Miller, P. Miller, C. Oakman, R. Stannard, M. Stannard, M. Ward, S. Soper, M. Soper, F. Morrow, D. Darvill, H. Darvill, W. Forde, M. Finney, M. Carrapiett, W. Jones.

**1. Apologies for absence.**

Apologies for absence were received from Maureen Gadsby, Sheila Deighton, Angela Fensome, Ken and Eileen Youngs, Jean Ward, Joan McDowall, Vicki and John Faiers.

**2. To elect 6 members to the Parochial Church Council, 4 for 3 years, 1 for 2 years and 1 for 1 year.**

Four nominations were received for Maureen Gadsby, Vicki Faiers, Miranda Soper and Bruce Benedickter. There being no further nominations, Maureen, Vicki and Miranda were elected for 3 years and Bruce for 1 year, at his request. There are still 2 vacancies, 1 for 3 years and 1 for 2 years and the PCC will seek to co-opt members to fill the vacancies.

**3. To elect Sidesmen for 2010 –2011**

The list of sidesmen was read out – Mike Ward, Peter Holmes, Iris Hutton, John Wyn Jones, Ann Tracey, Sarah Woodward, Sandra Moore, Nick Moore, Sally Finney, Mike Finney, Barbara Marshall, Sheila Deighton, David Darvill, Margaret Carrapiett, Carol Oakman, Joe Dunsford, Maurice Crowe, Wendy Crowe, Bruce Benedickter, Nevert Griffith, Hope Rose and Maggie Stannard. All the sidesmen were thanked for their continuous support. John Deighton said it would be good if we could have a few more people to help spread the work load.

**4. To consider**

- a. Minutes of the last APCM – John Deighton proposed and Carol Oakman seconded a motion to accept the minutes of the last APCM. All agreed.
- b. Matters arising – Bill asked about the repairs to the pillar by the West door; Nick said this was in hand with the quinquennial repairs. Maurice noted that the clock is now working.

- c. John Vickers, the electoral roll officer, advised that at the last APCM in 2009 the number of names on the roll was 165. 11 names have since been added and 4 deleted. The roll now stands at 172. John was thanked for his continued work.
- d. A booklet containing all the reports of the PCC had been printed and distributed prior to the meeting. The report on the proceedings of the PCC was accepted by all present. Ian noted that the Worship Committee has still not met and Fr Bernard said he is aware of this and will attend to it as soon as possible. He thanked the PCC for their support and encouragement.
- e. The report on the financial affairs of the PCC was in the booklet. Vernon explained that we have had a good year, with the share paid in full, a surplus at the end of 2009, and money put aside to cover the quinquennial repairs. But costs are increasing, giving has reduced and there will probably be a deficit at the end of this year. The parish share is increasing by over 5% next year. Bill pointed out that this is unsustainable and he felt deanery synod members should be pointing this out. He suggested that the PCC should have a "maintenance fund" set aside in relation to our income and if we cannot meet the share from this, then we should not pay it in full. Bill also asked about the Church Commissioners and their funds. Fr Bernard explained about their role and that parochial clergy are funded from the diocese, not from the Church commissioners, and the parish system is self funding.  
There is a financial implication if you are on the electoral roll. We need £8.50 per person, per week to run the church. And the PCC are constantly looking at financial affairs. Ian asked what percentage of our money went to mission. He felt that 2% was too low as we should be generous in our giving. The PCC will consider our giving to mission.
- f. The independently examined accounts of the Parish for 2009 were in the booklet and there were no further queries about them. The accounts were accepted. Vernon was thanked for all the work involved with doing and presenting the accounts. He often had to give figures for the hall fund applications and he always did this promptly. The Independent examiner, Katrina Boyce, was also thanked for diligently checking our accounts.
- g. Fr Bernard proposed and Bill Marshall seconded that Katrina Boyce be appointed Independent Examiner for next year. All agreed and a letter of thanks will be sent to her.
- h. Nick Moore referred to the Churchwarden's report that was in the booklet. He is currently seeking quotations for the repairs to the fabric of the church. The tender documents have been sent to three companies but only two have responded. Nick will discuss the details with the architect to see what can be done by us. There are significant bodies who give grants for church repairs so the majority of the costs should not fall on church expenses. We are all most grateful for the amount of work our church wardens do over and above their formal duties.
- i. The report of the Deanery Synod and other reports are in the booklet. Dave Darvill gave an update on the hall funding progress with notification of two pending grants. The hall is covering its costs and is building up a maintenance budget. This will mean it is free standing financially. The various groups were thanked for their promptness in submitting their reports and for their participation in the life of the church.
- j. Fr Bernard's report was in the booklet and he referred to it. Next year we are proposing that all the reports be for the calendar year, in line with the financial year. This would make reporting easier and give us more flexibility when arranging the date of the APCM. There was no opposition to this.

The meeting ended with the Grace. Fr Bernard thanked everyone for coming and supporting the PCC in many ways. The meeting closed at 12.55pm

## *Vicar's report for 2010*

This year, our reporting year has of course changed, so that we are thinking about the year from January to December 2010, the last few months of which we also in theory covered in last year's AGM. This means that there might be an element of repetition in some of the things recorded, and in particular the glorious British weather: the year began and ended in snow, that as in 2009 disrupted services and events, and has given my children a perhaps unwarrantable enthusiasm for Bedfordshire winters!

Lent and Easter were very early in 2010 – we had barely recovered from Christmas. As well as the Lent Groups organised by Churches Together, we also held, in St Barnabas, a Lent course based on the Bishop of St Albans's material, which was very valuable. Our Holy Week and Easter Services went well again – at least they did for me; many thanks to Ian for preaching on Good Friday. We held a second Passover meal as a part of our Easter celebrations, and I am grateful to all those who helped with the food at that, and to all the servers who shared in organising and preparing for Lent and Easter.

During Lent, one of our servers, Mike Finney, who continues to do much to prepare and organise our worship, was licensed as a Lay Reader, a day of rejoicing for him and for us. We have also had licensed a number of additional Lay Ministers to help administer Communion: many thanks to those who agreed to be volunteered!

We gained some new volunteers to help with our fortnightly Baby Barnacles Toddlers Service, which continues to be much enjoyed by toddlers and carers alike. Some of our regular Baby Barnacles were baptized during the year, and we were also as a Team able to begin our monthly Messy Church event. You may recall that last year I was wondering about what we could provide for families as a follow-on from Baby Barnacles: Messy Church might, I hope, fill some of this gap.

At St Barnabas we hosted the first, third and fifth of these Messy Church meetings in 2010, and our involvement as a Parish has been considerable in terms of volunteers. This is likely to increase as we move further into 2011, in the absence of the Reverend Julia, and while we wait for a new Team Missioner. There are doubtless areas that need further work, and in particular it would be good to expand out into those families who have as yet no contact with the church, but we have made a good beginning, and I am grateful to everyone from Linslade who has worked so hard in the kitchen, and in the craft, to make Messy Church such a success so far.

While on the subject of children and young people, our Sunday School and Barnacles continue to provide love, care and faith-filled nurture on a Sunday thanks to the hard work of a small number of volunteers to whom our thanks are due.

Our Summer and Christmas Fairs went well, and were very well attended, despite some dodgy weather, especially in the winter. We raised record sums for the Church: many thanks to all those who helped with them. The Christmas Tree Festival was an enormous success, both raising funds, and encouraging many people into St Barnabas, to decorate trees, to experience the beauty of the decorations, and to sense for a moment something of the glory and beauty of God. Our current Financial outlook is not as bad as we feared it might be at the beginning of the year, however it remains true that our costs are rising faster than our income, and we continue to face a difficult financial situation, and remain too dependent on the generosity of a few.

We again celebrated St Mary's Patronal Festival in August. The weather was not kind to us on the Saturday, and we were forced to picnic in the church, but on Sunday we held a Service of Evensong and Benediction which was very well-attended and which we plan to repeat this year. The monthly Saturday Eucharist at St Mary's continues to be a good opportunity to worship in the church that was the centre of the parish for our predecessors. This year we undertook a Rogationtide Procession up the tow path, ending in Evensong at St Mary's. This was very enjoyable and well-supported, but we learnt that we need to allow a bit more time for it in 2011! The Friends continue tirelessly to support St Mary's and to care for the churchyard: thank you to them.

We held another Vicarage Garden Party this year. Again, this was very enjoyable. Lots of cake, a fair bit of wine, and even some sunshine! (The less said about the garden, the better!)

Over the year, we have hosted a number of events, services and concerts, some for old friends like the Linsdale Singers, others coming to us for the first time for a while, such as the Leighton Buzzard Youth Theatre, who gave a memorable and moving performance of Godspell. We again hosted the Battle of Britain Service, and in November the Bereavement Group organised their Service of Remembrance that once more provided comfort to a large number of those bereaved in our parish.

Another new Team venture was the Prayer Cascade, a chain of people available to pray for those in need: this complements our own Prayer Tree, whose petitions we continue to remember at the Eucharist once a month, and the work of all those who pray for our parish day by day and week by week, and on special occasions such as the Walsingham Pilgrimage – again this latter was a very enjoyable and rewarding time.

The Music Group have gone from strength to strength, and we were also helped, while Tony was unwell, by a number of other organists from around and about to whom our thanks are due. I am glad that Tony is feeling a little better and is back with us again. My thanks go to him, and to the Choir, for their dedication and care for our worship.

As ever, much of the life of our Parish beats away often unseen, except by those directly involved: I think of for example the Theology Group; our Elm Lodge Visitor Team; the Busy Bees; the Outreach Group; our Sidesmen; our Office volunteers; the Flower arrangers; and our Church cleaning teams and many other often unsung workers have all supported our common life and worship and we owe all of them our thanks. I also would especially like to thank the members of the PCC for their support, and especially our Churchwardens John and Ian, and Vernon and Carolyn, our Treasurer and Secretary. I must, too, thank Wyn, Russell, Ian, Pat and Mike for their support in worship and teaching.

In conclusion, as I look back on 2010, I see many positive signs of the Kingdom of God moving among us. There are exciting challenges facing us, and already 2011 has seen change of all sorts. My prayer for us is that we continue to face the future with hope and joy, secure in God's love and confident in His will.

Fr Bernard

## **Churchwardens' Report**

This report from the Church wardens covers the period 1st January to 31<sup>st</sup> December 2010 and relates to the churchwardens responsibilities for St Barnabas' Church and grounds, the Hall, cottage and St Mary's Church Old Linslade and its churchyard.

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

There has been no capital expenditure in the church this year. The Church has been well used for concerts, carol services and community activities as well as regular and occasional services.

We had a visit from the archdeacon this year and he found St Barnabas and St Mary's in good order. He passed on his thanks to the members of the church for their hard work and support.

The first part of the work resulting from the quinquennial report will begin early in 2011, when the weather improves.

Nick Moore has been working on the clock chimes, so that they do not strike between 11pm and 7am. He was not helped when the weather froze the mechanism.

During the cold snap the church has been a little chilly. This is because our boiler is not designed to cope with such extremes of weather.

Repairs to the insulation strips on the Link doors have been carried out, as have repairs to the locking mechanism on the fire door.

Towards the end of the year the hall restoration fund was close to the target required to start making large grant applications. Well done the fund raising committee.

We do need a few more sidemen. Offers to serve just once a month will be greatly appreciated and will relieve those that have to cover twice a month. This is a most important piece of work within the church, greeting visitors and new comers and training can be given.

We are also concerned about the finances and the cost of the repairs that still need doing.

At St Mary's we have few problems and the friends of St Mary's keep the place turning over nicely. We propose to install two new bench seats in the grounds this year.

Our thanks go to all who have helped keep our two churches looking good and working well throughout the year.

John Deighton & Ian Woodward (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. 4 members are elected each year for a 3 year period, there being 12 elected members in total plus 3 Deanery Synod Members. Occasionally members are co-opted to fill vacancies not filled at the APCM. At its first meeting following the APCM, PCC appointments are approved to serve until the next APCM.

During the year 2010, the following served as members of the PCC.

#### Ex Officio

Revd. Bernard Minton	Team Vicar
Revd. Wyn Jones	Assistant Priest
Prof. Russell Stannard	Reader (co-opted)
Mrs Pat Faulkner	Reader (co-opted)
Mr Mike Finney	Reader (co-opted from March 2010)
Mr Nick Moore	Churchwarden (to May 2010)
Mr John Deighton	Church warden
Mr Ian Woodward	Churchwarden (from May 2010)

#### Elected members

Mr Nick Moore	Deanery Synod Member elected 2008 for 3 years
Mr Simon Soper	Deanery Synod Member elected 2008 for 3 years
Mr Ian Woodward	Deanery Synod Member elected 2008 for 3 years
Mrs Carol Oakman	Elected 2008 for 3 years
Mrs Sarah Woodward	Elected 2008 for 3 years
Mrs Fran Morrow	Elected 2008 for 3 years
Mrs Janet Miller	Elected 2009 for 3 years
Mrs Carolyn Birch	Elected 2009 for 3 years
Mr Vernon Smith	Elected 2009 for 3 years
Mrs Maureen Gadsby	Elected 2010 for 3 years
Mrs Vicki Faiers	Elected 2010 for 3 years
Mrs Miranda Soper	Elected 2010 for 3 years
Mr Bruce Benedickter	Elected 2010 for 1 year
Mr Chris Martin	Co-opted in May 2010 for 2 years

### **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 2009 it continued to focus its fundraising to the Hall project.

## **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 2010, the period when the diocese collects attendance figures on behalf of central church offices, varied from 89 to 101 adults, and 10 under 16 year olds. Total attendance on Easter Day was 175, and on Christmas Eve and Christmas Day 420. The Crib Service on Christmas Eve again proved to be very popular. During the year 25 baptisms, 14 marriages and 21 funerals were held in the church.

At the APCM held on 18th April 2010, John Vickers, the electoral roll officer, gave a report on the electoral roll. There were 11 additions, 4 deletions and the roll is now 172. 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 6 occasions during 2010. In January and February there were 18 members, from March to May 19 members and from July to December there were 20 members. Average attendance at PCC meetings was 16 members with the lowest attendance 11 and the highest 18. The standing committee met on six occasions. The main issues under discussion have been as follows:

### **Buildings**

There have been discussions about quotations for the work identified by the Quinquennial report and how to finance the work involved. We have applied for a faculty to do the repairs and it was decided to delay starting the work until next spring.

PCC approved a plaque being put on the hall wall as part of the Greensand Trust "Sands of Time" project.

There have been complaints to PCC of the conditions in the car park during bad weather, the lack of heat in the church and the noise from the church clock chimes during the night.. These complaints were addressed by the church wardens.

Following the visit from the Fire safety officer, the Fire Risk Assessment was revised for St Barnabas, St Mary's and the hall.

PCC have approved the removal of kerb stones at St Mary's and the position of an extra seat.

## **Hall Restoration Project**

This item has been on each agenda during the year. The main focus has been how to get the money to continue and complete the next phase of the project. Several options have been investigated including requesting loans from interested parties in order to have sufficient funds to apply for the larger grants. A series of newsletters have been distributed for the congregation and other hall users. The PCC would like to express its heartfelt thanks to the Hall Fundraising committee for all its hard work throughout the year.

## **Child Protection**

The Child Protection policy was reviewed and all necessary CRB checks have been completed under the new scheme. St Barnabas had to register with the Churches Child Protection Advisory Service that involved agreeing to 3 documents – “Parish of Linslade Equal Opportunities Statement”, “Criminal records Bureau Code of Practice”, and “Handling, Use, Secure storage, retention and disposal of disclosures and disclosure information”. We received a CCPAS membership pack with lists of available resources.

## **Finance**

The church’s financial situation continues to be a regular discussion item and the PCC are continually looking at ways to improve the financial position. (See also Treasurer’s report) Our reports were sent to the Charity Commission as required.

## **Other items**

The PCC receives reports from the Deanery Synod, Churches Together, the Worship Committee and the Stewardship Committee.

Six extra names were approved to be added to the list of Chalice assistants to enable 3 chalices to be in use at the 10.00am service on Sundays. This list was approved by the Bishop for 3 years.

The PCC looked at our Mission Action Plan and listed our strengths, weaknesses and opportunities to discuss with the congregation.

The PCC was pleased to support Mike Finney as he completed his training to become a Reader. He was licensed on 20<sup>th</sup> March and the PCC purchased a cassock for him in recognition of his achievement.

The PCC supported the Street Pastors scheme and the “Messy Churches” initiative.

The Summer and Christmas fairs were a success and the hard work involved was recognised by the PCC.

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***

I present the accounts for 2010, the detailed accounts are provided at the back of this Annual Report.

Savings have been made this year on utility costs, along with cheaper tariffs negotiated for 2010/11, savings of £3000 have been achieved. This has offset the reduction in our giving.

Our planned giving has shown a reduction of £1700, as during the year have lost some valued members, regular givers have increased through the year, we currently have at the year end 85 regular planned givers (includes individuals or family groups), although the projected giving for 2011 shows a fall of £3000 (around £55 per week) unless giving is increased we will be in a deficit situation.

The running costs for the Church are in the region of £1500 per week, The Parish Share of £52367 was paid in full, this being £2870 higher than last year.

Gift aided giving has allowed us to reclaim £15800 from the Inland Revenue in the past year, this is reduced by £1000 over last year by the reduction in giving, although changes in Tax relief 2011 will reduce this further by around £2500.

Our General Fund at year end was £30360, compared to £31437 in 2009. In addition the Hall has generated extra income from Hire fees and the balance of £4230 has been transferred to the Hall Restoration fund, also £9000 from our General income has been set aside for Quinquennial repairs required on our Church building during 2011.

The PCC agreed to match the Fundraising of the Outreach Group as in previous years and have matched the £830 raised during 2010, for our 3 Outreach Charities.

In conclusion I would like to thank all of those who have assisted with the financial matters in the parish, and especially, Chris Hart and Tony Birch for counting the weekly collections and banking money, Chris Martin, for agreeing to be Assistant Treasurer, David Darvill for the Hall Income and John Deighton for recording FWO envelopes, Katrina Boyce for her continued support in examining the accounts this year.

Vernon Smith, PCC Treasurer

## ***Deanery Synod Report***

On the 25<sup>th</sup> January 2010, Bishop Alan gave an inspirational address to the synod. The meeting also reviewed and accepted a Review of the Deanery. This gives a brief description of the diverse parishes with a mix of villages and larger conurbations. Meeting parish share is a common problem as is the upkeep of buildings many of which were built in the 13<sup>th</sup> century. The impact of the Milton Keynes and South Midlands Sub-Regional Strategy will have a major impact on the deanery as it envisages more than 25,000 houses by the end of the decade. We will need to work out how to reach out to such a major influx of people.

The May synod was cancelled but we were informed by email about progress on women bishops. It is expected to surface at deanery level in the first half of 2011.

The October synod included a frank presentation on diocesan finances by David Nye, Chair of St Albans Diocesan Board of Finance. The diocese spends 87% of its expenditure on parochial ministry and receives 84% of its income from parish shares. The diocesan reserves cover about 4 weeks of expenditure. Giving in the St Alban's diocese at 2.9% is below the national average of all dioceses of 3.4%.

The synod also discussed Mission Action Planning which is an initiative to get parishes and especially PCCs to examine what are the critical priorities over the next 5 years.

Simon Soper, Linslade Deanery Synod rep.

## ***Stewardship Report***

In response to the financial difficulties facing our church, the committee launched a brief stewardship campaign towards the end of the year. It was the subject of a sermon delivered on 12<sup>th</sup> December 2010. This was accompanied by a leaflet explaining that we faced a large bill for repairs to the fabric of the church. It went on to point out that although there had been an encouraging increase in the number of people in the envelope scheme, overall giving had actually declined due to the departure of certain generous givers. The Parish Magazine had a special edition in January devoted to the theme of stewardship. All in all we need an increase of 60% in giving in order to meet our financial commitments.

This cannot be achieved by everyone increasing their giving by that percentage. Some are already giving sacrificially and it would not be fair on them. The problem lies with those members of our church who have so far not responded to what the Holy Spirit is prompting them to do. Although many of them, to their credit, give of their time and talents unstintingly, they have yet to accept the need for a root-and-branch rethink as to what their faith in Christ requires of them when it comes to supporting the work of the church financially.

Russell Stannard

## ***Bellringers***

We have continued in “busy mode” during 2010, including extending our repertoire by ringing Surprise Major Practices each month before Evensong.

The Thursday late afternoon training sessions for the youngsters have lost a few members but continue with the participants making good progress. Some are now up to Sunday morning ringing standard.

In February our youngsters were awarded their Grade Certificates at Vandyke School followed by a party with their parents. All organised by Lindsay Brett. They took part in the District junior striking competition at Oakley in May.

The band was represented at the District Annual Meeting, where we also rang at Barton and Flitton. In March we came a creditable third in the District Striking Competition.

April saw us saying goodbye to Phil and Jane Dunn who have moved to live in Devon.

Our Tower Outing in May took us to villages in Cambridgeshire, starting at Hemingford Grey and ending at Long Stanton. A long day, busy and blessed with glorious sunshine – all organised by Janice Robinson! Later in the month we hosted the District Training Day at Linslade.

The “Connew Wedding” in June coincided with the Summer fair so we were able to combine ringing for that with adding to the festivities on the field.

We have made a conscious effort to remain in touch with our “old friends” in the Central Bucks Branch of ODG and some of us joined in their outing around North London. Magnificent

Churches, built in an age of greater affluence in that part of London, but most now sadly in need of repairs and TLC.

The Christmas Tree Festival gave us an opportunity to invent our own version of Christmas fantasies which we entitled "Peace on Earth".....a traditionally snowy village scene, appropriately matched by actual snow outside.

There were bookings for five bands of visiting ringers, but two had to cancel due to inhospitable weather. We rang for six Weddings; completed three Quarter Peals - one being Natalie Brett's first ( at the age of 15 years ) and another was Louisa Smith's first ( at the grand old age of 17 years ).

As ever, a Tower Captains thanks are due to the team --- Lynne, Lyndsay and Nick for their patience, coaching and hard work; to Jan Cornfoot as my Deputy and to Nick (again) for taking on the task of Steeple Keeper.

Heather Darvill

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

Our Walsingham Mass and benediction was celebrated throughout the year.

In May we went to Walsingham on a Day Pilgrimage. Members from All Saints and friends joined us on this occasion.

During the summer the Cell raised £703.20 for the Hall Restoration Fund. This exceeded all our expectations and we thank all members that worked so hard to make this a wonderful sum in just 6 months.

Our pilgrimage took place in October. Fr Bernard led us this year and we thank him for this.

During Benediction in November we admitted Joan McDowell as a new member to the Cell.

Welcome Joan! Our membership now totals 26.

Maureen Gadsby

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

The Choir at St Barnabas now consists of 8 choristers, and we are grateful for the loyal attendance of our members who collectively have contributed 230 years to their service within our Church.

We attend two Sunday services per week (Parish Communion and Evensong) and occasional weekday services as required. There are also weddings when we are requested to sing. Every month we sing a Festal Evensong to stimulate interest in choral singing for our members. This normally consists of a setting to the Magnificat and Nunc Dimittis, and also an Anthem appropriate to the Church's season. We usually sing a short motet or anthem at the Parish Eucharist and suitable music during Passiontide.

Evensong has been sung weekly in our Church since its consecration, and the Choir has maintained the tradition ourselves during the last interregnum. There are occasional choral events such as those sponsored by the Royal School of Church Music to which we attend if within reasonable distance of Linslade.

Choir Practice is normally held on Friday evenings at 7.00pm for one hour. Anyone who wishes to join our Choir should contact Tony Edwards our Organist/Choirmaster.

John Vickers, Choir Secretary

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

The Friends of St Mary's continues in much the same track that we have followed for quite a few years now. The work parties continue on the first Saturday of every month either inside or outside. Our usual events took place, starting with the opening of the church on Sunday afternoons from Easter throughout the summer until the end of September. We had a Rogation Service and Evensong led by Father Bernard in May. We had a Strawberry Tea on June 6<sup>th</sup> followed a fortnight later by a Cream Tea. St Mary's Patronal Festival was held with a picnic- it was a wet Saturday I seem to recall so the picnic was inside.

In September was Evensong celebrating the Birth of the Virgin Mary.

Our Annual Dinner was at the end of November and was enjoyed by all.

The Carols and Readings were in early December with the last two years being more popular than latterly, much to our satisfaction.

Our concert had to be cancelled owing to the very heavy snowfalls, much to the disappointment of everyone. It is a great event and looked forward to by us all.

Father Bernard holds Morning Prayer and a Eucharist on the first Saturday of every month.

As usual we make a plea for anyone who can help to join us at the work parties on the first Saturday of the month. Younger blood is needed!

Sheila Deighton

## ***Leighton Linslade Churches Together***

This has been a busy year for LLCT.

Open the book – this started in Bedfordshire in 1990 when lower schools were receiving few Bible stories. The Lion Storyteller Bible is used as the base text with the various stories dramatised to suit young children. The scheme was brought to Leighton Buzzard in 2000 and now has three teams in the town with four members in each. They cover three assemblies each week and work across thirteen lower schools. (Stanbridge have now set up their own group). Each school is visited every four to five years. Various items have been made over the years as visual aids and some now need to be replaced/repaired/ improved or added to. New volunteers are also needed.

Books for schools – This year Gilbert Inglefield Middle School received a gift of books.

Street pastors – This was a new initiative for 2010. Leighton Buzzard Street Pastors was formally set up at a meeting on 26th February 2010 and following a period of recruitment and training the Team of 15 began work on the streets on Friday 1<sup>st</sup> October. Following the reduction of funding from Bedfordshire Police in October, the LLCT agreed to provide an emergency grant of £250. It was suggested Street Pastors should contact local churches direct to see what additional help could be provided.

Town Development – During the last year there have been several housing development applications in and around the town that the group has continued to monitor.

At a meeting on 9<sup>th</sup> April 2010 the Town development Group agreed to actively work with Voluntary and Community Action (VCA) on the proposed Community House “plot 64” in Billington Grove.

The Southern Development has also raised the need to consider how to engage with the more established estates in this part of the town – ie Billington Park – and the churches will look at how more ecumenical activities can be taken forward.

Lenten Course – Over fifty people attended the course in 2010, the most for several years which was encouraging, since some opted for the St Albans Diocese Lent Challenge instead.

LIFE Exhibition – The exhibition was very successful with over 650 children from eight schools, plus a Youth Club, a Cub Pack and a Scout Troup attending. The exhibition was also open for a number of hours on the Saturday to enable families and others to come and visit. LLCT made a donation towards the cost.

Good Friday procession- Over 200 people joined the procession and service at the cross.

Churches Together Songs of Praise – The service was held at Trinity Methodist Church on Sunday 25<sup>th</sup> April. It was a very good evening with the Salvation Army Singers and choirs from All Saints and Trinity.

Christian Ecology Group – Trinity Methodist Church hosted the annual Eco Fair on 16<sup>th</sup> October. The theme this year was Food and the Environment and although the event went well with many participants and helpers, outside attendance was poor.

Praise in the Park –despite the efforts of the Salvation Army Band, only thirty people attended. This was possibly due to the poor weather. It was agreed not to hold “Praise in the Park” in 2011.

Advent Speakers – Reverend Iain Lane held three evenings during Advent looking at three pieces of well known art. Attendance was less than expected, probably due to the adverse weather.

Publicity – Faith Matters appears in the LBO on the last Tuesday of each month and publicises events in the local churches.

LL Churches Police Group – The Group is made up of LLCT member churches and other churches and Christian groups in the town. The purpose of meeting with the police is to deepen our understanding of local policing and crime prevention and to see what support and assistance local Christian organisations can provide to them and for the Police to have a better understanding of what facilities and support we have.

LL Homeless Service – This continues to provide much needed emergency support to those in need. In the present economic climate this need is likely to increase.

Carole Dixon

## **Outreach**

The Outreach group is a small committee of 7 members, plus an extended group of willing people who help with various activities.

We have only met formally three 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. Our international charity is “Friends of the Mombasa Children” whose vision and mission is to give support to children and young people in the Mombasa District, our national project is “Kids Out” whose headquarters is in Leighton Buzzard, and our local project is the Leighton Linslade Homeless Service.

Our fundraising this year has consisted of a Lent lunch, a harvest supper with a beetle drive, an Advent lunch, and carol singing at Leighton Buzzard Station. With the help of the PCC who matched our efforts, we sent £540.00 to each of our charities. 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, in the wider community.

Carolyn Birch

## ***Parish Hall Project***

This year has been one of consolidation, mainly concentrated on the efforts to raise more Grant funding - not easy in the current financial climate. The accounts will show that the Restoration Fund now stands at £80K – a significant increase on the total at December 2009, but tantalisingly short of the £100K we need to support applications for the balance we seek to get to our target of £200K to complete the revised project.

There has been a stringent revision of the original plans for the remaining works, partly to meet economic necessity and based on actual experience of the identified needs of the community.

The highlights this year have been the support from the PCC and congregation to complete the project, despite the other equally deserving calls on our financial resources; the very successful Christmas Tree Festival (some £2000 raised); the ongoing support from our stalwart friends the Linsdale Singers (whose concerts have now raised close on £2500 for the hall); the donation from the Friends of St Mary's; the agreement by LORC (our Tuesday dog training friends) to pay the majority of their 2011 rent as an up-front lump sum; the continuing endeavours of, among others, the Walsingham Cell, Chris and Marilyn selling coffee mugs and many others contributing to a steady rise in the financial position.

Thanks to “unsung” work by Steve Tyson we now have a modern website, kept up to date, attracting much attention and bookings as well as giving information on progress and facilities available. He is also compiling and editing our revived newsletter.

Hall utilisation has continued to increase, and with it the total revenue. This has enabled meaningful repayments of the loan for the central heating installation (how wise that has proved this winter!) and a balance to be built up to cover future maintenance costs. **For the first time in many years the hall is now a contributor to the overall finances of our Church family.**

Expenditure has increased, mostly for heating and lighting.

We have a growing waiting list of organisations seeking to make their home with us, justifying our vision that we are meeting a genuine community need, and of our intention to complete the refurbishment and provide the extra facilities to cope.

Obviously the project is taking a lot longer than was originally intended, but we are still moving forward in our stated aim to ***“be at the heart of our community and working in partnership with community organisations”***

Dave Darvill

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

Reflecting back over last years Annual Report I concluded with the thought that 2010 would be a challenge for the Branch to continue as a sustainable Branch.

However, members are very dedicated to Mothers' Union and in spite of not being able to form a committee to organise a calendar of events, the Branch held the usual monthly meetings with a series of interesting and varies speakers.

Members have also continued to support the "Mother and Toddler" group twice a month.

The monthly Corporate Communion with Coffee in the Choir Vestry continues and is welcome by those that attend. The financial contributions made help to support fundraising for Mothers' Union. The members have continued to participate in Services and Events with neighbouring MU Branches in the St Albans' Deanery.

There is also the opportunity for members to attend the monthly evening with the Leighton Buzzard Branch held at All Saints Church.

Sadly, the Branch has an ageing membership and depletes by the year, this in turn does not attract younger members. Not being able to form a committee hinders Branch Organisation and Development.

Mothers' Union issue a monthly "e" letter on line. This is now posted on the Notice Board in the Church porch available for the congregation to read. We pray that it will be read by younger members who will learn about the excellent work Mothers' Union do as an Organisation worldwide and would wish to carry on the good work locally.

Vicki Faiers. (Retiring Branch Member)

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

At present, we are a band of fifteen servers but in reality only fourteen. One works shifts and seldom knows too far in advance what her shifts will be. With two committed to assisting at the 8 o'clock Holy Communion service, this leaves twelve 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 just adequate for current needs, new 'blood' is needed as one starts at university in October and will only be available during the holidays. This year Mike Finney has decided that the roles of Reader and of a server are not compatible and has felt it necessary to step down from the latter role. We have recently welcomed Ese Otobo to our number which has made our average age marginally lower than it was but, with five of us fast approaching, or have passed, our allotted biblical life span the situation could become critical at short notice.

Immediately before Christmas and Easter, we have a high level clean of the church. Gill Peerman can still spot a cobweb at 300 yards! 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. The annual Server's Supper in the Hunt Hotel in the quite post Christmas months of January and February has now developed in the 'Sanctuary Supper'. This year again we welcomed the servers and partners from All Saints making a party of 36.

Following the passing of Avril Gunner, Carolyn Birch has undertaken the washing and ironing of the small linen i.e. purificators, corporals and lavabo towels. Frances Morrow and Gill Peerman

attend to the washing of the albs. Sandra Moore washes and irons 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 which are made up into palm crosses by the Barnacles.

Chris Hart

## ***Sunday School***

This has been a happy and productive year for our Sunday School, beginning with a move to our new (temporary) home in the Hall Committee Room. In spite of having to share this with other groups we have managed to make it our own special place, decorated with colourful pictures showing off a lot of the work we've been doing throughout the year. We all very much appreciate having our own Sunday School space and from time to time have opened the door to let other people admire the artwork!

Our core membership has increased from 5 in 2009 to 7 in 2010, with 2 more joining us at the start of 2011. This is, I think, a tribute to the teachers, who all work very hard at making lessons fun and relaxed, with plenty of time for chatter and jokes and a totally non-judgemental approach to the children's efforts. We try to make it as unlike regular school as possible, whilst still teaching the Bible stories we have all grown up with.

We made our Mothering Sunday posies in March, followed by our Pick-a-Lollipop and Lucky Dip stall at the Summer Fair. Our Chocolate Tombola at the Christmas Fair was well patronized and our Snowmen Tree welcomed visitors to the Christmas Tree Festival. As usual, we made the Christingle oranges and presented a beautiful nativity play at the Christmas Eve Crib Service. As always, Sunday School continued throughout the Summer holidays, even when attendance was down to 1 or 2 children. We feel that being Church-based rather than school-based; we should keep going all year round, in the same way as the Church keeps going. So, on every Sunday when there is no All-Age Eucharist, there will be a Sunday School. We take children from the ages of 4 to 8 and would warmly welcome more children. There is no pressure, nothing to sign up to and no need to commit to anything. Just a friendly invitation to come and have some fun. We'd love to see you!

Miranda Soper  
Sunday School Leader

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

It has again been a very busy but rewarding year for the Fair Committee, which met numerous times throughout the year to ensure the best possible organisation for both the summer and Christmas Fairs. This included organising jumble sales prior to each event to raise funds for Fair expenses. We are pleased for the continuing community involvement and again would like to thank St. Barnabas Football Festival for taking part throughout the day at our Summer Fair. Thanks also to the children from Linslade Lower School, the Linslade Ringcraft and Obedience Club and the Leanne Hughes School of Dancing for their contributions to the day's entertainment. The weather remained kind and with everyone's involvement we were blessed with a successful and fun-filled day.

The Christmas Fair was another great success, despite the very cold, wet and windy weather. It was wonderful to see so many of you supporting this event and again thanks to Father Christmas for popping in to see the children.

The Fair Committee also took on the responsibility of organising the Christmas Tree Festival in early December, (an event shared with All Saints Church and falling to us as host Church this year). Particular thanks go to Carolyn Birch for all the time and hard work that she put into the organisation of this event and the resulting Festival brought much joy and pleasure to the many visitors. It was opened by the Mayor on Friday, followed by the Linslade Lower School singers and then our organist Anthony Edwards, all contributing to a great start to the Festival. Saturday's full programme included David Cox and Laurie Swadling, the U3A choir, Linslade Guides choir, South Beds Youth Voices and our own St. Barnabas Music Group, our thanks to all who took part. The evening was rounded off by a wonderful concert of Christmas music by the Linsdale Singers. The proceeds of the Festival were given to the Hall Restoration Fund.

The Fair committee wish to thank those many volunteers who help us at these events and without whom we would not have the success we do. We would also like to thank all of you who come along and support us.

The Fair Committee – Carolyn Birch, Mary Johnson, Barbara Marshall, Sandra Moore and Carol Oakman.

### ***Busy Bees***

Busy Bees continues to thrive and Saturday afternoons are a lovely mix of work and fellowship. Last April we presented the Mother and Toddler's Group with two large blankets of knitted squares for the children to sit on at their meetings. We continue to knit items for use at the Luton and Dunstable Premature Babies Unit, including tiny teddy bears, one for each little patient. Last Christmas Eve the staff there was delighted to receive four more boxes of garments and teddies – we would like here to thank those who are unable to join us but continue to knit in their own homes. If anyone else would like to join in this ongoing work, we have special patterns available. Last July we again participated at Elm Lodge Summer Fete and the Busy Bees handicraft stall sales enabled us to present them with 50% of our proceeds.

We are always pleased to see new faces (and gentlemen are as welcome as ladies), it is not a commitment to come each week, but it is surprising how much we manage to make during the year and we welcome the chance to learn new skills and share ideas, some of which come from our honorary overseas member and friend, Marlene Richardson, who still keeps in touch and hopes to see us again later this year.

Sandra Moore

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

The aim of the Wednesday House Group is to come together and worship God in an informal environment as well as providing Christian love, support and friendship to all its members.

We met twice a month throughout the year for prayer, meditation, spiritual reflection and bible study. During the past year we have completed three courses - "Living for the King", "Relationship Building" and an Advent course called "Promises, Promises". We also celebrated a Christian Seder meal together before Easter.

As a diverse group of all ages we often meet socially at various times when our children and grandchildren can be fully included. We celebrated two milestone birthdays this year as well as two New Year Eve parties – one for the children and one for the adults.

Jayne Humphreys

## ***Julian Meeting***

A Julian meeting is held on the last Wednesday of every month. This is an opportunity to spend 20 – 25 minutes in complete silence reflecting either on what we are led into or something that is on our mind.

We are a small group of 4 to 5 people, and although this isn't meant to be for a large group, we would welcome a few more members.

We take it in turns to lead the group but this is not compulsory.

If this is something that you feel you could benefit from, please speak to Mike or Fr Bernard.

Mike Finney

## ***Theological Study Group***

The Theology Group is still going strong, with eleven people attending most meetings, which are usually on the third Thursday of the month.

We study a wide range of books, sometimes finding we have taken on more than we can chew when a dictionary can come in handy! We take turns to lead the discussion by reading the relevant chapter beforehand, looking up any references and points not understood. The less wise amongst us find more to wrestle with! We try to condense it down as it can be difficult to cover a whole chapter in its entirety in one evening.

Hopefully everyone will have read the relevant chapter and sometimes there are some lively discussions which often provoke us along byways!

It is an enjoyable and interesting evening in good company and a good way of learning more about our faith.

Sheila Deighton

## ***Sunday Barnacles Report***

Our numbers have remained constant this year, but still only a small group of just five members, albeit regular in attendance and excellent in active participation! Jayne and Derek have continued as leaders; much of the work has fallen on Jayne as Derek was out of action for number of weeks after coming out of hospital.

Meetings in the Barnacles room in the Cottage on Sunday mornings have continued to be active, busy and sometimes noisy. Much has again been achieved. Before the summer holidays we focused on Christian Aid Week and then on St Paul and St Barnabas for a number of weeks. St Paul found himself in the familiar trauma of a live active shipwreck and being marooned on an island. Once he was safely escorted to Rome the seas become calmer; the autumn content of Barnacles sessions, up to Christmas, traced the line of Jesus' ancestors and King David through an exploration of some major figures in the Old Testament. Now, after Christmas we are exploring key New Testament people in Jesus' life and death.

We have also embarked on individual projects creating stained glass windows (real plate glass for safety and genuine glass paints). Careful concentration, good eye-hand co-ordination, high work ethic have been the hallmarks of the Barnacles' output. The windows will be dedicated to God, including Simon's modern lead work shapes, Rebecca's fine Bells, Ari's live angel, Xenia's detailed Epiphany panel and Emma's transparent Nativity scene. Barnacles have led prayers and read in church at the All Age Eucharist, along with us participating in the Music group. They have shown increasing composure and confidence, even if occasionally providing some anxious moments to ourselves as Leaders.

Barnacles have also paid a day visit to Cadbury's World in Birmingham. There we not only saw the process of making the daily chocolate we all know and love, we were also taken on a history of Cadbury's company development via full scale model shops, advertisements, and even a train ride. Not least important, there was a valuable opportunity to understand the great 19th philanthropic vision of the Cadbury and Fry families. We could see the social significance of their care for their workforce through the houses, sport and social facilities built at the village of Bourneville.

As Leaders of Barnacles we look forward to the continued progress of Barnacles in the future. We do, however some have serious concerns. In the past Barnacles has been way for young people to learn of Jesus Christ, some still serve their Faith and others remain in touch with Church, some have come to St Barnabas to be married, or now take their children to church. But will this sort of thing continue? Is it time for a Review of Barnacles by the Church? What can be done to increase our much smaller numbers - we need suggestions. Will there be provision as good as present for our group when the Cottage is refurbished – what provision will then be made? And what provision will our Church make as we, Barnacles leaders, come to end our work?

For the immediate future we wish Emma every success in her forthcoming visit to the 22<sup>nd</sup> World Scout Jamboree in Sweden later this year. (Some sponsorship still required)

Jayne Humphreys & Derek May. (Leaders).

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

I am able to report yet another year in which St Barnabas Church excelled in its efforts for Christian Aid Week 2010. We numbered 47 collectors, some of whom covered more than one round and some who were new. No surprise then that we maintained the very high totals of previous years. Our total was £5542.86, with £1832 of this amount attracting further Gift Aid at 25%. A successful year indeed. The overall total for Leighton -Linslade was also maintained (£13,524.90 including Gift Aid). Some churches did lose ground, it is clear, though, that the Churches of the Ouzel Valley Team Ministry played a major part in achieving the overall total. Christian Aid wrote to us to say a heartfelt 'thank you' and to acknowledge the consistency with which over many years we have played an outstanding part in achieving the overall National total of over £ 15 million.

During the past year there have been several major disasters where the Disasters Emergency Committee (of which Christian Aid is a member) has been forced to appeal for urgent support from UK citizens. At St Barnabas we have answered these appeals and it should never be forgotten that some in our congregation also give to Christian Aid on a planned monthly Direct Debit or Standing Order basis. This kind of support is especially valuable as it facilitates reliable funds for mounting fieldwork, education and campaign projects in Christian Aid. If anybody would like help to plan their giving in this way, or even when making a Will, please ask me for further details.

As I reported last year every penny counts at a time when like other charities the credit crunch is damaging financial resources and some winding down of previously funded projects seems inevitable, as well as redundancies among Christian Aid staff. So can St Barnabas excel again this year? I feel sure we can and will do so as part of the Body of the Compassionate Christ. **Christian Aid Week 2011 is Sunday May 15th – Saturday May 21<sup>st</sup>. Please stand by for action!**

Just before Christmas, on a very cold and windy night, I found myself incarcerated in the Tower of London beside Maggi and Russell Stannard. 'Good job' you may say. 'It's about time people like that were locked up!' Be that as it may, we all three did escape to continue to bother you at St Barnabas. The occasion was a special National meeting organised by Christian Aid, held in the chapel at the Tower. The speaker was the Director of Christian Aid, Loretta Minghella. She outlined possible strategies to cope with the current new financial circumstances. In essence appeal is to be made to the bankers and other corporate finance leaders for help. Loretta's previous contacts,

acknowledged experience and known acumen in the world of finance, offer serious grounds for believing such help will be forthcoming. One purpose of the meeting was to provide a welcome invitation for financiers to join with the work of Christian Aid.  
So let us pray for the continued and expanding work of Christian Aid in all its parts.

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

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

Baptism Preparation and Wedding Preparation continue to rotate between the churches in the Team. Representatives from each Church attend each meeting in order to meet the candidates and participate in leading the sessions.

The Bereavement Group meet bimonthly at St. Barnabas Church starting with Eucharistic Worship. Bereaved families are visited and given a copy of a Church magazine by a member of the Group. The annual Bereavement Service held in November was again well attended. This was followed by refreshments in the Parish Hall.

Wyn Jones.

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

This year has seen a steady increase in numbers. We meet on the first and third Wednesdays of each month in term time from 2.00 to 3.00pm (setting up from 1.30pm).

The children enjoy ringing the church bell before a short service in church followed by refreshments and activities in the hall.

At the beginning of the year we were presented with two beautifully knitted blankets from the Busy Bee group. These are used during our service in church and are much appreciated by the adults and the children.

This year, we sadly said goodbye to two of our long serving helpers, Wendy and Irene. Wendy has been helping at Baby Barnacles for 18 years and Irene for 24 years! We also said goodbye to our children who are due to start school this term.

We welcomed three new helpers, Joan, Jenny and Christine. New helpers are always welcome and you can go on a rota if you can't help regularly.

Isabel is on sick leave but it is hoped that she will be able to rejoin us soon; we wish her well.

Our picnic at the end of the summer term and our Christmas party are always good fun. Father Christmas took time out of his busy schedule to visit the children again and was treated to a chorus of "When Santa got stuck up the chimney"!

We are grateful for the pastoral care and support from Fr Bernard and Rev Wyn Jones.

Mary Johnson

### ***Wives Fellowship***

Our January meeting was cancelled due to the extremely bad weather. In February we had a talk by Mr Chris Summer entitled "Revolt of the Councillors" which related to the rate demand placed upon the rate payers of the London Borough of Poplar in 1921. The councillors felt this demand was unfair and when they refused to pay, 30 members of the Council including 5 women were sent to prison. A talk by Anna Conte on Stained glass was heard in March and in April we heard about Caring for hedgehogs by Jackie Burke, plus our silent auction that raised £34.20 for the funds. In May we had a talk by Linda Gransby on scrapbooking, very popular, and in June an interesting, amusing, anecdotal talk by the author Melvin Rees.

Our summer outing in July was to Garyeanna Alpaca Farm at Cosgrove, followed by a meal at the Barley Mow. We do not meet in August.

September saw a talk and slide show by Mr R Davis entitled "One foot in the water" about the Grand Union Canal. In October we were entertained with a concert by Junction 14, the only female barber shop singers in Milton Keynes. In November we had our AGM and a pot luck supper, and in December we were at the Hunt Hotel for a meal, table top quiz and a super raffle.

We took part in the Christmas Tree Festival in St Barnabas Church. Our theme was the poem "The Christmas Alphabet", and very splendid it looked too.

This year Wives Fellowship donated £150 to the Church Hall Restoration Fund.

We meet in the Church Hall on the first Wednesday of every month at 7.30pm. New members are always welcome.

Linda Gibbs, secretary

## ***Parish Magazine***

The Parish Magazine has been published in this Parish of Linslade for over one hundred years. I have several copies of old editions and the earliest one that I possess is for July 1896! At that time it contained an insert "The Dawn of Day" and the price was one penny in old money. Now it costs sixty pence (new money)!

Single copies can be purchased from the back of the Church at 60p on the free standing rack at the side of the west door. A yearly subscription can be obtained and the cost is now £5.00 for the year. (11 editions) The Magazine has around 200 regular recipients and will be delivered to your door (for addresses in Linslade) and I herewith express my grateful thanks to our distributors who deliver them month by month. Thank you! There is normally a combined edition of two months during the summer months to give the Editor and its valued contributors a rest during the holiday period! The distributor for the Magazine is Mrs Miranda Soper (378481) who should be contacted by new customers.

It has been my pleasure to act as Editor to the Magazine since the end of 1995 and I hope that you enjoy reading it month by month. I much enjoy producing the Magazine, but confess to being frustrated by insufficient items being handed in for publication, often at the last minute. The cut off date is normally the first Tuesday of the preceding month, but an early submission will be very welcome.

I introduced a coloured cover with a different picture each month in May 2004 to reflect up to date ideas which is supplied by G.J.Palmer of Beccles, Suffolk and I have no control over what picture is used. The location is normally printed on the back of the cover. I know that some would prefer a picture of our own Church there each month, but I cannot satisfy all tastes and hope you like my humble efforts.

### ***The Magazine is only as good as its contributors.***

I always endeavour to have the Magazine available to distributors on the last Sunday of the preceding month, so keeping to our tight schedule of preparation is vitally important. Could YOU give me something that would be suitable? It doesn't have to be too long; in fact if it will fit into one page or even less of the Magazine, I will welcome it. Can you send your items to the Parish Office, or e-mail to: [linsladeparishoffice@googlemail.org](mailto:linsladeparishoffice@googlemail.org) I will gladly accept hand written items, and will willingly type it out for you, but an early submission in this case would be very welcome.

Thanking you in anticipation.

John Vickers.

