

ST MARY'S NORTHCHURCH

REGISTERED CHARITY 1130418



ANNUAL REPORTS 2014/2015

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INTRODUCTION

The life of St Mary's is varied and involves many groups that link in with the community in a variety of ways. These reports give an insight into what goes on and I am extremely grateful for the time and commitment that is put in by so many people. A key part of church life is welcome and inclusion. We worship a loving and generous God and that is something that will shape how the church welcomes and encourages all ages.

I hope you enjoy reading about what goes on and please let me know if you would like to know more or be more fully involved.

Jonathan Gordon

CHURCHWARDENS' REPORT

Firstly, we would like to offer our thanks to all the ministry team at St Marys for the weekly contribution they make to our spiritual lives. We are also conscious that there is also much work that goes on behind the scenes in terms of contributing to the community via input to the school and pastoral visits. These combine to make St Mary's a real focal point for Northchurch, Berkhamsted and beyond.

During the year, Andrew Reay, found it difficult to remain in post as our treasurer due to his overseas business commitments. Soon after the church fête Richard North, the previous treasurer, stepped in to sort out the banking and recording of the accounts.

Richard has had to pick up the accounts mid-term with a significant backlog and succeeded in producing a balanced set of accounts for the year to 31 December by the end of the first week in January. He has also brought the position with our suppliers and the Gift Aid claims up to date. We would like to place on formal record our appreciation to Richard for all his hard work.

In the meantime, Emma McCann kindly offered to take on the treasurer's position and has now formally taken over from Richard. Christopher Talbot-Ponsonby has picked up responsibility for Gift Aid claims from May Smullen. The Wardens would like to thank May for all her dedicated work on the Church finances over many years. The PCC hopes that, by taking steps to lighten the load put on the treasurer, previous problems will not recur.

We have also undertaken a major clean and refit of the organ to restore the workings, of which more later. Jenny Hoare, our organist, had spotted the problems with the organ last year and arranged for an inspection. The result was that we needed to spend a significant sum to affect the repairs. Immediately she set to work to organise fund raising to cover the cost involved.

Jenny worked tirelessly to arrange concerts, the Hymnathon and the auction and with the help of the choir and congregation managed to raise even more money than was required. We now know that the organ has been cleaned and repaired, but further non-urgent work has subsequently been identified. The biggest problem however is that the fault was caused in part by water leaking through the roof. It is therefore proposed that the funds raised in excess of the costs incurred will be retained to address these potential future issues.

We are very grateful to all involved in the fund raising efforts and to all those from the congregation and beyond who contributed to the Organ Fund.

Work on the leaks in the roof had been tackled during the year, but it seems to no avail, as there are continuing problems, albeit relatively minor ones. However given

one of them seems to be affecting the organ, we have made an application to a new government fund for a grant to replace the whole of the roof over the nave.

On the fabric front, we are pleased that the replastering of the north aisle and other areas was completed during the summer and the whole area looks much better. Many people were involved in the reordering of the pews and heating pipes and our thanks go to them.

Many of you will have noticed the new kneeler in front of the altar. Thank you to the Time Out 2 group for both the organisation and fund raising of this.

On the social and fund raising side, it was good year on a number of fronts. The fête was a great success back in the summer, with several new ideas and thanks go to Jonathan , Rachel and the committee for all of their hard work.

Thanks also to all the members of the PCC for all of their hard work and especially thank you to Rosemary and Richard who have so ably stepped into Margaret's and Roger's shoes. We are always pleased to enrol new members to the PCC so please consider if you would like to join.

Particular thanks this year are due to the efforts of the youth team in holding everything together in the absence of a youth worker following Ed Stewart's departure in July 2014. Ed made a major contribution to our youth work during his time with us and we wish him well for the future. As some of you are aware, going forward we intend to share a full-time youth worker with All Saints Church. We hope to have a new person in place before the summer.

Outreach into the community is always a very important part of church life and to that end, we are grateful for work done in producing and delivering the newsletter. The Church's Facebook page is also becoming an increasingly popular way of engaging with friends from near and far.

As some of you may be aware, Nick Bugg is stepping down as Churchwarden at this ACM. From David's perspective, he has been extremely grateful for all that Nick has done during his time in office. In particular, the many local tasks he has undertaken to ensure the smooth running of the church especially when running repairs are required!

Nick sends special thanks to you all for the support and assistance that he has received over the last five and a half years.

Finally, thanks to all the people behind the scenes who organise the regular running of the church and in particular those that are not acknowledged here. Your hard work is really appreciated.

Nick Bugg and David Sayers

PCC SECRETARY'S REPORT

St Mary's Northchurch continues as focal point for the local community. The Sunday morning services are well attended, as are the special services during the Easter and Christmas periods and also on Remembrance Day. Particularly popular among families once again was the Crib Service on Christmas Eve. Peggy Sear held another "Quiet Day" at the start of Advent, which many people found helpful. The regular Taizé Sunday evening services are also popular.

Rev. Michael Eggleton continues to take services at St Mary's, normally alternating with the Rector, Rev. Jonathan Gordon. During the year, we lost one of our Readers, Eva Wallace-Hadrill, who moved away from the area. We thank Eva and her

husband, James, for all that they contributed to St Mary's over the last couple of years.

The PCC met on five occasions during 2014 with the Rector chairing all the meetings. Additionally, the Standing Committee met on one occasion. The subjects discussed were dominated by the topics of finance, fabric and the organ.

At the Annual Church Meeting in April 2014, Karen Baldwin, Brian Hodgson, Nick Laing, Richard North and Rosemary North were re-appointed to serve on the PCC and Marilyn Pryor was elected as a new member. During the year, Andrew Reay resigned as both Church Treasurer and as a member of the PCC and Quentin Jones resigned from the PCC. This was due to increasing work commitments. Emma McCann was co-opted on to the PCC as the new Church Treasurer, with her appointment to be confirmed at this year's ACM. Nick Bugg is also standing down at Churchwarden at the ACM, but has volunteered to remain on the PCC.

During the year, there were 12 baptisms, 9 weddings, 2 marriage blessings and 19 funeral/memorial services. The church was also used by a number of local schools to hold Easter, Harvest and Carol services.

Our outreach to the local community via the Newsletter and wider afield via our website continues. In addition, our Facebook and Twitter pages were heavily used not only to advertise special services, but also to promote the various activities associated with the organ appeal.

Finally, I will take this opportunity to thank May Smullen, who has stood down as Gift Aid Secretary due to increasing ill health. May has been involved in one way or another in church activities for over half a century and over those years has been a member of the PCC, Church Treasurer and Gift Aid Secretary. As someone who relies heavily on computer-based spreadsheets, I am amazed how May managed to keep immaculate and highly accurate hand-written records. Christopher Talbot-Ponsonby has now taken over as Gift Aid Secretary and we wish him well in his new role. He joins Emma McCann and Nick Laing and me as part of the finance "team". Thanks should also go to all those who contribute to the overall life of the parish, no matter how small, which helps to make St Mary's a thriving church.

Richard North

ELECTORAL ROLL OFFICER'S REPORT

At the time of writing, there are 133 members on the electoral roll, 11 less than last year, the reduction mainly resulting from people moving away from the parish.

Rosemary North

CHILDREN'S MINISTRY

The children's Sunday Groups continue to flourish and over the year, we have welcomed several new families.

This year, the crèche for the under-3s, now known as Little Stars, has been revived – many thanks to Liz Monehen for making this happen. We would encourage any families with children in this age group to make use of the crèche and to help Liz so that it can continue. The rest of the children are split into two main groups: Sparklers (nursery, reception, year 1 and 2 or approximately ages 3 and a half to 7 years) and Rockets and Runway (years 3 to 6 or approximately ages 7 to 11). In addition, Louisa Osmond continues to co-ordinate the holiday activities. These activities are

aimed at children, aged 3 to 7 years and the dates when they are running are listed in the pew leaflet before the holidays start.

Many thanks to the whole Sunday school team who pull out the stops to ensure how children engage in meaningful worship and teaching each week. As always, we still need more volunteers to boost this team, as some of our regular team would like to step down shortly.

Thank you again to all our volunteers for their commitment and prayer.

Sunday School Team

YOUTH WORK

What a year it has been for the 'Lighthouse' youth at St Mary's. In July 2014 we saw the sad departure of our youth minister, Ed Stewart. Over the last five years, he has certainly left a lasting legacy. There was a consensus that once he left, we would try to keep the youth ministry going till the arrival of a new youth minister. So together with a small team of adults, namely parents and two of our older youth, we have continued to run the Lighthouse youth group in much the same way as previous years. Many of the youth have continued to come with the addition of our new year 7 youth.

The main focus of the Lighthouse youth ministry continues to be centred around Sunday evening, consisting of a home group at 6.30 pm, followed by chill out time from 7.30 - 8.30pm. It has been a real blessing to see many of the youth maturing spiritually, whereby this year has seen several of the youth take a lead leading the home group sessions. A highlight last term was the annual Christmas youth ball, an event that as usual brought several of the parents and youth together, with a scrumptious meal, fun and games being on the agenda!

Thanks to James Foskett, we have also been able to make two trips to the Soul Survivor church in Watford, attending their Sunday youth service on both occasions, with a pit stop first at MacDonalds, of course! In addition, we hope as a youth group to be able to take part in some of the ecumenical activities that are promoted through REFRAC, a Berkhamsted/ Northchurch town-wide youth project. A youth service is being planned in the not too distant future, which the Lighthouse youth hope to attend.

This March, we are hoping to take 20 young people for a weekend away at Felden Lodge in Boxmoor. The weekend away continues to be an annual event that has proven to be a real blessing and a spiritual time of teaching and growth for our youth. Thanks to the team, we are going to be able to make this possible again this year.

Although we still await the arrival of our new youth minister, it has been a real privilege as a small team, to keep the Lighthouse ministry going. Many thanks to Fiona Johnson, Nick Laing, James and Sarah Foskett for their time and endless support. Let's not forget too, Matthew Foskett and Robert Payne, both youth who have grown up through the Lighthouse ministry and who have taken a role in leading Lighthouse this year. It has been a real joy to see them lead with such maturity and grace. Thank you boys!! Thank you, too, to all who help in whatever capacity, to ensure our events run as smoothly as they have done.

So, for the youth team, this year has consolidated many of the foundations set up over the last few years, as well as being a year of many blessings and fulfilled hopes. Please join with us as we pray for the appointment of a new youth minister.

Peach Berry

CHURCH MUSIC

2014 was dominated by our concerted efforts to raise £5,000 to have the organ repaired. The main fundraising events were the organ recitals in April, May, June and July, the Promises Auction in May and the Hymnathon in July. The organ recital series attracted much interest and great financial support from within and also far beyond our own parish. I would like to record my special thanks to our recitalists, Hilary Norris, Jonathan Lee, Peter Yardley-Jones, Lee Burgess and Liam Cartwright; each gave freely of their time and talents and provided wonderfully entertaining recitals, which raised around £3,000.

The Promises Auction involved many generous contributions and lots of hard work by our dedicated organisers. Karen Baldwin, Evelyn Hodgson and Andrew and Margit Dobbie drove this event to great effect and a further £2,500 was raised. Proceeds from the Hymnathon and a number of individual contributions ensured we exceeded our £5,000 target and the organ was finally repaired right at the end of 2014. The organ repairs indirectly drove the long-awaited completion of repairs to the north wall and Brian Hodgson deserves special mention for his role in ensuring the wall works were completed in time to allow the organ builder to complete his work. Andrew Stevens has cleaned all the 'Great' pipework, improved the pedal action, brought the salicional back to life and reinstated the 'Open Diapason' and the organ is sounding bright and responsive. However, Andrew's discovery that water is coming into the organ from the roof is of great concern and he has erected a temporary canopy over the soundboard to deflect any drips while the roof is attended to. The money raised for the organ repairs remains designated to maintaining the organ and money not spent will be used towards an overhaul of the console and electrical components and any future repairs.

The choir worked hard all year, returning to several 'old favourites', including three arrangements of *Brother James' Air* and Durufle's beautiful *Ubi Caritas* but also rose well to the challenges of '*O Radiant Dawn*' by contemporary composer James Macmillan as well as a short Advent antiphon written by Adrian Davis. Gareth's own composition '*Did you know*' was quite the highlight of the carol service.

Jenny Hoare

MUSIC GROUP

The music group is still very much enjoyed by its members and is now an established part of St Mary's family worship. We play for the 10 am service eight times a year and now have an established repertoire of the more modern hymns/songs. Whilst we have lost a few members this year due to young people moving on to university or studying hard for school exams, we have also gained new younger members, so numbers remain the same. There are usually at least ten of us present.

The music group gives our young people an opportunity to enjoy playing their instruments in a group setting, but it also gives them a way of contributing to the life of St Mary's and of being part of the monthly family service.

My thanks go especially to Sarah Foskett who is a member of the music group and has been going through the trumpet/cornet parts with our brass section.

Rachel Gordon

STEWARDSHIP SCHEME

I help run the stewardship scheme for St Mary's. This scheme allows you to give, gift-aided or not, without having to fill in envelopes every time you visit church in various ways:

1. The box scheme for those who make a commitment on value and in return receive a years' worth of envelopes.
2. The loose change white envelopes for gift aid donations of whatever value you wish to give.
3. Paying by standing order, so you never have to fish around for cash during the service.

We have plenty of spare boxes available if you want to get involved.

Whichever way you would like to make your commitment and donations easy for you, please contact Nick Laing or the Churchwardens for more information.

Nick Laing

MONDAY HOUSE GROUP

Due to the commitments of its members, this group has not convened since the Summer and is looking into restarting later in the year, perhaps Wednesdays

Rosemary North

WEDNESDAY HOME GROUP

The Wednesday Home group continues to meet at one of the member's homes in Chiltern Park. It has seven members and has done studies on *Characters of the Old Testament* and *Galatians* this year.

Linda Slim

THURSDAY EVENING FELLOWSHIP GROUP

The Thursday evening home group continues to meet once a fortnight. There are usually about seven to eight of us that meet regularly, sharing in a time of fellowship, prayer and Bible study. We continue to meet at the home of Peach Berry. It has been a blessing to share and support one another in our Christian journeys.

Over the last year, we have again used a range of Christian material. We have just completed *A life worth living* by John Ortberg, comprising of watching a DVD followed by a discussion. Our new Bible study centres upon the Sermon on the Mount, which promises to be challenging.

A typical Thursday evening will start with refreshments, cheerful banter, Bible study, discussions, with the evening ending in a time of reflection and prayer.

Peach Berry

BERKHAMSTED DEANERY SYNOD

At the June PCC meeting David Sayers, Karen Baldwin and Rosemary North were elected to be the St Mary's Deanery Synod representatives along with Gareth Pritchard. Their first meeting was on 18 June 2014 in the Court House at which Elizabeth Dalziel, a freelance photojournalist, spoke about her work in the Middle East as did Robert Hodge, who worked for many years for Al Jazeera (English) but is now working as the Deputy Foreign Editor of Channel 4 News.

On the lovely sunny evening of 25 July many of the synod members and their 'other halves' attended social in the rectory garden. This was a good time to have a chat with members from other churches.

At the meeting in Little Gaddesden on 15 October 2014, Ted Oram was unanimously re-elected as Lay Co-Chairman. Then Ray Ashley-Brown, the Chaplain of the Hospice of St Francis, gave a presentation of the invaluable work of the Hospice staff and the pastoral care given to local patients with life-limiting illnesses and their families at the hospice. He also praised the local volunteers and everyone involved in raising the funds without which the hospice would not be able to offer their services. After this, the Diocesan Vocations Advisor, Rev. Charles Burch, gave a presentation on vocations. He advised that 50% of currently ordained vicars in the diocese are due to retire in the next 10 years. He hopes to energise the clergy and lay staff with the recruitment of new clergy over the next decade and by encouraging applications from younger people before they pursue other careers.

Alan Conway then spoke as a Representative of the Diocesan Board of Finance talking about the Parish Shares. He reminded those present that all parishes should be encouraged to pay their shares on time.

For the Deanery Review Rev. Jonathan Gordon suggested that the focus should be on church schools rather than vocations.

Rosemary North

NEWSLETTER

Few realise how many people are in some way engaged with the newsletter. When the printer delivers boxes to the church on a Friday, 4 out of a band of 8 stick labels and count the number of newsletters for each bundle (choristers do more than sing!). From the front of the church, 28 people pick up their labelled bundle(s) for delivery. 10 of these are also 'couriers', taking bundles to others to deliver through individual letterboxes. 25 bundles are delivered by people with little regular contact with the church, but who are happy to serve St Mary's and the community in which they live. Each individual involved has a vital part to play, and we thank them all.

The Newsletter currently has 31 advertisers, many of which have been advertising with us for some years. This brings in something like £450 per month.

A plea from the Editor: it would be much appreciated if anyone who wishes to get in touch could email me. I am also on Facebook, LinkedIn and Twitter. If you do not have email or use social media, you could write to me instead. Please do NOT telephone. I do not put my phone number on the newsletter and this is not a sure-fire way to reach me. I am completely deaf. This means I cannot hear anything and therefore cannot make or receive phone calls. Thank you for your understanding in this matter.

Jill Hipson

ANNUAL FÊTE

Despite the showers, the fêete was a very enjoyable occasion and as always we were given excellent entertainment by the Hemel Hempstead Brass Band. The variety of different stalls this year included a Pimms stall and entertainment for children provided by *Dizzy Lizzy*, plus pony and train rides. The time and effort of all those who set up and helped on the day is greatly appreciated. The proceeds were split between Streetkids UK, the local Pony Sanctuary, the Flower Guild and church funds.

Jonathan Gordon

NORTHCHURCH CHURCH HOUSES

The Alms House is doing very well, all the flats are occupied and last summer we welcomed two new residents.

All our finances are in good shape and all our costs are covered. The repairs and ongoing maintenance of the almshouse flats are up to date and all are in good condition. Next year we will need a quinquennial inspection. The gardens are nicely maintained by a local gardener and the courtyard is neat and tidy.

This is my second year in post and I am enjoying my work with the Trustees and residents.

Kathy Ridges (on behalf of the Trustees)

FLOWER GUILD

Floral arrangements in the Church have continued to be organised by The Flower Guild throughout the year. A number of floral and candle decorations were arranged for Easter, Harvest and Christmas services.

Weddings and other events have also been marked with floral arrangements when requested.

Our stall at the Summer Fete with games and various items for sale did well in spite of the weather.

In August we were invited to participate in The Flower Festival at St Bartholomew's at Wigginton and the Guild provided four arrangements, each evoking one of the four seasons. The Church looked beautiful over the festival on the Bank Holiday weekend, with many varied arrangements on the theme of "All God's Gifts", and we were very pleased to have been able to contribute to this event.

Sadly, Mrs Christine Flanagan has been unwell over the last year and we miss her staunch support of the Guild and her lovely arrangements.

The donation from the PCC from the proceeds of the fête towards our costs is very greatly appreciated, as are those from individual parishioners.

We look forward to continuing our contribution to the life of the church community.

Denise Rouse

BELLRINGERS

Bells and organs both make loud music in praise of God, and 2014 was a year in which they developed a new 'partnership' at St Mary's. Money was needed for repairs to the organ. One of the promises auctioned in the cause was lessons to learn to handle a bell – and 3 curious, determined and persistent people paid their money. The tower is indebted to Chris Hoare (that's another link between our bells and the organ!) for his gifts of time, experience and enthusiasm as instructor. We also thank the community for putting up with some less musical ringing as Anne, Brian and Rosemary advanced to the point where they can join the regular Sunday band.

We had 10 active ringers on our list through the year, and rarely would you have heard fewer than 6 bells ringing for services on Sundays. If you were woken by bells on a festival day, you might have counted 8 bells at 7.30 am! It is a longstanding tradition at Northchurch that we ring for the first service of the day at Easter,

Pentecost, Harvest and Christmas. Despite moving to Cheddington during the year, we still see Philip on practice nights and for weddings.

Our hospitality has extended to two bands who attempted to ring peals (that's 3 hours of ringing non-stop) and to friends who visit every month to attempt quarter peals (a mere 50 minutes without a break). Other visitors have included Northchurch on their outings, mostly for general ringing. It is true that these visitors are ringing for love of the bells, and seeking to perfect their art, but they are also dedicated to ringing on Sundays at the parish churches where they live. They never leave without making a donation to our tower fund. This year we have needed both a new vacuum cleaner and a new heater, and we have invested in a stock of ash wood – from the Ashridge Estate – against the occasional need to replace a stay.

The tower is fortunate in its many friends in the area around. When bells are requested for a wedding, it is not always possible to make up a band of Northchurch ringers on a Saturday, and ringers from Aldbury, Berkhamsted, Great & Little Gaddesden, Kings Langley and Tring have augmented our number. Some 'expert friends' have regularly joined our first practice each month so that the rest of us have opportunity to develop our skills: everyone is able to ring their best when they have good ringers in their band.

Valerie Clark, Tower Captain

KNEELER PROJECT

Just two kneelers were placed in the Church in 2014.

Valerie and her sister Pam combined talents to produce a commemorative kneeler which celebrates the Queen's Diamond Jubilee in 2012. The design is attributed to Valerie and the stitching to Pam. The other kneeler, based on a design of miniature spring bulbs, was worked by Margaret Davies and is dedicated to Margot, the wife of Bernard Hughes who was Rector of Northchurch from 1955 to 1975. A kneeler dedicated to Bernard is still being stitched and should be in the pew before too long.

Two more kneelers have already been stitched and will soon be ready for the pews as they are now being made up. One is the third kneeler to be stitched by Lena who has chosen to represent the Christian Aid Logo in her design on this occasion.

The other one comes from Margaret Davies and this must put her, together with Valerie, at the top of the leader board for the most number of kneelers contributed since the project began. They each have eight kneelers to their credit according to my sums! Margaret's latest one is dedicated to Dorothy Hayward and features a blackbird and the opening words of the hymn "Morning has broken----". Congratulations and many thanks for all your hard work Margaret!

I am aware that there are some members of the congregation who have taken materials from me in good faith saying that they would stitch a kneeler but who months or even years later have not put a stitch in their canvas! I cannot afford to have materials "hoarded" in this way, so please let me have any unused canvas and wool back if you feel unable to fulfil your original intentions, so that it can then be used by someone else.

As usual, my thanks go to Janet Volker for sharing with me the labour involved in making up the kneelers. Before we can do this the foam blocks must be prepared with calico covers, webbing and D rings, and for their involvement with this process I thank Jacky Roberts and Judy Wilkin.

Finally, I would like to say a big thank you to Valerie who came to the rescue while I was away and evacuated the 66 kneelers from the Church to her garage roof loft for protection while the north aisle walls were being treated. I understand that she organised the congregation to carry them to her car after morning service one Sunday, and that young and old responded splendidly!

It was good to have the kneelers in the pews for the carol service with the candlelight enhancing their colours. Unfortunately, there was a downside to this because we discovered afterwards that candle wax had dripped on to some of the kneelers. The big question next Christmas may be: do we need a different kind of candle or another evacuation?

Marilyn Pryor

SUNDAY MORNING COFFEE

I would just like to say a huge thank you, on behalf of the congregation, to the wonderful volunteers who supply us with refreshments after the 10am service each week. We have continued with 28 people, working together in pairs, and we all do either 3 or 4 sessions a year. It is not a difficult job and does not take up much time.

We can always do with more volunteers, even though the rota has been done now until the end of February next year, but if anyone is interested, it would be useful to have a few extras who we could call upon for cover if there were any problems throughout the year.

Sue Jukes

2ND NORTHCHURCH BROWNIES

This year we celebrate our 50th Birthday. To mark the occasion we have had a designer badge competition. The winning design has been chosen and being made up and will be given to all the girls later in the term.

In June 2014, we joined with lots of other Brownies from our Division to have a fun filled day to celebrate the Big Brownie Birthday. The theme was "Star Quest". There were different zones to represent the past, present and future. We had to collect stars from each different activity. It was a great day meeting other Brownies.

We have done lots of fun things this last year, including our Season Badge, for which we made birdfeeders - it was very messy! We are currently working towards our Science Investigator Badge. So far we have dyed material using natural food colours and made bridges out of newspaper - some looked more bridge-like than others!!!

In September we surprised Brown Owl by helping her boyfriend to propose to her. We were all very excited to be involved in that special moment. Thank goodness she said yes!

December saw us joining the Rainbows at the pantomime in Aylesbury. It was a great way to end the year.

If you are interested in finding out more about volunteering with Girlguiding, please do not hesitate to get in touch with me... it's great fun.

Susan Reynolds (and all at 2nd Northchurch Brownies)

MONDAY CLUB

Over the past year, we have enjoyed a variety of talks, some with demonstrations or illustrations of the speaker's interests, as well as outings and events to celebrate Harvest, Christmas and Easter.

Our numbers have increased, partly due to new residents in Northchurch, and we were very happy to welcome a gentleman, whose presence we hope will encourage other men to join, as the club is for anyone who lives alone.

Outings have included lunch at The Bridgewater Arms, tea at the Ashridge visitor centre at bluebell time and a visit to the Elgiva theatre in Chesham. Going further afield, we visited Hughenden Manor where we learnt of the very secretive work of map making for the R.A.F. carried out there during the war, as well as spending time enjoying the beautiful grounds and the house.

A generous donation from the Northchurch United Charities has helped to finance outings and provide transport to the Parish Room for those members who need it, and we are very grateful for that.

Joan Cox and Jennie Budd give the club unstinting help with the preparation and serving of tea and Tony Lockhart is an ever-willing driver to assist whenever possible. This is very much appreciated by all of us.

Joan Downhill and Barbara Lloyd.

MOTHERS' UNION

2014 proved to be another successful, but challenging year for our Mothers' Union members and friends. As diocesan members, we keep contact with our three local branches from Berkhamsted, Tring and Leverstock Green. For our first event, we welcomed them all to our church here at St Mary's for the Lady Day Service led by Rev. Jane Banister.

Fundraising events during the year have helped to provide more bicycles, replacement lorries and training for nurses for new mums.

In July, we ran our church fete stall. Many thanks to Jennie and Elizabeth for their help - all Jennie's marmalade was sold.

We also helped with Thursday Lunches, the Monday Club, the Crisis for Christmas sale and other fundraising events. In October we welcomed The Happy Wanderers to a Harvest Service in church followed by tea and cakes. Thank you to all who helped and made cakes for us.

Autumn worship was our last event, at St Mary's Hemel Hempstead, where we contributed toiletries which is given on release to women at the Women's Detention Centre.

Thank you to our brass team who keep the church bright and shiny.

Our thanks to Jonathan and Rachel for all their care for us and all our friends and for their time and help enabling us to have such a happy year.

Joan Cox

TIME OUT 2

Once again, the members of Time Out2 have enjoyed a varied year, meeting at each others homes on many occasions for prayer, fellowship, craftwork and delicious cakes. Last July we had a splendid lunch at The Greyhound in Wigginton, and in November we revisited Waddesdon Manor for the magnificent Christmas Tree Festival. In December we held our annual coffee morning and lunch in aid of Crisis at Christmas, at which the sum of £360 was raised. Most recently, on Shrove Tuesday, Melanie Llewellyn treated us to pancakes at her house.

However, our main achievement this year has been the completion of the altar rail refurbishment. The old carpet was removed last year, and then earlier this year a splendid new altar kneeler was installed. It is hoped that later this year the kneeler will receive an official blessing.

Karen Baldwin

MISSIONS & CHARITIES

We have a very ad-hoc Missions and Charities system at St Mary's which, arguably, could benefit from somebody to volunteer and coordinate our activities.

There are several 'main' charities we support, including Mission Direct, Phakamisa, The Children's Society, Christian Aid and others that are regularly supported.

In November we had a return visit from Claire Hodgson to update us on the extraordinary work of Mission Direct. In the past work has concentrated on teams of volunteers, who visit for two weeks to, in particular, help build housing, schools, churches, for people who would have been living 'shanty towns'. The last year has seen Claire focussing on obtaining registration papers and passports for dozens of people to be registered as Dominican Republic citizens and thereby guaranteeing their chance to stay in their homes. The government would be quite happy to remove men, women & children, so the fabulous effort made to raise money in support of these people is hugely important – so thank you to all who have prayed and supported this cause.

Charity/Mission*	2014
Bishop's Appeal for the Hungry	£141.70
Children's Society	£919.09
Christian Aid	£173.26
Hospice of St Francis	£201.00
Phakamisa	£829.14
Royal British Legion	£78.53
SSAFA	£78.54
Streetkids	£1,000.00
Two Oaks Pony Sanctuary	£400.00
	<hr/> £3,821.26 <hr/>

*As per the church accounts. Other monies emanating from St Marys, e.g. to Mission Direct, were paid directly to the charity

Nick Laing

CHRISTIAN AID

For Christian Aid Week 2014, the St Mary's team collected from 16 roads. I have said previously that there is an opportunity to raise much needed money as there are many roads across our village which are simply not being visited. In the past we have had as many as 26 people collecting and I would love to see our numbers moving back in that direction again.

Our grand total including our 16 door-to-door collections and soup lunch was £1,675.

Thank you to all those that joined me on the streets of Northchurch and to all those that made donations. The money we raise is so vital and I implore you to continue supporting Christian Aid, this year.

Please consider joining the team in time for Christian Aid Week 2015, 10-16th May.

Nick Laing

THE CHILDREN'S SOCIETY

The Children's Society works within the UK to help and protect vulnerable children. Runaways and children coming out of care and fostering are safeguarded and given a point of contact. Children's Centres are operating all around the country, supporting young families who may be facing crisis due to housing, unemployment and issues due to debt. In fact debt counselling, budgeting and household management are seen as the best way to help children living in poverty and The Children's Society has had a shift in emphasis during the last year to plough funds into those services. Many of the Children's Centres also stay open at weekends to provide a safe, warm, supervised and supported place where access visits can take place, often for fathers to see their children after divorce.

All this vital work needs funding. At St Mary's we have had 41 box holders, who in 2014 have raised a magnificent £850.24, often in very small change! Every contribution, however small has amounted to this fantastic total, so thank you so much to all of our loyal supporters. The cash collection from the Christingle service also goes to support the work of The Children's Society.

Inevitably, we have had box holders who have passed away this year. Two of our box holders have moved away from this area - so we need some volunteers to fill this shortfall, please. If you agree that this is a very worthwhile cause and if you can pop your small change into a box for us, then please get in touch with Gareth and Charlotte Pritchard, who will happily supply you with a box. Thank you so much if you can be a new volunteer for 2015.

Charlotte & Gareth Pritchard

TRADCRAFT

Traidcraft was formed in 1979 as a Christian response to poverty and it is great to see the significant increase in fairly-traded goods being sold across the UK.

I make no apology for cribbing from the 2013 Traidcraft report as the message is the same as it ever was - buying fairly-traded products should be routine for us all. Charlotte has often said, we hope our stall becomes 'redundant' as people now have the chance to buy their regular items from all the supermarkets.

However, as St Mary's is a Fairtrade church, we are committed to using fairly-traded coffee and tea at our social activities. We continue to sell a variety of foods after the

10am service every Sunday. The recently updated Traidcraft catalogue includes a plethora of clothing, gifts, food and items, which we are happy to order for you.

It also has a website from which you can order their products direct. If you have a chance to look at the website www.traidcraft.co.uk and you will not only find the considerable number of products we don't stock, but frequently items being sold at special prices!

We get a discount for regular buying on our purchases and the profit goes directly into the St Mary's church funds.

Nick Laing

BEDS & HERTS HCT SPONSORED BIKE 'N HIKE

The annual bike and hike event took place on Saturday 13th September 2014. As always my thanks go to everyone who took part, including cyclists, walkers, church minders sponsors and to Jennie Budd for her delightful provisions to encourage everyone on their way. This year your organiser was slightly challenged by having both the church and Parish Room booked for a very important wedding on the big day. We had to arrange for our team to meet and greet people in the vestry, so signs had to be made and arrows put up around the churchyard for everyone to find their way and not disturb the happy couple.

We had a good day for the event this year and had about eleven people who originated from our church, including children of current PCC members who have grown up and left home, but still see St Mary's as part of their heritage. (Thank you Ros).

In total 43 energetic folk crossed our threshold, from all the surrounding towns and villages including Boxmoor, Bishops Stortford, Hemel Hempstead, Chesham, Little Gaddesden, Nettleden, Puttenham, Dunstable and Potten End.

Brian and I set off only two minutes behind the area organiser Patrick Lepper for our most enjoyable day in the saddle.

We travelled as far as St Mary's Puttenham in time for tea, stopping on the way at various churches including New Mill Baptist, Tring, for the usual delightful lunch of sandwiches, cake, tantalising nibbles, and clean facilities. In total we covered 43.99 miles, visited 29 churches and reached a maximum speed of 31.5mph – must have been downhill with a following wind, or very near to one of Brian's favourite pubs!

Thanks to our fantastic sponsors and to "Just Giving" this year we came second only to Berkhamsted St Peter, having raised the princely sum of £1,380.00 of which we will receive £690 towards our building fund. Gift Aid brings the total up to £1565.46 and the other half of our efforts go directly to the Beds & Herts Historic Churches Trust, which gives grants to churches in need of repair. If you would like to know more about the work of the Trust please visit their website: www.bedshertshct.org.uk.

Please make a note in your diary and come and join in the fun for this year's event which takes place on Saturday 12th September. With your help, we could raise £2,000 and receive a gold certificate!

Evelyn Hodgson

NORTHCHURCH UNITED CHARITIES

Jonathan Gordon is Chair of Trustees of the NUC. The trustees meet annually to disburse funds received from Berkhamsted Town Council, Sunnyside Church, St Mary's Church and Northchurch Parish Council to beneficiaries living in the old parish of Northchurch. This year the NUC moved its investments to the CCLA Ethical Investment Trust Fund, which saw improved returns so the trustees were able to maintain their donations to individuals and clubs in Northchurch and Berkhamsted.

Rosemary North

THE CHARITY OF DR SMOULT

A former Rector of St Mary's left money in his will to establish this charity in 1705. It continues to support local young people with the costs of their education and, during 2014, grants totalling just under £17,000 were distributed to individuals, youth groups and schools in the area of benefit. This is defined as:

"the Ecclesiastical Parish of Northchurch St Mary, the Civil Parish of Northchurch, the area known as the Chiltern Park Estate in the Civil Parish of Berkhamsted or the Ecclesiastical Parish of Wigginton, all in the County of Hertfordshire".

Applicants must be under 25 and, if they do not live in the area of benefit, they must have "an active association with St Mary's Church, Northchurch or St Bartholomew's Church Wigginton". If you fulfil these qualifications and need financial help with education or apprenticeship, or you know someone who does, please contact me.

Valerie Clark

ST MARY'S SCHOOL

The last year has seen many things to celebrate at the school. In June OFSTED inspectors assessed it as "Good." A few weeks later SIAMS or church inspection took place and the grade this time was "Outstanding."

Last autumn the school celebrated its 150-year foundation by combining a special service in church with Bishop Richard with the blessing of the new classrooms and extension. Over the summer, those travelling down New Road will have noticed the work being done on the extension and the result is the creation of a fantastic learning space that has transformed the oldest part of the school building into a modern teaching environment with additional space for music and drama.

At the end of the year we said farewell to Mrs Eloise Haezewindt and welcomed Miss Vanessa Hunt as her replacement. The process of finding a new headteacher for a school today is a challenging one, but in Vanessa we have someone who demonstrates great passion for the church ethos of the school and provides leadership to move St Mary's into its next stage as a primary school. We are very fortunate to have her in the post.

A number of the congregation are involved in the life of the school as volunteers and governors and the school community greatly benefits from their hard work and dedication. One of the highlights of my week is going in to take assemblies or participating school services in the church. They are always a delight and frequently visitors to the school remark on their politeness, enthusiasm for the school and, perhaps most importantly, their zest for all that they do.

Jonathan Gordon

St Mary's Church, Northchurch

Registered Charity 1130418

Annual Reports and Accounts

of the

Parochial Church Council

for the year ended 31st December 2014

to be held in church after morning service
on Sunday, 19th April 2015

Incumbent:

*Revd Jonathan Gordon
80 High Street
Northchurch
Berkhamsted
HP4 3QW*

Acting Hon Treasurer:

Richard North
8 Pages Croft
Berkhamsted
HP4 1BX

Independent Examiner:

Steve Mitchell
16 Oxfield Close
Berkhamsted
HP4 3NE

Bankers:

National Westminster Bank
199 High Street
Berkhamsted
HP4 1BH

**St Mary's Church, Northchurch.
Charity No. 1130418**

**Annual report and Accounts of the Parochial Church Council for the year Ended
31st December 2014**

Independent Examiners Report.

The report on the accounts for the year ended 31st December 2014, which are set out in the following pages is in respect of an examination carried out in accordance with the Church Accounting Regulations 2006 (the regulations) and s 145 of the Charities Act 2011 (the Act).

Respective Responsibilities of the PCC & Examiner.

As members of the PCC you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts. You consider that the audit requirement of Regulation and the Act does not apply. It is my responsibility to issue this report on those accounts in accordance with the terms of the Regulation.


Basis of Independent Examiners Report.

My examination was carried out in accordance with the General Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145 (5)(b) of the Act and to be found in the Church Guidance (2006 edition). The examination included a review of the accounting records maintained by the PCC and a comparison of the accounts with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual item or disclosures in the accounts & seeking explanations from you as Trustees concerning such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit and consequently I do not express an audit opinion on the view given by the accounts.

Independent Examiners Statement.

In connection with my examination, no matter has come to my attention:-

- 1) which gives me reasonable cause to believe that in any material respect the requirements
 - to keep accounting records in accordance with section 130 of the Charities Act and
 - to prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records and comply with the requirements of the Act and Regulations have been met or have not been met
- 2) to which, in my opinion, attention should be to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.


Steve Mitchell
6th March 2015

ACTING TREASURER'S REPORT 2014

Summary

St Mary's faced some substantial financial challenges at the start of 2014. After numerous delays, work finally started on the replacement of the plasterwork on the lower half of the north wall, significant work was necessary to repair damage to the organ and there was still the outstanding amount due to the Diocese relating to the 2013 Parish Share. I am pleased to say that by the end of 2014 all these issues had been satisfactorily resolved, albeit new challenges appeared during the year.

At the yearend overall income exceeded expenditure by £10,574. Within this net figure however were some significant amounts. The General Fund ended the year with a surplus of £10,096 whereas the Building Fund had a deficit of £15,502. The newly established Organ Refurbishment Fund ended the year with an additional £10,661 and a further £5,318 was added to the 98 High Street Fund.

General Fund Income

Planned Income i.e. moneys given to St Mary's via standing orders and the envelope schemes was £727 lower than in 2013. It is likely that some of this reduction is due to monies in ad-hoc Gift Aid envelopes being designated towards the Organ Refurbishment Fund as opposed to the General Fund. Cash collections were also lower. However, with the help of a new HMRC on-line system for reclaiming Gift Aid, for the first time we were able to submit all the outstanding Gift Aid claims for 2012, 2013 and 2014. The income generated from these claims resulted in overall Voluntary Income being £12,608 higher than 2013.

General Fund Expenditure

During the year, £54,947 was paid to the Diocese in relation to the Parish Share which covers clergy stipends, pensions and diocesan costs and included the settlement of the outstanding amount carried forward from 2013. The 2014 Share was paid in full.

A knock-on benefit of the replacement of the plasterwork on the north wall was the temporary disconnection of the church heating. This, along with a mild winter accounted for the overall fall in Church Running Expenses.

Building Expenditure

Building expenditure related mainly to the costs associated with the replastering of the north wall. This not only included the cost of the replastering work itself, but also installing protective covering for the organ and the disconnection and reinstallation of the radiators.

Organ Refurbishment Fund

By the end of 2014, the new Organ Refurbishment Fund had raised a further £10,661, including reclaimed Gift Aid. This was a tremendous result, with the income being generated by a "Promises Auction", several organ recitals and individual

donations. Work to repair the organ was started at the end of the year and the associated costs will appear in the 2015 accounts.

Looking Forward

There are still significant financial challenges ahead, particularly regarding the costs associated with the repair to the leaking church roof. The PCC will be looking to obtain grants from various organisations to offset some of the costs involved, as well as holding fundraising events. However, in terms of the day-to-day running of the church, St Mary's is now in an excellent position to meet future challenges. The new HMRC Gift Aid system enables multiple claims to be submitted during the year, which will be a great help in easing cash-flow pressures. We also have a new Treasurer, Emma McCann, and a new Gift Aid Secretary, Christopher Talbot-Ponsonby. I wish them well in their new roles.

Richard North

Receipts and Payments Account for Period to 31st December 2014					
	2014			2013	Variance
	Unrestricted £	Restricted £	Total £	£	£
Receipts					
Voluntary Income					
Planned Income	49,117.85	0.00	49,117.85	49,845.52	-727.67
Cash Collections	3,005.78	0.00	3,005.78	3,568.92	-563.14
Income Tax Recovered	23,399.36	0.00	23,399.36	9,500.00	13,899.36
	75,522.99	0.00	75,522.99	62,914.44	12,608.55
Other Voluntary Income					
Specific Legacies	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Donations/Legacies (inc HRH Duke of Cornwall)	3,646.32	27.80	3,674.12	4,307.69	-633.57
Special Collections / Donations	0.00	1,880.26	1,880.26	1,771.72	108.54
Rector's fees	3,520.00	0.00	3,520.00	3,666.00	-146.00
PCC fees	2,684.00	0.00	2,684.00	4,340.00	-1,656.00
Organist's fees	1,140.00	0.00	1,140.00	1,420.00	-280.00
Bellringers' fees	540.00	0.00	540.00	680.00	-140.00
Verger's fees	1,040.00	0.00	1,040.00	1,021.00	19.00
Churchyard	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Grants Received	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
	12,570.32	1,908.06	14,478.38	17,206.41	-2,728.03
Events and Activities					
Summer Fete	0.00	2,859.18	2,859.18	2,603.76	255.42
Magazine Advertising Income	3,633.50	0.00	3,633.50	3,846.50	-213.00
Printing Income	5.00	0.00	5.00	0.00	5.00
Parish Room Hire	4,772.58	0.00	4,772.58	2,894.50	1,878.08
Church Lunches	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Historic Churches Cycle Ride	0.00	690.00	690.00	1,229.75	-539.75
Social Activities	0.00	0.00	0.00	412.00	-412.00
	8,411.08	3,549.18	11,960.26	10,986.51	973.75
Other Income					
Bank Interest	12.72	0.00	12.72	12.89	-0.17
Dividends	291.52	0.00	291.52	334.97	-43.45
C B F Interest	341.98	0.00	341.98	288.21	53.77
Donald Lockhart Memorial Fund	5,055.42	0.00	5,055.42	4,956.72	98.70
Northchurch Development Fund	0.00	0.00	0.00	109.47	-109.47
Miscellaneous Income	530.35	0.00	530.35	208.83	321.52
Rent for 98 High Street	0.00	6,695.70	6,695.70	7,217.43	-521.73
Insurance Reclaims	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Organ Restoration Fund	0.00	10,839.31	10,839.31	50.00	10,789.31
Building Fund Income	0.00	1,025.00	1,025.00	4.00	1,021.00
Youth Worker / Youth Group Funding	0.00	7,178.82	7,178.82	10,003.00	-2,824.18
Sunday School	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Traidcraft sales	887.55	0.00	887.55	988.80	-101.25
Kneeler Income	0.00	550.00	550.00	0.00	550.00
	7,119.54	26,288.83	33,408.37	24,174.32	9,234.05
Total Receipts	103,623.93	31,746.07	135,370.00	115,281.68	20,088.32

	2014		2013	Variance
	£		£	£
Payments				
Grants				
Overseas Missions and Relief Agencies	1,829.14		419.39	1,409.75
UK Missions and Relief Agencies	1,992.12		2,847.20	-855.08
	3,821.26		3,266.59	554.67
Relating to the Work of the Church				
Diocesan Quota	54,947.25		46,471.75	8,475.50
Rector's fees paid to Diocese	3,520.00		3,666.00	-146.00
Church Running Expenses	13,835.73		16,340.87	-2,505.14
Clergy Expenses	2,798.06		2,357.20	440.86
Service & License Costs	1,547.79		1,213.33	334.46
Youth Worker Salary	4,476.54		6,300.00	-1,823.46
Honoraria	5,699.50		4,903.00	796.50
Organist	1,710.00		1,565.00	145.00
Churchyard	272.34		506.19	-233.85
Magazine	5,268.00		5,010.00	258.00
Printing	387.86		821.61	-433.75
Organ Maintenance	178.00		783.80	-605.80
Vergers Fees	1,040.00		1,295.00	-255.00
Bellringers' fees	540.00		760.00	-220.00
Organist's service fees	1,140.00		1,455.00	-315.00
Other Expenditure	2,050.45		720.89	1,329.56
Fundraising Costs (incl Fete & Social Activities)	105.60		928.98	-823.38
Sunday School Expenses	170.40		200.40	-30.00
Youth Work Expenses	1,465.91		1,506.05	-40.14
Traidcraft Purchases	885.03		1,288.70	-403.67
Kneeler Expenses	0.00		76.60	-76.60
C B F Interest Reinvested	341.98		397.68	-55.70
Audit Costs	0.00		0.00	0.00
	102,380.44		98,568.05	3,812.39
Maintenance Costs				
Major Capital Expenditure	0.00		477.00	-477.00
98 High Street	1,377.26		855.48	521.78
Buildings Maintenance	16,737.36		2,121.61	14,615.75
Parish Room	479.90		175.03	304.87
	18,594.52		3,629.12	14,965.40
Total Payments	124,796.22		105,463.76	19,332.46
Surplus for the Year	10,573.78		9,817.92	755.86
Building Fund	-15,502.26		-1,539.89	-13,962.37
98 High Street Fund	5,318.44		6,361.95	-1,043.51
General Fund	10,096.29		4,195.86	5,900.43
Organ Fund	10,661.31		800.00	9,861.31
	10,573.78		9,817.92	755.86
Balance Sheet as at 31st December 2014				
	2014		2013	
	£		£	
Fixed Assets	0		0	
Current Assets				
Cash at Bank	44,200		39,324	
Investments	180,974.1		173,299	
Debtors	16,050		9,500	
	241,224		222,123	
	241,224		222,123	
Represented By				
Funds carried forward	241,224		222,123	
	241,224		222,123	
Note 1				
Accruals relating to Gift Aid claims				

Charity/Fund Title	Account No.	No. Shares	Value per Share	Dividend/ Interest	Value of Fund at 31/12/14
<i>National Westminster Bank</i>					£44,199.61
<i>With St Albans Diocesan Board of Finance</i>					
Northchurch Development Fund	132001842D			£96.26 reinvested	£19,312.83
Donald Lockhart Memorial Fund	132001875S			£5,055.42	£132,387.05
<i>With Central Board of Finance of the Church of England</i>					
Fixed Interest Securities Fund	632008001F			£159.76 reinvested	£4,134.80
Deposit Fund	632008001D			£85.96 reinvested	£17,245.02
<i>COIF Charity Funds</i>					
Wagstaff Trust	C0000402616			£2.92	£145.98
Wagstaff Trust Income Fund	C0000403186			£1.04	£54.02
Hadden Trust	C0000402615			3.2	160
Hadden Trust Income Fund	C0000403185			£0.80	£40.00
Malcolmson Bequest	C0000402601			£2.96	£147.88
Bailey Charity	282190001T	18	£12.18	£8.38	£219.31
Ridley for Church Fabric Fund	282190002T	56	£12.18	£26.07	£682.29
Ridley for Churchyard Fund	282190004T	56	£12.18	£26.07	£682.29
Michael Memorial fabric Fund	282190003T	58	£12.18	£27.00	£706.66
Gwynedd Charity	282190005T	89	£12.18	£41.41	£1,084.36
Thelwall Trust for Churchyard Upkeep	282190006T	89	£12.18	£41.41	£1,084.36
A Ashley	282190007T	32	£12.18	£14.89	£389.88
C B Kings Children for Churchyard	282190008T	15	£12.18	£6.98	£182.76
Randall Memorial Foreign Mission	268810000T	62	£12.18	£28.84	£755.40
Browne Charity	332730001T	128	£12.18	£59.55	£1,559.53
					£7,894.72
					£225,174.03
				Debtors	£16,050.00
					£241,224.03