



St Matthias', St Mark and Holy Trinity

Church Reports for the Annual Parochial Church Meeting April 2020

1. St Matthias Pre-School and Childcare Centre

2019 has been a challenging year in many ways. From a peak number of registrations in 2018 the number of new children registering has reduced by quite a significant amount. We believe this is due to several factors, principally:



- *A decline in the UK birth rate in recent years*
- *Children being enrolled at other settings with an aim of receiving priority access to schools that are attached to particular settings*
- *Our current policy of not taking children between 2 and 2.5 years old in an environment where parental demand is increasing for this age group*

The lower numbers have inevitably had an impact on our income for the year, which is based on government grant funding and parental contributions for additional sessions that are not covered by the grant. Government funding levels have also been an issue for us and many other Pre-Schools, causing some to have no option but to close down. There has been much lobbying of government by ourselves and other settings, supported by Torbay Early Years and the national Early Years Alliance, to put across the seriousness of the situation, and we are hoping to see changes during 2020 to ensure the viability

of ongoing provision of services that are accessible to every child and family who needs them.

Despite these challenges it has been another busy year for our dedicated staff team who, as usual, have been working hard to care for and guide the children in their thirst for learning and new experiences, both academically and physically, indoors and outdoors. Our outdoor facilities, partly configured as a Forest School environment, benefitted from some considerable enhancements in the Spring/early Summer, funded by money set aside from 2018 for this purpose. The improvements, all focusing on natural materials included:

- *Construction of a wooden gazebo over and around the fire pit to make it usable in all weathers.*
- *Creation of additional play areas interspersed with new trees and plants, some of them in specially constructed wooden planters.*
- *Creation of a sensory garden in a quiet area of the grounds.*
- *Creation of additional storage facilities.*

On completion we invited all children and parents to a celebration barbecue. Feedback from all was very positive and, for the rest of the year, the children were able to enjoy the new facilities both during term time and also in the Holiday Clubs held during school holidays, which were also very popular.

Towards the end of the year we said goodbye to Jennie Judge, our Assistant Manager, who decided to move on to progress her career in other directions. We would like to record our thanks to her for the contribution she made during her time with us.

As we go into 2020 the Management Committee, along with Liz, our Pre-School Manager, will be looking at ways of addressing the issues raised above and of ensuring the ongoing viability of our operation going forward.

Finally, a huge thank you to all our staff and members of the Management Committee for their ongoing hard work and dedication, continuing to put the children in our care at the forefront of everything we do. And also thanks to our children themselves, who continue to delight and surprise us with the fun, spontaneity and pleasure they bring to us in our day to day contact with them.

Sylvia Barratt
Chair, Pre-School Management Committee

2. Children's and Young People's Ministry

Schools' Work

Collective Worship:

St Matthias has a team of people who visit Ilsham, Warberry and Ellacombe Academies to take acts of worship once a week. As Ellacombe is in a shared parish area, St Mary Magdalene also contribute to this activity. Bible stories are told using the "Open the Book" materials which ensures uniformity of the subject although each one of us has a different approach. Every term the schools focus on one of their values and we try to incorporate this into our presentation and prayers. We are always well received and appreciated.

Other activities:

Both Ilsham and Warberry Academies have an end of term service which usually takes place in St Matthias Church.

In the past we have worked alongside the schools and organised various spiritual experiences for the children. An Easter Experience is planned for the end of this Spring Term. (*Cancelled due to Cororavirus.*) This will involve classes moving around the church where various stations have been set up covering biblical accounts of what Jesus had to encounter during his journey to the cross.

The church has offered help and assistance during SIAMS inspections and are keen to maintain that strong connection of support in the subject of RE. We also have a link with St Cuthbert Mayne School, a local secondary school, through the chaplaincy team.

Monica Rook

Open House meets in the lounge on Tuesday mornings between 9 and 11.30 am and is a relaxed group for under 4's with their parents or grandparents to play and get to know each other. We have had a really encouraging year. Although the group remains small, with an average of 10 families, we have a core of regular members and we were very excited to welcome two new babies at the end of the year! It has been lovely to be able to spend more time with the families and build relationships – also to see friendships growing between mums and grandmas. Two families have links with Breakfastzone and one with Messy Church and it's been good to see parents and children enjoying the bible

story at the end of the morning as well as joining in with the singing with great enthusiasm!

We don't know what the next few months will hold in store for us as a group but would value your prayers as we try to stay in touch with our families, hoping too that they will be able to stay in touch with each other.

Elaine and Judi

Godly Play has become an established part of children's worship during both the 2nd Sunday Family and the 3rd week's Growzone services.

The Godly Play room is the Lounge! Under the worktop is a huge cupboard where 7 sets of shelving are stored - and wheeled out to form a fantastic Godly Play classroom set out like an open Bible!

Godly Play is based on Montessori principles allowing children to discover God for themselves. It allows them to explore faith through story to gain religious language and enhance their spiritual experience through wonder and play. It uses open ended response times so that a deeper understanding of stories, their rituals and rites can develop. Godly Play is in fact an invitation not just to play, but to play with the language of God and his people, through sacred stories, parables and liturgical actions, and silence too!

A Godly Play session is made up of 4 parts, each one echoing the way most Christians organise their worship together. Starting with a welcome, when the children are 'ready' they are invited to join the circle. A story is told using handcrafted sets of figures and objects made from wood or fabric. Everything is natural and the children are encouraged to handle these pieces with care and respect. After the story, a wondering session takes place allowing the story to be explored further through discussion, often bringing into today's context, but with no right or wrong answers - allowing the children to develop at their own speed. They also are encouraged to use arts, crafts and natural products to enable them to continue their wandering. Finally a prayer session with a simple feast, usually fruit, follows.

Having this wonderful space as part of St Matthias, we can submerge children in the Christian faith, giving them a safe and interesting place of their own to explore. I have also used the facility for preschool teaching, we have been going into a local school enriching their RE lessons and have more booked for 2020. This is a really exciting opportunity to forge links with our local community in addition to hopefully developing adult courses and training new teachers.

It was a huge privilege to also present the Easter and Christmas stories in Church on Good Friday and during the Carol Service.

Lena and Giles Fearnley

3. Matt's Knits

Matts knits is a social group who seek to bless others whilst we knit and natter over a cup of tea or coffee, by supporting various projects as well as knitting or crocheting for ourselves, and learning from each other. We meet on Tuesday lunchtimes from 12:00-13:30 usually in the Lounge and welcome new members to join us at any time. We have had a very enjoyable and successful 2nd year.



Our first project saw us knit 12 hats for TOWNS, then some dolls clothes for the under dressed dollies at toddlers. Liz from Pre-School then asked us if we could make some figures to help illustrate the Easter story....so some disciples, Mary and Jesus "riding" on a donkey. We then held a very successful Easter stall raising £180 for 'Wellspring'.

patients
on
ward at



Our next project was knitting twiddlemuffs for with dementia Cheetham Hill Torbay Hospital.



We were contacted by Nicci Maxwell in Uganda requesting more matinee jackets for the premature babies and we were able to send 21 to friends of Nicci who were visiting Uganda during the summer.

We sent hats and scarves for Christmas boxes going to Moldova

and much closer to home had a Christmas stall at the reopening weekend raising £300 for Wellspring.

Our finale for 2019 was sending another 35 matinee jackets with Cecil who very kindly delivered them to Nicci.

We have lots of new exciting projects lined up for 2020, we welcome new members at any time and any donations of knitting yarn are gratefully accepted.



Elaine Biden

4. Youth Worker Management Committee

We met twice last year in April and November, to review the Youth Work at St Matthias. Sunday groups have been made more consistent with the youth having a group on three Sundays per month. The Youth have continued to grow as disciples through *Route 66* (Youth-led service), which is valued by many of the congregation. TGIF have followed the Bible Course and are displaying a fantastic knowledge of scripture as a result! TGIF and Youth Club continue to meet on alternate Fridays.

In November, Victoria indicated that she would be stepping down at Christmas, as Stephen moves on to be Team Rector in Brixham in March. Ruth has moved on from chairing this group in order to coordinate Sunday and Friday youth activities with the brilliant volunteers: Jack, Elaine, Abby and Mike.

The committee would like to thank Victoria and her team for all their hard work as they teach and mentor our young people each week.

The committee and PCC have agreed that the best way forward for St Matthias would be to pay a full-time Children's, Youth and Family Worker to grow and support this vital ministry and are currently appealing for funds to make this a reality.

Youth Worker Management Committee (Tessa, Phil)

5. Girls Allowed

Girls Allowed have enjoyed another successful year meeting monthly at various venues - Church Hall and Lounge, Brunel Manor and Lincombe Manor Retirement Village. The meetings are a wonderful opportunity for approximately 30/40 women attached to St. Matthias and friends to come together for a social evening. There is always time to chat over tea or coffee and this helps us all to know each other better whilst sharing a wide variety of activities. During the past year life stories have been shared, an illuminating and thought provoking film was shown, exploration of a range of Christian books, pumpkins were carved with Christian symbols, an interesting talk about The Ladies Lounge by Ros Ede and a challenging fun quiz was organised by one of our members. A lovely sunny evening together at Cockington was memorable with our more energetic members completing the Treasure Trail whilst others enjoyed a drink and a chat around outdoor tables. We all celebrated the winners with chocolate. Sampling the culinary delights of Christmas food and the pudding evening, to which husbands and partners are invited, are always a huge success. We were looking forward to learning about The Language of Love from Elaine Ward from Dorset in March but we will have to keep that one on hold until we are able to meet again after the Coronavirus restrictions have been lifted.

Girls Allowed provides an opportunity to keep up with friends in a pleasant social setting for ladies from different congregations. 'Girls' of any age are

welcome to join us - meetings are advertised through the notice sheet, the sign-up sheet in the church hall and by email. Please do not hesitate to sign up or email to let us know that you will be joining. A small donation covers room hire and refreshments.

Ruth, Marjorie, Sue and Judi

6. Prayer Life at St Matthias

Prayer Activities in this past year include:

Prayer Ministry

Our prayer ministry team has been expanded so that there are always people to pray with others every Sunday either during or after the 11am service. It has been very noticeable when this is promoted during the service, there is a significant uptake on people requesting prayer. Over time it is hoped that this can be available at every service with members of the team leading prayer prior to the 11am service in the St Francis Chapel.



Prayer Meetings

These occur on the 1st and 3rd Thursdays every month.

Blue Light Prayer Phone

The idea behind the Blue Light Prayer Phone was to have a contact number for those needing urgent prayer. This has not been used very much at all, it costs money to run and the handovers on a Sunday between holders often do not go to plan. (However, at the time of writing the Coronavirus epidemic is just starting and so any review of the value of the BLPP will be deferred until later.) Requests for non urgent prayer go to fellow Homegroup members or to the church for inclusion on the intercessory prayer list.

Thy Kingdom Come 21st May-31st May 2019

As part of TKC the church focused on prayer and many home groups completed the Prayer Course. Many went to the final celebration at Exeter Cathedral.

Prayer Warriors

The PCC draws up a list of prayer requests at the end of every meeting and these are distributed to our housebound Prayer Warriors at home. Not only do we know that those things important to the PCC are being prayed for but it keeps our wider church family informed and involved. It also provides an opportunity for contact.

Intercessory Prayer

There is a team of people who lead us in intercessory prayer at many of the 11 o'clock services.

Colin Young

7. Missions Action Group

St Matthias follows the biblical principle of tithing by donating annually 10% of our voluntary income to a range of Christian charities. The Missions Action Group meets to decide on the charities and amounts we wish to recommend to the PCC for tithe donations. These charities represent four areas of giving: Local Mission, World Mission, Poverty Relief and Supporting Churches. In 2019 we were delighted to be able to donate £15,750, an increase of £2,500 on the previous year. This total was shared between our six main charities, which receive significant donations from us each year, and several other charities, which vary from year to year.

Our six main charities are: Church Army, Church Mission Society, Church Pastoral Aid Society, Linx, Mission to Seafarers and Tear Fund. The other charities chosen for support in 2019 were: Christian Response to Eastern Europe, Compass Braille, Mercy Ships, Open Doors, Scripture Union, Torquay Community Larder, WorldShare and Youth Genesis Trust. Each year, the sum of £1,000 is kept in reserve from the tithe until the end of the year, to be used for emergency and disaster relief. In December 2019, this money was donated to Christian Aid.

We arrange for representatives from each of our six main charities to come and speak to us in Sunday services, every few months. This enables them to share news of their work with church members and strengthen their relationship with us all. In 2019, our Sunday service speakers included representatives from Linx, Tearfund and Church Pastoral Aid Society. We also welcomed a speaker from Christian Response to Eastern Europe to give an evening presentation about their work.

We are extremely grateful to all at St Matthias for their generous giving, enabling substantial amounts to be sent to Christian charities which are showing

God's love in action, both in the UK and overseas. In our meetings, we share news of projects being undertaken by the various charities we support, and pray for their work. We would be very happy to welcome new members – if you are interested, please speak to Joanna.

Joanna Wilkinson

8. Social Core Group

And then there were four... Social Core would love more members so that we can continue to put on events to help folk get to know each other. It seems particularly important that, as we grow as a church, we have opportunities to meet up in a relaxed way and help to welcome newcomers too.

The reordering has meant that the normal lunches could not function, but, with Amanda, Steve & Julie, we ran another Fish'n'Chip'n'Film evening as well as Jollyween, with Dean giving the children a really good party. We funded the chocolate eggs at Easter. We'd also love to thank people who have helped us run the Farewell Lunch for the Yates's.

We hope that 2020 will give us new vision for events that use the amazing space that the Wellspring Project has provided – could you join in? (Ruth 293119 or jrmp@btinternet.com)

Social Core Team

9. St Matt's Cats



St Matts' Cats Gospel Choir had a busy year. We sang at various church services including our Easter service and the Christmas carol service. Last October some of our choir members went to Bristol to participate in the Sing! Conference with other GGCC (Gospel Generation

Community Choir) choirs. We had a great day of singing, learning new songs and worshipping together.

The highlight of our singing activity in 2019 was the Gospel Extravaganza Recording Project led by Geraldine Latty and Carey Luce. The recording was made in July at Thornbury Church in Bristol where we met up with other GGCC choirs from Bristol and the Riverside Community Gospel Choir from London for a day of singing and recording. As a result of this project a CD 'Sing Our Way Home' has been released and is now available for sale.

We had an exciting year of learning new songs and preparing for our next concert which will hopefully take place later in the year.

Anya Jones (jones_anya@yahoo.co.uk)



10. Friends of St Matthias

Activities and events during the year to April:



Funding projects

The Friends were able to give significant support to the Wellspring Project. Specifically, the reordering of the Francis Chapel, which was funded from money left to the Friends in her Will by Helena Castle, as well as a significant contribution to the cost of the work on the Piazza.

Apart from the Wellspring Project, the Friends also funded the much-needed major overhaul and upgrading of the Church Centre heating system at a cost of more than £15,000, including vat.

Events

It was a busy year with a good programme of well supported events:

- The Christmas meal at the Headland Hotel and the New Year meal at Amici are now regular and well supported events in our calendar
- The Riverford Farm cooking evening was a popular event and will be repeated
- The Open Mic evening in October was a huge success, thanks to a great team of organisers and in particular to Charlie for having the idea and to Dean for hosting it brilliantly on the night
- The Autumn Fair and the Organ concert were both deferred because of the ongoing reordering work
- We were pleased to be able to take part in the Church reopening event in December and we welcomed a number of new members following this

Christine Tibbetts in particular has been tireless in promoting our events, though all the committee, as well as our wider group of supporters, worked hard to make this a successful year for the Friends.

I am grateful to all our Trustees for their support, commitment and enthusiasm during the year, and in particular to John and Sheila Hart who have decided to stand down at the AGM after many years' service.

Membership and Role

I would like to thank Cecil Johnston and Steve Vans-Colina who have been invaluable in the process of reviewing and updating the Friends' written material and in particular our redesigned leaflets and new logo.

We have had extensive discussions about the role of the Friends following successful completion of Wellspring, though this is all currently on hold, as are our plans for a full programme of events during the year.

We are so grateful that the internet allows us to keep in touch until such time as normal service can be resumed.

Rob Newman, Chairman

11. TOWNS (Torbay Winter Night Shelter)

This is the fifth year that St Matthias has hosted the homeless night shelter. Known as TOWNS (Torbay Winter Night Shelter) seven different churches host it throughout the five weeks, our night being Sundays. Thanks to all the generous support of our church family, this year again proved to be a great success. Each night we sheltered and entertained on average 10 people per night, (50 people throughout the five weeks) who enjoyed a good meal, a safe, warm and secure place to sleep and breakfast the following morning. They were then able to register for the night shelter the following night. Kevin Foster our MP and a church member held a surgery on one of the nights, and Galina, another of our church family held an art session which went down well. We would like to think that all our volunteers enjoyed the experience, and the folk we looked after were very grateful as they left in the morning. Thanks must go to all who supported this great outreach. Interesting conversations were had by all. Particular thanks must go to our food and kitchen teams who provided meals for up to 24 guests and volunteers each week, also all who prayed at home, and all our volunteers deserve thanks for making our homeless friends so welcome in our church. We have always endeavoured to make this project self-funding, and thanks to donations from individuals, and again generous support from the Lions Club, we are able to fully fund it again this year.

***Avril & Malcolm Ford & Cliff Adcock
Co-ordinators***



Guests and volunteers enjoy their meal

12. Pastoral Care

The Pastoral care team has had a busy year again as many of the Church family have been unwell. The team visit all of the residential and nursing homes in our parish, taking communion to those who wish to receive it. We have two new homes that we now visit; Hadleigh Court and Jubilee House.

Several of our congregation have been in hospital this year and have had visits from our team and have been referred to the hospital chaplaincy team for communion. Thank you to those of you who have contacted me or the office to let us know about poorly people.

Sadly, we lost John Collison, Mike Luntz, Dilys Howman, Pat George-Amuah, John Purdy, Mollie Baldwin and Andrea Perry during the last twelve months.

If anyone would like to know more about joining the pastoral care team, please speak to the clergy or myself. We know that many of you who are not on the team, do visit people in their own homes as friends especially members of your home groups, thank you.

Suzy Young

Pastoral Care Coordinator (01803 614658)

13. Chat@St Matts

Chat@St.Matts (otherwise known as Tea & Cakes Afternoon) is held on the first Thursday of the month at 2.30pm in the Church hall. Around 20-25 people meet – we do jigsaw puzzles, crossword puzzles, laugh, share, chat – sometimes serious conversations, discuss IT problems and find help, listen and join in with songs on Alexa and it is a really pleasant afternoon appreciated by those who attend. Lifts are available for those who have difficulty getting to the church.



Chat@St.Matts
First Thursday of month

At Christmas and Easter, the Pre-School children join us to sing songs which are lovely occasions and the clergy will join for a short talk and prayer.

We are grateful to the team for all that they do and for keeping this afternoon special for those who attend.

Sylvia Barratt

14. Messy Church

The Messy Church family gets together once a month to explore the bible through craft activities (some very messy!), games, and story, finishing up with a celebration and supper together. For the first half of the year our numbers averaged 60 plus but from September the numbers have dropped, we think because Beavers and a couple of popular after-school clubs run at the same time.



There has been change in the leadership team as Monica has stepped down and Lena has come on board. We are blessed with a great team who make everyone welcome, helping to organise crafts and games – plus wonderful helpers in the kitchen, who cook and clear up.

Although the number of families attending is smaller, they join us every month and it is a privilege to be part of the Messy Family with them.

We shall miss Stephen and Victoria and would value your prayers as we try to stay in touch with our families over the next few months.

Andrea Crump and Judi Stannard

15. Home/Study Group



The church now has a total of 13 Home Groups, including some new ones and a couple that have merged into others. Around 110 church members meet fortnightly to enjoy fellowship, bible study, prayer, coffee or tea and in some cases cake as well. Four groups meet in the Church Centre, eight in homes around the parish, and one (a more informal Songs of Praise format) at Sundial Lodge. Enabling new members to join groups has worked best when new groups form following Alpha courses.

Most groups have this year followed “The Bible Course” from The Bible Society, an 8 session course introducing the bible for beginners, but providing long established Christians with a surprising increased depth of knowledge and insight into this “big and complicated book”.

During Lent the plan was for the Home Groups to provide tea and coffee before the weekly Lent meetings and a short devotional introduction. After the first week, we all discovered we were giving up a little more in Lent than we had anticipated. Rev Andrew Green kindly recorded the sessions which are available on the church website.

All the Home Group leaders were contacted and sent “A practical checklist” to assist them in maintaining contact between members by e-mail or phone and to make sure that those who need assistance had help.

Plans for 2020-21 will of course depend on the progress of the present emergency but some form of remote study, perhaps at a coordinated time, is under consideration. Some groups may establish something like the ‘Zoom’ groups to join together.

We are all grateful for the effort the leaders put in, and would welcome enquiries from those not currently in a group.

Further information is on the updated noticeboard, leaflet and website page and we are happy to give advice and information on joining an appropriate group.

Group	Leader/Coordinators	Time	Venue
The Rockyroaders	Andrew and Hilary Stilliard	Tue 7:30pm	Church Centre
Woodend Evening Group	Mike Higgins	Tue 7:30pm	Woodend Road Wellswood
The 2018 Group	Paul and Tessa Barton	Tue 7:30pm	Church Centre
Ladies Alone	Marilyn Smee	Wed 10:30am	Church Centre
Ilsham Valley Group	Maureen Purdy	Wed 2:00pm	Ilsham Road, Wellswood
Livermead Evening Group	Ian and Jenny Lane	Tue or Wed 7:30pm	Livermead
2019 Alpha follow on Group	Sharon Hiley, Mike & Dee Moore	Wed 7:30pm	Church Centre
Shiphay Home Group	Suzy and Colin Young	Thu 7:30pm	Cadewell Lane Shiphay
Blossom Hill Group	Monica Rook	Thu 7:30pm	Higher Lincombe Road
Manor Wood Group	Alan Poole	Thu 7:30pm	Watcombe Heights
Wellswood Avenue Group	Paul and Judi Stannard	Thu 7:30pm	Wellswood Avenue
Watcombe Park Group	Brian and Norma Gerry	Thu 7:30pm	Watcombe Park
Sundial Lodge	Residents	Occasional	Sundial Lodge

Norman & Lindsay Doidge (Home Group Coordinators)

14 Courtenay Gardens, Wolborough Hill, Newton Abbot, TQ12 1HS

Tel 01626 210427

norman.doidge@hotmail.com mob 07968 375528

lindsay.doidge@icloud.com mob 07792 861343

16. Men's Breakfast

The Men's Breakfast is now in its 7th year. We have been privileged to see it grow from 3 people to sometimes 50! On average though attendance is a more modest 30, but that is still a real blessing.

We are currently meeting at the Riviera Centre International, otherwise known locally as the ERC. This has been a brilliant place to meet, serving excellent food with a professional conference environment. It has been ideal, allowing our speakers to present their stories in a relaxed and informal atmosphere. After all, we are all friends, comprising a rich variety of characters and backgrounds. And it's that, that contributes to the validity of our fellowship. We share who we are, no frills and how God has been active in our lives, willing, directing, challenging and loving and caring for us each step of the way.

Each story brings something different. Sometimes laughter, sometimes tears and sometimes both. All in the context of Christian Love, supporting each other, especially when difficult times have crossed our paths.

If you have never been to a Men's Breakfast, may I encourage you to come and sample our wares and be part of this growing fellowship of ordinary, yet extraordinary bunch of chaps, seeking to live as God intended, even if we do make mistakes along the way. We do have some surprises up ahead. All will be revealed in due course!!

Charlie Allansen c.allansen@btinternet.com

17. Welcome Team

During the year we have moved from the church to the hall and back again, with the geometry of the seating being changed between the 9.30 and 11.00am services.



We now have 6 Welcomers for the 9.30 services and 23 for the 11.00 services. In addition to the 23 there are 2 reserves who are not part of the regular teams but stand in when people are away. Also members from other teams are very willing to stand in if there is a shortage of Welcomers on any Sunday. We are very grateful to these reserves and to all the team members for the hard work they put in especially in making newcomers welcome. This is

something that the wider church is good at doing – spotting newcomers and welcoming them.

As we remarked last year the attractive booklet '*Everything*' has proved very useful for handing out and the *Men's Breakfast* and *Girls Allowed* are good events to which newcomers can be invited.

Jenny & Ian Lane

18. Church Flowers

2019 was, of course, when the Church re-ordering began and so the group decided to place flowers in the Linkway instead. That was not entirely successful due to the sunshine making it rather warm for them!



We were pleased to be able to put some decorations around the Church at Christmas and thereafter have been using the lovely Font as the focal point for our arrangement. We were also very pleased to welcome Jill Luntz onto our team.

Sue Newman & Barbara Burrows

19. Church Cleaning

As you may be aware, there have been many changes in the cleaning set up since the last APCM. No pews to polish for a start! When we returned to the church after the re-ordering, several people decided to retire from the cleaning team which left us 6 people short. Since then 2 more have retired and although 5 people responded to the appeal for more volunteers (thank you 😊) we are still 3 people short. So we would be extremely grateful if some of you could come on board and help us to keep our beautiful church as you would like to see it. We have 6 teams so you will only have to do your bit of the cleaning once every 6 weeks. All cleaning materials are provided and we throw in tea and coffee!

We are truly grateful to all those who have kept our church clean and shiny in the past and we hope this sounds attractive enough to make you all eager to rush and sign up 😊 Every blessing. ***Jean Fricker***

20. Open Church Volunteers

To be in a position to welcome visitors to the reordered church has been a great privilege. It has been so easy to offer tea, coffee and biscuits from the new 'church café'. But far more the joy of showing people all that has gone into the changes; the brightened "feel" of our church and mostly, the enthusiasm of our visitors. I know there are a few regulars who have yet to see the joy we feel before seeing the light for themselves. May God protect our church family in these difficult times. We both look forward to being able to welcome our holiday visitors once again to St. Matthias - we pray it will not be too long before we are back to normal.

Graeme Whitaker and Barbara Burrows – Tuesday morning team

Future plans – it is John Beckett's vision and hope to be able to keep the church open each day for a longer period. To this end we have received offers of help and when the church re-opens and normal service resumes (after the Coronavirus pandemic), we hope to open from 10am to 12 noon with our existing teams, and then offer a quiet space over lunchtime from 12 noon to 2pm with an additional team of volunteers. We will advertise this locally to the local Wellswood businesses – some people may wish to find some quiet time during their lunchbreaks and we can provide this along with a cup of coffee and a friendly face! My thanks go to all the teams who keep this church open for visitors. (We are still looking for additional volunteers to help with this – please contact the office for more information.)

Pere Snow (Centre Manager)

21. The Church Centre

As I write this the church and centre are currently closed on account of the Coronavirus pandemic (March 2020) and I find myself working from home. The Centre is usually so busy, so we are in very different times. However I can look back and write about the last year and no doubt when these times are over, we will all get back to 'normal' and the Centre will flourish again.

And so...

The first thing to write about is that during the last year, the church went through the re-ordering/building programme and essentially it became a

building site but one which staff, the public and our worshippers had to walk through for access to the building. It was a daily challenge to find the correct entrance and working out how not to bring the dirt and dust from the church through to the centre, was a daily pre-occupation! I have to say that the regular hirers were very tolerant and continued to run their classes despite the changes/upheaval. A good number of them were invited to the Launch event in December and I think many of them felt very positive about the 'new look' church. One of the best things for the Centre in relation to the hirers is the installation of automatic doors at the entrance to the Centre. No more heavy doors to open and much easier when bringing in their equipment.

During the last year we have continued to hire out the rooms in the Centre to community groups, for exercise classes, to the Diocese for training courses, and many others – see the list below. We have welcomed some new regular hirers including The Probus Club of Torquay who now meet in the Centre once a week. Another WI group has also started up and holds a monthly afternoon meeting – there are now 4 WI groups meeting at St Matthias! We are so pleased that our rooms seem to be popular and very well used.

The Centre also continues to be a great resource for the church family and is used by the church for meetings, courses etc and one of the small rooms is no longer hired out externally but used exclusively by the church – a second vestry/meeting room for the clergy and for use by the Finance Team (Rose Price Room). Our church users include: Chat@St Matts, St Matt's Cats, Matt's Knits, Messy Church, Alpha & Lent courses, Parent & Toddler Group, Missions Action Group meetings, staff meetings, management meetings, Friends meetings and Friends events, Winter Night Shelter and some of the Home Groups meet in the Centre too. See reports from some of these groups elsewhere in this booklet.

Other news...

A small team of volunteers continues to support the work of the office, particularly covering in my absence for holidays or meetings.

Although not at the moment, the church continues to be open every weekday morning as a place of quiet reflection or for somewhere to come for a chat and a coffee with our team of volunteers. Since the re-ordering we now have a lovely café from where refreshments can be provided and a lovely informal 'chat area' complete with settees and coffee tables.

See the report elsewhere in this booklet for more information about Open Church and the plans to extend the opening hours.

The upkeep of the Centre continues to be a joint effort between the Re-ordering Maintenance Group and others including our team of 2 cleaners and with much help from those washing tea towels, mending dripping taps, changing light bulbs etc. It is a large building and needs as many 'elves' as possible to keep it all running smoothly. Thank you!

On a personal note, thank you to everyone who helps with the running of daily life at St Matthias – it is appreciated. In addition thank you to those who have stepped down from their roles after many years and to those who have recently joined the team. Thank you.

To give you a flavour of the activities taking place at the centre, see the list below and if you fancy joining any of the groups, take a look at the church website for more information.

List of groups/activities:

Exercise classes

U3A groups - Music Appreciation, History of Art, Quiz, Singing

Angels & Mavericks – choir

WI – 4 groups

Probus Club

Tutoring

Counselling

Ballet

Brownies

Rainbows

Film Club....and more

Pere Snow

Church Centre Manager

22. Re-Ordering Maintenance Group

The whole year has been about the re-ordering of the church and the group has meet lots of times, sometimes with the architect and builders and sometimes alone. The members have varied from time to time as the needs have changed. The re-ordering is nearly complete though of course some snagging issues still need to be dealt with. I cannot count the number of small decisions and choices we have had to make but it all came together wonderfully. Other than the re-ordering the major job has been sorting out the church centre heating. It has been dealt with brilliantly by Paul Stannard and Tony Barratt. Once the present troubles are over with and we get back to normal I am sure lots of matters will require attention but only after we have taken a collective DEEP BREATH!

Phil Miles

