

THE WAY AHEAD

Already planned for 2017/2018

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| 1. Participation in the week of prayer "Thy Kingdom Come 2017"
<i>Praying Together at Pentecost for mission and evangelism 25 May - 4 June 2017</i> | 2. Confirmation |
| 2. Holiday Bible Club | 7. Church clean |
| 3. Weddings: numerous alongside blessings and renewal of vows | 8. Deanery away day |
| 4. Services: musician for other services | 9. Charitable support to our proposed charities by the members of our church |
| 5. Weekend away | 10. Mission Canada |
| | 11. Church Mice events |
| | 12. SoulTime Projects: assistant |
| | 13. Pastorates |
| | 14. Major fundraising events |

These are only possible if we continue to commit fully to that which we have been called and acknowledge that everyone has a part to play in the greater mission.

God has blessed each of us with gifts, and how we use them in His name in response to the call He has placed on our hearts is key.

Much of what we do is not new but is part of the life cycle of faith, but to keep it relevant and to allow others to flourish requires a sacrifice on our part. We have to grow new leaders, allow young and old to mix and flourish, and embrace that which sometimes makes us feel uncomfortable. It is perhaps akin to reading Matthew and Mark together and praying for a smooth unfolding revelation of Jesus.

Today we have a few challenges ahead:

1. To sustain the people who come to our church and allow them to grow in faith.
 - a. Initially this may or may not mean close-led teaching by a priest or LLM. However this cannot be the only route, as to do so is to limit that which is provided in Christ. This is particularly relevant as we have a diminishing number

of priests, and hence a need to grow and empower new leaders for the work in hand.

2. We must remember that we are here as Christians to worship together, share our faith, and grow and strengthen disciples of Jesus.
 - a. This means sharing skills in an unusual setting. Music, prayer or even care of the church linen are examples of this.
 - b. To encourage one another and join together to share time in Christ, such as is provided by the church weekends away.
3. One of the greatest challenges is to realise that it is Christ who calls us and then sends us out to serve and teach in His name.
 - a. Christians in Mission brings a huge difference to sustaining what we do, rather than just doing good because it makes us feel good.
4. We must remain vigilant to the needs in front of us.
 - a. If someone here is in need then we should respond.
5. Following Jesus often requires a sharing beyond that which comes easily. Whether we are sharing our time, finances or skills, it will challenge our own desires and plans.

In 2017 we need to address the shortfall in our tithing and recognise that it is something not to run away from, but to be bold and seek to support and commit our blessings of time, gifts and money. As good stewards of our finances and assets, we need to recognise that grants and fundraising may take longer but will meet our aims.

Importantly our lives must not be inhibited by fear, but by trust, and be released in and through Jesus.

As a community we can then release and encourage each other as disciples and leaders of Christ, moving forward in faith, expanding on our vision and evolving mission plan, daring to dream and implement the unexpected and potentially impossible.

Thank you to you all who have worked in Christ's name, served in His church, tended to those in need, prayed and worshipped the Lord, taught and shared the Word, and provided hospitality in Christ's name. I pray that our next 12 months continue to be blessed.

Revd Claire



RECTOR'S REPORT 2017



In friendship together we resolve to worship God, serve the community, and share our faith in Jesus Christ

Past, Present and Future



Rich inheritance - the gift of faith provided by those who have gone before us. Although none of us can claim to know some of my better-known predecessors such as John Newton and Moses Brown, there are still those who speak of recent incumbents, for example Canon Collins. Their charge was the cure of souls, a task which we continue to own as we seek to share our faith with those we know, and pass it on to the next generation.

As a church family we state that *in friendship we resolve to worship God, serve the community, and share our faith in Jesus Christ*, something which resonates strongly in the life of this church in recent years.

In 2008/9 a shared vision (although initially suggested as a plan to build links between church and town) became a wider aim - to see the outpouring of our church as part of the body of Christ as Mission and Ministry throughout our Market Town as the natural occurrence.

This vision built upon what was already established, and did not seek to replace that which had gone before. We have created new services, and existing services have expanded. Our local mission under the banner of SoulTime is matched by that of supporting others in mission through charitable giving. Our fund raising through major events - Pancake Race, Dickens of a Christmas and Cherry Fair - has benefited from additional targeted fund raising events, all of which underpins our aims and helps the growth of discipleship in numbers and depth.



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WHAT WE HAVE DONE

The following dates and key events/activities provide a good insight to the living faith which is founded in Christ through prayer, study and worship. It reflects that which we all recognise; that our community is a family although we might well worship at different times in the week, on different days, and different ways. Nonetheless the family of St Peter and St Paul Church, whilst broad and diverse, is held together in Christ to fulfil the vision.

April 2010

- Charity registration was completed
- Additional training and good practice addressed cash handling and new policies, including child protection
- Fabric: 2006 Quinquennial repairs began to filter through
- The bells, augmented by two more, were returned and hung
- Easter cards were added to the existing town-wide delivery of Christmas cards
- Maundy Thursday Vigil and Easter Eve Service of Light
- Prayer Chain created
- Charity Committee created
- Church Mice continued to thrive

April 2011

- Appointment of John Witchell as Director of Music
- After school club - Activate (Middle School)
- Wednesday Holy Communion now followed by refreshments - and sock competition
- Bereavement Boxes for the schools
- Appointment of a part time Church Administrator
- Breakfast talks at the Bull
- Life Path, Easter and Christmas Cracked
- Wedding course
- Mix at Six service began
- Harvest Hog
- Entrance pillars were completed
- Battle of the Bands

April 2012

- Moment on Monday service for the housebound and lonely began
- PCC: created sub-committees for help with the specialism required by an expanding and busy church
- Mission Opportunity Fund created, and provided contributions towards the cost of Church Hall reordering and a Youth Worker
- Baptism Prep team expanded
- Tour guides - Pilgrim trails
- *Olney's Got Balls* (Testicular Cancer awareness)
- Church weekend away
- Soul Survivor camp
- 2006 Quinquennial work completed
- Church path relaid
- Sound system repairs
- Piano purchased
- Church annual clean regularised

April 2013

- New sound system installed
- Church path lights installed
- Shed cleared and floor relaid for better utilisation
- Listening Ear launched
- Olney Festival 2012 (Olympics event)
- Choir day out at Ely Cathedral
- Autism weekend
- Murder Mystery evening
- Strawberry cream teas at the Rectory
- Vocations event
- Pet service
- Beyond the Surface started
- Church Facebook group created
- Mission Action Plan reviewed and a hub for the community agreed
- Birth of SoulTime Programme
- Reordering of the Church Hall
- Contracts re-negotiated with Olney Nursery School
- Fund raising for the Church Hall completed through grants and local fund raising
- Increase to three Churchwardens
- Revd Coralie Mansfield joined as a curate
- Additional £65k raised through grants and fund raising for the Church Hall
- SoulTime Memory Club started
- SoulTime Café started

April 2014

- Completion of the Church Hall reordering
- Church weekend away
- Prayer Labyrinth
- Christian Aid soup lunches continued
- First incumbency placements - Revd Rona and Revd Eleanor
- Lost Sheep Christmas competition
- Increase to four Churchwardens
- Six new preachers authorised and joined the ministry team
- Two organ scholars
- Choir concert and a gold medal for a chorister
- Dinner auction
- Church lighting upgraded
- Repairs to boilers
- Replacement of Church kitchen water heater
- Deanery Away Day led by Revd Dr Michael Beasley
- Soul Survivor camp
- Holiday Bible Club

April 2015

- Tea and Christ started
- Emmaus, Lenten and Advent courses
- Bishop John Pritchard's visit to Lifepath
- Easter flower cross
- Monthly sheet started
- Beyond Alpha home group established
- Diocesan Grand Day Out - goodbye to Bishop John
- Wedding Fair in the Church Hall
- Twinned with St George's Church in London, Ontario
- Fireworks event
- Health and Safety Committee created
- 24 Doors of Advent
- Purchased Yearsmind book

April 2016

- Grave Talk
- Implementation of Health and Safety fabric requirements (ongoing)
- National Wave of Prayer week - tree ribbons and votive candle stand
- Pizza and Prayer started
- SoulTime Breakfasts started
- SoulTime SPOT (Supporting Parents of Teenagers)
- SoulTime Soup Lunch started
- Food Hygiene 5-Star award
- YAGs team leadership group formed
- Boiler repairs
- Church Hall lights upgraded
- Church south doors installed
- 100 youth volunteers achieved - SoulTime Café
- Pastorates formed with 36 leaders
- Break-in at Church Hall and also sound desk stolen from Church



STEWARDSHIP

Thank you is something we learn from our parents. Words we express to show our gratitude and love for their provision and gifts. As we grow older we understand that we have a part in giving as well as receiving gifts.

The greatest gift each of us will ever receive is the gift of Jesus Christ, who provides our hope of eternity, our restoration through His love and our strength to meet the challenges that life places before us. James reminds us that every good gift we have comes from God (**James 1:17**). We show gratitude for a blessing of this magnitude by giving generously to God (**2 Corinthians 9:11**).

This year we continue to face the challenge of sustaining our plans to grow our church, support our initiatives (locally such as SoulTime and wider afield with our pledged charities), as well as maintaining the everyday operational elements including our utility bills, parish share, music, and administrative costs.

Our own planned giving. It costs £11 per week per adult to run the church, and we have each been asked to prayerfully consider our own planned financial giving to the church.

Thank you. I would like to express my thanks to all who are considering a pledge/covenant as part of a regular giving plan and to those of you who are already part of our regular giving plan.