



**The Parish Church of All Saints, Staplehurst**

# **Annual Reports**

**2007 / 2008**

Dear Friends,

Do you, like me, find yourselves sometimes comparing the church you knew, as a child, with the church of today? We easily reminisce nostalgically about the world we knew as youngsters, when churchgoing was the norm. In 1955, for example, 83% of adults over 16 claimed to have attended Sunday School, or Bible Class, for several years when they were children. Those were the days of one paid vicar per church, no shopping or sporting fixtures on a Sunday and the vicar would most certainly not have written his (note HIS!) introduction to the annual report with the help of a computer. In Canterbury Diocese we are very well aware of changes in society and in the national church.

Staplehurst is listed in our diocesan literature as an example of a "traditional church showing growth". So we have much to celebrate here. Read through these pages and see reports on many people, active in ministries of all kinds, as disciples of Christ. There is prayer support and active community involvement. We see the whole church trying to be open to the needs of the wider community as well of those of the congregation, providing some of the spiritual and social "glue" that holds all together, while the culture in Britain moves in the opposite direction.

Phil Osler and John Mackenzie, both of whom served their curacies here, left this year to lead their own parishes and it has been exciting to see Steve Bennett start his ordination training and Kevin Fulcher start his Reader training, as well as watching many different people getting involved in leading groups and services here. The trend in the National church is for fewer people to come forward as stipendiary candidates but the total number of ordained ministers is actually rising in the church, as more are offering themselves for self supporting ministries. We are not a church in decline, rather a church that is changing.

In November 2001, our Diocesan Synod adopted a report entitled "Growing Forward Together" (often abbreviated to **GFT**) and in May 2006, Bishop Stephen, in his presidential address at Diocesan Synod, gave his personal vision for **2020**. The combined goals of these two visions are exciting. We are looking ahead to how we might best serve Christ and his kingdom over the next decade and beyond.

So, as we at All Saints look backwards and forwards, let's see ourselves less as guardians of an ageing heritage and more as a community 'on the move' and resourced by God. We might do well to use the bullet points from the **GFT>2020** vision, as a checklist for ourselves and our church.

How are we becoming:

- A Holy People

*(personal and corporate spiritual revival and renewal)*

- A Learning People

*(committed to understanding our faith and equipped to Minister)*

- A Missionary and Evangelistic People

*(involved in, with, and for, the world in daily life, worship, mission and social action) ?*

Happy travelling and much love



## SECRETARY'S REPORT ON THE BUSINESS OF THE PCC 2007-8

Members of the PCC are a dedicated group who have continued to work well together during the last year at the six meetings held. Thanks were sent to the Free Church, whose room was used for the meetings until September, when their church was closed for demolition and rebuilding. Since then we have met in Staplehurst Primary School.

Discussions at the PCC meetings have included those concerned with work to be done on the church roof and the lighting, disabled facilities for the Parish Room, and the reordering of the St. George's Chapel.

The PCC agreed to support Steve Bennett, as he explored his vocation to the Ordained Ministry. He was selected for training and he is now training with SEITE over the next three years. They also supported Kevin Fulcher's application for Reader training. He too started a three year course in the autumn.

In May we said goodbye to the Revd. Phil Osler, who took up the position of a House for Duty Priest in two Devon parishes. Phil and Janet served All Saints for nearly 30 years and their departure left a huge gap in the life of the church.

In November we also said goodbye to the Revd. John MacKenzie. John took up the post of Priest in Charge of Willesborough with Sevington, near Ashford. John and his wife Sophie worked unstintingly in many areas of church life, especially with our teenagers. We wish them well in their new home and new ministry.

Javaid Khan, who joined the PCC in April, moved with his family to the U.S.A. in September. The Kahn family were regular members of the congregation and continue to keep in touch.

We welcomed the Revd. John Walker from Maidstone, who came to us in November as Self Supporting Associate Priest and will continue to work with us all in the future.

Adie McCall, from Hawkhurst came on a six month placement to All Saints as part of her OLM training. Her stay with us finished at the end of February and her ministry amongst us will be much missed.

The Deanery Service, held in November, in our church was well attended and there was a good representation of all the parishes in the Deanery. The Revd. Christopher Race, Principal Tutor of the Local Ministry Training Scheme, came to preach.

Glenda Groves retired as Sacristan at the end of March. She has continued to work hard in this post now for nearly ten years and we wish her well in her retirement.

Thanks from me to Karen (who can still read my writing) for typing up my minutes after every meeting.

Finally, many thanks to Gill, our hard-working Rector. We congratulate her on being made an Honorary Canon of Canterbury Cathedral in March this year.

*Sylvia Lade*

## **Churchwarden's Report for APCM – April 2008**

Another busy year has passed, with a mixture of happy and not-so-happy events within our Church. Whilst thinking of both Phil and John leaving Staplehurst as “not-so-happy” occasions for us, it was wonderful to see them move on to the challenges of their own parishes and I am sure that the time spent here will have enriched their ministry and prepared them for their respective livings.

Without Phil and John and all the support they gave to us, to Gill, to our Church and indeed to the village, Gill's workload obviously increased. Gill works incredibly hard and we are grateful for her ministry and her inspiration which enables us to look positively at the future of our Church here in Staplehurst. Our Church continues to grow and develop. The Sunday services are varied, giving everyone an opportunity to worship in their preferred way or to try out different ways. It was wonderful once again to have a full/overflowing Church for the Christingle service. There have been courses and Bible study groups through the year and an enormous amount of thought, time and effort goes into the planning and organising of all these. It was good to have the Bible study during the day as well as the evening for those who prefer not to go out in the evenings.

The Parish Weekend in November was a great parish success, attended by over 100 people and was an ideal opportunity to meet socially with, and get to know better, other members of our congregation.

As Area Dean, Gill has had responsibility for the other churches in our deanery, which is quite a challenge. We were delighted to host the Deanery Service in Staplehurst this year and co-ordinate the lunch afterwards. The deanery regularly puts on open meetings of interest to all and last year a course on bereavement was held. Again, all extra work for Gill.

Towards the end of 2007 Adie McCall from Hawkhurst spent a six month placement with us as part of her training and in addition we were fortunate to have John Walker join us as assistant self-supporting priest. We also look forward to Lusa joining us in June as trainee curate.

It has been an enjoyable year for me again, thanks to so many people. I would like to thank all those who give their time and their love to benefit our Church in so many ways, with special thanks to Glenda who has just “retired” as Sacristan after ten years, she has done a wonderful job and will be greatly missed. I would also like to say a special thank you to Norman, my fellow warden, we have worked well together. He has spent so much time and energy on various projects for the Church, the most notable recently being the new proposed lighting. Most of all I thank my husband, Brian, for his support, patience and long-suffering sympathetic ear!

*Alaine Summers*

## **Churchwarden's Report on the Fabric, Fixtures, Fittings and Furniture of the Church for APCM 2008.**

There are still items from the 2003 Quinquennial Survey on the Church which have yet to be fully addressed and another Survey is due in the coming year. However work is continually being done to keep the building in as good a condition as finances will allow and to make it as user friendly and safe as possible. As items are found, that need attention, they are being dealt with, from large repairs on the structure, down to small repairs on fixtures and fittings. Some items have been completed whilst others are still in progress. What follows is a summary of what has been done during the past year and which items now require attention.

The stonework to the battlements on the top of the Tower has been re-fixed or re-pointed as necessary, paid for with funds provided by the Friends of All Saints. The clock case has been completed; the finance for this was provided by the Friends, the Newlyn Trust and some small fundraising events.

The lock on the Kitchen door has been changed to one that is more appropriate than that originally fixed and a sign and indicator bolt have been provided for the Toilet. A new key safe has been obtained and fixed. A small item of repair has been carried out to the brass altar rail and the latch on the South door has been re-riveted. The external notice boards have been redecorated and the cover to the manhole at the rear of Church Gate Cottages has been replaced. Regular servicing of the boiler, organ and fire extinguishers has been carried out.

The Rector's Vestry has been re-organised and cupboards in the Vestry and Nave have been changed over, making better use of them and giving more space in the Vestry. Some more minor alterations are still required to make better use of that space. The halogen light fittings in the Vestry have proved to be no more reliable than those in the main part of the Church and are being replaced.

The necessary re-tiling of the South slope of the South Aisle roof is proving a slow process. A quote has been obtained for the work and funds have been secured from The Friends of All Saints and The Friends of Kent Churches but the Diocese has not as yet given its approval. A similar situation prevails with the proposed refurbishment of the Chapel; funds are in place and although quotations for the work have still to be obtained, the Diocese again has not as yet given its approval.

The work at the Parish Room to provide facilities for the disabled by way of a ramp at the front and improved toilet accommodation has had to be put on hold because of lack finances and also, due to more urgent matters in the Church, thoughts of an overhaul for the organ have not been progressed.

The CCTV system, which ceased to function, is in the process of being replaced and the sound system control desk which had developed a fault is being repaired. The wooden memorial flower pedestal is also in the process of being refurbished. Some ivy has been removed from the walls of the Church but there still remains some around the West end of the South Aisle and Tower stairs and it is proposed to tackle this task in the near future; also the external louvres to the Bell Chamber are now in need of urgent attention.

The final matter to mention is the lighting in the Nave, Chancel, Chapel and South Aisle; the halogen lights have for some time proved to be difficult to maintain and the PCC has now accepted a proposal for a new lighting scheme based on chandeliers and wall lights. This scheme will include a complete rewiring of the lighting circuits. The process of obtaining approval from the Diocese has begun, as has securing sufficient finance for the project, but at the present time funds are well short of the required amount.

*Norman Wallis*

## **READERS' REPORT**

My report last year ended with a plea for more new young Readers. Well, that plea has been answered by Kevin starting his training as a Reader and we are already enjoying the benefits of his ministry.

Peter and I continue to serve in our special ministries. Peter is particularly skilled in the ministry to the care homes and home communions, although he also plays his part in the liturgy by reading the gospel and leading intercessions.

I continue with the music and taking my turn with the other ministers in the leading of, and assisting at, services of all kinds.

All three of us value the variety of experiences offered to us in the parish and the way in which we are included in the work of the church here. We may be regarded as "lay theologians" by the hierarchy of the church but in practice the Reader ministry continues to fulfil varied roles depending on the abilities of the personnel and the requirements of the parish: and so we carry on!

*Lesley Whitwood*

## **MUSIC REPORT**

The music in the church has continued to develop in all sorts of directions.

The praise band is going from strength to strength: they have benefited enormously both from Gary's expertise and enthusiasm and the provision of various technical aids to the balance of the sound produced.

Many members of the choir continue their faithful service, turning up for all sorts of different services and trying both traditional and modern music. We have a mixture of those who come to everything and those who come when they can, which leads to a wonderful variety of experience for us all. We are still short of young people but value those that we have: Bryony, Katie and Josh. There is always room for more (old and young) – come and join us!

Much of our music stock is quite old and we are very aware of the restrictions on photocopying. The choir have therefore donated most of the fees they receive for weddings to the purchase of some new anthem books and we are trying out some very challenging music.

Our major events for the year were the "Crucifixion" on Good Friday 2007 and "Messiah" in September organised by the Friends of All Saints. At present we are rehearsing for a semi-staged production of "Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat" on 9th and 10th May. This has given an opportunity for many of our young people to enjoy participating in an acting and singing experience and they will be looking for your support in coming to the show.

We continue to be supported by our excellent band of organists and piano players: Ted Hall, Steve Bennett, Bob Chapman and Delphine Wass. We have had to use the CD accompaniment on very few occasions this past year and we are very grateful for their expertise and patience.

*Lesley Whitwood – Director of Music*

## CHARITY COMMITTEE REPORT

Thank you to everyone who generously gave to the charities which the people of All Saints decided to support. The list of amounts given in 2007 is on the Charity Board in the coffee area. Stop the Trafik, USPG (aided by the harvest supper), The Royal British Legion, The Children's Society (at Christingle), and Orbis (Gift Aid Tax Refund) all received several hundreds of pounds each. The other charities received £160.00 each or below. The total for the year was £3,533.56.

During 2008, we have changed from supporting a different charity each month to giving money to the same charity for three months. It was felt it may be better to give a larger amount to fewer charities which have been chosen by the congregation, than to spread smaller amounts round more charities.

The Orange envelopes are still collected monthly, on Charity Sunday (or any other Sunday in the appropriate month). Cash given in the collection plate on Charity Sunday is given to the charity. If you pay tax it would add to your donation if you put this money in a Blue envelope and fill in your details. (You will need to write the name of the charity on these envelopes).

This year, also, we are raising extra money for our charities by asking the congregation to take home an empty film pot to fill up with their small change. Just one pot every three months. If you have missed out from being given one of these pots, and feel you could spare some cash to fill one – any coinage – please ask me for one.

You are all most generous, particularly as most people have their own favourite charities which they support at home, but have also on their list the Church charity.

The list of charities for this year is on the board in the coffee area.

*Audrey Bullock, Chairman, Charities Committee*

## MAGAZINE REPORT

- 1) The profit made from the magazine in 2007 was £1481.29
- 2) There will be no increase in the price of the magazine for 2008.
- 3) The format of the magazine will remain the same for the time being. Changes may be made to the cover
- 4) There has been a drive to get as many articles and photographs from organisations and individuals within the village.
- 5) Many new adverts have been included in the magazine.
- 6) The chairman would like to thank the distributors, and everyone who helps with the magazine for all their hard work.

*Anne Tugwell*

## **SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY COMMITTEE 2007/8**

The main emphasis of this committee this year was promoting Fair Trade. Glyn Roberts has produced a briefing paper which has been distributed to the various groups in the village. We have secured the support of the other churches in the village. Later in 2008 we will run a stall at the village carnival to promote a number of aspects of Fair Trade.

Christmas Stars of remembrance were provided by Audrey Bullock.

We distributed the names and addresses of 45 people imprisoned for their faith so that they could be 'adopted' by members of the congregation and receive Christmas and Easter Cards. Chris Mahoney gave the address at Harvest Festival describing the plight of some of those persecuted for their faith.

Janet Powell coordinated the Christian Aid tea party in September.

We have instructions as to how to recycle juice cartons.

We are investigating the possibility of helping run a debt counselling service in the village.

*Mary Shaw*

## **PASTORAL MINISTRY**

Once again the team have had a very rewarding year. We continue to visit the sick, the bereaved and to administer Holy Communion to the housebound, and to provide a listening ear to those with family problems.

We have monthly Communion visits to the local nursing homes and members of the team have been appointed to administer when Gill is unable to. We can from time to time provide transport to hospital and also take the elderly in the parish to spend time with their friends when they live away from a bus route.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the team, and especially the new members who have joined this year, for the help and comfort they bring to all.

We are always pleased to have extra help. If you feel you would like to join us, please speak to Gill or to me.

*Pat Sherlock*

## SUPERSAINTS REPORT

Supersaints restarted on the 23 September 2007 with a new and exciting programme packed with topics for children between the ages of 4 to 8. We meet in the Parish Room regularly on the 2nd and 4th Sundays of the month. We have five children who regularly attend where we aim to provide them with a fun environment where they have an opportunity to participate in activities such as, listening to bible stories, singing songs, making things and playing games relevant to the story of that week, having rhyme time and enjoying time just being together. Colouring time appears to be one of their favourite activities!

The children took part in the Harvest festival service by singing a short harvest song. They thoroughly enjoyed singing this song and were grateful to Debbie Brady, who accompanied them on the guitar.

Between September and Christmas, the children have enjoyed activities, such as making a 'boat in a bottle' when we talked about Jesus calming the storm. Making a 'washing line prayer line' was a real winner when we talked about prayer. The children were able to write a short prayer on a t-shirt shaped piece of card and hang it on their own made washing line from string and very small clothes pegs. For Advent we talked about the coming of Jesus, likening it to the start of a long journey. The children were clearly excited about Christmas and we looked at Christmas traditions from around the world. They really enjoyed trying to say 'Happy Christmas' in French, Italian, Spanish and Dutch.

The New Year saw us start a series of the stories which Jesus told, such as buried treasure, the two builders and marvellous yeast. This will take us up to the Easter break. The children found the story about looking for the lost coin really interesting, but they found the 'hunt the coin' game more rewarding especially when they found out that they were looking for chocolate coins. You could not dampen their enthusiasm!

After Easter we look forward to topics about the people we meet in everyday life and how they help us, such as doctors, nurses, postmen and farmers.

We invited a large number of children who had been baptised in the church between 2002 and 2003 to the restart of Supersaints in the hope of keeping in touch with them as part of the church family. Sadly this approach did not bear fruit, however, with the success of MiniSaints, we will see new children joining us in the next few years.

I really would like to say a big thank you to Alison Swannick and Alison Clarke who regularly help with the children. Their support is very much appreciated.

*Sonja Drew*

## **YOUTH MINISTRY COORDINATOR REPORT TO THE APCM 2007/8**

There is provision for education and worship for the young people of our community from birth to 30 years old.

### Minisaints

This group is now a year old and quite well established. The routine of free play, story and singing followed by a themed craft activity provides a structure which attracts a core group of regular mums/grannies and toddlers. Numbers still vary but we average 15 -18 each week. The ladies on the rota who help with registration and refreshments are much appreciated.

### Super Saints

I am grateful to Sonja Drew for taking this group on and her report is included below.

### Explorers

In spite of studying A Levels and working, Anna Silkin and Richard Barclay continue to assist with this group. They make a very positive contribution and the six young members benefit greatly. So many thanks to them. We follow the scheme devised specifically for this group, looking at the Bible, the life of the church and people who have made a difference to others. We also have games, quizzes and treasure hunts etc.

### The CRU

After John and Sophie MacKenzie left, I took this group over again have also received help from Anna and Richard. I am very pleased to say that Ann Brenchley has now joined us. We continue to use the Cross Scheme which follows more deeply the course used for Explorers, but also have games, quizzes, DVD's and outings.

### ASC

This group continues with a few faithful members who help to prepare the Youth Service. We also have snooker/table tennis or games/coffee/chat sessions. I'm grateful to Gill not only for the support with this group but also for letting us meet in her house from time to time.

### Youth Services

Most of the Young People are very loyal and attend these regularly. I feel it still remains an important part of an ongoing education process as well as worship for our Young People. It would be good if they had a little more support from other church members too. I'm grateful to Debbie Brady and the music group for coming along each month.

### Family Services

Involving different people to lead these services has provided a variety of different talents and enriched our worship, as well as involving the Young People more too. Again thanks to Debbie and her group for supporting us musically.

*Marion Whatmore*

## **EDUCATION REPORT**

### Adult

Last year Gill and John ran a course to study Philippians. This took place both at morning and evening sessions thus enabling more people to attend.

Currently Gill is leading a group who are looking at 'The Ten Commandments, Laws of the Heart, by Joan Chittister. And also Canon Clare Edwards is leading a weekly Lent course called, 'Dying to Live'.

### Children

As reported above. Rachel Layzell has also organised All Age Workshops for Harvest and Advent, and Good Friday is being planned as I write. Many thanks to her and her team of assistants. These continue to be an important part of our outreach, especially as for some children (and maybe their parents too,) it is the only time they come into the church.

*Marion Whatmore*

## **THE HEALTH, HEALING AND SUPPORT PRAYER GROUP REPORT TO APCM – 2007/08**

The group numbers are nine. The group have continued to meet over the past year on the same regular basis as previous years. The group is presently formed of Ron and Barbara Dear, Jean & Des Liddicoat, Pam and Peter Mortley, Jean Clarke, Brioni Armytage and Sue Hollins. Any person who has an interest and would like to join the group please contact me. You would be most welcome.

Ron and Barbara Dear are accredited to the Healing ministry and the Laying on of hands. The Laying on of Hands with prayer is now offered as part of regular worship at the Holy Communion service on the first Sunday evening of each month. Do come and use this service when you feel the need.

A leaflet, which outlines the work and aims of the group, is available in the Church Porch or from the writer.

We support, with our prayers, those who ask and those we know who are ill or having other difficulties with their lives. Over the past seven years we have supported and prayed for over 640 people and families, and know we have been of help. Some of the first people we prayed for are still on one or other of our Prayer lists, and continue to be supported in prayer on a daily basis by the individual group members.

Let us help you when you are in stress.

We now maintain three separate prayer lists. First, the official 'Church Prayer List' which is published as a part of Church Notices each week and is monitored by the writer. The second is the 'Confidential Prayer List', which is for anyone requiring prayer who, for any reason, does not wish to be on the church list. The third is the 'Support Prayer list' and is primarily for those who have problems other than desperate illness, for example those who are in cancer remission or have financial or other personal problems. Contents and details of all lists remain within the group, or to the individual members of the group when specifically requested, and not divulged or discussed outside. Confidentiality is strictly enforced.

Prayer for healing and support should be started as soon as possible, like going to the Doctor suspecting something before going for tests. We have been thanked by many for whom we have prayed and they, and we, are certain that God responds and hears our prayers. The earlier we can start the better.

Please ask me, or any member of the group, for help and Prayer when you, or someone you know, is in need. You will be surprised and thankful for the amount of help and comfort the Lord provides to those who ask.

*Ron Dear (891407)*

### **HOME GROUP AT IDEN CRESCENT**

We are an enthusiastic group who meet every other Thursday 2.30pm in the home of John and Sue Green. We discuss, study, pray, and watch videos and every six weeks have a service of Holy Communion. Praise the Lord.

*Brioni Armytage.*

### **MONTHLY PRAYER GROUP**

A few of us meet regularly every month on Wednesday evenings to pray for Gill and all that is going on in our church.

*Brioni Armytage.*

## Social Events Sub-Committee Report

We had a very busy year in 2007, lots of hard work but also lots of fun, planning and organising events and it was a successful and rewarding year. We had agreed to run some fundraising social events for Church funds and had a target set of £10,000. We started in May with the launch of Donations for Dining, which carried on through the year and will, we hope continue through this year. Having decided on a French theme for our Summer Fete, this was great fun to plan; it proved to be a real family fun day and so many people turned up and stayed. The Tug of War brought in lots of people both competing and spectating, which was good. In October we were very grateful to Julie Fitch and Gill Greetham, who organised an Auction of Promises for us, and this was a great success with some really good bargains. Another new venture was Cream Teas in Church held several weekend afternoons during the summer. Some afternoons were busier than others, with a coach load of oriental visitors arriving on one occasion. This year we will be serving teas every Sunday afternoon from 25<sup>th</sup> May to 7<sup>th</sup> September. We also had a barbecue in September, which was as popular as ever. These events, plus Gift Day, helped towards meeting our target.

In addition to these fundraising events we have continued to hold social events to correspond with our Church's calendar – Pancake Party on Shrove Tuesday, Harvest Supper, and this year we held a Harvest Team, following a more traditional Harvest Festival afternoon service - our thanks to Sylvia and her team for organising that. We have also served refreshments following various special services in Church, and co-ordinated the Deanery lunch.

Some of our social events have continued to prove popular so we have held these again. We held Breakfast in Church twice during the year, Sunday lunch at McCabe Centre and Carols, Casks and Candlelight in December. The Day trips by coach were as popular as ever, with trips to Oxford and Le Touquet.

We do try to arrange a varied programme and welcome everyone to our events. We do welcome new ideas, but having said that it becomes difficult to give up any of the other events which have become popular and there is a limit to what we can and should arrange. We are a small committee and rely on help from others. The success of our events is due to the hard work and enthusiasm of our committee – Val, Tug, Anne, Richard and Sarah - and their partners, who get involved in so many ways. Special thanks to Val and to Richard who have both organised events through the year, to Yvonne and Patrick who help at so many events and to Robin, who seems to fry more eggs at each breakfast we do. And, last but not least, a huge thank you to my husband, Brian, for his continued support and help at all the events.

Please make a note in your diary of our forthcoming events:

- Bank Holiday Monday, 5<sup>th</sup> May – May-hem at the Bell
- Saturday, 12<sup>th</sup> July – Summer Fete at the School
- 28<sup>th</sup> November-1<sup>st</sup> December – trip to Christmas Markets
- Saturday, 13<sup>th</sup> December – Carols, Casks and Candlelight

*Alaine Summers*

## **FLOWER REPORT**

Thank you, as usual, to everyone who, with secateurs in hand, arranges flowers in church. More thanks to those who are also in charge of various months and who spend extra time organising their rota and popping in frequently to water the flowers.

As usual, we offered the opportunity to buy a lily to be blessed on Easter Day in memory of a loved one.

The pedestal arrangement by the memorial book is donated throughout the year. There is a calendar on the notice board in the coffee area if anyone would like to contribute to an arrangement. Flowers are only placed by the memorial book if they are donated specially for this purpose.

Flowers do cost a lot of money, particularly at Harvest and Christmas. We are grateful for the contributions which have been given to help towards the cost. It is not right to expect the flower arrangers to pay, particularly as they are frequently asked to do arrangements. Unfortunately the flower fund at times gets drained and then we ask for your help. Garden flowers are lovely, but not always easy to arrange.

*Audrey Bullock, Flower Arranging Co-Ordinator*

## **HOLY DUSTERS AND BRASS CLEANERS**

The church continues to look clean and 'cared-for'. Many thanks goes to our faithful and willing band of 'Holy Dusters'.

Unfortunately, we have lost four 'dusters' in the last few months. Mrs. Jean Rogers has joined our team; there is however, room for more volunteers. It only takes up to half an hour a week or fortnight to clean an area. Cleaning materials etc. are all supplied and kept in the cleaning cupboard in church.

Many thanks as well to Pat Sherlock, Margaret Friswell and Churchwarden Norman for all their help throughout the year.

The Brass Cleaning rota is still organised by Mrs. Shirley Skinner and she maintains another list of willing helpers.

Mrs. Glenda Groves continues to keep me up to date with areas that need extra cleaning attention, and with her retirement from her work as Sacristan, we are going to miss her very much and wish her and Ian a long and happy retirement. Thank you Glenda!

If you are able to join our happy band of 'dusters', please contact me on 01580 891 091. I shall welcome you with open arms!

*Sylvia Lade*

## **'CHURCHES TOGETHER' IN STAPLEHURST REPORT**

Churches Together in Staplehurst have continued their outreach programme of delivering Christmas and Easter cards containing service details of all four Churches to every home in the village. We also continue to co-ordinate the annual Christian Aid collection. We are very grateful to the volunteers who give up their time to deliver these.

We continue to hold the regular combined Church services on the 5th Sunday each month and also organise the annual Christingle service, the World Womens Day of Prayer and Christian Unity services.

On Good Friday we hold a Witness event outside the library when we hand out hot cross buns wrapped in a messaged napkin and speak to passers by.

Our coffee mornings continue to be held at The United Reform Church on Tuesdays and provide us with a small income that helps fund the cards. We also continue to run a refreshment stall at the village fete.  
*Margaret Ashby*

## **MOTHERS' UNION REPORT**

We continue to meet at Spillsill Court and enjoy Doonie Marshall's kind hospitality.

Our fundraising strawberry teas takes place at Spisill in the Court Barn, with the opportunity to walk round Doonie's lovely garden. This is one of the occasions when we raise money for our many projects.

We are a worldwide organisation and are pleased to be part of this international family, which includes everyone, not only mothers. There are over three million members.

Our meetings each month give us an opportunity to gather as a family and we have joined up with Marden, so we can enjoy each other's meetings. We also hold a joint bank account as we are a small group.

Our main aim, as always, is to be concerned with Christian family life and we meet up with our Deanery Mothers' Union for quiet days and study groups. In joining with our Diocesan representatives we join a wider circle to learn about what is going on with our members worldwide.

Please read our excellent quality magazine, 'Home and Family', which we leave in the church for people to pick up.  
*Sue Hollins*

## STAPLEHURST BELLRINGERS' REPORT TO APCM APRIL 2008

Following a lacklustre 2006, this year has been much more positive, mainly due to the continuing support of existing ringers, the arrival in the parish of an experienced ringer from the Rochester District and the enthusiasm of two of our younger ringers, whose ringing and conducting skills have progressed with amazing speed. Several others have also reached ringing "milestones" during the past year.

We have a total of 17 active ringers, but this is supplemented by several university students when they come home for vacation. Attendance per session during the past year has averaged 12 ringers, an increase of 3 on the previous year. The average figure for Sunday mornings was 11, Sunday evenings 9 and on practice nights 15, all up on last year. This has meant that there have been more occasions than the previous year when all 10 bells could be rung. We have also managed to cover most weddings with local ringers and only minimal assistance from ringers from outside the parish.

Shortly after last year's APCM Staplehurst Bellringers won £1000 in a competition organised by Charles Wells, the brewers of 'Bombardier' ale, which features the St. George's flag prominently on its label. The prize was for toasting St. George's Day in the most unlikely circumstances and place, and we thought that up amongst the bells was a pretty unusual place to be. We thought it appropriate to donate the prize money towards the re-ordering and refurbishment of St. George's chapel.

Our annual outing in September to West Sussex was an enjoyable day out and attracted 25 ringers, partners and friends.

Last, but by no means least, Staplehurst Ringers won the Maidstone District Call Change Striking Contest at Snodland on 10<sup>th</sup> November. A total of six bands took part, and ours included one ringer who was ringing in a competition for the first time.

All in all it has been a very good year for Staplehurst, but we must not be complacent. At least two of our younger ringers will soon be going to university, so we must build for the future. In this respect we are pleased at the progress in the past year of our three less experienced ringers. However, new ringers are always welcome. If you are interested please contact our Tower Captain Sue Bassett on 01580 891917, or come along to our Tuesday evening practice at 7.30pm

Roy Barclay  
Tower Secretary  
March 2008

## CRANBROOK DEANERY,

This year the Cranbrook Deanery Synod has held three open meetings inviting others to come and join us. A very well attended meeting on exploring the healing ministry was held in September, in November the Lambeth conference team came to share with us how we could engage with the Lambeth conference to be held in Canterbury this summer. We are looking for volunteers so please do look at your parish magazine if you are able to help in any way. It will be a “never to be forgotten” experience and opportunity to be part of the wider Anglican communion for a short time. At the third open meeting we had a speaker from Christian Aid asking for our generosity so we could make a real difference to world poverty.

Almost a year ago a decision was taken at Deanery Synod to make a request to the Pastoral committee at Diocesan level to change our name to **Weald Deanery**. We were advised that we could do it under the short measure. To date we still have not had the confirmation that it has been approved. I am glad we did not try the long route!

Staplehurst hosted our Annual Deanery service last November and my thanks to all who helped make that such a wonderful act of worship.

As the role and responsibilities of the Deanery grow the Diocese has given thought and resources to training. Gill and I have attended two one week residential courses on leadership training. Being with other Area Deans and Lay Chairs was very valuable. As a result of that, Gill and I have invited each pair of church wardens in turn (sorry Staplehurst we have not forgotten you) to supper. This has given us an opportunity to know and understand each parish in our Deanery a little better. There is on going training for Lay Chairs, starting with a new job description which will more accurately reflect the role we now hold.

This year sees the completion of the triune and we elect a new Deanery Synod at the APCM.. My grateful thanks go to all those who have served the parish on the Deanery Synod for the past three years and especially to our Area Dean. The Deanery is not always plain sailing, there are difficult times and demanding times but also times of laughter and friendship.

Thank you Gill.

*Val Wallis Lay Chair Cranbrook Deanery*

## DIOCESAN SYNODS

With just two Diocesan Synods a year, each meeting takes up almost half a day, 9.30a.m.-3.00 p.m.

### **May 2007**

This meeting was held in the newly refurbished church of Holy Trinity in Margate.

The new Archdeacon of Canterbury, Ven. Sheila Watson, was welcomed to Synod.

The topic for discussion was "Towards 2020". Bishop Stephen introduced '2020' in May 2006. Since then discussions have been held with senior staff, area deans and lay chairs, department heads and Archbishops' Council. Reports from these conversations came back to Synod for general discussion. Some questions arising:-

Where are we going? – paints a picture of a dynamic church, discovering more of God's love and sharing God's love.

How do we get there? – suggests a rich breadth of mission activity that could help us as well as fresh thinking about the ministry and resources to support it.

How do we do it? – suggests a new diocesan priority to offer teams to help parishes and deaneries begin conversations in response to the Vision's invitation and to provide both training and support as new ways forward emerge.

The Vision is an invitation to share in a Process of Journey and Hope.

Members of Synod said goodbye to David Kemp as he retired as Diocesan Secretary after serving for 16 years.

### **November 2007**

Worship was led by Bishop Stephen, who then commissioned Julian Hills as Diocesan Secretary.

An informative talk on 'Marriage and Weddings' was given by three speakers, one of which was our Rector, Gill who reported the outcome from the General Synod on the Marriage Measure. After coffee, deaneries held discussions about the contents of the presentations.

The remaining time in Synod was taken up with each of the deaneries taken by coach on a pilgrimage round Ashford. We were shown poor and run-down areas, neglected flats, and how plans to improve these areas are working slowly but steadily.

The next part of the tour was to the new John Wesley School, the only joint Wesley & Anglican School in Kent.

We finished our journey in the village of Kingsnorth, where the church has been recently refurbished, providing the church with meeting rooms, offices and a quiet room. This was a most enlightening trip, making this Synod one of the most interesting ones!

*Sylvia Lade*

## WORSHIP COMMITTEE REPORT

Having spent the last couple of years reviewing and replacing many of our service booklets, there was little major change deemed necessary in our provision, so the committee has only met once since the last APCM.

We have much enjoyed the variety of worship provided and it was agreed that the booklets are generally easy to follow and flow well. The variety of the first Sunday 10am family services, which have involved many new faces and voices, was particularly appreciated. Comment was made on how welcoming this service felt for those with young families. These services have also enabled our Praise Band to play on another occasion, other than the second Sunday evening. The committee reflected on ways of encouraging newcomers to attend the Praise services. The band has become a very accomplished group, giving those who enjoy more modern worship songs an enjoyable opportunity to learn some new ones. Suggestion was made that the title of this hour's slot might be changed as it was more of a time of praise than a service.

The committee feels that the mixture of services on offer is helpful, enabling Anglicans from very different traditions to find somewhere they feel comfortable, as well as enabling newcomers to feel welcome.

Our committee is keen to hear from anyone who has comments to make about our worship. At our next meeting we are planning an overview of how we worship at "All Saints". We shall be using a small book published recently and written on behalf of the Liturgical Commission, called *Worship Changes Lives* (How it works and Why it matters) . We are aware that worship can be inspiring and exciting, or bland and boring. Do help us get it right for those coming to our services, by your suggestions or your participation.

*Gill Calver*

## FRIENDS OF ALL SAINTS

In accordance with its objectives, over the last twelve months, the Friends of All Saints have continued their fundraising efforts to support the PCC in maintaining and improving the fabric of our church.

We would like to stress that although the primary purpose of our events is to raise money, they are also by their very nature pleasant social occasions, that, hopefully, enhance the life of the church in Staplehurst.

Membership remains steady.

Over the last 12 months The Friends have provided the following:-

- £ 517 towards the new casing for the church clock.
- £3,439 towards general maintenance of the church.
- £ 228.53 for ten tables
- £1,032.80 to cover repairs to the stonework on the tower.

We have also agreed to provide £7,534.00 towards repairs to the church roof.

At the time of writing The Friends have raised approximately £4,500 over the past year.

Whilst the committee organise events, we would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone who has helped in any way. We hope you have enjoyed your involvement and look forward to your continued support.

*Brian Humphries*

# **PARISH CHURCH OF ALL SAINTS, STAPLEHURST**

## **MINUTES OF EASTER VESTRY MEETING HELD ON MONDAY 23<sup>RD</sup> APRIL 2007**

Rev. Gill Calver opened the meeting, welcoming all those who attended.

Everyone was thanked collectively for all the hard work that had been done in the past year. Special thanks were given to Janet and Phil Osler for their love and support in all aspects of parish work, as they prepare to leave for Phil's new position in Devon.

Gill also spoke of the PCC awayday in London in November, where those who took part did so with much enthusiasm.

Focussing on some characteristics for ministry given in the churches of North Michigan. These included:-

1. Relating to others and listening attentively.
2. Disagree without being disagreeable.
3. Worship frequently.
4. Share time, talent and money.
5. Respect the past and be open to changes.
6. Find opportunities to affirm other people's skills.
7. Co-operate with others and don't stake our personal territory.
8. Remain loyal to group decisions, even when disagreeing with decisions made by the group.
9. Accomplish assignments on time.
10. Know when to be a leader and when a follower.

### **Election of Churchwardens**

Before the election, Gill thanked Andrew Brady for his support, loyalty and care during his time as churchwarden.

After a small presentation to Andrew, the elections went ahead.

Alaine Summers was re-elected as Churchwarden, proposed by Delphine Wass and seconded by Glenda Groves.

Norman Wallis was elected as Churchwarden, proposed by Des Liddicoat and seconded by Sylvia Lade.

### **Minutes of Easter Vestry Meeting, 24<sup>th</sup> April, 2006**

Proposed by Colin Whatmore and seconded by Audrey Bullock, it was agreed to accept the minutes of the meeting.

### **Date of Next Annual Parochial Church Meeting**

Monday 21<sup>st</sup> April 2008.

Minutes were then signed as correct.

# PARISH CHURCH OF ALL SAINTS, STAPLEHURST

## MINUTES OF ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHURCH MEETING HELD ON MONDAY 23<sup>RD</sup> APRIL 2007

1. Revd. Gill Calver opened this meeting with a short prayer.

The meeting was attended by 65 people.

Apologies were received from: Sophie MacKenzie, Jack and Marion Christie, Margaret Friswell, Iain and Janet MacKay, Jean Liddicoat, Ted Hall, David Wass, Melanie Brooker, Ann Fulcher and Dorothy Hegarty.

2. **Minutes of the Annual Parochial Church Meeting – 24<sup>th</sup> April 2006**

Proposed by Andrew Brady and seconded by Tug Tugwell, the meeting voted to accept the minutes of the A.P.C.M. 24<sup>th</sup> April 2006.

3. There were no matters arising.

4. **Presentation of Electoral Roll**

John Stewart, as Electoral Roll Officer said that numbers had gone down to 127 people. John was thanked for his work, and will continue in his role as officer.

Proposed by Debbie Brady and seconded by Karen Kember to accept the presentation of the Electoral Roll. All agreed.

5. **Election of Members to PCC**

Gill thanked the retiring members of the PCC who had reached the end of their term: Debbie Brady, Bob Chapman and Pam Mortley.

Two were standing for re-election – Colin Whatmore and Anne Brenchley. Two new members elected to the PCC are Sonja Drew, proposed by Karen Kember and seconded by Marion Christie, and Javaid Khan, proposed by Karen Kember and seconded by Alaine Summers. Both were welcomed to the PCC and to their triennium of office.

6. **Annual Reports**

The reports again proved to be very encouraging and Gill invited comments from the meeting.

- a) Parish Magazine

Ron Hegarty had put forward suggestions last year and was pleased to see some had been acted upon. However, he felt a few more suggestions and improvements could be made:

- i) The colour of the cover could be changed
- ii) The paper is 100 grammes and could reduce the cost if the magazine used 80 grammes instead.
- iii) More photos of church events.
- iv) Using line drawings as illustrations
- v) Introducing saddle stitching as a means of holding it together.

These suggestions will be passed back to the committee. Robin Oakley spoke in favour of the magazine and said it compared favourably with other magazines in the Diocese.

- b) Social Events

Alaine Summers said that the Auction of Promises will be on 15<sup>th</sup> October and not 19<sup>th</sup> June as advertised.

- c) Deanery  
Val Wallis stressed the importance of the service in Benenden on 15<sup>th</sup> May at 8pm, when churchwardens, PCC members are sworn into their jobs by the Archdeacon of Maidstone.

7. **Treasurers Report**

Gill explained that Geoff Greetham had had to give up his post as Treasurer owing to pressure of work. Patrick Harrison has agreed to take on the role as Treasurer again.

Nick Wells, Chair of Finance Committee, presented the accounts to the meeting. Newcomers to the church will be made aware of our financial position and will be encouraged accordingly.

All social events in the last year made a profit.

Ron Dear asked if the contributions from the Friends of All Saints could be shown in the accounts in the future.

Proposed by Tug Tugwell and seconded by Colin Whatmore, it was agreed to accept the accounts.

Appointment of Independent Examiner

Thanks were expressed to Rory Silkin as Independent Examiner. It was proposed by Pam Mortley and seconded by Colin Whatmore to appoint Rory to continue with the work. All agreed.

8. **Election of Sidespeople**

The current list was read out at the meeting. Three names came off the list – Janet Osler, Norman Wallis and Pam Winnett. One name was added – Caroline Highwood. The list of Sidespeople now stands at 33. Proposed by Steve Bennett and seconded by Anne Brenchley, the meeting voted to accept the list for the forthcoming year.

9. **Any Other Business.**

Norman Wallis thanked all for electing him as Churchwarden and said he would always try to do his best in his new role. Two things he felt needed attention, namely light and heat – complaints were that the church is too dim or too cold. The lights have always been a problem and will need attention. Doors are often left open in the winter and warm air disappears very quickly. The side glass door should not be left open and we need to use them as effectively as we can.

A key had been missing from the Parish Room after Norman gave it to someone. However the recipient was found – John Mackenzie!

Alaine said the Donations for Dining was proving very popular and urged that all should take part in some way or another.

Gill welcomed newcomers to the meeting.

Audrey Bullock thanked Gill for all her care and hard work throughout the year.

The next Annual Parochial Church Meeting will be on Monday 21<sup>st</sup> April 2008.

The meeting closed with the Grace at 9.00 p.m.

**Parish Church of All Saints, STAPLEHURST**