

Rectors Report for APCM. Langham with Boxted - 2019

Not given as a sermon, as on sick leave following back surgery, but submitted for the Annual Report

First of all I want to thank all of you, for your good wishes and prayers for my back surgery and subsequent recovery. I am completely convinced that both have been better than could be imagined, or hoped for, because of your faithful prayers. Thank-you.

I particularly want to thank Stephen, Denise, Graham and Dominic for being our Churchwardens this year, and at the helm during my Extended Study Leave, light duties after Christmas and my sick leave. I am truly grateful to you all. You have done a fine job, thank-you. Graham indicated last year that this would be his final year, so I want to give him our heartfelt thanks for all that he has done for this parish and St. Peter's church in particular. At the time of writing of my report, no one has been nominated to replace Graham as Churchwarden. Please consider who might be approached.

I also want to thank, every one of you, for the part that you have played in the continued life and growth of this parish, during these six months, and the rest of the year. You have made these churches the special places that they are. Additionally, I would like to thank my husband, Paul, who has been such a support of me and made it possible for me to be part of this family, and able to play my part in its journey.

May I thank so many of you, for all of the other things that you have been doing during the year, Fabric Officers, Reader, Deanery Synod Representatives, Village Hall Representatives, Tree Officers etc. etc. ... too many to list. Thank-you. And a big thank-you to all of your spouse's for supporting you in all that you do.

Thank-you everyone who is a PCC member and for giving so much of your time; Patsy Ann as our Vice-Chairman, and leader of the Friday Young People's Nurture Group; Liz Nickerson for being our PCC Secretary, and holding our administration together; Jacky Budenberg key to the Baptism Preparation Team; Stephen Whybrow and Anthony Corrin who are caring for our finances; Colin Jones who has administered our Stewardship and the Gift Aid associated with it for many years, and who is standing down from the APCM, and Michelle Percival who has shared the load with him for several years and is now carrying the whole load, thank-you. The good news is that under their tenure we are continuing to marginally increase our reserves, rather than eating into them.

Thank-you Mark for playing so faithfully for us both on the organ and the keyboard, even if there is a bit of busking at times! We enjoy the fairground music, hearing about beer festivals and your dog!

Thank-you to Laura for being our Safeguarding Champion, and continuing to work with the consequences of the GDPR regulations and the new Diocesan Safeguarding Policy. Thank-you Patsy Ann for working with Laura on this. Thank-you David for co-ordinating Good Neighbours and to everyone who faithfully and graciously help folk in our villages. Thank-you to Brian for your faithful behind the scenes work on the fabric of St. Mary's, and thank-you Roger for caring about our trees.

This year has been one of the years when we have to start our Electoral Roll from scratch, rather than updating and amending it. Thank-you Tim for organising the necessary administration. Thank-you too for taking over the Editorship of the St. Mary's and St. Peter's Newsletter. We are grateful to you for all of the many hours you are putting in our behalves. Thank-you Amy for co-ordinating of tea and coffee at St. Mary's and to all those who give us a treat after our services, both here and at St. Peter's. A big thank-you to Ann Hollands for the many years she has undertaken coordinating the cleaning of St. Mary's, we do appreciate it. Thank-you too, to Jenny and Angela for the many years of service they have given in coordinating the cleaning, and tea and coffee rotas at St. Peter's.

September was Pauline Coverley's final edition of the St. Mary's and St. Peter's Newsletter. Thank-you, Pauline, for the generous time you put into the newsletter, we are grateful to you. Thank-you Claire for being such an efficient and successful Advertising Manager for the Newsletter. Angela, what would we do without your weekly newsletter and all your work on our website? We'd be lost, thank-you.

A big thank-you to Dot and Annette who co-ordinate the flowers in our churches, and everyone who makes them so beautiful. Thank-you to Jos for acting as verger at weddings and funerals and to everyone who rings the bells for us so faithfully. There are some less visible parts of our ministry here in church, and I want to thank all of -you who quietly get on and do the work behind the scenes. Thank-you for your contribution to making the Body of Christ in Langham and Boxted all that is. You are all very much appreciated, I am truly grateful.

Liz Dixon in the Three Parishes' Office, works tirelessly on all of our behalves in relation to baptisms, weddings, funerals, social media and a plethora of other administrative matters. I am grateful to her.

During the year, it became clear that Sunday mornings weren't the best time for our ministry with our children and young people, and so Sunday Group is no longer meeting during our services. But, instead we have two Family Services. The first is at 4 pm on the second Sunday of the month coordinated and run by Jo Jeffery our Childrens' and Families' Worker, and alternating between St. Peter's and St. Mary's. They include some teaching, some exploration and some food! These have been very successful with up to seven families participating on any one Sunday. Our second service, Morning Praise, is at 9.30 on the third Sunday of the month, and it is planned by a team of parishioners, including Denise Hobday, our Reader. This too alternates between St. Mary's and St. Peter's.

Thanks to Patsy Ann's care and attention the Faith Garden at St. Peter's School, Boxted, has been completed and was official opened in July, by Bishop Roger, to which everyone who donated to the project was invited.

Jo Jeffery has made great progress in both Boxted and Langham Primary schools including running a Year Six Leaving Retreat for both schools. Additionally, she has helped some of the children with stress coping strategies. She plans to run a Marriage Course for parents at Boxted School soon. What a blessing she is to the children and families in the churches and the wider village communities.

In addition to being Churchwarden, Dominic has been running the Resolve Course, Beer and Hymns, Beer and Bible and is training to be an Evangelism Enabler. With Linda, he has

continued to grow The Zone, at 5.30 on a Friday evening, for primary school children, and has relaunched The Edge for secondary school young people from 7.30 – 9 on alternate Friday evenings in term-time. The children are learning how to pray, and sang at Christmas services as a choir.

It has been clear that St. Peter's tower roof has started to leak and so, spearheaded by the work of Graham Pullen and financially energised by Stephen Whybrow we are working on giving it new roof in the autumn, when it is appropriate for the bat colony. As it is very expensive to have the scaffolding, the work to repair the rendering on the walls will be undertaken at the same time.

At St. Mary's the temporary faculty for the extension of the altar has run out and we have a permanent faculty for the work to be undertaken. At this time we are waiting for the new tiles to be made.

The North Colchester MMU has been up and running for more than a year now. In the late summer at a service at St. Michael's, Myland there was a cross-licencing of the Ordained and Lay Ministers for all eight parishes. The MMU has been finding its feet and the parishes involved have started to work together, very productively. We are at the point that the treasurers are coming together to work out how the 'MMU Family Purse' is shared out from 2020, getting Churchwardens together so that they can find constructive ways of working together and supporting each other, getting PCCs together so that they can get to know each other and as a MMU we are getting together to set our vision for the coming five years.

On 10th December, 2018, when the snow was at its worst, Bishop Roger led a Confirmation Service at West Bergholt, including, Amelie Charlton, who at the time attended Boxted School. This year Bishop Roger invited her to be a Bishop for a Week, which she accepted. She had a fabulous week and set a pattern for another young person in the Colchester Area of the Chelmsford Diocese, to do it in the coming years. She is currently a member of the Diocesan Youth Synod.

It is possible that the Methodist Chapel in Boxted will be closed in the coming year, and the Methodist chapel Members are likely to worship in Colchester, but the PCC has agreed that, if at any time, they would like to hold services, or other events, in St. Peter's Church they are very welcome to do so.

I think that these thoughts illuminate much of the journey we have made this year, and hint at our aspirations for the coming year. Our desire continues to be, to grow the Kingdom of God, both in numbers and maturity, in the villages of Langham and Boxted.

So, looking forward to the coming year ... there are some things in the pipeline, and some questions we might each ask ourselves.

These might include:

- Where is Jesus walking in these villages?
- Where are his footprints?
- How can we walk in them?
- Where is he calling us to?
- Where will we be in a year's time?

With these questions in mind I, and a group of five members of the parish, are undertaking an appreciative enquiry of about twenty-five church members, by asking three questions, looking at the past, the present and the future hopes for this parish. We hope to be able to draw the information gathered, together by the first PCC of the coming year and following this it will be widely shared in the parish. I hope that these twenty-five responses will help us to see our way forward in the coming years.

I am sure that we want to see where God is working in these villages and we want to work there with him. May God help us to know where he is, and help us to journey with him.
Amen.