

Annual Church Meeting 2016

TEAM VICAR'S REPORT

The main emphasis in 2015 continued to be discipleship. This was developed through house groups and through teaching program on Sundays – with a lot of time given over to thinking through what it means to be a disciple of Christ in today's world - especially in the workplace. It was exciting to have those working in business, education, health and other areas share from their own experience.

There were two church weekends in 2015. One at Rose Hill over the May Bank holiday weekend for the whole church family with Andy and Margaret Wooding Jones and a residential one specifically for the 7 o'clock congregation with Broadies at Ashburnham.

The last few years seem to have been season of laying things down and there was one final one thing this year with Jon our children's minister ending his time leading Boulder Gang (New wines ministry to 10 and 11 year old's). Over the years, New Wine and in particular Boulder gang have had a significant impact on church life. St. Matt's has shared the leadership for over 10 years – it has been a training ground in leadership for our young people who have served on team. Fittingly there was large party from St. Matt's at New Wine to mark the event. (shame the weather was not better....)

Autumn was dominated by two significant events: First, the 100th anniversary of the sinking of HMS Hythe with the loss of 150 lives many of them from Southborough, High Brooms, and Silverdale communities. The anniversary was marked by a memorial service for the families of those effected by the disaster. The Service was attended by both Southborough and Tunbridge Wells Mayors, our MP Greg Clarke and the Deputy Lord Lieutenant of Kent. Over 150 relatives attended and many brought pictures and mementos. Some travelled from as far Wales within the UK and Germany and South Africa.

The second was more significant for our church family. The Gift Day we held in the November which was focused on our children and youth ministry raised over £15000 at the time with another £12,000 coming in in the new year. The Gift Day arose out of the need to resource our Children's and Youth ministry.

One of the success stories of St. Matt's has been the growth in Children's Ministry under Jon and Claire's leadership. Involvement in Children and Youth ministry on Sunday s and mid-week have more than doubled over last year. The average Church of England Church has 54 members with 1 child to every 6 adults making on average 9 children under 16 in a church of that size. St Matt's is clearly larger than average – morning congregation has over 100 adults on any given Sunday but often with 60 children. This presents a real challenge and fantastic opportunity. Research suggests that most people that become Christians were originally impacted as by the Christian faith as children. What we are doing has greater significance than just St. Matt's and has implications for the future of the wider church. To secure this ministry we need to resource it not just financially but with manpower (and womenpower...)

we need to grow the team alongside the ministry. We are really grateful to the existing team and our full time employed leaders.

We clearly rely on our staff to resource our volunteers and lead teams – This ministry is costly but vital. As you will know in recent years we have seen a widening gap between income and expenditure –We are thrilled that gift day provided the opportunity to bring this challenge to the church family exciting to see you all respond and provide a foundation for our Children and Youth Ministry for the next few years.

There are always so many people I should thank at a time like this. St. Matt's only works because so many people play a part – so rather than trying list people (and miss some!) I really want to say one big thank you to everyone who serves in whatever way. I do however want to make one personal thank you and this is a very special one. Giles Parratt, our Treasurer, is finishing this year after over 20 years in this role. He has faithfully overseen our finances throughout that time and we are very grateful for all he has done.

Rev Chris Wicks
Team Vicar

YOUTH MINISTRY REPORT

What a year! This year has seen a continuing growth in numbers of youth, but has thankfully been matched by a growth in leaders bringing much needed support to our church's Youth Ministry. Despite the large numbers there has also been a growing sense of community and family within the youth and amongst the leaders. It is a privilege to watch the young people support each other as they grow in friendship and community. Though the numbers have been exciting, what has been more significant is seeing God's work in individual lives. A highlight for me was seeing the young people sharing words and praying for the adult congregation within the Sunday morning service. For many of the youth this was a moment to step out in faith and realise they can hear from God even though they may not be adults!

Here is a brief description of what has happened in each group and different area of Youth Ministry:

Encounter: Encounter is a group for all those in year 6 and up and is held every Sunday morning, except for the first Sunday of every month. This year we have been able to break into two different age groups most weeks as a result of growing numbers and a more diverse age range. For this school year we have studied (simultaneously with the children's groups) a different element of what God does, such as 'God loves', 'God heals', 'God saves' or 'God gives'. This has allowed us to cover a range of understanding of God's character. Within these topics, we have sought to allow opportunities for what we are studying to be made real. For example when we looked at how God gives spiritual gifts we practiced the gift of encouragement on each other. Similarly, as I have already mentioned, when we looked at how God heals we were able to go and pray for healing for the adult congregation. Finally, this year we have placed an emphasis on allowing times for prayer ministry within the group. This has also meant teaching the youth how to do prayer ministry and getting them to practice on each other.

Ignite: Ignite is a mid-week group for all those in year 6 and up. The church is set up with table tennis, table football, a pool table and more. Once a month we provide a tuck shop, and a milkshake bar and we also provide pizza for the young people for free every week. The first half of the evening is spent playing games and having fun together and is an excellent opportunity for relationship building. During the second half of the evening we either break into three different age groups or meet all together for some fun filled worship and a short talk or testimony. In our groups we have been looking at who Jesus is, trying to break free from any unhelpful perceptions of Jesus and allow the young people to form their own perspective on who Jesus is. In our monthly joint services we have even had one of the young people share about what God means in their lives, which has been really exciting.

Unite: Every month a group of our young people are taken to Unite which is a town wide youth service run by YFC and youth leaders in the town. It is an excellent event which the young people really enjoy coming along to.

The Noise: This year we had about 12 young people from our youth attend the Noise which is a 3-day event which gives young people from across the town a chance to come together to serve the local community practically, to worship, to receive teaching and to have a lot of fun. It was awesome to see God working in the lives of the young people during this event.

Mentoring: Heather and I have been meeting up with young people for coffee and also for guitar lessons.

Looking toward the future I am hoping to focus on growing our efforts to mentor the young people. It would be amazing for this to involve more members of the church investing in the lives of young people on a regular basis. On top of this, I would love to give young people more opportunities to grow in confidence in hearing God's voice and in their God given gifts. Finally, I hope to give opportunities for the young people who are completely new to the Christian faith who attend our groups to encounter God's love and respond to the good news of Jesus.

Claire Carroll
Youth Minister

CHILDREN'S MINISTRY REPORT

Deeper: Deeper is our Monday after school club for years 3-5 held here in the church. The club is run much like a youth club with lots of free play, pool, table tennis, the Wii etc. During the course of the afternoon we will play a game altogether and then have a time of worship, teaching and prayer. Deeper has been one of the most encouraging areas of children's ministry this year. My vision for it had been to keep it small and focus on discipleship; however due to our amazing children at St Matt's inviting their friends and sharing faith we get on average 25 children coming each week with 38 children on the register. We have worked hard this term to make Deeper work for those numbers ensuring that the teaching and worship times are interactive and as much as possible allow group discussion and chance for personal

prayer ministry. The success of Deeper has been aided this term by a brilliant and increased team (although always room for more) and a good behaviour management system.

Sunday Mornings: I am pleased to report that we now have 3 children's groups meeting every Sunday. Shine, Glow and Bright. Last year we were in the process of splitting the groups, this year we have achieved a complete split every Sunday and the groups have their own identity.

Glow is our newest group for ages 3-school yr1. This group meets in the church hall and focuses on play, storytelling and craft as acts of worship and learning. Glow is led by a fantastic team.

Bright is for children in school years 2-5. Bright meets up at the Bethel hall and is led by an amazing bunch of volunteers. We have made some significant changes to the running of Bright this year. Firstly we have introduced a behaviour management system which rewards positive behaviour with Bright Cards and a yellow and red card system for challenging behaviour. Using this system has brought a real positive change to the Bright. I am very grateful for Em and Nick Cheeseman for helping me with this. Secondly we now structure Bright around group activities rather than upfront teaching. During a session we will split the children up into small groups and throughout the morning each group will do 3 -4 activities. This has enabled us to work much more closely with the children and teach in small groups despite the large numbers.

Shine: We rebranded crèche as Shine. We felt that it was important that our 0-2's have an identity of their own and emphasis that we believe that God is just as at work in this group as he is in the others. We are following an age appropriate teaching program writing by New Wine especially for this age group. Shine is run by a fantastic and faithful team.

St Matthews School: Our link with St Matthew's School continues to be strong. I go into the school every Tuesday to do assemblies and run a lunch time club; this is a provision at lunchtime which aids the children's emotional and spiritual development. The School recently had a SIAMS report (an inspection for church schools) in which they got "Outstanding". The report praised the close relationship that the school has with the church. This is a real credit to the hard work of the teachers at St Matthews School. The School continues to come to us at least 5 times a year to celebrate key events in the Christian calendar.

Toddler Group: We continue to open our doors on Thursday mornings to toddlers and parents. The group is currently reduced in size both in terms of parents and helpers but provides a great place for children and parents to play and make friends during the week.

Jon Carroll
Children's & Families Minister

7 O'clock SERVICE REPORT

As a leadership team we are really excited about what God is doing amongst us. Over the last few years we have really felt a growing sense of community between us that we have fostered with the introduction of the 'round the table services' where we eat together as part of our communion. We went away in March to Ashburnham for a weekend away. The weekend away highlighted just how powerful it is when we get together and in vulnerability share what is going on in our lives. Alongside this growing sense of community we have noticed a decline in our numbers and this has led us to think about the sustainability of the 7 O'clock service in its current format. At our last leadership team meeting we came up with a new format for the service which we feel will be sustainable and allow us to explore and go deeper with this idea of community.

We are looking to have a monthly 7 O'clock celebration on the first Sunday of every month. This will comprise of a full worship band, a teaching series and ministry. The following Sundays will be a bit more low key but focus on building community and allowing the gifts and talents that we all have to be shared. The 2nd Sunday we will focus on eating together either all together at church or at people's houses. The 3rd Sunday will focus on extended times of worship and waiting on God and the 4th Sunday will focus on people within the congregation sharing thoughts on faith. This change will come into effect in May. We are seeing the change as an experiment and will be open to feedback and change. The overall aim though will be to build deeper relationship and through that deepen and strengthen our walk with Jesus.

Jon Carroll
7O'Clock Service Leader

HOUSE GROUPS REPORT

We currently have 8 adult groups which meet on different Tuesday, Wednesday or Thursday evenings. We do not currently have a daytime group.

In the past year the termly programmes have comprised the following:

Summer 2015 'Seven Signs of John' course [*A different way to do evangelism/introduce people to Jesus*]

Autumn 2015 Studies on 'Bearing Fruit – our relationship with the world' or Ken Costa 'God at Work' course [*These courses were particularly valuable in helping us explore how we can take our faith outside the church walls and into the rest of our week/into the community*]

Spring 2016 1st half of term: Studies on Philippians

2nd half of term: Lent – 2 "Hungry for God" joint evenings at church

(+ optional '40acts' resources/Scripture Union Lent course)

LENT and Hungry for God: Rather than follow a specific course, meeting weekly at church throughout Lent, we trialled meeting for two 'Hungry for God' evenings. These have been evenings where we have had time to seek the presence of God together in worship and prayer; - with no agenda of our own but looking for the leading of the Holy Spirit! These were very encouraging evenings and are being continued as part of our corporate church 'Prayer' with some house groups not meeting that week so that they can attend 'Hungry'.

We also met together centrally in October to hear Martin Hall from OM talk about "Understanding Islam Today", an incredibly relevant and informative evening.

The groups continue to vary in how often they meet and give different emphasises to prayer, bible study, worship, socialising, evangelism.

What all the groups have in common is fellowship within a small group where people can support and encourage each other on their journey of faith; - we're meant to be in this together!

Our thanks again to our fantastic leaders and hosts.

Mary Wilson
House Group Co-ordinator

PODS REPORT

Pods are our small discipleship groups. This year Pods at St. Matt's have been growing. At the end of last year we did a questionnaire to get an idea of how many Pods there are and what they are doing. This showed that there are at least 16 Pods currently in church, with at least 45 people in Pods. At least half of those in Pods are also in a house group. Most Pods spend time chatting about life and their walk with God and praying. Some use talks or other devotional materials to focus their thoughts and discussions. The things members most value are openness, accountability, support, deeper relationships and prayer. We are in the process of putting together a short video of people talking about their Pods, which we will show in church very soon! If you would like to know more about Pods, please come and chat to me.

Hannah Mwesigwa
Pods Co-ordinator

PRAYER REPORT

MINISTRY TEAMS

We continue to offer ministry after morning services, and it has been great to have our children and youth involved in this from time to time. I would like to grow our team again and have had a few people mention that they are interested in joining the team, which is encouraging. We would run some training for these individuals before letting them loose on the congregation..!

PRAYER MEETINGS

We have continued to keep prayer meetings to once a term, with the vision evenings continuing the theme. We have also held two "Hungry" evenings of worship and prayer during Lent 2016, which have been well attended and well received. We are considering using these as a prayer meeting alternative, possibly running them every half term.

FACEBOOK PRAYER REQUESTS

Facebook continues to be a great resource for the congregation to share prayer requests and offer prayer for one another. The discipleship page is used on a daily basis.

Sarah Johnson
Prayer Co-ordinator

PASTORAL CARE REPORT

Pastoral care at St. Matts is offered in a variety of ways:-

House groups:-Through prayer, friendship and help during difficult times.

Pods: - An opportunity for more in depth prayer, friendship and support, between one or two other people.

Prayer ministry: - After every service there are always people available to pray.

Home visits: - There are a number of people who visit the elderly, housebound, and those in hospitals.

Chris and Carole are always available after the morning service if someone wants to speak to them. Appointments can be made to meet either of them, or one of the designated people who are available to pray with others outside of church service.

Chris and Carole hold a twice yearly coffee morning at Christmas and Easter for the retired members of our church.

Revive – our group for women meets once a term for worship, teaching and ministry. We had our Quiet day in March led by Rev Kerry Tucker, which was an opportunity to have a day to meet with God in a more reflective way.

We have also organised some social events throughout the year for women: -

Christmas Craft event: – which remains really popular with many members of our church and community.

Film night: – an opportunity to bring friends to church in order to watch a movie, whilst enjoying drinks and nibbles.

'Restore':- is the men's group at St Matt's which offers spiritual and social events during the year.

The **Lone Parent group** meets to support those parenting on their own. it usually meets on the first Saturday of the month in Church. Toys, games and activities are available for children allowing the parent's time to relax.

Carole Wicks
Pastoral Care Co-Ordinator

EVANGELISM REPORT

This is a long term way of meeting and growing friendships in a natural way (19 years so far) Rather like a seed being planted in the ground, so as we meet people and find a connection that is the seed being placed in the soil. That is just a beginning because the joy of friendship it is the careful watering and weeding that is shown by our care for one another as friends. You may be thinking that the flowering is the final phase. Not necessarily so! As with all perennials they flower every year and can last. This is a picture of the work that our small Barnetts team do. To sum up we are action people who prayer, care and share.

If you would like to join us, do see Trevor or Richard.

Trevor Long
Evangelist

Link with Nourish Community Foodbank, Tunbridge Wells & St Matthew's Church

Our link with Nourish Community Foodbank grew out of a vision evening in January 2015 at St Matt's. It was consolidated when Dawn Stanford visited St Matt's on 20th Sept 2015 and gave a very emotional and informative overview of how Nourish CFbk operates. Below are a few stats since our link started in 2015.

Weight of Food donated from St Matt's since Oct 2015:

October 181.3 kg : November 60.03 kg :

December 42.7 kg: January 55.10kg : February 36.4kg : March 40.12kg

Food donated by St Matt's on the first Sunday of the month is collected by me and delivered to the Big Yellow Warehouse Unit usually on a Mon or Tues. There are currently three very large storage units being used by Nourish when teams of volunteers, weigh, sort and store the donated food.

Financial Donations made by members of St Matthew's : £565.08, including Gift Aid.

Donations like this are vital and always used to buy essential food items. Nourish have had to spend over £1500 in the last six months, on food which has been needed to fill food parcels.

They are always desperately in need of more food, as well as more volunteers with different skills. If you feel you can help please speak to me, as there are many ways in which we could help ease the burden.

Dawn particularly wanted me to say that, "our ongoing support is much appreciated and vital to Nourish. They are about to publish end of year figures and anticipate a 50% increase in clients on last year. This is a sad fact, but also a celebration of how many people Nourish has been able to help".

Volunteering with Trussell Trust Foodbank, Crowborough branch

My involvement began with Crowborough Foodbank after reading an article in the local *Courier*. Following training, I was taken on as a volunteer team leader with responsibility for opening up/setting up the Foodbank and 2 other volunteers, which changes with each rota. As Team Leader, I have responsibility for checking the authenticity of callers, [we have had 3 scams this year] processing vouchers and ensuring all information is collated and referred back to the local managing team, checking food stocks in the centre by date code, restocking the centre, preparing food boxes for collection by CAB reps and generally overseeing the team on a particular afternoon. Each voucher covers 3 days' food and individuals or families are allowed 3 vouchers. Thereafter, the policy is that Head Office makes contact with the referral agency to obtain information on progress with the claimant's issues. The main drivers of foodbank usage remain the prolonged processing of benefit issues, [currently that stands at 13 weeks to process a claim] as well as low income. The foodbank is open bi-weekly on Tues & Fri 2- 4pm. There are currently 40 volunteers overall on rota basis, of which 6 work at the 'warehouse' currently a volunteers garage! 8 volunteers collect by car from local donation points. Often there is more food than we can store and this is usually sent to other Trussell Trust foodbanks in Sussex and, as far afield as Newcastle where there is an even greater need.

Collection points : Tesco ; Waitrose, ; United Church; ; All Saints Church ; Lloyds Bank.

There are 24 Referral Agencies registered with Crowborough Foodbank.

Crowborough Foodbank has helped 131 adults and 109 children - a total of 240 since April 2015.

Unlike Nourish where food parcels are door-step delivered by team members, there is a tension that exists in this model, in that volunteers representing the Trussell Trust, are prevented from delivering food parcels to individuals or families due to safeguarding policy. We often experience callers who have been presented with several bags of food e.g. for a family of 4, struggling to get the food home due to weight of food/lack of means even for a bus fare. This often creates difficulties for the volunteer staff, which has to be managed with compassion and a large dose of common sense.

**Dee Harper
Evangelist & Pastoral Assistant**

MISSION GROUP REPORT

Summary of Main Mission 'Links':

Our 'official' church links currently comprise 4 main overseas links:

1. AFRICA- Tanzania
 - a) With the Diocese of Geita, Tanzania (AICT – Africa Inland Church of Tanzania)
 - b) With Samuel and Pendo Limbe based in Mwanza, Tanzania (AICT)
 2. AFRICA – South Sudan *(Church contact for info: Sarah Johnson)*
With Ruth Radley (CMS mission partner) based in Yei, Southern Sudan
 3. SOUTH AMERICA – Peru *(Church contact for info: Mary Wilson)*
With Pat Blanchard (CMS mission partner) based in Lima, Peru
 4. SOUTH AFRICA *(Church contacts for info: Chris & Carole Wicks)*
With Steve & Diana Morris (The Sozo Foundation) based in Cape Town, South Africa
- and 1 main local link:
TUNBRIDGE WELLS *(Church contact for info: Emily Cheeseman)*
With the charity 'Life & Soul', based in Tunbridge Wells, working with children and young people aged 5-25

As a church we also give significant support to 'TEAR FUND'

(Church contact for info: Liz Johnson).

GIVING OF TITHE

It is a great joy for the Mission Group to be able to prayerfully allocate the giving of our Church 'Tithe' to both our main links and to a large number of other charities/people; (local, national and international).

We currently give £1,600 to each of our Main Mission Links as the financial part of our commitment to their support. Smaller amounts are then given to a variety of other people and groups involved with Mission.

MISSION PRAYER BREAKFAST

We believe that our support of those in Mission should be more than just financial, so the Mission Prayer Breakfast provides one opportunity (for those who can manage early mornings!) to gather over a simple breakfast, share news and be able to pray together for our Mission Partners, often ministering in tough situations. We believe that prayer makes a difference, so if you have a heart for praying for Mission, you would be incredibly welcome to join us! (8 am on the 3rd Sunday of the month in the Church Centre).

NEWS & HIGHLIGHTS FROM A BUSY YEAR!

Nourish

As part of our focus in the Autumn Term of the Church looking 'out', Dawn Standford from 'Nourish' spoke and shared about the amazing work of this local charity. In response, our Harvest Offering (of both money, and gifts of relevant food and home supplies) were given to Nourish. Since then we have a regular opportunity as a church family to bring donations for Nourish on the 1st Sunday of every month.

Tear Fund Christmas Offering for Refugees

With so many of us concerned with the plight of refugees, and particularly of children caught up in it all, we felt that we could make some sort of response to this through our Christmas Offering. As well as the offering given at our services during the Christmas Period, Liz Johnson organised a special Christmas Coffee Morning to both raise awareness and boost funds. An amazing £3,195.82 was sent to Tear Fund.

Ruth Radley back in the UK

Ruth is on furlough from South Sudan and came to talk to us in January about the work she has been involved with. It has been a very tough assignment with this young country experiencing many difficulties. It was both challenging and encouraging to hear about the work that Ruth's team has been able to do in this situation.

Charis Wicks headed off to New Zealand

Charis headed off early this year to New Zealand on a YWAM Medical Discipleship Course. She's been writing a blog to share about what she's been experiencing and learning. Following a period of lots of teaching and training, they are now putting the theory into practice with their main Mission Trip. We look forward to hearing from her in person when she returns in the summer!

Life & Soul cooked us lunch!

The Life & Soul team cooked a wonderful lunch for us on Valentine's Day after the morning service. With the slogan "Have a Heart for Life & Soul", they shared with us about the projects they are running and the results that they are seeing in the lives of children and young people in Tunbridge Wells.

Visit of Steve & Diana Morris to St Matt's

We were really fortunate in having Steve and Diana visit us on an evening in March whilst on a visit to the UK. They have been out in Cape Town for just over a year and were able to update us with all the exciting things that God has been doing. Steve also really spelt out how we are all involved in this. *[Talk is available on our church web-site]*

Mary Wilson
Mission Co-ordinator

WELCOME TEAM REPORT

2015 has been a challenging year for our Welcome Team. In spite of a constant recruitment drive, numbers of willing people stay low. Without, the often last minute, help from a small number of people, there have been several mornings where the supply of Coffee has been doubtful. Special thanks go to Gordon & Rosemary Blanchard, Hanson, Bethany Whybra, Jan Ash & Carole Wicks for regularly jumping in to help.

We meet on average one person each week attending St Matt's for the first time and can expect at least 40 new people to a family Baptism Service. Our strategy is that each and every new person attending St Matt's is greeted at the door, pointed in the direction of Coffee and introduced to a member of the Church.

Several of our current Welcome Members were new to St Matt's and found joining the team a great way to get to know our Church family. New St Matt's member Mark Gabriel shares his experience of St Matt's Welcome below:

"Welcoming at St Matt's:

AS NEWCOMERS:

When Jan and I first arrived at St Matt's in late August 2016 we all received a really warm and friendly welcome. Claire noticed that we had our boys with us and came over and greeted us all and spent time talking to us. Chris was on hand to shake our hands as we left and that initial friendly welcome lead us to come back again the following week.

One person who made a lasting impression on me was Trevor, it was on an occasion when I came by myself and quietly sat down. Trevor came up and personally introduced himself, he had seen us visiting over summer and as I had come by myself he wanted to ensure I felt part of that morning's service.

AS WELCOMERS:

It is a delight to meet everyone as they arrive and be able to welcome people to St Matt's Church. That first impression made when visiting a church is incredibly important and therefore we are grateful to have the opportunity to pass on our positive experiences of feeling part of God's family at St Matt's to other people".

May I take this opportunity to thank everyone in our Welcome Team and special event hospitality teams for their dedication and hard work over the last 12 months. And remind you all of our Welcome Mission Statement:-

Do not forget to show hospitality to strangers, for so doing some people have shown hospitality to angels without knowing it. (Hebrews 13.2)

How apt we now have a family of Angel Gabriels!!

Bee Shaw
Welcome Team Co-ordinator

WORSHIP REPORT

The Worship Team has had a few changes over the past year, with folks moving on and new members joining. So many people put so much time, effort and passion into being part of the worship team, whether that be at the front in the bands or

overseeing the sound and vision. I can't adequately convey my gratitude for all that the worship team do.

We still really need drummers and bassists, particularly in the next few months. The monthly Evening Sessions - an informal gathering of the worship team - continues to help us bring new material to St.Matt's and has been a good place for people interested in being part of the worship team to come and find out more.

We will be looking at replacing the current mixing desk this year as it is starting to have more persistent issues. The new desk should give us more reliability, flexibility and possibilities for expansion when we need it.

Worship continues to be a core part of church life at St.Matt's. It seems lately that there has been a growing hunger in the church for worshipping God, for a corporate and individual intent in seeking Him as we gather together. We have explored this in our recent Hungry gatherings which gave an opportunity for folks to find space in worship that they might not get in, say, a morning service. They also provided a safe place for exploring and rediscovering different expressions of worship.

This coming year we will be looking into ways of developing what has come out of Hungry and this sense of increasing desire - that idea that there is more. We are already looking at this in the 7 o'clock service and in mid week gatherings from time to time. It is my hope that as a church we will have an expectation of meeting God and being transformed in His presence in all that we do as we worship together.

Ali Granger
Worship Co-ordinator

FINANCE REPORT

- We had a surplus of income over spending of nearly £15,000 for the year
- The projected position at end September was a deficit of more than £11k; we ended with a surplus of nearly £15k, so overall a £26k improvement
- Of the £26k improvement, £2k was due to less spending than expected (the main area being children and youth), and £24k was due to more income than expected (mainly the gift day but also a separate one-off donation of £5k, related gift aid and surpluses on social events etc).
- Without these 'one-off' items we would have had a deficit close to what we had budgeted for the year, and therefore the underlying position remains that regular income is not keeping pace with the level of spending we need

- The budget set for 2016 has an estimated shortfall of around £9k for the year; fortunately our overall funds, including from the gift day, protect us in the medium term
- Our overall funds have also been boosted by a legacy of £57,771.

2015 summary:

Income	£178,900
Expenses	£164,101
Surplus	£14,799
Budget (deficit)	£(8,541)
Actual vs Budget	£23,340 (favourable)

Note: the legacy is not included in the summary.

**Giles Parratt
Treasurer**

FRIDAY BREAKFAST CAFÉ

We have a core of regular customers and occasional new faces either sitting at tables or benefitting from our 'take-away' service. On average we deal with 50 – 60 orders each week, varying from a simple bacon baguette to a full English breakfast consisting of bacon, egg, sausage, beans and toast with tomatoes, hash browns and mushrooms as optional extras. Our prices have not changed since the start, which we feel is right in the present economic climate.

The café could not run without the commitment of the team of regular volunteers who selflessly give up their Friday mornings to ensure its continued success. Grateful thanks are due to Julie Sewell, Hazel and Geoff Hoad, Jan Ash and Muriel Nopper who help with the cooking, drinks and keep the Kitchen running smoothly, to Gordon Blanchard who keeps us on our toes taking orders and ensuring nothing slips through the net, and to Paul Sullivan who ably devotes himself to the washing up, and finally to Helen Steven who ensures there are flowers on every table and, more importantly leads us in prayer at the start of each session.

We continue to pray that the love of Jesus will be felt by all those who come in, and that those who don't yet know Him might want to know more about what He has done for us and to get to know Him for themselves.

**David Johnson
Churchwarden**

FABRIC REPORT

CHURCH FABRIC

The fabric of the church is in generally good condition and only a few minor repairs have been necessary during the past year:

- A badly corroded radiator in the Vestry toilet has been replaced;
- Faulty equipment in the Church Centre kitchen has been replaced, including a fridge/freezer, dishwasher and tea-point boiler;
- A new louvred door replaces the deteriorating old door to the organ blower compartment;
- The overgrown hedge to the Gordon Road boundary has been cut back.
- The lighting to the Church Centre entrance path has been improved.
- The quinquennial inspection of the church was carried out in June of last year and the report contains a number of items of repair and maintenance to be carried out.

CHURCH HALL FABRIC

The following minor repairs have been carried out during the year:-

- The roof has been overhauled following the fall of a few loose slates.
- The light outside the front the entrance and the door bell had both stopped working. The fault was resolved.
- Illuminated Fire Exit signs and emergency lighting have been replaced.
- The cold water tap in the middle toilet has been replaced after a cracked washer seat meant it was leaking.

David Johnson
Churchwarden

OPERATIONS/ADMINISTRATION

GENERAL

This last year has been another busy one at St. Matthew's – when are they not?!

Administering the services and daily church life takes up the majority of my time. I would like to thank everyone who contributes to our services – rotas, preachers, welcome teams, musicians, sound desk people, readers, pray-ers – for letting me badger you into serving. You all do a great job in making St Matt's a welcoming and vibrant place in which to praise the Lord.

On 31st October 2015, St Matthew's held a Centenary Memorial Service for the sinking of *HMS Hythe* which was attended by over 150 relatives and local dignitaries including the Mayor and Mayoress of Tunbridge Wells, the Mayor of Southborough,

the Deputy Lord Lieutenant for Kent and local MP, Greg Clark. Relatives travelled from as far as South Africa and Germany to attend. The TS Brilliant Reunion Band sounded the Last Post and Reveille and Mr Gary Faulkener, President of the Royal Tunbridge Wells British Legion read the Exhortation. Many thanks to Rosemary Blanchard and her Team for the splendid tea she organised afterwards, to Carole Wicks and Mary Wilson for being the Welcome Team, Clive Sewell for manning the sound desk and not least to Chris for the great talk he gave – he now knows more about the *Hythe* disaster than he ever thought he would!

We continue to get enquiries about the Hythe Memorial and requests to see it on a regular basis, especially by those descendants who embark on compiling family histories.

PRE-SCHOOL

I am continuing to build a relationship with the Pre-School Group but am appreciating the frustrations on both sides. They are trying to run a children's group in an ageing building yet having to try to conform to health & safety regulations whilst we have limited resources (both in monetary and manpower terms) to maintain the building. I liaise with David Johnson on a regular, informal basis to ensure maintenance is kept as up to date as possible.

BUDGETS / FINANCE

I manage the stationery and catering budgets as well as possible and, amazingly, did not manage to spend the coffee budget, despite our best efforts. However, there was some overspend on the Stationery and Publicity Budgets.

The three Quiz Nights Bryn and I hosted raised over £600 pounds during the year, enabling us to buy polo shirts for the Reception Class of St Matthew's school as a gift last September.

I have been liquidising redundant assets such as unwanted equipment, and ink cartridges on eBay to help raise much needed funds.

HEALTH & SAFETY

The number of drug & alcohol incidents around the church have dramatically reduced since the hedge in Gordon Road was cut to a more reasonable height.

PERSONNEL / HR

I manage Susan Green, the Church Cleaner, and Chris Skilton who comes in once a fortnight to act as Groundsman for the Church, the Church Hall and the Bethel. Both work very hard to keep the building and the grounds clean and presentable.

I also maintain the staff leave and sickness records.

FINALLY

I shall be stepping down as Ops Manager/Administrator later this year as Bryn and I shall be re-locating to the Welsh Marches to begin his retirement and a new phase of life for us both. I shall miss St Matt's enormously as I came to faith here 17 years ago but I shall take its ethos with me to wherever God has planned for us. Thank you for the incredible opportunity I've had to serve you and the wider community here – it's been a privilege.

Clare Caless
Ops Manager/Administrator