

St. Stephen's Church

Aims and Purposes

The Parochial Church Council is responsible for co-operating with the incumbent in promoting the whole mission of the Church, pastoral, evangelistic, social and ecumenical. It also has responsibility for the maintenance of the fabric of St. Stephen's Church.

Jax Machin Appointment

The most significant event in this report has to be the appointment of Revd. Jax Machin as our new rector following the interregnum that lasted until July. This appointment has been greeted with a mixture of relief and heartfelt approval following the strenuous effort to find what we all acknowledge is an outstanding person to take up the post of rector. Thanks go to those in the ministry team who have been so supportive taking services during the interregnum and to the churchwardens carrying the extra load up to this appointment.

Acknowledgement must also go to those who worked hard and patiently during the process of interview to find Revd. Jax. We now have David Mapes due to be appointed as assistant priest in early September

Worship and Prayer

The PCC is keen to offer a range of services during the week and over the course of the year that our community find both beneficial and spiritually fulfilling. For example we offer a pattern of services including family communion, matins and welcome worship on a regular monthly basis. We have provided special services throughout the year including the celebrations for Easter and Christmas, a Mothering Sunday service, a Maundy Thursday service with vigil, an All Souls service and a Remembrance Day service. House group meetings took place throughout the year.

All are welcome to attend our regular services. At the annual meeting in 2015, there were reported to be 62 names on the Electoral Roll. The average weekly attendance at morning service, counted during September, was 27 but this number increased substantially at festivals. For example, the Easter Day service attracted an attendance of 113 and the Christmas Day service an attendance of 107.

We celebrated 9 baptisms and 6 weddings and held 5 services for funerals and interment of ashes in our church in 2013.

Deanery Synod

The PCC representation on the deanery synod provides the PCC with an important link between the parish and the wider structures of the church. In 2014, the main task facing the deanery synod was the drafting and approval of a Deanery Mission Action Plan. This plan will be carried forward to be implemented at the benefice level following discussion with each PCC within the benefice under the leadership of Revd. Jax.

Pastoral Care

Parish Visitors are faithful members of local Churches who are trained to give Pastoral care to any in need in their Parish, whether they are Church members or not. They give their time, energy and compassion reflecting Christ's love for his Church. They respond to requests from Link members, Church members, people in the community and the Clergy.

Careful planning is given to the organisation of the All Souls Service which was attended by a congregation of 48. This service involves a personal invitation and where possible a visit to each bereaved person.

Sparsholt School

The PCC has maintained close links with Sparsholt School by inviting participation of the school in the Mothering Sunday service, the Harvest Festival and the Carol service. Sparsholt School also conducted their own Harvest Festival and Christingle service in the church. A new pastoral initiative began in 2014 with the formation of a monthly lunch club in the school to which people in the village are invited to a lunch shared with the school pupils.

Messy Church

Messy Church is a fresh expression of church, started in Portsmouth in 2004, and now taking place in over 2000 places around the world. Families come along to take part in activities based around a Biblical theme; join in a celebration with songs, Bible story and prayers; and finish with a meal. Our Messy Church was started in 2012 and circulates between Crawley, Littleton and Sparsholt. It is held on the second Saturday of every month except August.

Mission and Evangelism

The PCC has a charitable giving sub group to recommend giving for charitable purposes. In 2014 the PCC gave £350 to each of 3 charities as follows;

- The Missionary Training Service
- Karis Kids
- Winchester Churches Nightshelter

The PCC also decided that £720 should be paid out of the church fete income in equal shares to support Ham Green Volunteers, Sparsholt C of E Primary School, Sparsholt Village Playground Association and Sparsholt Village Shop Association.

Our Parish Paper is distributed bi-monthly to all the parishioners keeping them informed of the important matters affecting our church and articles that maintain the Christian message.

Financial Review (all figures rounded to nearest £100)

The PCC has to find a parish share which in 2014 was £19677 and in 2015 will be £21,645

£33,300 was spent to provide the Christian ministry from St. Stephen's Church, including the contribution to the diocesan parish share that increased by 6.1% in the year. Our share of benefice expenses increased by £1400 over the previous year

Overall expenditure was considerably less than last year as there was no requirement for building maintenance.

We are very well supported by FOSS

Volunteers

We would like to thank all the volunteers who work so hard to support the church within the community of Sparsholt. In particular, we want to mention the commitment shown by our churchwardens Caroline Horrill and John Wesley who both work tirelessly on our behalf and Sally Wesley for her efficient handling of the accounts and finances. Christopher Anderson and Robin Hodgson have again provided strong leadership in raising finance for the PCC. We have a band of helpers including the flower arrangers, bell ringers and key rota volunteers who all contribute to welcoming people into the church.