

A L L S A I N T S C H U R C H
Boyne Hill, Maidenhead

ANNUAL REPORT 2008



I wandered along a tree lined road.
A stranger there was I.
When all at once, I stopped and stared,
as something caught my eye.
There stood a hallowed building:
Tall and proud and splendid.
And in my heart I knew at last!
That my lifelong search
for the loveliest church
had ended.

All Saints - John Tointon

Overview Of The Year

Rather than begin the report this year by looking at the ministry of All Saints I thought it would be helpful to reflect upon the Diocesan vision that has emerged over the last 6 months called **Living Faith**. Living Faith is an attempt by Bishop John and other senior members within the Diocese to give a framework for mission within the parishes.

Bishop John would like to see communities of people that are attentive to God in prayer, with people that are using their gifts to build the Body of Christ. It is hoped that communities will be rooted in scripture, faithful to the traditions of the church, and grow in confidence to give fresh expression to the church.

The purpose of this vision is 'to join with God in creating a caring, sustainable and growing Christian presence in every part of Oxford Diocese.'

The five priorities of Living Faith are;

- Sustaining the sacred centre
- Making disciples
- Making a difference in the world
- Creating vibrant Christian communities
- Shaping confident, collaborative leadership

If we think about the life of All Saints we have attempted to develop these strands of Living Faith through our communion model of the church. Those five strands have been;

- The Trinity
- The Body of Christ
- The Sacrament
- The People of God
- The Leaven in the world

In the first case our sacred centre is the entry of members into the relationship with God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. The relationship of love reflected in the relationships within the Trinity should be reflected in our relations with each other.

The second priority within the Body of Christ is that through the Eucharist we are joined one with God and each other. This leads us to share fellowship with each other, learn together, pray together and reach out to others. In other words making disciples.

The sacramental dimension is that which says God through Christ revealed his love for the world. As Christ left this world he left the Church empowered by the Holy Spirit to represent him in the world. I believe this might fit in with the Diocesan priority to make a difference in the world.

The People of God are a faithful group of pilgrims who are not perfect but who live as if the best is yet to come. In other words people who are journeying towards the Kingdom of Heaven in hope and attempting to bring a little of the qualities of that Kingdom to this world. The Diocesan idea of vibrant Christian Communities which are hospitable, deeply engaged in their communities and passionate about God, fits the vision we have been exploring.

Finally in our Communion Model we have thought about being leaven in the world. If we become more aware of the implications of living communion, the links between collaborative ministry and mission will emerge. We will take the values of the above into our families, work and the wider society.

Outcomes of the vision at All Saints

Sustaining the Sacred Centre - This is to deepen our enjoyment of God and to recognize God's presence in the world. We would hope that through our Eucharistic worship, our study of scripture and our pilgrimages to Walsingham and the Holy Land we might be helping people in this journey.

Making Disciples – The Evangelism team, Messy Church, Alpha courses, Emmaus courses, Godly Play, Bible Studies and the use of the visual arts and baptism preparation team.

Making a difference in the world – Locally we have further developed our links with our schools. This has led to the shared Gutjwa School project where we will support the development of education in a South African township. Also we have continued to support the training of priests in Kenya and continued our Fairtrade commitment.

Creating vibrant Christian Communities – Our link with other churches in taking 'Open the Book' into the schools sharing the stories of the Bible in an engaging way. Within our community many of the ideas mentioned above will help us grow in this way. For the future continuing to develop our links with Larchfield School and nursing home.

Shaping confident, collaborative ministry – we are fortunate at All Saints to have developed extensive use of peoples gifts. We have encouraged vocations, and in Elizabeth Bryson we will in the next year have a Licensed Lay Minister. We have a large number of lay teams working on Messy church, Baptism preparation, Young Saints, Marriage preparation, Open the Book, Flower arranging, office staff, Alpha and Emmaus teams the intercessions team and the list goes on. An important dimension has been the practical working with other parishes and other church dominations.

Thanks to the Congregation of All Saints

It is a great thrill and a wonderful privilege to be part of what I believe is a vibrant Christian community. Thank you to all of you who give your time and talent to help build the Body of Christ at All Saints. As with last year's report I express my thanks to the choir and servers, our director of music, all who help with the pew sheet, rotas, service booklets, and those who clean the church and prepare the flowers. Other important roles are the ministry of the church wardens, the verger, the sacristan and those who act as sidespeople our school governors and those who give support running the office. Thank to all those who have continued to oversee the tower and spire project which has been very successful. Special thanks this year to Lucy Cowdery for her five years developing the ministry of Young Saints and to Mike Moss for 15 years as our parish treasurer. Mike has used his considerable financial skills to enable the smooth running of All Saints.

I am sure that people have been left out so I thank all of you who contribute to the life, worship and mission of All Saints.

God Bless

Love Fr Jeremy and Carys

Churchwarden's Fabric Report

Ken Smith

Ecclesiastical Jurisdiction Measure 1991.

It is a requirement of this measure that a report should be presented to the Annual Church Meeting on the 'fabric, goods and ornaments' of the church. This report encompasses the requirement and has been seen by the PCC.

Goods and Ornaments

These are in good order, including the linen, silver, candles and brassware. An Inventory is available.

Fabric

The church building has been carefully monitored throughout the year and attention paid both to major and less significant issues. This report highlights a number of those items and looks to some issues for the future.

Tower and Spire

Following our successful application to English Heritage and other grant awarding bodies, and through the generosity of local benefactors, preliminary work on setting up the site began in May 2008 and the scaffolding was erected during June and July. Masonry repairs began on 19 July.

It is pleasing to be able to report that the work contracted for has been completed within time and well within budget and now that the scaffolding has been removed from the spire the results look outstanding, with the gleaming white of the spire surmounted by the newly gilded cockerel. The initial problem was of course the affect on the masonry of the corroded iron band. When work had started it was found that that band was in fact five parallel bands, all of which have been removed. Not only that two further levels of iron banding have been discovered and removed, otherwise there would have been further problems in years to come. In spite of that the project has gone remarkably smoothly with very much credit due to our architect, Roderick MacLennan, and the Builders, St. Blaise, with particular thanks to Ian Gangadeen the on-site project manager, not forgetting the structural engineers, quantity surveyors etc., and not least the workers and craftsmen.

Quotation from one of the men on the project – *"This project has been one of the best I have worked on"*. Quotation from one of the workmen on the original construction who dropped his hammer from the top of the spire in 1865 *"Unprintable"*. Quotation from the workman who 'received' the hammer at the bottom *"Equally unprintable"*.

The project has gone so well, particularly budget-wise, that English Heritage have agreed that we can continue the work on the tower down to ground level, hence the continued presence of the scaffolding, which will probably finally be removed at the end of May.

It is intended to hold a special service of thanksgiving in the Summer once the completion date is known.

As reported last year we have had to commit to three things in particular as a result of the EH grant, all of which are to be welcomed.

1. The church will be open at least once a week for visitors, on Tuesday mornings.
2. It will be necessary to put into place a formal system of carrying out maintenance, including professional assistance, particularly for inspecting the rainwater goods.
3. We need to improve accessibility in some areas, including removing the threshold to the parish centre and erecting more signage. All these will involve expenditure.

At the time of writing it is planned to ring the bells again for the first time on Easter morning since work on the tower started.

The clock has been re-gilded and is awaiting an appropriate point in the tower work to be re-fitted. The winding mechanism has been automated.

Floor tiling

You will have noticed white patches on the floor of the church. This is soft lime mortar put there to prevent accidents and protect the surrounding tiles. It is easily removable (unlike the cement elsewhere) and was done by the tower site manager.

The Gresley Silver plate, namely a flagon, chalice and paten, was exhibited in a magnificent exhibition arranged by the Goldsmiths Company in Goldsmiths Hall, London in May 2008

Lead flashing over the Sacristy roof has been replaced.

Several leaks in the roofs of the parish centre have been repaired, including the replacement of the flat roof over the kitchen.

Quotations to repair the two sets of stained glass windows, including the Gresley window, which are bowing, and the hole in the Birinus garden have been received but further work has been delayed pending an improvement in our cash flow, possibly in July once the costs of the tower work have been finalised.

Progress on repairing the arch has also been delayed for the same reason.

Quinquennial Inspection

A formal inspection of the church building is carried out every five years by our Diocesan Architect (Roderick MacLennan, the architect we are using for the tower repair). The function of the inspection is to define what work needs immediate attention, what needs doing in a short time, and what is to be noted for the future. Our next inspection was due in December 2008 but has not yet taken place.

P.C.C. Report

John Ainslie

The PCC has met on 7 occasions in the year following last year's Annual Parochial Church Meeting, of which one was a short meeting to elect the PCC Officers and Standing Committee.

During the course of the year the PCC appointed Dorothy Strack-Hankey as Child Protection Officer, adopted an updated Child Protection Policy and began updating CRB checks for all relevant people involved in church activities with young people.

The PCC appointed Elizabeth Bryson as Evangelism Champion in line with a Diocesan initiative to increase the profile of evangelism within the church. An Evangelism Group led by Elizabeth planned a successful Baptism Family Day on the Saturday before Mothering Sunday, following on from the Back to Church initiative in the Autumn.

The Diocesan "Living Faith" vision has occupied much thought by both PCC and the PCC Standing Committee during the course of the year. This is now shaping the whole agenda for PCC meetings, providing a framework within which to judge priorities.

The possibility of a Church Army Officer being appointed, with external funding, was discussed by the PCC and a special open meeting held chaired by Fr Jeremy and the Area Dean. The Church Army Officer is now embedded within the Deanery Plan, though nothing is certain and timescale for appointment uncertain. A focus for the Church Army Officer would be the community at Larchfield; we are already building links there particularly through the school, and the Head gave a presentation at a recent PCC meeting. The Head of Boyn Hill School also attended a PCC meeting and gave a presentation about the Gutjwa School Appeal.

Arrangements for emergency services in the event of a priest not being available due to sickness etc were discussed, and three people were put forward for a Bishops Licence to enable them to provide a service of communion from the Reserved Sacrament to cover such eventualities; the licences have been obtained and training and the preparation of forms of service are in progress.

Following Mike Moss's announcement that he would not be standing again as PCC Treasurer at the end of the present year, the PCC thanked Mike for his enthusiastic and committed work as PCC Treasurer over many years.

The major Tower and Spire Restoration work was put in hand and largely completed during the course of the year, with appropriate faculties being obtained and finance from English Heritage, other external donors, and members of the local church family.

Young Saints

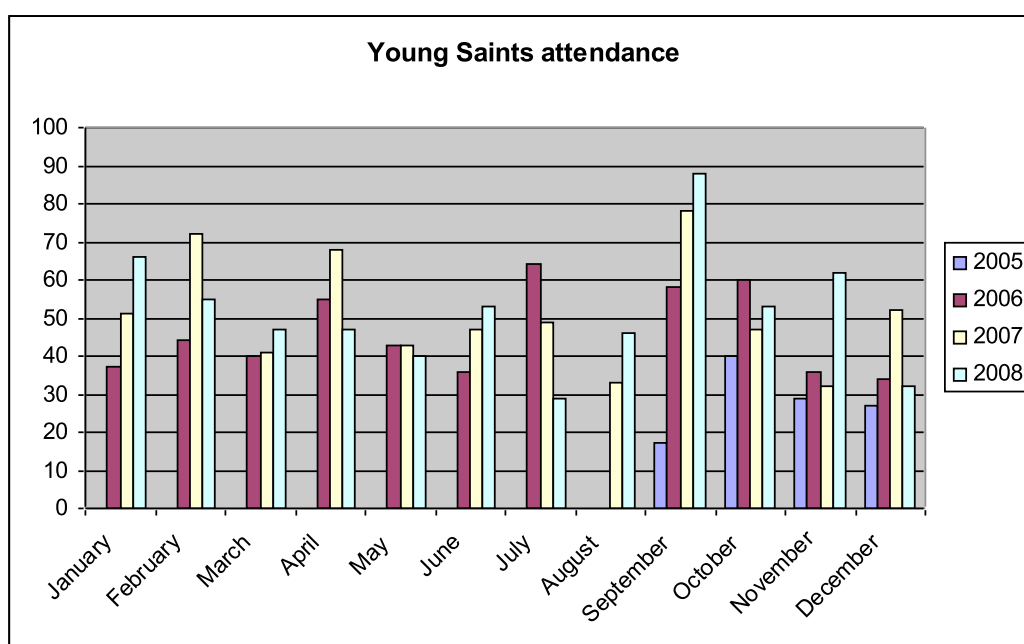
Lucy Cowdery

Members of the group

Sirpa Arovaara, Bethany Cowdery, Lucy Cowdery, Christine Dunford, Father Jeremy Harris, Tanya Howarth, Leigh Hutchinson-May, Michelle Symonds, Ami Webb-Morris, Jill Webb-Morris, Hannah Wilson.

Attendance

The chart below gives an example of our attendance records over the last few years. This shows the steady growth that we have been enjoying not only among the children themselves but also their families. This bodes well for the future.



Godly Play

We are continually building the resources for Godly Play. The majority of stories are made by us and there is now a library of resources at Abingdon where you can borrow stories. Unfortunately none of us have been able to go on a training course this year due to other commitments but I would hope that next year some of us will be able to find the time as they are very valuable days not only in terms of learning how to teach the stories but also as a kind of day retreat.

All age worship

Michelle has been organising the all age worship services with Father Jeremy for some time and there has been a marked improvement in the length of service and the participation of the children. Previously the children were too shy to come to the front but now they rush forward. We tend to have fun and games with the microphone each time but we'll win in the end! Maybe you could let us know your views.

Promoting our work

Leigh and I attended one of the Deanery Synod evenings where the theme was 'the Children's work within our Churches'. We ran a 2 minute presentation on the work within All Saints which was very well received.

We also attended an Evangelism day in Oxford along with a few others from the Church where we all joined different workshops. Leigh and I attended the children's workshop and were very encouraged as we felt that we had a great framework in place whereas a lot of other Churches were struggling and had a lot of work still to do.

Following on from this day a team was put together to organise an evangelism party for our most recent Baptism families. We were available to talk with the families and show a digital display of the children's work and events that have been organised over the years. We also had examples of our newsletters and the Godly Play resources.

Events

Over the years that I have been in charge we have organised some fantastic events – The Saints and Sausages party, Pancake racing, Christmas trips and picnics to name but a few. I hope that these events will continue as the children get so much out of them.

Teachers

We have been lucky enough to have had a loyal group of mums help in Young Saints for the last few years and the continuity has contributed to the success of the class. However, after over 5 very enjoyable and rewarding years of running the team I have decided the time has come to move on and let someone else take the reins. Two new volunteers have joined the team – Nicola Johnston and Sally Gaines – but we are always looking for more helpers. Come on you Dads!

The future

With a change in leadership I am sure there will be new ideas, which is always a good thing. The format of the lessons will remain the same and we are committed to building up our Godly Play resources and teaching. We'll just have to watch this space.

I'd like to thank everyone who has helped and supported me over the years. Young Saints will always be a special place for me and I pray for its continued success.

The Alpha Course

Elizabeth Bryson

We had two Alpha Courses in 2008 January – April and then an Autumn Alpha. It was great to have people on the Courses wanting to find out what Christians believe. It has been good to have people who have recently started coming to Church as well as new enquirers. In both these Alpha Courses it has been a joy to see people grow in knowledge, understanding and experience of the Lord.

We are grateful to the members of the Congregation who support the ministry of Alpha by praying and by providing suppers. The supper enables us to give a friendly welcome, which is an important start to each session. The DVD Talks followed by discussion enable those on the Courses to find out about Christianity, with an emphasis on knowing God and coming into a relationship with the Lord through faith in Jesus.

It is encouraging to read comments written by people who have come to Alpha. Here are some from our recent Courses, which reflect the spiritual journey that has been experienced:

- A better understanding of my faith
- I believe and understand more than before and realise you don't need all the answers
- I think about God more and my behaviour
- A bit further along? Still very questioning
- Faith encouraged and strengthened
- Has grown the faith I had
- Far more knowledgeable – now have the bulk of facts to enable me to move forward
- The discussions after can be very helpful.
- I would now describe myself as a Christian. I made a proper commitment towards the end to lead a Christian life by making the commitment prayer.

As in previous years, some people who have enjoyed Alpha now regularly attend All Saints' Church. Now we want to become a missionary congregation. I hope that the Alpha Course in the Autumn 2009 will have many guests from outside the Church as well as people from the congregation who would like to join us to grow in their knowledge and understanding about our Christian faith. In previous years the poster outside the Church has drawn guests and the Internet contact of the Alpha and Church websites.

There are many people who wonder: 'Is there more to life than this?' They would welcome the opportunity of finding out about Christianity and experiencing the love of God in their lives. Please will you recommend Alpha to people you know, who you think will be interested and invite them to our next Alpha Course, starting on Wednesday September 23rd 2009, The Alpha Course is such a wonderful opportunity to:

- Enjoy a friendly welcome
- Find out what Christians believe

- Ask questions
- Discuss your ideas
- Have a delicious supper

The Emmaus Course

Ann Rawlings

I have attended two Emmaus courses, last year and the year before. I found them both very good helping me to re-evaluate, question and change I hope, long-held beliefs. As an out-of-parish member they were helpful in getting to know church members outside of services. I would like to continue them; covering new ground preferably, so my learning process can continue.

OAK (Ordinands Appeal in Kenya)

Elizabeth Bryson

Margaret and Eunice are now Priests in the villages of Kenya, because we paid for their training. We are now funding Patrick through his training for Ordination, in Bishop Samson's Diocese of Taita Taveta in Kenya. Patrick will start the third year of his training in August 2009, ready to be ordained in the Autumn of 2010. They are all very grateful for the financial and prayer support from All Saints' Church.

The Revd. Roy Taylor brings us news of Eunice, Margaret and Patrick after his visits to Kenya. Roy met Eunice and Margaret when he visited Kenya in December and they have settled in their Parishes and are doing well. Patrick is getting on fine with his training.

This project is an exciting way that we can contribute to the building of God's kingdom in Africa. When new priests are Ordained, Bishop Samson is able to set up new Parishes in his Diocese. This means better provision of Services, pastoral care and evangelism in the villages and towns of Kenya.

Please give financially to OAK by putting cash or a cheque made out to 'All Saints Church Fund' with OAK written on the back, in an envelope marked 'OAK' in the collection on a Sunday, or leave the envelope in the Church Office. Please continue to pray for Margaret, Eunice and Patrick.

Mothers' Union

Ena Jones

What is the Mothers' Union?

The Mothers' Union meets on the second Wednesday of the month in the Parish Centre. It is open to anyone who has been baptised, and our present membership of 38, includes four men, and six ladies from St Luke's, St Peter's, and the Good Shepherd. We value these contacts with our fellow Anglicans, and find that they broaden our horizons. We also have good relationships with Boyne Hill Baptists, and Edmund Campian churches, with whom we sometimes share meetings.

We have a varied and interesting programme which includes speakers, occasional meals out, cinema visits, and informal 'get togethers'. Last Autumn, finding that several of us attended the same medical centre, we arranged joint flu injections followed by a tea party at a member's house - probably the only 'flu party' on record!

Our chief project is still 'Feed the Children' for which we join St Luke's ladies for 'stitch up' days. This year, since Christmas, we have made 411 blankets, and, 1,325 over the year, in addition to childrens' clothes. Incidentally, we are glad of donations of wool - any quantity, any type, and any colour!

Through a 'donation instead of cards' scheme at Christmas, we were able to buy 40 copies of 'Praying through the Day', for Father Jeremy to use for baptism families. At our A.G.M. in March, we organised a 'Lenten Gift Project', and were able to give £30, and a sack of toiletries and stationery to 'Feed the Children'.

We are hosting the Deanery Festival this year on Wednesday, 13th June - St Luke's kindly hosted it last year - and shall welcome members and friends from all parts of the deanery. We hope too, to give a presentation, showing the work that the Mothers' Union does in the 78 countries of the world in which it has branches.

Earlier this year, members were asked to write about what the Mothers' Union meant to them. In all the replies three things stood out - Prayer, love, and amazement at how much good work it does all over the world.

Larchfield Report

Sandra Williams, Larchfield Activities Coordinator

Larchfield is a home providing specialist care for people suffering with a dementia. There are many types of dementia; each person is unique and each person's experience of dementia will be different. We have now been open for two years and have 75 beds; some are contracted by the local authority and The Primary Care Trust, some are privately funded and two are set aside to provide respite care for those living with dementia in the community.

Dementia is not selective; it can affect any one of us regardless of creed, colour or race. At Larchfield, we promote Person Centred Care, responding to the needs of the person and learning about each person's individual rich history. This helps us to connect with and understand the person we care for. It can be a difficult and traumatic time for families and we endeavour to support and work with them at all times.

We have been fortunate to have Rev Jeremy Harris as our Church of England minister. He visited our home first to see for himself the special needs of those we care for, embracing Person Centred Care. Our monthly service has been created around these needs. We have even included colouring for a gentleman who has a passion for this.

Our services focus on symbols to set the scene, lots of hymns as music is a wonderful way to communicate and indeed hymns with rhythm, many of them modern, are a great success. The Lords Prayer is always included; it is such a powerful prayer and brings a sense of calm that only our Saviour, Jesus Christ can bring. Most of those we care for can say this wonderful prayer, but sadly they may not recognise their wife or husband.

Over the past months Brigitte from your parish has joined us to share and support our worship. Being admitted to a care home should not be the end. There are still opportunities to enjoy life. Being a part of the wider community, who offer friendship and prayer is so important and reminds us all, that God loves and cares for us equally.

Deanery Synod Report

David Morgan

The Vision of the Deanery is to encourage, support and help Parishes as they assist people to become committed followers of Christ.

We welcomed Rev Dr Jeremy Hyde as new Area Dean at the beginning of the year.

The Deanery held four Synods during the year. Topics ranged from celebrating children's ministry; to an insight into the work of the Anglican Church worldwide. Bishop Stephen talked to Synod in July about developing a vision for evangelism; in November Jeremy Hyde gave a presentation on the Deanery Plan and answered questions.

Church wardens across the Deanery took part in a Meet & Share event in January 2009, visiting Christ Church Cathedral and discussing ways of facilitating collaboration across the Deanery. Various ideas were hatched including the suggestion of twice yearly meetings between Church Wardens across the Deanery, and a web chat room to allow sharing of ideas and provide a forum for discussion.



Meet & Share – The Church Wardens from Parishes in Maidenhead & Windsor Deanery in the Tom Quad Oxford

Copyright David Joynes – Church Warden at Holy Trinity Church, Cookham.

Parish Centre Users Committee

Stella Harding

Representatives of All Saints Church and the users of the Parish Centre have been meeting now every three months for the past two years, helping to fulfil the aim of fostering communications between the two groups. Until the end of 2008, six user groups are regularly represented on the Committee: Brownies, Rainbows, Mothers & Toddlers, Alzheimers Carers, A.A and the Courtyard Complimentary Therapy Centre, ("CCTC"). Unfortunately, following Christine Sanders decision to retire from the CCTC they are no longer represented on the Committee; the Alzheimers Carers Group have also recently decided that they will no longer use the Parish Centre for their meetings and the Committee has lost the services of another important member, Christine Price. The Committee will miss both Christines for the active parts they played at meetings and for their valuable contributions to its work.

Whilst much of the agenda and ensuing discussion at meetings continued to focus on general maintenance issues and the refurbishment of the Parish Centre, the Committee also completed its work on the update off the Parish Centre Hire Agreement which was subsequently approved by the PCC.

Sylvia Dension, assisted by husband Reg, continued to do a wonderful job in keeping the Parish Centre clean and tidy with Reg also turning his hand to some DIY work in the hall; both Sylvia and Reg play an important part in the day to day presentation and care of the building.

Work on the fabric of the Parish Centre continued to be limited to essential maintenance and repairs in 2008 with critical repair work carried out to the roof. All fund raising efforts continued to focus on the Church spire and it was possible, through the Committee and its meetings, to share news of the progress on this major project with the user groups.

It has also been possible, through the Committee, to continue to call upon the skills and talents amongst Committee members and their friends / colleagues / associates when more minor repairs or maintenance activity has been required in the kitchen or hall; in particular, Mr Stevens, father of Beckie, the Brownies Leader, and Reg, as mentioned above, have continued to provide valuable help and support.

The Committee and the Church remain very keen and fully committed to pursuing the aim of refurbishing the kitchen and the hall floor and have also considered replacing the current heating system in due course.

The Committee continues to provide a valuable means of communication and information sharing with the Parish Centre User Groups and through its meetings it has been possible to quickly resolve any issues or areas of concern.

8th Maidenhead Rainbow Guides

Alwyn Kimber

Rainbow Guides are the youngest members of the Girl Guiding UK, age range from 5 – 7 yrs old. All Saints has a thriving unit of 12-14 girls who meet between 4:30pm and 5:30pm every Friday in term-time at the Parish Centre. The leaders are Alwyn Kimber (Duck), and Heather Noyce (Hedgehog), ably assisted by Brigitte Ranger (Swan), Lucy Saxton (Rabbit) and Cara Guest (Bumblebee).

We have fun playing games, making things, cooking, singing and stories (usually each meeting is based on one theme). Our meetings have included making pancakes, blackberry & apple crumble, Valentine gifts & masks plus much, much more. We have also had a Scottish and a Chinese meeting and a talent show.

Since the autumn we have been to Legoland, the pantomime at the Methodist Church and had an action-packed afternoon with other Rainbows, Brownies and Guides from the District for Thinking Day. The District Christmas Celebration always seems to mark the start of the festive season with lots of well-known Christmas songs and carols.

As part of the Guiding initiative to 'Change the World' the girls will be singing to their parents and friends to raise money for Wateraid. Next term they hope to raise awareness of the World Wildlife Fund. Also next term we will be planting up the tubs that brighten the doorway of the Parish Centre.

The coming year is going to be very exciting for us because it will be the Centenary of the founding of the Guide movement with lots of events and parties being planned locally and Nationwide.

I would like to finish by thanking all the people who help us, but especially Brigitte, co-founder of this unit, and whose ideas, leadership and assistance have been invaluable. In accordance with the rules of Guiding UK, Brigitte needs to retire from being an Assistant Guider but will continue for the time being as an occasional unit helper.

If you would like your daughter to join us please contact Alwyn on 01628 670176, but please be quick as we have a long waiting list.

Evangelism Group Report

Elizabeth Bryson

The Evangelism Group was formed after the Living Faith Conference on June 7th 2008. We discussed the day and felt that we can celebrate the Nurture Courses that are successful at All Saints and also Young Saints. We wanted to develop the contacts that we already have. Fr Jeremy asked me to be the Parish's 'Evangelism Champion', which I am glad about, as I love to help people come to know the Lord and grow in faith.

So two of us went to Diocesan Living Faith Training about 'Back to Church Sunday'. We then met with Fr Jeremy and the larger Evangelism Group to plan our 'Back to Church Sunday' on 28th September 2008. This was a successful day with lots of the congregation inviting family, friends and neighbours. We had about 20 visitors on the day and some have returned since then.

In the Autumn the Evangelism Champions in the Diocese were invited to Courses to help plan a 'Contact Event'. Three of the Evangelism Group came with me and with others in the Evangelism Group we planned a Party for Baptism Families who have had a baby baptised in the last year.

This Party was a great success on March 21st 2009. The Church looked fun and welcoming with balloons outside and inside, worship music playing on a CD as background music, people ready to greet the guests and activities ready for them to enjoy. There was great 'team work' involving and including many people in the congregation using their gifts and talents. Ten families came to this event, they all enjoyed the party, were grateful for the invitation, would like to come again to a similar event. Three of these families often come to the 10am Eucharist, while most of the others had not been back to Church since the baby's baptism. All ten families took packs of information so they know how to take a 'next step' with: dates of Church events and special services for the rest of 2009, information about Young Saints, Messy Church (which lots were interested in), Alpha Autumn dates, a 'Parenting' booklet and a pack with ways to pray with their children. The visitors enjoyed the activities from 3:00 – 3:50: 'angel hunt' around the Church – exploring the building, making a posy of flowers, making a Mothering Sunday card, having cakes and drinks, planting a sunflower seed (the children will need to look after the seed so it grows into a plant, just as their Mums care for them and Jesus loves us so we grow – this symbolism was explained to some of the visitors and appreciated.) At 3:50 we gathered at the front of the Church to sing "Jesus' love is very wonderful" (with the actions), then the Baptismal candles were lit and Fr Jeremy said a prayer from the Baptism Service. The guests left at 4 pm with their information packs, all had enjoyed the afternoon and thanked us for arranging the Party.

The Evangelism Group will plan another contact event next year, so we continue to become a Missionary Congregation by developing links with the groups of people that we already have contact with. It is wonderful to have an enthusiastic Evangelism Group using their gifts and talents and others in the Church working with us, so we can draw more people in to come to know the Lord and grow in faith.

Pilgrimage to the Holy Land

David Emerson

In January, a party from All Saints were joined by a group from two London churches to go on a trip to the Holy Land. We flew from Heathrow to Tel Aviv where we met our guide for the week Ghassan, an Israeli Christian, and our coach with our driver for the week. We were driven to the Pilgerhaus (a German owned Pilgrim Hotel) situated on the shore of the Sea of Galilee. It was a beautiful hotel in a perfect setting.

Day two. We drove to Mount Tabor and visited the shrine of the Transfiguration. Then on to Nazareth to see the site of the Annunciation and the carpenter's shop where Jesus helped Joseph. At **Cana** where Jesus turned water into wine we renewed our wedding vows.

Day three. We visited the site of the miracle of the Loaves and Fishes, then held a Eucharist beside the Sea of Galilee. We visited the Mount of the Beatitudes where Jesus preached the Sermon on the Mount. Father Kevin's wife, an opera singer, sang a beautiful solo. On to **Capernaum** where Jesus held his Galilean ministry. Then we sailed on the Sea of Galilee which was both peaceful and calm. On to **Kursi**, the site of the miracle of the Gadarine swine.

Day four. We moved hotels. At the New Baptismal site we renewed our baptismal vows. On to **Jericho**, to view the Mount of Temptation, then to **Bethany** and the homes of Mary, Martha and Lazarus. In the afternoon to the Mount of Olives.

Day five. Bethlehem to the site of the Nativity and then on to the Shepherd's Fields.

Day six. Sunday. We moved hotels to **Jerusalem** and went to St. George's Anglican Cathedral for a Eucharist. Then to **Ein Karem** and the traditional home of John the Baptist.

Day seven. Proceeded to **Bethphage** to the start of the Palm Sunday procession on the Mount of Olives. On to the site where Jesus wept over the destruction of Jerusalem, then to the Garden of Gethsemane.

Day eight. We followed the Way of the Cross along the Via Dolorosa to Calvary, where the site of the Cross is enshrined in the church of the Holy Sepulchre.

Day nine. To Mount Zion and the site of the Room of the Last Supper. Then on to the Dead Sea to float and cover ourselves in revitalising mud. On to Qumran where the Dead Sea Scrolls were found, and then to the excavated Essene Monastery, where the Scrolls were probably written.

Day ten. Left Jerusalem to visit **Abu Gosh** the possible site of **Emmaus**.

After a final Eucharist we left for **Tel Aviv** and home.

It was a life enhancing experience, much to be recommended.

Flowers

Barbara Bannister

Once again I am able to report on a year in which the church has had a good display of flowers each week. Thank you to all members of the congregation for their generous sponsorship of the flowers week by week, and the special gift of lilies at Eastertide.

Last year we said goodbye to Jean Kelly and I am pleased to tell you that Jean and Brian are thoroughly enjoying their retirement to Scotland. At present they are "down under" visiting their son and daughter and their families.

Thanks are due to Marian Duncombe and Jean Balchin for their hard work throughout the year. Jean's departure laid a heavier burden on three of us, but we have survived!

During the year we have been greatly helped by Valerie Duncombe and a new recruit, Jean Loveday. Katie Easthill, who took over from Jean Kelly, rapidly became pregnant and had to withdraw. However, now that Evie is a few months old, Katie is ready to take part in flower arranging again. Brigitte Ranger, Brenda Ilott, Eleanor Kershaw and Sue Stannett have also helped us at festivals etc.

We are hoping that some, if not all, of these people will become more involved and join the rota - in pairs if not on their own. We are very willing for anyone to work with one of us for a while to learn the ropes and gain confidence. It is always a pleasure to have someone working with you as it reduces the amount of work to be done. All people are welcome. If you are hiding your light under a bushel please, please let it out and speak to one of us about it. We are all pleased to talk to you about joining the team at any time. We look forward to talking to you.

Open the Book

Renee Wilson

Many young people today have no knowledge of the simple, much loved, Bible stories that were once an accepted part of our early lives. The Open the Book project was launched to redress this sad situation. The idea was to form small groups and approach head teachers with the offer to perform the stories in school assemblies. The scheme has been in existence for a while and is now growing substantially, having caught the imagination. We in All Saints have been privileged to be a part of it since September last year.

It is a simple concept involving an introduction to 'set' the story, followed by narration- with acting, a conclusion, a moment for reflection and a prayer. We endeavour, as far as possible, to dress in suitable costumes, though adaptation and recreation are regularly brought into play at the eleventh hour! Props are sought wherever possible and here the schools play an important part by producing art and handicraft. The children are also cleverly included in the action of the play, either as volunteers for small parts, or as essential 'noises off'. The measure of the children's appreciation of the plays can be judged by the forest of hands that shoot up when volunteers are called for and by their quiet attention during the performance.

For us, the satisfaction is that we are introducing the children to the stories that we ourselves have loved, and that perhaps we may have planted a tiny seed that may one day grow and flower.

Rene Wilson

On Behalf of All Saints Junior School, I would like to thank the team of volunteers who have joined us every Thursday morning for the 'Open the Book' assembly. The children have really enjoyed seeing the stories from the Bible brought to life. As Rene has said, the opportunity for them to become involved in the dramatic retellings has made these sessions a highlight of their week. It has also been fascinating listening to the children talk about the stories they have heard, reflecting on the messages that are part of each retelling. Long may it continue!

Best wishes,

Bridget McLeod,

Headmistress