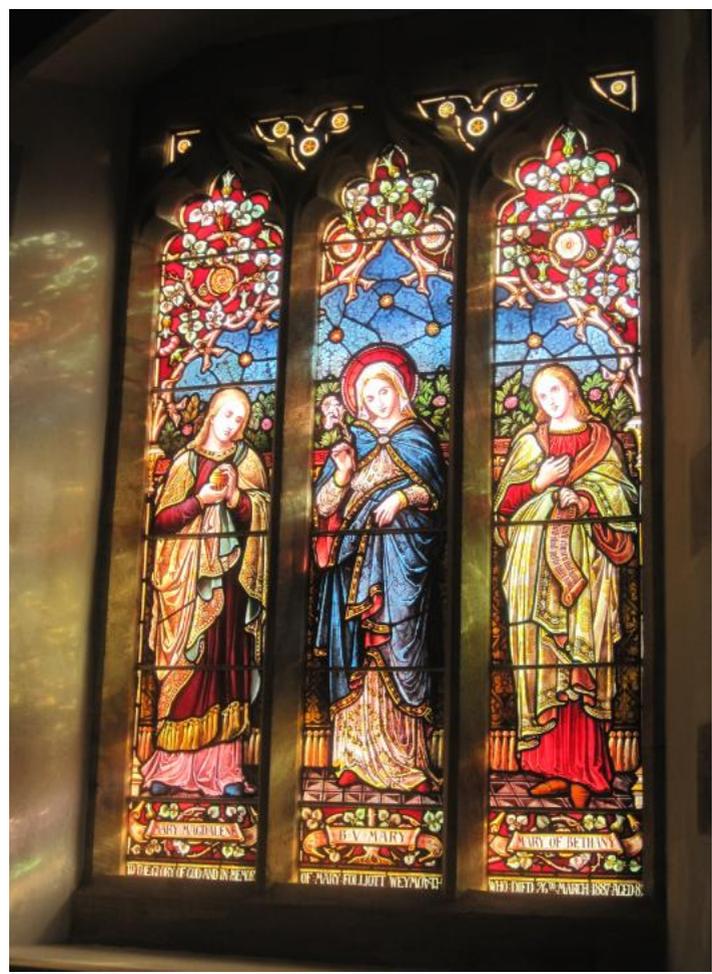


St Peter's Church Stoke Fleming



ANNUAL REPORT 2017

The Parochial Church Council 2017

Rector

*Revd Alison Shaw

**Ex officio*

Churchwarden

*Mr. John Dietz (Health & Safety Officer, Fabric Goods & Ornaments Officer)

Representatives on the Deanery Synod

*Mr. Peter Barker (Reader, Vice Chair and Hon Secretary)

*Mrs. Rosemary Shiffner

Representative on the Diocesan Synod

*Mrs. Rosemary Minshall (Hon Treasurer)

Elected to the Parochial Church Council

Dr. Hazel Browne

Miss Jenny Harris (Reader)

Mrs Sarah Stevenson-Olds (from March)

Mrs. Heather Stramik

Mrs. Juliet Sutton Scott Tucker (until Nov.)

Mrs. Sue Walford (Assist. Treasurer)

A Word from the Rector

Dear Friends,

Welcome to the Annual Parochial Church Meeting of St Peter's, Stoke Fleming.

At a time when we hear in the media of the demise of the Church in England, it would be easy to feel discouraged.

Don't be! Instead, read our 2017 Annual Report and be heartened and encouraged by everything within its pages. Read about the energy and commitment of a wonderful church family - and my love and thanks to them for all they are and do.

And there is still more to be excited by - we read at the end of St Matthew's Gospel of the Great Commission - Jesus' call to make disciples of all nations. Of course, we are already fully occupied looking after our people and our building, but Jesus' call is still there, for all of us. We need to be creative and imaginative. We can take tiny steps - praying for our shop, school, pub and clubs. Tell them what we are doing. Ask them if the church can support or serve them. And so on - small, manageable steps. Ways for us all to bless our community. Who knows what God will make of it?

Love, joy and peace
Reverend Alison



Finances

Church Receipts

The Church Planned Giving Scheme has helped our finances greatly this year and as a number of people joined this half way through the year we should see an even greater difference next year. This of course also is noticeable in the Gift Aid Tax Return.

Church Payments

Common Fund Payment was high this year but will be decreasing in 2018.

We have used nearly £8000 from our CBF Ordinary Account towards the cost of the stain glass windows repairs. Without the generosity (£9,000) of FOSP we would have run at a loss this year. We would like to thank them for all they do for us. The VAT returns when received will be divided between the Tower and CBF Ordinary Fund according to how much was paid by both funds.

General Comments

The cost of maintaining the Churchyard is high and would be even higher if it were not for Adrian Lloyd Edwards' contribution. Again we give him our very grateful thanks. We have very little in the way of donations for this work and it would be helpful if this was taken into consideration.

We have covered our expenses during the year but this would not happen without fund raising. It is our aim to achieve this by our collections and planned giving so that we have more money to spare for things we feel will grow our church.

I would also like to thank Sue Walford for all the hard work she does throughout the year on reclaiming our Gift Aid Tax. This is done so quickly at the end of each three month period that we hardly have to wait for the money to return to us.

Rosemary Minshall, Treasurer.



Members of the PCC at a meeting in the Rectory.

Building and Maintenance

Windows and Tower

The main task in 2017 was the repair of some of the stained glass windows. We had received reports and estimates from John Mayne Stonemasonry Ltd and Bob Tucker of Heritage Stained Glass for various works required on eleven of the thirteen windows in the main body of the church.

Their total estimate for the work on all the windows was around £22,000 but it was divided into three stages based on priority with the most urgent work being required on four of the windows on the south side of the church, namely the large window opposite the main door, the Organist's window, the Mary window, and the Farwell window in the south transept. The work ranged from repairing the stonework of the mullions in all four windows to complete removal of the glass and replacement of the lead calmes in two of them. The iron saddle bars were also replaced, this time with stainless steel. Estimated cost for this work was around £12,500.



The PCC decided to proceed with stage one and we are extremely grateful to the Friends of St. Peter's for their contribution of £9,000 towards the work, which was completed in November. Final completion was later than expected because when the organist's window was removed it was found that the lead calmes needed to be replaced, something which had not been apparent at the outset.

The major work of the tower project was finished in 2016 with some work extra to the main contract extending into 2017. All the main contractors have now completed their work and their accounts have been settled. Some minor work such as decorating and general tidying up is still being carried out by the ringers and I must make special mention here of Peter Bailey who has assisted greatly in these minor tasks. There is still a sum remaining in the Tower Fund to meet the cost of materials for this work.

Clock

In July the motor which drives the striker weight failed. It was replaced by the Cumbria Clock Company under guarantee.

Churchyard

In late March a working party including Nick Teage, Alison Shaw, Christine and John Prendergast, Richard Stramik, Peter Barker and John Dietz spent the morning trimming hedges and bushes, clearing paths and the drainage ditch around the base of the church walls, and generally tidying the churchyard.

Throughout the year the grass in the churchyard has been kept cut, on the south side by the contractor Chris Reeve and on the north side free of charge by Adrian Lloyd Edwards. We are very grateful to Adrian for this work, which saves the church significant costs.

In addition it was necessary in September and October for the contractor to carry out two weed killer treatments on a large fast growing creeper which was taking over the south-west corner of the yard. It was spreading over the walls into the neighbouring cottage garden and into the grounds of Sanders. The treatment succeeded in killing the visible growth but experience elsewhere with this type of plant suggests that it will need to be repeated over several years in order to kill the plant completely.

Organ and Organists

In October Joost de Boer and Mateusz Jabłoński of William Drake Ltd, Organ Builders of Buckfastleigh, tuned the organ and made some minor repairs. Also this year I made an application to the British Institute of Organ Studies to have the organ listed as being of historical interest. The application was successful and it was awarded a certificate Grade II listing.

We thank the organists who played regularly for us. In general Carol Warboys played on the second and third Sundays of each month and Jon Oliverio on the fourth Sunday. Mike Dodsworth continued to play free of charge on first Sundays. Others who played occasionally were Bob Barsby, Karen White and Robin Tugwell.

Finally, many people do all sorts of things to help the church and it is possible that I may have forgotten to mention them, in which case I must generally thank everyone for whatever they do, be it great or small. I would also mention Nick Teage and Peter Bailey who, between them, make sure the church is unlocked every morning and locked again in the evenings, so that visitors may come and go freely during the day.

John Dietz, Churchwarden.

St Peter's and Stoke Fleming Primary School

2017 was our fifth year of presenting Open the Book in the School Hall each Monday morning. The dramatized stories continue to be as popular as ever and pupils are always eager to participate. Heather continued to manage our extensive and still growing 'wardrobe' and Mike Browne constructed an amazing 'cage' for the story of Daniel and the Lions. Members of the team also led the School's annual end of term Christingle Service in church, which included showing the Bible Society's Christmas Children's film, *The Greatest Journey*. The children were all given a copy of *The Greatest Journey* Booklet.



St Peter's also welcomed the children, teachers and a host of parents and grandparents for the School's Harvest Celebration in October and traditional Carol Service in December.

3 members of St Peter's, Revd Alison, Peter and Sarah were members of the Local Governing Body within *Education South West*.

Peter Barker

St Peter's and the wider Church

In Lent we much appreciated having Bishop Sarah as one of the Speakers at our Mission Community Lent Course, *A New Day Dawning*. The other sessions were led by Revd Jackie Taylor, our Rural Dean, Revd Barry Dugmore and our own Revd Alison Shaw. We also hosted the *Christians Together in Dartmouth and District* evening service for the *Women's World Day of Prayer*. For several days before Pentecost we hosted the wonderful prayer stations for '*Thy Kingdom Come*'; these toured the churches of CTiDD. On Advent Sunday we were delighted to welcome Bishop Nick to St Peter's to lead a Service of Confirmation and Holy Communion. Two of our congregation, Mo and Fred, were duly confirmed.

On six Sundays we were encouraged as we shared worship together with the other parishes of the Mission Community rotating around the 4 churches. At the joint service in April (at Strete) we were delighted to meet Grace and Festo (CMS missionaries) who told us about their work in a school in Tanzania. In July the 4 PCCs met for an enjoyable day together, led by Revd Alison, considering how to make the most of PCC meetings. On Pentecost Sunday a number of the congregation visited the Cathedral for Evensong and were pleased to see the *Hollenden Verge* carried in the procession.

Woodleigh Deanery held a very successful beach picnic and service at Blackpool on July 2. The cakes baked by Stoke Fleming ladies went down very well! The United Deanery Celebration service with Bishop Nick in the autumn was another success. This year it was at St George's, Modbury. Synod members, and others who are always welcome for the Deanery Synod talks, heard Katherine Lyddon on Children's work, Barry Dugmore and Jenny Appleby on their Mission Shed initiatives, and Graham Hamilton on the work of General Synod. Rosemary Minshall represented the Deanery at Diocesan Synod and Peter Barker (Deanery Lay Chair) at the Archidiaconal Council.



St Peter's Charitable Giving

We aim to give roughly 10% of our income to 'good causes'. Sunday collections at various special services were given to Christian Aid, Sailors' Society/Mission to Deep Sea Fishermen/Mission to Seafarers, Farming Community Network and the Royal British Legion. St Peter's also made donations to Devon Historic Churches Trust, Salvation Army, Bible Society, Open Doors (supporting persecuted Christians, especially in Syria and Iraq), Scripture Union (supporting Street children in Peru), Youth Genesis (working with young people in Torbay and Dartmouth), CMS (for Grace and Festo in Tanzania), Mediciens sans Frontiers and Stoke Fleming Village Magazine. There was also the big donation from the Christmas Tree Festival to the Devon and Cornwall Food Association. St Peter's continued to collect contributions for the Dartmouth Food Bank, with a special effort during Advent.



Grace and Festo with their young sons. Some of the contributions on their way to Dartmouth Food Bank. Don't keep a watchful eye on everyone and everything!

Bellringing

We have eight regular Sunday bellringers plus two learners. Thanks to their commitment and regular attendance we have seldom missed ringing for a Sunday service and we continue to hold regular practices, often attended by ringers from elsewhere. On the 21st October we had an outing, ringing at several churches in the Christow and Dunsford area of the Teign Valley. As mentioned above, some of the ringers also spent a considerable amount of time and effort carrying out minor jobs in the tower, thereby saving costs to the tower fund.

John Dietz

Friends of St. Peter's

At our AGM in April John Harrow, our first Chairman, resigned having moved from the village. He is a great loss but has been replaced by Rosemary Shiffner, while Suzie Dodsworth was elected to join the remarkably effective Committee.

We have had a good year, meeting both objectives in our Constitution: firstly we were very happy we were able to make an £8,000 grant to the church to provide the majority of funding for much-needed repairs to some of the stained glass windows this work has now been completed. (The subject for our Festival Christmas Tree this year was Windows!) Secondly we held a 'Persian Evening' in the Village Hall in October, triggered by Peter Barker's splendid slides of a recent visit to Iran. 127 guests from across the South Hams were greeted with drinks followed by Peter's excellent illustrated talk 'Persia to Iran', then enjoyed a banquet of Persian Mezzes; the evening ended very happily with enthusiastic dancing to Persian music! The event was a terrific success and raised just over £3,000, thanks to our very long suffering, patient and hard working Committee and the help of Fariba Sutton-Scott-Tucker who introduced us to Plymouth-based Mr. Edmond Davari. His immense generosity provided an entourage of staff to serve the delicious meal at cost and with no staff charges.

We live in an amazing village: with the exception of Mr. Davari, all the support necessary for the success of the evening came from within Stoke Fleming: the speaker, the Iranian contact, the brilliant sound system Isonify, the supplier of wines and our barman, to all of whom we are very grateful. Incidentally, within the hall that evening were two people who had had letters (on different subjects) published in a major National newspaper within the previous ten days! Stoke Fleming 'punches well above its weight.'



Rosemary Shiffner, Chairman

The Dartmouth Church Recording Group presented the impressive fruits of their labour to Revd Alison, watched by members of the congregation.

Mothers' Union

We started the year with our Reports and Accounts, followed by Holy Communion. This was followed in February by our annual lunch at the Stoke Lodge Hotel. On March 15th we held a Lady Day Service at St Peter's Church when our friends from other groups joined us. In April we held our meeting in the Church with a small bring and buy table to boost our funds; this was a Members' afternoon. In May we had a very interesting talk with slides about Ethiopia given by Peter Barker, followed the next month by a flower arranging demonstration by Jenny Harris.

July was a talk by Caroline Luff about Fasts and Feasts. In September we went to Dodbrook for a talk and in October we had a Deanery meeting at the Hall with a talk by Nichola Johnson. November was an interesting talk by Carolyn Williams from *Rowcroft* and December our usual tea and Carols in St Peter's. So ended another eventful and interesting year.

Sue Walford

St. Peter's Visiting Group

Members of the visiting group keep an eye on a number of elderly people within the parish and one of them has now gone into a residential home.

The Senior Citizen's lunch moved to Stoke Lodge Hotel in September when the school were no longer able, due to staff cut backs, to have us at the school. We have a couple of new people who joined us and it is still popular. The Senior Citizens also have a cream tea in the school once a month and different classes look after us. It is a little early in the afternoon but we love the children's participation. They are so friendly and helpful.

We still send out the bereavement cards for two years, the baptismal ones for five and the wedding anniversary ones for year after the weddings we have in church.

It would be good if we could find a way of reaching out to the younger people within the parish that need our help.

Rosemary Minshall

Christmas Tree Festival



The Christmas Tree Festival, on 8th, 9th, 10th December, seemed rather early this year! Each year we try to improve the experience of our visitors and also the administration for ourselves, and we were very pleased that all this year's changes seemed to work well. 2016 was the first time we had a Christmas tree in the glass room up the stairs at the back of the church; this year we introduced the church's large and beautiful crib figures to the balcony itself – which was very well received; many commented that they had not seen the figures before, though since the church received them about ten years or so ago they have been displayed between the front pew and the lectern every Christmas! We also varied the entrance/exit arrangement which seemed to be an improvement. The sun shone through the newly repaired windows each day (showing up every particle of dust!), but it was cold so the heating bill was higher than in past years. Visitor numbers seemed to be down, but with the help of the Mothers' Union running the refreshments stall, and a wonderful gift of Christmas cards of the previous year's Festival painted and donated by Gail Dorrington, after expenses we were still able to make a donation to the church as well as £700 for our 2017 charity, the *Devon & Cornwall Food Association*, which was very pleasing.

Shirley and Rokie

St Peter's

St Peter's Church stands opposite the Green Dragon. I am reminded of how Jesus once said (John 4.14): "*Whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst. But the water that I shall give him will become in him a fountain of water springing up into eternal life.*"

A band of loyal workers enables the Church here in Stoke Fleming to remain a sanctuary of healing, refreshment and re-motivation, which can well up in the hearts of all who set foot inside. We express our gratitude to each. First our Rector, Revd Alison: whether she is down on Blackpool Sands with Don chatting to other dog-walkers or organizing a pancake party, she engages with the villagers. She preaches practical, positive and punchy sermons. Tirelessly she encourages us all, in all four churches, to pull together. We are so grateful for your freshness, Alison, and your faithfulness. Then we have our Readers. Peter is like *Ernest Owl* (in the *Blackberry Farm* books)! His wisdom and outreach (as far as E. Portlemouth on occasions) help to ensure the smooth running and integration of all aspects of the church. Jenny makes the church look wonderful with her flower arrangements and quietly inspires us by her example. She is a helpful and gentle presence in the village, reaching out to all who might need her. Sally offers strong support and, with Heather, visits Residential Homes, taking communion to the residents.

Rosemary, our treasurer, reminds me of *Mrs Beaver* (in *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*). With her ever helpful and kind husband, John, she opens her home to parishioners for Sunday lunch. They also drive them here, there and everywhere. Heather and Sue do so much to set up the church for services and make sure that weddings and funerals proceed smoothly. They all deserve a huge vote of thanks, as does our churchwarden, John, an ever-present character around the church, mending this, fixing that and keeping a close eye on maintenance. He liaises with FoSP, faithful supporters whose fundraising does so much to keep the building intact, serene and glorious. A big 'thank you' to them; to Shirley (M) who regularly supplies tea and coffee after each service; to Adrian for his meticulous care of the north churchyard; to Rokie and Shirley (R) for the vibrancy, colour and warm welcome of the Christmas Tree Festival; and to all our organists for the joy of their music.

Let us praise God for this loyal band of helpers. May they know that "*their labour is not in vain in the Lord.*" (1 Corinthians 15.58)

Hazel Browne