



**St. Mary the Virgin, Richmond
Annual Report, 2020**

RECTOR'S REPORT

With deadlines as they are, I find myself writing my Annual Report in early February – even before Lent has begun! As I look ahead to the end of April and to our Annual Meeting, I am therefore already anticipating our celebrations of Easter, the high point of the Christian year. I see that the gospel reading appointed for the day of our Annual Meeting is Saint Luke's wonderful account of the Journey to Emmaus.

In reflecting on that passage I am reminded of the occasion over twenty years ago when as an ordinand at theological college I met our Archbishop-elect, Stephen Cottrell. He was visiting the college to discuss how the recently-published 'Emmaus Course', which he had co-written, could be used in the mission of the Church

I was struck then by his point that Jesus, when he came alongside the two disciples, walked with them *away* from Jerusalem. They were walking in the 'wrong' direction, and yet Jesus went with them, opening their eyes to the scriptures as they went. Later, at supper in Emmaus, the disciples' eyes were opened again when Jesus broke the bread: finally, they recognised him as their risen Lord. Stephen Cottrell suggested that in our mission we, too, are called to draw alongside people 'where they are', and to help them see the presence of the risen Christ in their lives and in ours. Clearly, the name of the Emmaus Course had been chosen with care.

Stephen Cottrell will begin his ministry as Archbishop of York in June, and shortly after that our new Curate, Paul Sunderland, will begin his ministry with us. We very much look forward to the arrival of Paul and his wife Jeanette on Sunday 5th July. Many of us have met them already and we can all see that their presence with us will be a blessing to us. Let us seek to be the same to them.

Turning around and looking back, I can also clearly see that we have much to be thankful for. The installation of our new Audio-Visual system is a remarkable achievement and will transform both our worship and our service for many years

to come. As well as being a superb concert venue, greatly beloved by the wider community, St Mary's is now recognised as a 'training hub' for use by both the Deanery and the Diocese. And thanks to the generosity of so many we were able to weather the storms of the expensive repairs found necessary to our widely-acclaimed organ and our heating system.

Thanks to the work of our Parish Development Team we have made good progress with setting out a Vision for the future of our church, a Vision which both dovetails in to the Diocesan Vision and which takes into account our particular strengths and weaknesses. Another constant cause for thanksgiving is the strength of the network of pastoral support given by and to so many within and without the church community.

On behalf of us all, then, I would like to take this opportunity to say thank you to everyone who has contributed in any way to the worship, mission and service of our church, the parish church of Richmond with Hudswell. Whether what you do is in church or in the wider community it is very greatly appreciated.

I am wary of naming names here, but I must mention my Ministry Team colleagues, Bishop John, Mark, Jennifer, Scott and Gillian, and George. I would also like to mention our Pastoral Assistant Jennifer, our Parish Administrator Claire, and our Vergers Leonard and Susan – all of whom do invaluable, often unseen, work. The same applies to our Director of Music, Chris and our Tower Captain, Susan. Through their leadership, our Choirs, Musicians and Ringers collectively do so much to uphold and refresh the core traditions of our church.

Special mention, too, goes to our Churchwardens, David and Peter, for their dedication and impressively wide set of skills. After over six years' service, David will be stepping down this year and he does so with our heartfelt thanks. His considerable experience of the 'St Mary's way' will not go unused, however: he will continue to play a central part in the life of our church in a number of ways.

Someone else to whom we are immensely grateful is our new Treasurer, Paul Carnell. He has brought both humour and rigour to his duties, and has more than proved to be a worthy successor to William Gedye. As Paul rightly reminds us, our finances are not sustainable: we cannot realistically cut our costs so we must find ways to increase our income. We are therefore greatly indebted to our Fundraising Team who under Peter Trewby's leadership have helped ensure our deficit remains much smaller than would otherwise be the case.

The major part of our outgoings is our Parish Share. Our Share request of over £95,000 is the 12th highest in Ripon Episcopal Area, and 25th highest in the Diocese. However, as a 'large' church we must recognise our responsibility to support the work of the wider Church. In doing so, we might also recognise that from July the Diocese will be funding not one but two full-time stipendiary ministers in our Benefice.

With the best way to increase our income being growth, we are thankful that in the last year new people have started to worship with us. Most importantly, this means that it is our worship and fellowship, and our mission and service, that is being enriched.

A church community of our size needs everyone to be playing their part, whether by doing or by being, whether in the public eye or behind the scenes. So releasing the God-given gifts of our most important resource – you! – will be a top priority in the year ahead. After all, together we *are* St Mary's church, the parish church of Richmond with Hudswell.

And together, we were very sad to lose some of our dearest friends during this past year, John Dickinson and Anne Simpson amongst them. Their examples of deep faith, selfless love and dedicated service will continue to be an inspiration to us all.

Looking back over the past year, then, we have a great deal for which to give thanks, so much celebrate. 'Thanksgiving' is the meaning of the word 'Eucharist', during which we say, 'We are the body of Christ'. Each time we break bread together, let us remember that our risen Lord is with us, and that it is through us that he draws alongside others.

So looking ahead, I invite us all to 'Go in peace to love and serve the Lord', in Richmond and Hudswell, and throughout the ever more evident Kingdom of God.

Martin Fletcher
Rector

After the Cards

We meet on the first Wednesday of the month. In September we moved to The Fleece which is easily accessible with a friendly and warm environment. It remains an informal meeting with Martin, Jennifer, Gillian and me, with no agenda.

A time to relax with a tea or coffee meeting people, who frequently become friends, who have recently also lost loved ones.

Carrie Stephenson.

Bell Tower Report

In 2019 we have had an enthusiastic and committed band of ringers that have enabled us to ring for services, including more of the Sunday afternoon and special services. Practices have been busy with up to 20 people and it is a rare Sunday when we aren't able to ring all 8 bells for morning service. Richmond is very fortunate in this and in having our lovely set of new bells which are bedding in beautifully. Peter, in particular, has worked tirelessly to finalise the sound control, which is in regular use for visiting bands and when teaching beginners. We have been pleased to welcome to the band Giselle and Isabel, who have progressed quickly to ringing call changes, and we continue to welcome our friends from Barnard Castle, Grinton and Kirklington.

Over the year, we have rung to commemorate local and national events, including tolling following the fire at Notre Dame cathedral and, sadly, in memory of those who have died. Andrew and Liz have celebrated 40 years of ringing in Richmond and Kath has joined the band from Bedford. Congratulations go to Russ on his first ever quarter peal and to Jan, Yvonne and Chris for personal ringing milestones. Alastair has made great progress this year, calling his first quarter peal and rapidly extending his ringing from more complex methods on 6 to those on 8 and 10 bells, including being invited to advanced practices at Ripon Cathedral. Meanwhile, Sue and Glenys have rung to celebrate notable birthdays.

Outside the tower we have enjoyed an outing to county Durham, ably organised by Jan, where we rang at Barnard Castle, Staindrop, Shildon, Bishop Auckland and Gainford with generous stops for food and drink! We have supported a number of local ringing events, including entering a team into the branch striking competition. Peter has been busy up the tower, painting clappers to help us muffle the bells for remembrance and keeping the bells and fittings in good shape. I would like to thank him and everyone else who has helped make this another successful year for the tower.

Susan Welch. Tower Captain

Charitable Giving Report

We would like to thank the congregation for their continued support for the Charity of the Month. This voluntary retiring collection, taken on the first and second Sunday of the month, has continued in its support of alternate home and 'away' charities. The total raised in 2019 was over £2900 and the gift aid reclaimed has increased this total further. The largest single collection was for Practical Action, which raised over £485.

Many charities from both at home and abroad will have benefitted from this generosity, and we would like to profoundly thank all the people who have given their time and energy to make this possible.

In addition, the congregation has supported Christian Aid Week, with St Mary's volunteers collecting donations from the community of over £1600. The Christingle service raised over £300 for the Children's Society.

In 2020 we will continue to collect for 6 british charities but on alternate months we will be collecting for USPG. United Partners in the Gospel, enabling us to participate in Christian mission work through fundraising, prayer and setting up a link with it's projects around the world.

The Charitable Giving Committee.

Churchwardens' Report

Significant events during the year relating to St Mary's, its fabric and structure

Blocked toilet drain pump. Pump system outside North wall dismantled and serviced.

Broken flag halyard and flagpole found to be inadequately secured. Halyard replaced and flagpole taken away and new securing brackets fixed.

Continuing problems with heating caused by corrosion in the presumed Victorian heating pipes blocking the condensers in the modern boilers. The system has been changed to a sealed pressurised system with new pumps and extensive replacement of corroded pipework. In the summer more work will need to be done in the church to replace badly corroded pipes. Intelligent outside temperature sensors will be inserted and this with Wi-Fi control of heating should enable better fine tuning of the heating and hopefully save fuel costs. Other possibilities to be considered: inserting a heat curtain blower over the south door and/or installing secondary glazing over the east window in the south aisle. Work ongoing.

Extra electric sockets have been fitted.

On the police's advice we have installed a video surveillance camera/recorder following repeated petty thefts from the wall safe and the candle safe.

After one of the piano legs broke, an A-frame was installed to make moving the piano safer and easier.

New sound system has been installed with simple controls for each microphone which can be operated by mobile phone or dials at the back of the church. Work ongoing

Ongoing organ repairs with wind leakage caused by decay of the skins covering the bellows. A tap has been inserted in the organ loft to make filling of the humidifying buckets easier.

The Quinquennial Review by Richard Crooks of Richard Crooks Partnership has pointed to major work needed with regard to gutter and roof maintenance and pointing. *Crighton Steeplejacks & Restoration* who in years past carried out regular maintenance at St Mary's have been reappointed. Estimates for the cost of the work are awaited but are likely to be substantial. In the meantime, the lightning conductor has been checked and gutters, downpipes and gullies have been cleared where possible.

Hudswell bell: after discussion with Hudswell Community Groups the bell was offered to Keltek and a place has been found for it as a single chiming bell in the 14th century grade 1 listed St Andrews Church in Calstock, Cornwall. Calstock will pay for removal and refurbishment and will make a donation to the Hudswell Community Group.

The altar frontals and Verger and Clergy vestments are in poor repair and will need replacing in the near future.

Peter Trewby 17/2/20

Richmond Deanery Synod Report 2019

During 2019 Synod met three times.

At the February meeting the new Graffiti Wall was explained as a means of celebrating what has happened in our benefices and a new display table on Setting God's people free.

There was a brief update on "Growing Gods Kingdom" (the new title for Vision 2030).

Arrangements for a joint Confirmation Service and The Kingdom Come Walk from May 30 to June 9 including a Deanery Ascension Day service on Thursday 30 May at Easby, were outlined.

In the June meeting the Lay Chair gave a brief account of the recent Lay Chair Forum. He noted that in most other parts of the Diocese the size of the Ripon Episcopal District as substantially larger than any other in the Diocese, with 6 Deaneries and 226 churches together with the substantial geographical distances involved, was not understood, but his explanation should assist better understanding. Other parts of the discussion included on the Role and function of Deaneries and their Lay Chairs, how Deaneries should be supported and resourced. The difficulty of getting a consistent response from the Diocesan Office were noted. Looking forward the development of lay roles was emphasised. They also considered the recently published Diocesan Strategy.

There was a report on the recent meeting of the Diocesan Synod, which included discussion of Environmental policy; the Diocesan Strategy and the associated Toolkit and the proposal for term limits for lay members of Deanery Synod. This last point was discussed – mainly noting the lack of clarity and doubts on over simplistic term limits.

Arrangements for the Deanery “Thy Kingdom Come” walks between Ascension Day and Pentecost and for the Deanery events on Ascension Day were explained. Rev Andrew Cromarty (vicar of Colburn and Hipswell) gave an account of his Holiday and pilgrimage - 500 miles on foot - along the via Camino to Santiago de Compostela.

The October meeting was an open meeting to meet Bishop Helen-Ann. The Bishop gave a presentation on the Leeds Strategy Framework - full details on the Diocesan website under: Introducing the Strategy Framework. The Diocese of Leeds, Church of England.

The Questions and Answer session which followed included: the difficulty of dealing with “red tape” whilst meeting legal requirements; having different models for lay training provided in the Diocese; organically growing lay ministry needs continued tailored learning and support; the possibility of small churches pooling resources especially administration; with small maturing congregations fewer people are able to contribute actively.

An item on Continuity Planning involved the ongoing position of the lay chair, in the context of the Diocesan Rules limiting Lay Chairs to 2 consecutive terms of 3 years. Following discussion, it was unanimously agreed that Steve Jackson should continue as Lay vice chair beyond the end of his second 3 year term.

The Area Dean’s notice included a note of the untimely death of Rev David Lewis; and that both the Wiske and East Dere Street Benefices will be vacant by the end of the year.

Susan Welch, Claire Murray and Jonathan Roberts

Community and Fundraising Group Annual Report

The group has met monthly and has initiated or been involved in the following activities:

Station singers' concert

Easter Fun Run

Whole benefice Ride and stride

Swaledale Festival concerts

Wine tasting

Fourum concert

Northern Sinfonia concert

Army band concerts

Total raised from these events together with money from coffee mornings, 200 club and mug sales = **£8,889.96**

Events planned for the coming year:

Easter fun run 19th April 2020

Fashion show In Town Hall Friday, May 1 (models and side stalls welcome) 2020

Whole Benefice Ride and Stride 13th June 2020

Refreshments for Hallé Cellos 29th May (Swaledale Festival) 2020

Refreshments for Swale singers 30th May (Swaledale Festival) 2020

Plant and Produce Festival bank holiday Saturday 29th August 2020

A-V system, Thanks to the generosity of members of the congregation and outside agencies (Town, District and County Councils, Sir John Priestman Trust, Garfield Weston foundation, National Lottery Community Fund, All Churches Trust and Rank foundation) the Audio Visual system with retractable screen, projector and PTZ camera + recorder with an updated sound system and a functioning hearing loop is installed. We hope this will open up possibilities for the church to be used more for community events, dementia friendly shows, film shows for young people/school groups, live screening of important events as well as for use in worship. The congregation needs to be consulted on the extent to which they wish the screen to be used in worship. Ideas for community use welcome.

The Friends. We are looking to revamp the Friends of St Mary's and combine our two groups as our aims are identical. Fundraising activities would then be Initiated by the Friends with the money raised used for the benefit of the church at the Friends' discretion.

Card Reader. A fixed card reader has been purchased for use at the back of the church to encourage donations from visitors who may not have cash available. There will be delay before it is available because of production problems in China caused by COVID 19. There is now a PayPal tab on the website.

Future Activities. Planning has started for celebration of Richmond 950 in 2021. Suggestions for activities welcome. Current suggestions: Radio 4 Any Questions,

Exhibition of 950 years of Christian Worship in Richmond, showing of Mike Porter's films of Richmond, 950 yard Easter Bunny Fun run races, 950 bell changes, Silent Movies with music, films from 1921 etc.

Chairs. We have been encouraged to replace our fold-up creaking chairs with non-creaking chairs to attract outside users. Discussions ongoing with the Richmondshire choral Society.

The Belles. All thanks go to the Belles whose generously donated time, talents and resources have been essential in underpinning so many of the above events.

Peter Trewby

Knit2gether Report 2019

The Knit2gether Group has enjoyed another year of meetings at The Restaurant at Greyfriars, on Flints Terrace, Richmond in between 10am and noon on a Friday.

Meetings have a regular attendance of approximately 12 – 16 ladies, plus many occasional visitors. Each bringing their own creative projects, sharing knowledge and skills whilst having fun and fellowship. New member always welcome.

Claire Murray. Convenor

Little Rainbows

Little Rainbows meets in church every Thursday morning during term time, from 9:30 until 11am. It's for pre-school children of any age, together with their mums, dads, grandmas, great grandmas and child minders! We play in the children's area then move round church for singing, story and craft, ending with much enjoyed snack time. We have five dedicated and invaluable helpers, and (including the helpers) have recently had a maximum of thirteen adults and nine children.

This is a lovely activity to offer to the community.

The adults enjoy time to chat and share with one another and are a warm and inclusive group. The children have a great time and feel very at home in the church. Our numbers are growing and everyone goes away happy at the end of the morning!

Wendy Pritchard

Mothers Union Annual Report

Mothers Union gatherings always involve prayer. Mary Sumner's personal prayer is one of our favourites.

“All this day, O Lord, let me touch as many lives as possible for thee; and every life I touch, do thou by thy spirit quicken, whether through the word I speak, the prayer I breathe , or the life I live. Amen.”

Our Year began with the Commissioning, by the Archbishop of Canterbury of a new World Wide President Sharon Harper. She is the first World Wide President, since the Mothers' Union began, from outside the British Isles to preside over the present membership of over four million members.

Our branch is privileged to be able to do the mid-day prayers in Ripon cathedral three or four times a year enabling us to have some time in the cathedral, some shopping and a lovely lunch.

In the branch we have continued to have monthly meetings in each other's homes ,not enough of us to ask a speaker to come but friendly members of the congregation have told us about their work. This year we will concentrate on the festivals and services, our annual band concert and the celebrated Christmas party. As we know there has been a branch of the Mothers Union at St Mary's since before 1920 (when there were 42 members) we are very anxious that we should keep the branch alive.

The Belles continue to provide refreshments for events in church. We have been lucky to have been joined by a team of supporters who may or not be Mothers Union members but who are a great help when needed and who meet in an ad-hoc and social way.

Margaret Clayson. Chairwoman

Music Report

At St Mary's we are blessed to have a wealth of musical talent to help us worship God and I'm very grateful to all those who give of their time and talents freely in our worship.

Starting with the first Sunday of the month our 'Scratch' choir goes from strength to strength, swelling in numbers and giving a wonderful lead. Thanks to Fionagh (and occasionally Colin) for playing the organ and to Scott for coordinating the singers every month.

On third Sundays 'Anacrusis' give a brilliant upbeat lead at All Age services, accompanied brilliantly by Brett. We use a combination of songs from the green hymnbooks and some more modern worship songs. Up to now we have been limited to providing worksheets for the congregation for the latter but now we have a state-

of-the-art projection system we can use this more and more - increasing our musical repertoire for such services.

The robed choir has been busy as well in 2019. We had a joint venture with the Benefice Choir of Stanwick Benefice in Passiontide when we sang music from an RSCM publication called 'The Cross of Christ'. This we sang together both at St Mary's and at Melsonby church and the choirs complemented each other wonderfully to produce a beautiful and memorable act of worship.

On our Patronal Festival on September 8th we 'pushed the boat out' with a special service of Choral Evensong at which we were joined by the choir of Bradford Cathedral conducted by their Director of Music Alex Berry. This was an inspiration for many of us and a privilege to be singing at that kind of level - with a bunch of professional level musicians - and that includes the children in the choir! Thanks also go on that (and many other occasions) to Susan and her team. They provided our visitors (and us!) with a slap up tea which went down very well indeed. I've heard rumours that some enjoyed the food as much as the music!

As I've said before, much of my time is exercised in addressing the problem of chorister recruitment and after mixed, or non-existent, results I decided late in 2019 to take a different approach, namely to start a new group. The aim was to sing at three events: the St Mary's Town Hall Christmas coffee morning, the annual visit to BFBS radio to sing carols and also to sing at the Carol Service in church. I'm glad to report that five members of this Song Squad choir have decided to stay on and join us in main choir now. At the time of writing we have 13 trebles on the books, which is very pleasing. Also pleasing is the adult section of the robed choir, whose experience and expertise is now complemented by all three young Lunns on the tenor line making a fine sound. The tradition of 'Ice cream Sunday' continued in 2019 and shall, I hope, continue long into the future.

We were again very fortunate that our superb 'resident' violinist, namely Keith Robson played on several occasions during services last year. His wonderful playing adds a whole new dimension to worship and I'm very grateful that he has been able to do so.

Our piano was caught being slightly legless just before the Christmas concert season but is now very happy to be sitting on an A frame which should help with stability from now on.

In the winter of 2018/19 due to a problem with the heating we managed to 'cook' (the organbuilders' word, not mine) the organ which led to some problems with notes not working or not stopping working. The consistently high temperature in the building caused some distortion of the smaller parts of the action - parts expanded with the heat but then didn't contract to the correct size afterwards. Some remedial work has been carried out and hopefully the rest will be completed before too long. However, the instrument continues to be an inspiration to those of us who play it and it's not uncommon for yours truly to receive a phone call

from organists visiting the area to ask if they could have a look and play on the mighty beast.

Many thanks to all those who have made music in our church, either through concerts or worship and also those who support them through transport, prayers, help and smiles.

Chris Denton. Director of Music

Pastoral Team Report

The Pastoral Team meets quarterly. Pastoral care takes place in many ways across the church and into our community eg with practical assistance from The Happy Bodgers, bereavement support through After The Cards and individually, prayer support via the Prayer Circle and pew sheet, listening, visiting, home communion. The team have supported the Service of Light which has been appreciated by those who attend. At each meeting we look at how the support we provide is as good as it can be and as helpful as it can be. Training courses are due to start regarding pastoral assistant training and we regularly access the lay learning platform to see if there are other courses which may be accessed to enhance skills eg listening skills and dementia training.

There is a lot of pastoral care which goes on within the congregation and into our community which is often unseen and unknown by others who are not on the pastoral team and is much appreciated.

It is always helpful to be updated if people are poorly or in need of prayer or practical support.

Gillian Lunn

PCC Secretary's Report 2020

The Rector was installed as Area Dean of Richmond.

A new church architect was appointed.

Sian Lawton moved to St Mary's Church, Masham, after her ordination as deacon; William Gedye attended his last meeting as treasurer and handed over to Paul Carnell; Roy and Janet Morel resigned.

Gillian resigned as editor of the parish magazine to be replaced by Jim Jack.

The diocesan vision and strategy toolkit for future mission was adopted.

The number of teams on the PCC was reduced to five with members of the PCC being team leaders:

Worship and prayer – prayer groups, liturgy, music, bells

Outreach – welcome, communication, young people, charitable giving

Learning and pastoral care – study groups, visiting, young people, safeguarding

Finance – diocesan share, administration, fabric, stewardship

Social action and evangelism

The PCC held an Away-Day in May to formulate team structures and working groups.

Members of the PCC are data controller and data compliance officer under GDPR rules.

A SHAPE course is planned for the parish during Lent, to identify skills and talents.

A course on being a welcoming church was held in January 2020.

Sian Lawton instituted a baby and toddler group called Little Rainbows, to take place in church every Thursday during school term time, which is gaining a regular attendance. Pupils of St Francis Xavier School contributed money to buy equipment for the group.

A first Games Night, including a talk by John Dickinson, was a success. A monthly youth event was instituted. Young people also visited Colburn Church for a Worship and Praise service.

A fun-run, benefice walk, barbeque and concert were approved for the Spring Bank Holiday weekend; a wine-tasting evening, a Yorkshire Historic Churches Ride-and-Stride event, Fourum in concert, and a flower and produce show were successful fund raisers later in the year.

The new printer-copier was installed in the rectory, where the church magazine is now produced.

A new audio-visual system was installed with a 3-metre screen, a projector, camera, and upgraded sound system, allowing the whole congregation to see special presentations during services and allow live streaming of events.

A heater was installed in the disabled access toilet/baby-change room.

Replacement soundproofing enabled the bells to be heard more clearly.

The bell from Hudswell Church, having been declined by the Hudswell community for security reasons, was donated through the Kelttek Trust, which rehomes redundant bells, and has been accepted by a church in Cornwall.

The organ from Hudswell is now in place at St Patrick's RC Church in Bradford.

A GoodPlate was successfully introduced at services, to cater for contactless donations. A GoodBox is to be fixed to the wall for contactless donations from visitors outside of service times.

The installation of a CCTV system followed police advice after petty thefts and minor damage.

The Hudswell Community Charity hopes to use Hudswell Church as a bunk barn instead of social housing; the Thompson Hospital Trust is therefore to find new social housing projects where their funds can be distributed.

Sharon McCormack was asked to improve the arrangement and display of notices, rotas, posters, leaflets and cards in order to bring them to the notice of churchgoers and visitors and to neaten the appearance of the building.

Sharon McCormack

Safeguarding Report

At St Mary's, we are endeavouring to put safeguarding at the heart of everything that we do. To this end, a small team of the Rector, Gillian and Scott Lunn and Jan Jack have met four times and had numerous "unofficial chats" to discuss how this can be done. We believe safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and with the help of some advice from the safeguarding officer from another parish, we have looked at different aspects of it.

Firstly, safeguarding now features on the home page of our church website so it is more visible. Secondly, we have looked into putting some kind of poster on the back of the toilet doors giving information of who people can contact if they need any sort of support. It has been suggested to us, that having these posters in private spaces allows people to make a note of the information without anyone else seeing. This poster will also be displayed in the church as it serves as our safeguarding policy statement. The full document booklet will also be displayed in church in accordance with Diocesan guidelines. Thirdly, a database is being put together showing the different roles that members of the church family play, who has had safeguarding training and at what level and who has DBS clearance.

Currently only 7 members of the PCC have not completed a basic safeguarding course in the last three years but two are already booked onto a course in April and three have said they will do the online course. It will become an expectation for new members of the PCC to attend safeguarding courses in the future.

Of about twenty bellringers, eleven have completed a basic course (one having done it online) and five are going to do it online in the near future. The expectation of the Yorkshire Association of Bellringers is that all ringers have a basic awareness of safeguarding gained by doing an online course or attending one. One adult in the choir, the choirmaster, two volunteer drivers, a flower arranger, the parish administrator, three MU members, two helpers at toddlers, three Bodgers and our lay readers and pastoral assistants have all completed a course within the last three years. There is still work to do in this area - encouraging volunteers to understand the importance of their own safety as well as the safety of others.

The team are looking to get anyone who volunteers for a role within the church family to sign a "GDPR compliance notice", as well as a "written agreement for volunteers" which will lay out what the role entails and what the expectations are and a "Church of England Confidential Declaration Form."

Our hope is, that none of this will be too arduous for anyone who wants to play a role in the life of St Mary's. We certainly do not want to put people off volunteering, but we do feel the need to be as aware as possible of any pitfalls. It is all very much work in progress and will probably remain that way for some time!

Finally, I would like to express my thanks to all who have embraced the decisions the safeguarding team have made so far and hopefully we will continue to all work together to keep one another “safe.”

Jan Jack. Safeguarding Officer

Wednesday Study Group Report

The 23rd year of The Wednesday Study Group!

In this last year we started with the traditional approach of picking books and sections, from the bible, for study and discussion. We have, for example, looked at Hebrews, parts of Proverbs and parts of Psalms. We have also followed the normal Lent practice of using the York Course and welcoming extra members. We have had the painful loss of both John Dickenson and Ann Simpson during recent months.

John was deeply committed to the bible and a life lived both in its teaching and in the spreading of the word. His experiences both here and overseas gave invaluable insights that are greatly missed in the group.

Ann had a deep-set commitment to applying the message of the bible and the foundation principles of our faith to real-life applications. She had an irrepressible desire for social justice and the need for the Christian voice to speak out against injustice throughout the world.

In recent times the group has moved onto looking at the three readings for the next Sunday - invaluable if the preacher for that Sunday happens to be there!

We are also looking at breaking with tradition and moving the meeting to a Tuesday from a Wednesday to avoid clashing with many meetings held elsewhere in the church and town.

As always new members are very welcome.

Scott Lunn

Thursday Study Group

The Thursday Bible Study Group meets at 1 Roper Court, Richmond, DL10 4DF, at 7.30 pm on Thursday evenings. Everyone is welcome.

We have almost completed studying the book, “Ten”, by Bishop John Pritchard, which intrigued us, stimulated discussion and entertained us as well. It deals with a wide range of topics including ten problems people have with faith, ten beliefs about science and religion, or ten ways to pray. We will break off studying “Ten” for the weeks of Lent, when we will follow “Saying Yes To Life“, by Ruth Valerio.

We usually read the section selected for each week, discuss our understanding of the text, and contribute our individual insights and experiences. There is no compulsion to speak – just listening and thinking is a way of taking part. We finish the evening with tea or coffee and biscuits and enjoy each other’s company and conversation.

Jennifer Patrick

Monday Morning Toddler Group

The joint St Mary's Church and Richmond Methodist Church toddler group continues to meet term-time on Mondays between 10am and 11.30am in the Methodist Church Hall.

A friendly group of mostly younger children accompanied by the mum, dad, grandparents or carers.

Very informal, we play for an hour and then read a story, say a prayer and sing some actions songs. After many many years Joy Hornsby has stepped down from her much appreciated role of accompanist for the singing. We are hugely grateful for all she has done. Our refreshments team make everyone very welcome cups of tea and coffee.

All are welcome to join this group, and all are welcome to come along and help. Our helper base is seriously diminishing due to ill-health and age, so do please speak to Gillian if you would be interested. The more people who help, the fewer sessions everyone needs to do.

Gillian Lunn

Womans Fellowship Report

The Fellowship has continued to be supported by about 20 members each month. We meet at the Town Hall on the third Wednesday of the month at 2.00 p.m.

We were privileged to welcome both Bishop John and Wendy speaking variously about the Life of a Bishop, and about the love of gardens and flowers

Other speakers included Daphne Clark with her own poetry, the Curator of the Green Howards telling us about the Conscientious Objectors imprisoned in Richmond Castle. Judith Clarke gave us a great description of the work at Marrick Priory, an outdoor centre catering for many young people, we made this our charity of the year. Linda Drury told us a fascinating tale of "WW1 Loot. The Return of The Gospel Book to Greece," We also entertained each other by our Members' Mementoes, We managed an outing to Mainsgill in July for afternoon tea, thanks to friends who provided transport . We appreciated our two periods of worship at Easter and Christmas, when we were so grateful to Christine Stedman who played the piano for us on those occasions, and to Jennifer Patrick who enabled us to share an extended communion.

Different members lead the meetings, to whom we are grateful, as we also are to Joan and Maureen who look after our refreshments, and Jeanette who organises our finances

Joy Hornsby Convenor.

Treasurer's Report 2019

I was honoured to be appointed Treasurer to St. Mary's at the 2019 Annual Parochial Church Meeting but I actually began compiling the church accounts from the start of the year with invaluable help from William – thank you William, for the smoothest Treasurer handover that I've ever experienced! It didn't take me long to realise that at St. Mary's we have very many people who are greatly committed in their support of the church with their time, talents and – my department – money. With over 100 people giving regularly, a congregation that gives so generously into the plate each week, and a highly active (and highly successful) fund-raising team, I wouldn't be breaching any confidences if I told you that any of the other 5 Parishes that I'm the Treasurer of would be green with envy!

However, despite our best efforts, our Unrestricted (General Fund) expenditure still exceeded our Unrestricted income by £11,388, due in the main to our high Parish Share Request. This continues to be a considerable drain on our resources, but in the words of the Rt Revd Nick Baines, Bishop of Leeds, "Your contribution is vital to enabling us as a Diocese to fulfil our continuing ministry and mission". You may also be interested to know that of the 34 Parishes in the Richmond Deanery, ours is the highest Share Request, accounting for 20% of the total requested across the Deanery!

Our Unrestricted Funds may have been in 'deficit', but this was offset by a 'surplus' in our Restricted Funds which created an overall surplus in our accounts of £4,765, a figure arrived at in the main due to Peter and his highly persuasive applications to several funding bodies to contribute to the cost of installing our new hi-tech Audio-Visual system. In July the PCC agreed to 'match-fund' the £24,000 project by allocating £12,000 from Unrestricted Funds. It only took twenty weeks before we were able to return that £12,000 to our reserves when we had already exceeded our target!

As I previously mentioned, we have over 100 people in our Planned Giving Scheme who give regularly by bank standing order and numbered envelope. The amounts given this way accounted for just under half the church's total 2019 receipts, and by adding the Gift-Aid claimed on the eligible donations, that became just OVER half! Thank you.

In July we received a generous donation of a 'GoodPlate', a device that accepts contactless donations via a simple tap of a credit or debit card. This added £339 to our service collections in the first 6 months of its use and it was also brought out at several fund-raising events where it processed another £152 in donations.

The PCC were so pleased with it that a similar device was ordered from the GoodBox company in January. This will be permanently situated at the back of church to receive contactless donations from visitors, etc.

In December the PCC agreed that St. Mary's would join the Parish Giving Scheme and I am awaiting our first donor to give to the church in this way. The aim of the scheme is twofold: to reduce the workload of the person claiming Gift-Aid (in our case, me), and to provide the opportunity for donors to increase their giving annually in line with inflation. I am eternally grateful to everyone who gives regularly, but at one of my other churches for example, there are several people who give exactly the same amount now as they gave seven years ago, when I first became Treasurer!

I'd like to thank those who count and record the Sunday collections – if only my other churches' Vestry Sheets were so easy to read – and the churchwardens who do all the banking. My grateful thanks also to Claire for her administration work and the rest of the Finance Team for their continuing support, and to Alistair McLean for his independent examination of our accounts.

Paul Carnell

March 2020