

Congregational meeting, Monday 21st October 7.30pm

Attendees: Matt Trendall, Pat Sawyer, Sylvia Bennett, Nick & Sandra Mills, Cath Segers, Gill Farrow, Wayne Webb, Pauline Ghiradello, Ayokunnu Otunla.

1. Welcome and opening devotions

2. Apologies: Keith & Chris Straughan, David Sawyer, Paul & Gloria Terrelonge, Jane Charman, Pauline Evans, Carolyn Sanderson.

3. Updates from All Saints & around the Partnership

The following is a brief summary of the updates presented:

- Plastic Exhibition, 5th-6th October – had been a great success. Up to 1,500 local schoolchildren from 3 local primary schools had taken part, and 300 people had attended the event at church across the weekend. The church looked fantastic and the children had obviously engaged incredibly well with the topic. ‘What will we do next year?’ was the comment from the schools!
- Ride’n’Stride, 14th Sept – had raised an incredible £980 this year. There were 7 riders from All Saints, and alongside 20+ visiting the church from other churches, dozens had come across from the Foodfest event in Middleton Pavilion to take a look round the church.
- Cafe Church – had made a very good start in Sept and Oct. Numbers were significantly up from attendance at the all age service, and the event was working well for all who came, and especially for families. Most encouraging were the positive comments from those who hadn’t expected to enjoy it! After a break for Remembrance, it will return in Dec for Christingle Cafe Church, and is likely to continue on 2nd Sundays into 2020.
- Go4th Sunday – continues to offer exciting opportunities, but is in need of more projects for the winter season ahead. A brief discussion generated numerous ideas, including: Christmas Crafts event in November, making more Lunch Boxes for St Mark’s Meals, a talk on recycling from the local Recycling Centre, community singalong, a talk from the local police or PCSO and involvement from World Vision. Community Carol Singing will take place on Sun 22nd Dec 11am.
- Weddings 2019 – All Saints has had an unusually busy year, with 15 weddings. Keith, Pat, Gloria, Sylvia, Trisha and Jacqueline have especially worked hard to look after these, with help from the bellringers and the church maintenance team. Next year is looking much quieter, though.
- Quinquennial work progress – much of the work is now done, with a little left to do this autumn, and some to be done in 2020. The pledge day raised a fantastic amount (£9k, with more pledged monthly over the next 2 years), alongside a generous grant of £4k from Bucks Historic Churches Trust.
- Finance update – the financial position for 2019 is looking healthy, on course to meet our forecast budget deficit of £800, or even slightly beat it, towards break-even, which would be a great outcome with the pledge focus on the building work this year. 2020 is looking more challenging in light of reduced wedding revenue.
- Staff team updates – the new Baptist minister Rev. Ruth Gookey has settled in really well across the Partnership, and is proving a great appointment thus far. The Pioneer Minister still awaits final approval for 2020, but the Area Dean is 99% confident it will go ahead for Sept 2020.

- Eagles Rest and new St Mary's School – the new school opened on schedule in Sept and the building looks fantastic. The school has made a good start and community-building work led by the church has already begun with 2 open community meetings and a weekly coffee morning.
- Brief feedback from last year's initiatives showcased at the Congregational Meeting:
 - *MK Learning Hub* – plans still progressing well, watch this space for developments;
 - *Responding to Domestic Abuse* – following training for all clergy in Oct last year, the project team is developing a charter for churches to adopt, if they wish;
 - *This Time Tomorrow and encouraging testimonies* – there have been 2 'TTT's', and Cafe Church is allowing people to talk about their faith in a safe setting;
 - *Developing Schools work* – the exhibition! Plus more opportunities with Oakgrove and Monkston Schools in last 12 months;
 - *growing our community life* – 2 picnic socials over the summer which will be repeated in 2020, Musica Choir fundraising concert booked for 25th April 2020, Cafe Church....
- Looking ahead:
 - *Mayor's Civic Carol Service* – will take place at All Saints on Sun 15th Dec at 3pm – a real privilege to host this on behalf of MK, it will be a big occasion for us as a church
 - *VE Day 2020* – The May Bank Holiday is moving from Mon 4th May to Fri 8th May, to celebrate 75th anniversary of VE Day. The November Stewards' Council will be discussing ways we can celebrate it as a church – but all ideas warmly invited!
 - *other important dates* – see item 5 below

4. MAIN ITEM: Stewards of Creation

- Introduction – the Marks of Mission – Matt introduced the main item by talking through the '5 Marks of Mission', and how most churches (including us) focus on the first 3 Marks: proclaiming the good news, nurturing believers and offering loving service. However, the last two Marks – justice, and safeguarding creation, tend to get less attention. We are trying to rectify this – firstly through our major sermon/teaching series on Justice this Autumn, and now also by thinking about how we can 'raise our game' in terms of creation care. Matt acknowledged that we already do a number of things in this regard, and also that many of our church members are keen on this as individuals, and these should be celebrated. He posed the question: how can we take this forward as a church community?
- How do we respond? There followed a lively discussion, with lots of ideas, which can be summarised under these headings:
 - **Our existing strengths:**
 - A well kept building which minimises the carbon footprint for repairs/maintenance
 - Weekly use of recycling and green bins
 - Low consumption of consumables and use of crockery (not disposables)
 - Local congregation with low travel mileage to travel to church
 - Litter picking in the local community
 - Collecting stamps for recycling
 - **Our weaknesses**
 - Heating and insulation – unavoidable in a mediaeval building! Though it was observed that sometimes we keep the heaters on longer than we need to.
 - Lack of education – could we provide more info as a church, e.g. Go4th recycling talk?
 - Use of disposable cups for Go4th breakfast
 - Use of plastic wrapped food

- **Opportunities**
 - Mugs for Go4th breakfast – and switch to mugs generally?
 - More car sharing to get to church
 - Go4th talk from recycling centre
 - Investigate a green energy contract
 - Review our use of heating
 - Carpet the pews so seats warmer (and therefore need less air heating)
 - Review use of our bins and containers
 - Use LEDs not candles?
 - Offer crisp packet recycling (2p per bag goes to Willen Hospice)
 - Carbon offset via tree planting (probably via charity rather than locally)
- **Challenges**
 - Misuse of green bin in churchyard
- **General comment** – more information sharing, however we can do that

Matt concluded the conversation by thanking people for all their creative input – this is the start of a journey for us, which we'll pursue over the next few months or more. It will be part of upcoming stewards' councils, and we may form a team specifically to develop our response.

5 . Dates for your diary

Remembrance Service Sun 10th Nov 10.50am

MK Confirmation Service hosted at St Mary's, Wavendon Sun 17th Nov 6pm

Christingle Cafe Church Sun 8th Dec 11.15am;

Mayor's Carol Service Sun 15th Dec 3pm;

Go4th community carol singing Sun 22nd Dec 11am, after Go4th breakfast and worship

Cmas Eve: Crib 3pm & 4pm; Midnight Communion 11.30pm; Cmas Day communion 10am

6. Prayer – the meeting closed with prayer at 9.10pm.