



APCM REPORTS 2019/2020

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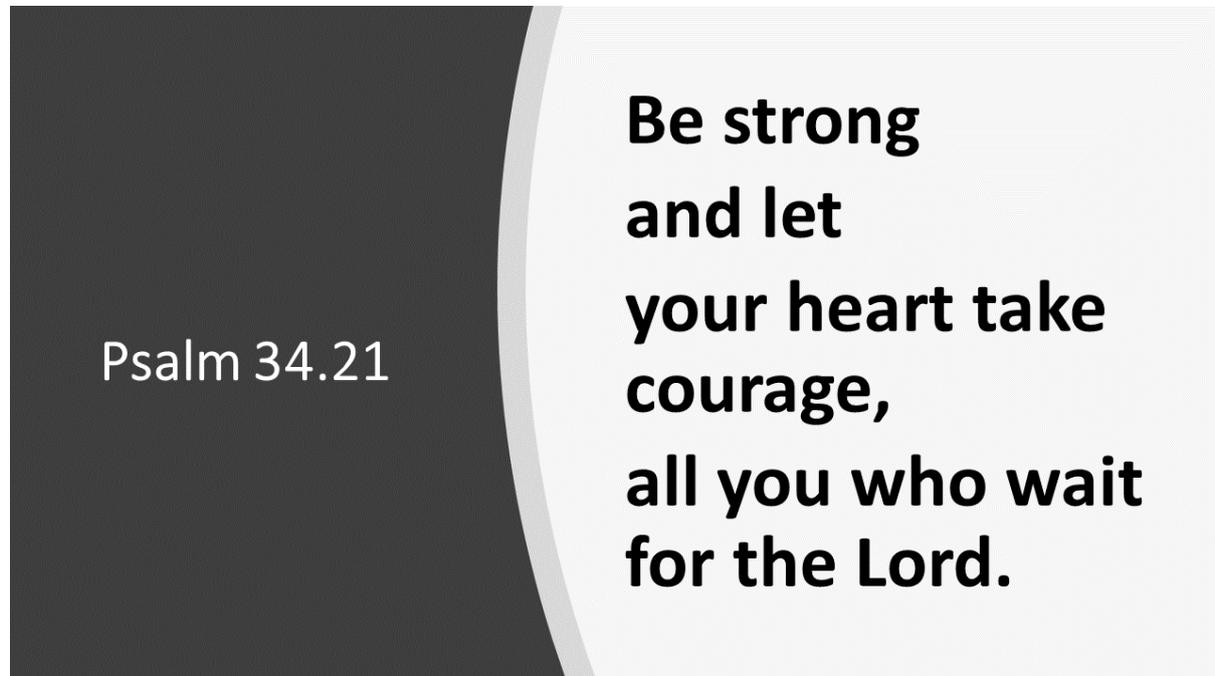
Safeguarding Report

Vicar's Report 2020 APCM

I usually have a visual aid- but of course this year I can't give anything out! But I do have a verse that it would be great if everyone could memorise and hold onto: Psalm 31.24:

Be strong and let your heart take courage, all you who wait for the Lord.

(Slide 1)



We are precisely those who do wait for the Lord, even when other sources of help and security have disappeared. So, take those words to heart and let's encourage one another with them.

I have been leant a wonderful book about how violins are made. The wood needed for a violin is from a tree which only grows in the most remote and unpromising conditions. Particular fir trees grow on mountain tops where rain is scarce and temperatures extreme. The trees grow very slowly, but in a way which makes the wood sing. The journey to find the trees, cut the wood and work with it is arduous. The writer says: 'Not all trouble works against us, and what is easy is not always a blessing.'

So perhaps 2020 will come to be seen as a blessing in its own way when we look back on it in April.

But for this morning, our focus is on 2019. It feels very strange to be looking back to 2019 when what is most immediate to us all is the current times that we are living through. 2019 feels like another era, another world. Let's cast our

minds back to when our greatest worry was a double-booking of the hall or not enough helpers for Messy Church.

The detail of what we got up to in 2019 is in the Annual Report, which I won't repeat. We were busy- proudly so. Multiple groups from babies to seniors used the building on a daily basis. Numerous people gave their time and care and love to enable groups to run, the building to be clean and well-maintained, and outreach to all ages to remain a priority. Thank you so much to every single person who was part of that active busy expression of church.

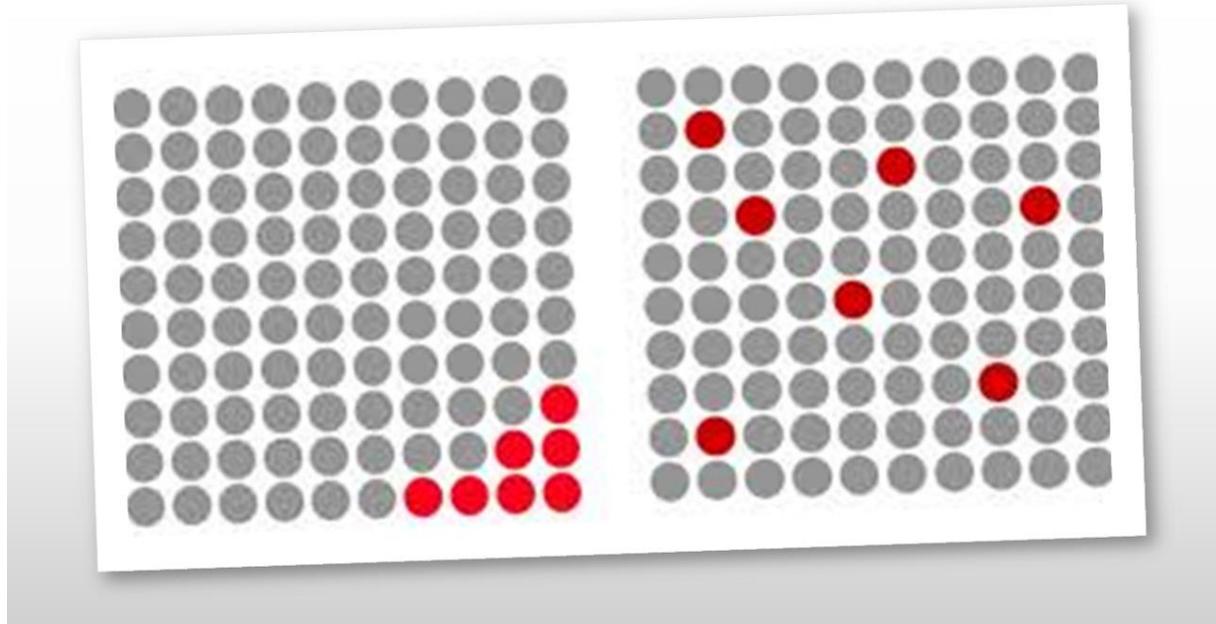
It is tempting to look back to that as a golden age. However, the challenge for us as we face a different future is not necessarily to try and replicate exactly what we did before. Perhaps some activities and groups will never re-start, and their season is now over. As 2020 draws to a close, our task is to discern how God wants us to be going forward, not looking back.

Last year I gave out nasturtium seedlings as we thought about Paul sowing, Apollos watering and God giving the growth. That vision has not disappeared simply because Covid has changed the way we are able to do ministry and mission. God continues to give the growth, and here is the evidence from Christine and Keith's garden! *(Slide 2)*



We thank God for every person's life that was touched by coming to an event in our building during 2019. For now the building is seldom open, and instead we have been sent out so that the love of God can be expressed through us in

our streets, our homes, our workplaces. Jesus is still inviting women and men, girls and boys, to follow him. How will people hear that invitation while we are unable to use our building in the ways we have been used to? This is the image I have of where we are now: scattered, but with huge potential for connecting with those around us who are not members of the church. *(Slide 3)*



We don't know what God will call us to do next. We know that many people in our parish will be struggling to make ends meet as the economic effects of the pandemic begin to bite. Together we will continue to pray, respond and reach out with Holy Spirit guiding and strengthening us.

Be strong and let your heart take courage, all you who wait for the Lord.

HB

Churchwardens' report to the APCM

2018 was certainly the year of maintenance with appliances and materials beginning to wear out at about the same time. However, these gave many years of good service. After all, the church building and facilities are extensively used. It can be difficult though to find a gap in which maintenance can be done. Then there was 2019, again an interesting year.

One of the major jobs which we had done in January 2019 was the replacement of the church lights. Thirteen LED fittings were fitted at a total cost of just over £6000. The required amount had been raised through a superb response by the church congregation. The beauty of LED lamps is that they are modern and have a life expectancy of 60000 hours. To put this in perspective, at 24/7 operation this equates to just under 6.85 years. So for the few hours which we use them each week they should last a great deal longer. Also each fitting uses 39 watts compared to the 260 watts consumed by each of the old fittings. The firm which fitted the lights did a good job and touched up the paintwork around the new fittings for us.

It has been another year for plumbing jobs. Our new plumbers turn up promptly when requested and have solved a few problems. They were out earlier in the year to fix a leak on one of the gents' toilets. Later in the year there was a leak on one of the ladies' toilets. Another urinal started leaking so that was replaced and the third was also replaced at the same time to save a further call-out. A recurring problem though was with the disabled toilet which kept getting blocked. This happened all too often and there were past stories of blockages costing us hundreds of pounds. We managed to unblock the toilet without calling out the plumbers and stuck up a notice requesting users to use the bins supplied for the appropriate usage. That seems to have solved the problem over the past few months.

Only one churchwarden was elected at the last APCM meeting. As a result, a rota was drawn up and several people helped with duties on Sundays. We are grateful for this help. Later, Mark volunteered to be a deputy churchwarden and is normally available except when performing sound system duties. In this case our volunteers are eager to be of assistance.

The security alarm has also been checked as a periodic requirement. However, shortly afterwards the alarm system developed a fault. The engineer came out to have a look at it and decided that the main box would have to be replaced.

That was done but after a day or two people complained that the door chime was not loud enough. This was important for anyone who might be alone at some time in the building such as the person who runs the Slimming World Club. So the engineer came back and reset the sound level. Although it is loud as you come through the main door you can hear it OK when you are alone anywhere in the church with the middle door closed.

Later in the year the gas contractors were working on the gas pipes in the roads around the parish. When they came to test our supply they uncovered a gas leak on our food warmer. To make it safe they removed the gas supply to the food warmer by cutting the pipe off and capping it. The food warmer, being important for Lunch Club and other catering events, we had to obtain a replacement. An electric replacement was acquired and duly plugged into a socket behind the old food warmer. The appliance met with approval by those using it.

Getting the baptistry system leak repaired was more of a problem. The installers have not called in. Perhaps they were never in the area. The plumbers never seemed to be forthcoming. Nobody seemed to want to do the job. However, our curate kindly came up with a repair himself replacing valves and pipework. Hopefully the water will be a little warmer than it was last time for our two young people who were baptised when the system was not working properly.

The clock above the hall doors started playing up a little while before Christmas 2019. It then stopped working completely. A replacement mechanism did not solve the problem as it was faulty and the clock seemed fated not to keep the correct time. Eventually the problem was solved thanks to a donated clock which now hangs above the hall doors and keeps good time.

Hall lettings are still popular at St. Justus. This is good for raising funds. A small team of key holders continues to ensure that the church doors are unlocked and locked as required. The churchwardens are grateful for this and thank the team.

Once again the Christmas Tree festival was a huge success. Visitor response was even better than last year with around 1000 people through the doors (plus over 100 at the Christmas Tree filled carol service) recorded this year. Numbers were boosted by the attendance of pupils from two infant schools.

The sandwiches were still popular again and people seemed to enjoy the time which they spent there. You shall be able to read more about this in the APCM Annual Report.

The sound system seems to be working quite well these days. The sound console was changed for another one and there is a dedicated team helping with the sound system at the various services. There has been a little flickering on some TV screens but this has been cured by changing HDMI leads. Will is very enthusiastic and really enjoys working on the sound system.

I wonder what 2020 will bring? There always seems to be something that needs servicing at some time or other. We shall do our best to keep everything in satisfactory working order. We seem to be solving the problems OK. We appreciate those helping with weeding, gardening, grass cutting etc and would like to express our thanks.

WNF/MS

Deanery Synod Report

This year we have had three meetings, in June 2019 at Pip & Jims, in October 2019 at St Margarets Rochester and in March 2020 at St Williams, just before the Co-vid virus prevented us from meeting, and curtailed our activity.

At the June 2019 we had a packed agenda which started with a Bible Study, had the Canterbury Pilgrimage feedback from Joshua Westog and a brief report from the Diocesan Synod. We then had two slightly longer sessions on a Chatham Town Centre update from Stephen Renshaw, and Joel Love looked at the mission opportunities at the Housing Development in Rochester Riverside and its effect on his parish. We then broke into cluster groups and talked and prayed about growth and the Called to Grow initiative.

In October we started with a Bible reading and prayer, Helen then announced that the Modern Day Slavery Event in Chatham was set up and two licensing events in August, the first Andrea becoming the Priest in Charge at Christ Church Luton and Paul Filmer vicar at Christ the King. The next item was a summary of activities planned for Bishop James' visit to the churches in the Deanery. We then broke into groups and were given an item of everyday tools and given 10 mins to work out how to share God's Word with it. We then shared this in the main meeting as an introduction to the Taste and See Event planned for October 2020. (unfortunately, this was not possible due to Co-vid restrictions). David Kitchenside spoke about four stages in Process Evangelism and its use when we broke into cluster groups to discuss how to use it when planning events for Taste and See in our areas.

In March we had a meeting just before lock down started. We had a Bible Study in small groups followed by updates from the October Diocesan Synod; the 2020 update of the representation Rules which tried to limit the members on the Deanery Synod to two terms but this failed as churches said this would leave too many places empty; the Medway Area Dean's consultation to form "super Deaneries" also was defeated as being impractical. We then had updates on Called to Grow and Thy Kingdom Come initiatives. We then had presentations from Stephen Ramshaw and Adam Pyrke connected to the Taste and See initiative and its timeline. (Stephen's video clip from "Talking Jesus" introduced us to the course which is now taking place on Zoom.)

An interesting year but unfortunately Co-vid has curtailed us from meeting further this year and has prevented some of the planned activities at the moment but has not stopped God from working.

Wendy Swattridge & Andrew Coomber

Deanery Synod Representatives

Safeguarding Report 2019-20

Safeguarding involves ensuring that the church and all its activities are a safe space especially for children and vulnerable adults. It means that the care and protection of children, young people and adults involved in church activities is the responsibility of everyone who participates in the life of the church. Karen Byrne is our Parish Safeguarding Officer and together with the vicar work on any concerns or issues that may arise within the church. As a church we have adopted the House of Bishops 'Promoting a Safer Church' safeguarding policy, a copy of which is available attached to the safeguarding board in the foyer or on the diocesan website.

Any concerns or issues regarding safeguarding need to be reported in the first instance to Karen Byrne or the vicar. You must not discuss any concerns you have with any other people as these concerns or issues need to be dealt with sensitively and confidentially.

Training

During 2019-20 we have continued to ensure that all members of the congregation have completed safeguarding training where appropriate. If you are new to our church or help out in any activities/groups or would like to help out with holiday club please see Karen Byrne or the vicar to ensure you have the relevant level of safeguarding training.

In September 2019 the current online safeguarding modules were revised.

These are now known as

C0 - Basic awareness

C1 - Foundation

C2 - Leadership

There are no longer plans to introduce a refresher module, instead training is refreshed every 3 years by completing the highest previous level.

Past Cases Review

In October 2019 the Bishop's office requested a review of all past safeguarding issues. This has been completed and all Church records relating to these meet requirements therefore the Bishop's office has been advised accordingly.

Job description and references

This is a constant and ongoing job throughout the year. Everyone within the church whether paid or a volunteer will be given a job description and will be required to provide references, as well as have a DBS check and relevant training.

DBS checks

If you think you need a DBS check because you do not have one or a current check please see Karen Byrne who can advise you.

We at St Justus are continually striving to make our church a safe space for all by taking our safeguarding responsibilities very seriously. This is an ongoing process throughout the year and we are constantly updating our working practices to reflect this.

KB