

## ST LAWRENCE, ABBOTS LANGLEY



## CHURCH OF THE ASCENSION, BEDMOND



# ANNUAL REPORT

**2010 - 2011**

## THE CHURCH OF THE ASCENSION

### 1. THE YEAR AT BEDMOND - Tony Gott

Our Church Fete in September was blessed with great weather and a fantastic turn out, and raised a record £750. We held our first Candlemas service in February, which proved so well attended that it was standing room only, and also held our annual Harvest Supper and Harvest Festival.

Our regular Coffee Mornings on the first Wednesday of each month have been very popular and brought lots of new people in, so popular that people don't want to leave!

We are very fond of our "little tin church", and we have held regular Congregational Meetings in Church. The building has benefited from a new roof on the main body of the church, and the vestry and toilet roofs are to be replaced soon. The new metal should be much more durable, and not require attention for many years.

Our historic building is a great attraction, featuring on local radio and was part of the "Tin Tabernacle Tour" by folk music duo Trevor Moss and Hannah Lou.

## WORSHIP

### 2. WORSHIP - The Revd Dr Jo Spreadbury

'To glorify God and enjoy him for ever' - this is the purpose and destiny of humanity ('the chief end of man' according to the seventeenth century Westminster confession) and this is what our worship at St Lawrence and the Church of the Ascension is all about.

We have glorified God in our worship and praise at the main services each Sunday - 8.00 am Holy Communion, 9.30 Parish Communion or Second Sunday Service, 11.00 Holy Communion or Family Service; and 6.30 Evening Prayer. We have glorified God in our worship and prayer during the week - 9.30 Morning Prayer and 5.15 Evening Prayer, together with Holy Communion on Wednesday and Friday and Prayer Extra on Monday, Tuesday and Thursday, and Compline on Saturday. Many people take part on Sundays, in glorifying God through serving, singing, playing, reading, leading intercessions, assisting with the chalice, and welcoming the congregations. People also take part in glorifying God each day during the week in church (sometimes many - at

a Mothers' Union Corporate Communion, for example; sometimes only a few, but the faithfulness of those who come daily to Morning Prayer is exemplary). I am sure also that many more of you glorify God daily in your own prayer and Bible reading at home, perhaps at the times when you know others are praying in church.

Since saying farewell and thank you to Brian Hibberd early in the year, we have been delighted to welcome Angela Milton to the parish, who brings many years priestly experience and is now playing an active part on the ministry rota, alongside Sally and Margaret.

We had the opportunity to glorify God in having children and young people in church more for the Parish Communion, as we took part in trialling two new Eucharistic Prayers during the first half of the year. These had fresh and direct language, and responses which the children took part in leading (refrains like 'Holy, Holy, Holy', or questions like *Question: Why do we follow Jesus Christ? Answer: Because he is God's saving love*) and proved very effective.

The Second Sunday Services provided a varied diet of worship through the year - reflecting on the Baptism of Christ; All you need is Love; Mothering Sunday (led by the Youth group); What do we do in Church?; The Water of Life; Music Sunday; The Good Samaritan; Rich & Poor in Church; our Seekers' Sunday School; Jesus, My Facebook Friend; Remembering for the Future; and a Christingle service. Many people helped with these services and many people enjoyed them.

In the coming year, I hope that through our worship we will continue to encourage people to glorify God and enjoy him for ever.

### **3. SIDESMEN AND SIDESWOMEN - Carol Higgs**

66 people from St Lawrence and Bedmond volunteered to be sides people last year. The lay ministry that they carry out is very special. They help with the smooth running of all the services and with the greeting that we all receive as we arrive at the church. It is one of those things that we can so easily take for granted. If these roles were not carried out to such a high standard we would soon all notice but as it is, the work that these people do, goes on quietly in the background every week.

Bill and I would like to thank all those who give of their time and talents in this way. It may be that they are on duty once a month; four or five times a year; at weddings, baptisms, funerals or just on Christmas Eve.

We are grateful to you all. The leading sides people - Wendy Beaumont, Christine Peters, Ian Donald, Alan Alexander and Linda North take on prime responsibility for leading their teams. Ian Donald has been the leading sides man on the Second Sunday for the first time this year. No Second Sunday Service is ever the same as the last which makes this really exciting for those of us who attend the service but for the leading sides man it means they have to be really on the ball and sometimes 'flying by the seat of their pants'. Very well done to all the team leaders including Ian who has been able to master the art of dealing with a forever changing situation and is able to think on his feet. I would also like to thank Maureen Denton for what she has done in the past. Maureen is stepping down as a baptism visitor and therefore no longer acting as a sides person for these occasions. Alan Alexander has expressed a wish to step down as a team leader but has agreed to stay on as a sides person. My thanks to Alan for what he has done over a number of years in this role, for helping with the training of new leading sides people and for all the help that he has given me personally during my time as Churchwarden. We look forward to the APCM when we will be re-electing the majority of our sides people and adding one or two new members.

### **4. SERVERS - Brian Higgs**

We have started 2011 on a positive note, with an overall increase in our numbers! Though Kate Turner left the team to take up her University place in 2010 we have since gained five new servers. Ann Staines joined us to serve at 8.00 a.m. and we have four new young acolytes for the 9.30 a.m. services, Michael Betteridge, Molly Firman, Poppy Sheppard and Victoria Tointon, who have now completed their initial training. It is uplifting to see these young people joining the team and I hope they will be as well rewarded by the experience as we are to have them with us. We now have seventeen team members following a low point of twelve in 2010.

The more mature members continue to serve even though we rely more and more on vitamins, potions and medical mechanics! Thanks to everyone, new and old for their support. We could still use more volunteers, for though our numbers have increased many servers have other commitments and it can be difficult, especially during festivals, to build a balanced team without relying too much on a small group of individuals. Finally thanks to Kate for her past commitment and to our five new team members for joining us. May we all keep serving the clergy, the church and hence God to the best of our abilities.

## **5. THE CHOIR - Steven Smith**

In August of last year we bade a fond farewell to our organist and director of music, Alan Vening, who moved to Brighton for a well deserved retirement. Alan's commitment and contribution to the music at St Lawrence was colossal: a prolific composer of small works, the choir regularly sang his own compositions and settings. Alan will be much missed but it is a testament to his professionalism over the years that he worked with the choir that they and the music continued steadily (and has indeed grown) during the inevitable uncertain period that followed his departure.

For myself, I have been working with the choir since late September 2010 and was officially appointed Acting Choir Director in January 2011. In that time there have been a number of successes: particularly the music that was sung during Remembrance tide and the services over Christmas. Despite the snow that fell the day before, the Nine Lessons and Carols saw the choir tackling and performing well a number of difficult pieces. 2011 will see the choir very much looking ahead and growing - both in numbers and repertoire. Already a new communion setting is being introduced and I hope to look at the possibility of singing more Choral Evensongs as well as planning a fundraising concert featuring the church choir.

I would like to thank all those who willingly give their time to the musical life of St Lawrence: particularly Andrew Howarth, Richard Vandy and Brenda Southorn who have provided invaluable advice and support, but also to the choir who add so much to the worship at St Lawrence.

## **6. BELLRINGERS - David Harris**

The bells were rung for services throughout 2010 by the members of the tower. Currently, there continues to be just 7 regular members who are assisted by 1 learner and 1 occasional attendee. We will once more struggle this year to provide a band for weddings and also Sunday mornings during the summer holiday season.

Toby Gamble was admitted as a Full Member of the Herts County Association, at the Watford and District Annual District Meeting.

The ringers were in attendance at 11 weddings this year, plus a blessing of a marriage. As usual, the tower was open to the public during the church fete, and received over 80 people wishing to see the bells. Visiting groups from Philadelphia USA, Wingrave Essex, and The Chiltern

Mid-Week Ringers rang here during the year.

The tower produced a display for the Flower Festival taking place during the Abbots Langley Festival of the Arts. Joyce Seabrook and Bernard Moore were congratulated on their floral and scenic contributions.

We were able to answer a query from Canada regarding a ringer who rang here in 1918.

As a group, we are constantly striving to improve our ringing. Our regular practice night is on Monday, when our homework on the various 'blue lines' is put to the test. We also achieved some success in the District striking competition, coming third.

As a nation we are being urged to exercise our minds and bodies more for the improvement of our quality of life. Bell ringing combines the physical and mental requirements and can be recommended. Reader, why not come and give it a try?

## **7. FLOWER ARRANGERS - Patricia Hill**

The Flower Arrangers lack of numbers, more than make up for it by commitment, sheer determination and good humour to ensure there are always lovely flower displays in the church.

Sadly the numbers of arrangers decreases yearly whilst the average age of those left is well over 65 years. Much effort is required from the fine team leaders to ensure a high standard is maintained. The continued high cost of reliable flowers is a problem too.

New recruits are needed, male or female, any age! My thanks to all the arrangers for their reliability and joy in their lovely displays.

## **8. TRAVELLING CRIB - Carol Higgs**

The travelling crib was once again very successful with families from Bedmond and from Abbots Langley each hosting the crib for one night before passing it onto the next family. Several new families had the crib for the first time and they really enjoyed the experience.

As we now have four cribs we were in a position to give one to Margaret and one to Sally who took them into school assemblies and to share with the residents at Hewlitt, The Firs and Tanners. One of the four we gave to Bedmond School for the first time so that they could use it over a much longer period. Somehow the lists of hosts all seemed to come together very easily although we did have a bit of a hiccup with the Holy family getting snowed in one night! If you remember it was

very icy and they just could not make it out of Kindersley Way; fortunately this was towards the end of the period and one of the other cribs became available so no one was disappointed.

Thank you to everyone who acted as hosts this year and made this such a special part of our Advent preparations.

## YOUNG PEOPLE

### 9. SEEKERS - Jane McHugh

Seekers (Sunday School) meet at 9.30 a.m. every Sunday morning (except the second Sunday) in the Church Hall. Children from 4 years old are welcome. We have a regular format that includes teaching, prayers, activities and games. New and visiting children are always welcome.

Activities in the past year have included an Easter workshop and a Christmas party. This year we had traditional games and an entertainer at the party which was very successful.

Once again may I say a very big thank you to our leaders who put a great deal of planning and thought into the sessions that they lead. We never know how many children will come to Seekers or what ages they will be so leaders have to be adaptable and creative. Thank you also to our dedicated team of helpers, they are there to lend a helping hand, assisting with the activities and clearing up! We are very pleased to welcome Nikki Williams as a Seekers helper.

In the coming year the Seekers will be preparing posies for Mothering Sunday and holding an Easter workshop on the Saturday afternoon before Palm Sunday. We look forward to welcoming children to Seekers and sharing our faith and God's love with them all.

### 10. YOUTH CHOIR - Claire Stephenson

2010 saw a few changes for the Youth Choir - starting with a change of name to reflect the age profile of most of the members. Then in July we said farewell to Alison Carr who had been leading the choir for a number of years. A huge thank you is due to Alison for her enthusiasm and commitment to the choir. She has been a hard act to follow! At the same time a number of the older members decided to leave and we thank them too for their contribution over the years.

So we started back in September with a smaller and younger choir but we have welcomed a number of new members including two boys! We continue to contribute to the monthly Second Sunday service and sang

at the Nine Lessons and Carols. We hope to get some more members so if you are a young person who enjoys singing please come along to the church on a Friday evening at 6.15pm and have a go!

### 11. YOUTH GROUP - Anne Donald

The past year has seen many changes with the youth groups. There was a great need for a new group for 10 - 13 year olds and unfortunately few volunteers to run it. Twyglets and TNT had merged the previous year and with numbers dwindling Rob Sheppard and I decided to take on the younger group with the help of our curate, Margaret, and a few of the older Twyglets.

The first meeting saw approximately 30 children and the numbers are rarely below 24 with new members joining every week.

The group meets on Tuesday evenings in St Lawrence Church Hall, with the children paying £1 each week, and enjoys a variety of activities from Bell Ringing (with thanks to Dave Harris), filling shoe boxes with gifts for children in need, baking and sometimes going bowling or playing golf. Our local PCSOs have brought along a police car and we are planning a visit to a fire station. It is a very lively group which certainly keeps us busy!

Many thanks go to the girls who help out each week - Rebecca Pickford, Rachel Carr and particularly Claire Edgerton and Lucy Reeve whose enthusiasm is invaluable and we undoubtedly couldn't manage without them.

### 12. MESSY CHURCH - Zoe Gott

Messy Church is almost three years old, and still going strong.

Last year we introduced a newsletter for our families which appears to have been helpful in keeping our families up-to-date with our dates, themes and activities in the community that are of interest.

We always aim to look after the pastoral needs of our families, as well as bringing the Bible to them in manageable ways. This January we introduced our Faith at Home programme that gives our families an activity to do each month that reflects the different areas of Messy Church, they are: Chilling and Chewing, Creating and Celebrating. This year we intend to meet at Easter and during the Summer Holidays, in order to keep continuous care of our families.

We have tackled various issues over the past year such as: Loving our

World, Easter, Baptism, Last Supper and Communion, Jesus Light of the World, Jesus found at the Temple, Zaccheus, and Lent.

We have on average around 43 visitors each month, which is almost as much as we can sit down for each meal.

Please keep an eye out for requests in the pew sheets for items for our activities, we try to Reduce, Re-use and Re-cycle as much as we can. This has the effect of keeping our running costs low.

I'd like to thank Abbots Langley Methodist Church as over the past year they have contributed approx £843 towards new storage, art and craft accessories, toys, mats and much, much more. We are still in need of some financial assistance so we can give the children many more and varied activities each month. Please continue to pray for our group.

### **13. CHILDREN AND YOUTH WORK COMMITTEE**

**- The Revd Margaret Davis**

The various groups are going well. The committee receives reports from each group at each meeting so that we can rejoice in good work and share difficulties. There is now a rota for writing a short article about each group in Outlook.

A group of us went to Greenbelt on August Bank Holiday Monday to see what all the fuss was about and think about taking a group of young people another time. It was a good day out with lots going on to see and take part in.

At Hallowe'en we repeated our party for children on a non spooky theme and called it Pizzas, Princesses and Pirates. Once more we had a good attendance but this time there were mostly church children rather than the village children we had the year before.

In December, two of us joined with Ian Bond and took part in the Sleep Out at St Albans Abbey, on one of the coldest nights of the year, in aid of the homeless, raising over £750 for New Hope Trust, where Ian works. Again, we hope to take a group of young people another year. Also in December, we held a very well received Christingle service which was as much fun to prepare as it was to take part in.

We have sadly said good bye to Roger Silvester as he is standing down from the PCC at the APCM. We are very grateful for his contribution to the committee over the last 2½ years.

## **SUPPORT, CARE AND OUTREACH**

### **14. WATFORD DEANERY SYNOD - Linda North**

There are four Synod meetings held each year and in 2010 we also had an Away Day together. In April, we met at St Paul's Langleybury when Mr David Nye, Chairman of the Diocesan Board of Finance, talked to us about the 3 Ms - Money, Maintenance and Mission.

Our Away Day in May was spent at St Stephen's, St Albans and was attended by clergy, readers and two reps from each parish. We looked at the makeup of the deanery, sharing good news, focussing on building up relationships and starting a process of working more together. Also included in the Day were the two Bushey parishes who have now joined the Watford Deanery making 14 parishes in all.

For our meeting in June we met at St Luke's for a follow up of the Away Day - What Next? In November, we met at St Peter's in Bushey Mill Lane for an Open Meeting of the Synod when we heard about the issue of Women Bishops from three different perspectives. There is a CD available if you would like to hear what was said. In January this year we met here at St Lawrence and looked at the Deanery Review and Plan (as drawn up following the Away Day), which was then presented to the Diocesan Pastoral Committee in February. (That presentation included pupils from St Paul's School, Langleybury talking about what being part of a church school meant to them - it was the first time that young people had been included in a presentation to the DPC and was very much appreciated).

The Deanery now has its own prayer and also a cycle of prayer to include all the churches and chaplaincies in the deanery. The Rural Dean is the Revd Dave Middlebrook, Priest-in-Charge at St Luke's, Watford.

### **15. CHURCHES TOGETHER IN ABBOTS LANGLEY**

**- Liz Dormer-Ainge**

The 2010 AGM was a more social evening with being combined with a quiz night and meal using Fairtrade ingredients where possible. It proved to be a big success.

The usual services were arranged including Epiphany, Palm Sunday, Good Friday, Easter Sunrise, and to celebrate the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity and One World Week. These were celebrated at various local churches and at Bedmond; the level of attendance varied greatly.

The 2010 Lent Lectures were held weekly at each local church in turn and were well attended, despite the awful weather.

CTAL was not represented in the local carnival procession. Instead there was a Fairtrade stall and an area to sit down and have a drink, Fairtrade of course!

The 2010 charity was 'Operation Smile'. It helps correct cleft lip and palates in children and adults, across the world. CTAL organised a choir concert to bring the congregations together in a social setting and to raise funds for this charity. Overall a healthy £572.02 was raised throughout 2010.

The 2011 AGM followed the same format as 2010 and proved to be even more popular - over 70 people attended. Wendy Beaumont stood down as Lay Co-Chair after completing her 3-year term. Lynne Watkins (Baptist) was installed as Wendy's replacement. The charity for 2011 was voted on; we will be supporting the 'Herts Air Ambulance'. The social fundraiser this year will be a Safari Supper on 9<sup>th</sup> July; further details to follow.

As I am writing, this year's (2011) Lent Sessions on "Living God's Love" are about to start and are hopefully going to be thought-provoking.

#### **16. OUTREACH - Bill Sanderson**

This year has been one of great progress - and achievement! We have covered a lot of ground in considering our support for charities. The End of Year donations cover more than 30 charities, all of which are worthy, but few of which have any direct connection to the general parish membership. We determined to focus on fewer charities with bigger donations - and donating to specific projects which we can 'own' as a parish, keep in contact with newsletters and keep in our prayers. We suggested four USPG projects - selected and presented by members of the committee - and the congregations voted for the one they felt was most worthy. The project selected was for Health Care in Upper Shire, Malawi and we shall be welcoming a speaker from there at the APCM on 5th April. In 2011 we shall be looking at the Church Urban Fund to see how we can link ourselves to a project in the UK.

We have taken up Bishop Alan's letter on 'Shrinking the Footprint' and challenged the congregation with a list of twenty things - some easy, some difficult - that we can do as individuals to reduce our carbon footprints. In the same vein, we have also started to think about the Transition Town Initiative.

PCC was asked to adopt the Diocesan Race Equality Policy and Outreach considered our position and understanding of the policy. Jo and Bill attended a workshop run by Margaret Sentamu, but we still have some work to complete. It is also relevant, of course, in considering our welcome to outsiders and visitors to the church.

I am very grateful for the hard work and thoughtful contributions by all the committee members and we look forward to an equally productive year ahead.

#### **17. REFUGEES - Richard Kendall**

WTRRP provides practical and emotional support for asylum-seekers, particularly those deemed to have 'failed', and refugees in the area. All those assisted are destitute and often desperate with some having small children. Most of those helped are not allowed to work or to claim State benefits.

In February 2010, we had 10 referrals. This number rose to 17 in November and is now 18. Most cases involve dealing with more than one person, often a mother and a child/children. The number of clients may not seem large but many cases are labour-intensive and require fairly long-term commitment on our part. Our aim is, whenever possible, to help enable clients to become independent and to regain their self-respect.

The severe cuts in Government funding for local authorities and in other areas means that the outlook for those we seek to help can only get worse; our expectation is that the number of referrals will continue to rise. The Children, Schools and Families Department of Hertfordshire County Council, which provides meagre financial support for the children of some of those we assist, has indicated they will be making every effort to minimise costs.

We have a store of tinned food, rice, nappies, toiletries etc which is used to assist clients in need throughout the year. Once again, we are grateful to St Lawrence and other churches as well as schools and individuals in the area for generous in-kind donations, particularly at Harvest Festival.

The Project, run entirely by volunteers, has recently produced its first newsletter (in colour) and plans to do so again, probably three times annually. Formal interviewing of volunteers was introduced during the year as were volunteer training evenings. A website is planned, although not yet designed!

We are always on the lookout for extra volunteers, especially those with the experience and aptitude to act as befrienders. Currently, we also seek a website designer and a fundraiser. Cash donations are always welcome as are items to replenish our store (see above). Any offers to me, please, on 01923 267082.

#### **18. COMMUNICATIONS TEAM - Carol Higgs**

The Communications Team meets every 3 months. Members this year have been Jo, Phill Higgs (webmaster), Pam Rastall (Outlook), Alan Alexander (notice boards), Katherine Littler (PCC member and excellent taker of the minutes with special responsibility for the notice board in the porch) and myself (publicity).

The new web site was launched this year and we have had many great comments about our site including some from Church House. Phill and especially Pam worked hard to deliver this and can be proud of what has been achieved.

Thank you to all the members of the committee and to the folk at Bedmond who put the posters up on the notice board there. We continue to make regular changes to the notice board in the churchyard with pictures of wildlife and the notice board at the end of the drive with forthcoming events. These have both attracted positive comments from those who pass by them everyday backwards and forwards along the footpaths. The painted notice board at Bedmond needs replacing and we will be doing this shortly.

Circulation of Outlook has increased over the year and the number of articles in *My Abbots* and in the *Villager* has also increased. All in all a very successful year for communications.

#### **19. OUTLOOK - Pam Rastall**

I continue to be amazed at how easily Outlook comes together each month because articles arrive just at the right time - although some months we have to juggle a bit and maybe leave some, where possible, until a later month. We try and have a mixture of articles alongside the regulars. If you want to submit an article, either one you have written yourself or have seen elsewhere which you think will interest people then please make contact. And please respond to articles - some are crying out for a response but that rarely happens!

I am grateful to the Communications Team for keeping an eye on things, to the clergy for their regular contributions, to the advertisers for their

support (and to Don Hull for keeping an eye on that aspect of the magazine), to the local shops who sell copies for us, to the deliverers who walk the streets, and to Pat Colwell and Bob English who do the car run each month delivering to the deliverers. Also grateful thanks to our printers who, despite the occasional late entry from me, always manage to get it printed and ready on time.

#### **20. OCCASIONAL OFFICES (Baptisms, Weddings and Funerals etc.)**

For the calendar year January to December 2010, there were 52 (47 in 2009) baptisms and 2 (2) thanksgivings for the gift of a child; 3 (8) people were confirmed and 5 (0) young people admitted to communion; 15 (19) marriage services and 1 (1) blessing of a marriage; 17 (16) funerals were held in church and a further 45 (25) conducted at the crematorium or cemetery. There were 14 burial of ashes either in the Garden of Remembrance or in graves in the churchyard.

#### **21. BAPTISM VISITORS - Lorraine Perry**

What a busy year with 52 baptisms and 2 thanksgiving services either held at St Lawrence or Bedmond during 2010. I thank our valued team of baptism visitors - Brian & Doreen Higgs, Lesley Silvester, Linda Bullock and Liz Burns. Sadly, Maureen Denton has decided to leave this busy team, and I thank her for the time she has given visiting families and being there when those children are then baptised and again welcomed into the church during a Second Sunday Service.

If you would like to find out more about becoming part of this valued team please speak to Jo, Margaret or to the office.

#### **22. BEREAVEMENT VISITORS - Wendy Beaumont**

We are very pleased that this year our small group has been joined by two new ladies from St Saviours but very sad at the death of Anne Jenkins who has been a visitor for many years.

We continue to meet every other month, to share experiences and any concerns we may have. We share the referrals amongst us and then make contact as soon as possible to see if people would like a visit to talk about their feelings of loss and grief. We have produced a leaflet which sets out information and advice for those who are grieving. We continue our links with the Peace Hospice and can either receive referrals from them or point people in their direction for additional, more formal, counselling. They provide training sessions which we can access.

In November we hold a service of Thanksgiving and Remembrance to which all who have lost loved ones during the past year are invited. This year over sixty names of people who had died were read out, while relatives and friends came forward with a lighted candle. We are grateful to all at St Lawrence who helped to provide the tea in the hall after the service.

During the summer we held a lunch in the Abbots House Barn for local, recently bereaved people, which was well received. We hope to repeat this again this year.

While there are now 7 visitors we still need more and would welcome inquiries from anyone interested, particularly men. Please contact Wendy Beaumont, Ann Brown or Sandra Ludlow.

### **23. HOUSEGROUPS**

#### ***Monday housegroup - Margaret Davis***

The membership of the group has reduced a little as health has stopped one person from coming, and retirement and new opportunities has meant that another has moved on. However, the group has taken to its new study programme with energy and interest. This year we have been studying the New Testament, rather in the style of the way we studied the Old Testament last year.

The approach has been the same but the effect rather different. As the New Testament is much smaller, we will be able to study much more of it. We started with the Gospels which posed a different challenge from usual as they were so familiar. However, reading them right through and then discussing them gave a different angle on the text. Now into Acts and the Epistles of Paul and there have been many opportunities to explore aspects of the Christian faith that may be puzzling, neglected or particularly interesting or inspiring.

The group continues to enjoy fellowship and is open to new members.

#### ***Tuesday housegroup - Jane McHugh***

Our study of Women of The New Testament was very interesting and informative. It is amazing how we came to know more about the women that we studied and became more aware of how they lived their lives and the way they contributed to Church history. It really seems to be beneficial to get to know more about these people as it helps to put events and happenings into perspective.

This year we have elected to study 'Fruits of The Spirit' which seems to

be appropriate as it coincides with our thoughts on Living God's Love. We are looking forward to working our way through the course and sharing our thoughts, ideas and feelings with each other.

We have had a small change in our members, two people have left and two have joined. Thank you to Robin and Eileen Venn who kindly host our meetings, normally on the second Tuesday of the month. If anyone would like to know more about 'Women of The New Testament' or 'Fruits of The Spirit' please come and talk to me.

#### ***Wednesday housegroup - Norman Meldrum***

The fourth Wednesday Housegroup meets most months, usually but not always on the fourth Wednesday. We consist of Brian and Pat Hibberd, Nigel Higgs, Alan Alexander, Catherine Evans, Wendy and Norman Meldrum and Peter Jowsey when available.

During the year we looked at Timothy Radcliffe's book "Why Go to Church?" which was the Archbishop of Canterbury's 2009 Lent book. Timothy Radcliffe is a Roman Catholic and the theme of the book focussed on the Eucharist. We struggled with the material it contained and in answer to the title of the book were not compelled by what we read and discussed.

Brian gently persuaded us to lead the Advent Quiet Hour in Church during the week leading up to Christmas. The format was a series of meditations prompted by readings and music that focussed on the visit of the Magi. We all contributed to the choice of readings and music and Brian pulled it all together to ensure a cohesive and thought provoking programme. The Quiet Hour featured in the CTAL sheet of Christmas services which is widely distributed. Despite snow on the ground we were greatly encouraged by the numbers who attended and the feedback received was positive and appreciative, reinforcing our own experiences of the occasion.

Many of our discussions this year have been prompted by articles from the *Church Times* that Pat and Brian have passed to us. So for example we have considered alternative forms of Ministry practised by a controversial small group in Australia involving laity leading communion. We have also looked at the role, values and influences of the British Army prompted by an in-depth interview with Sir Richard Dannatt. We are greatly encouraged by the insights that he gave us.

The housegroup is open to anyone who wants to examine and sometimes constructively challenge some of the issues and practices associated

with Christianity in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. The venue switches between members' homes so anybody wishing to join us will need to enquire as to when and where we next meet.

#### ***Thursday housegroup - Pam Rastall***

This housegroup meets throughout the year on the last Thursday of each month. Our main study in 2010 was 'The Beatitudes' following a course devised by Churches Together in Britain & Ireland. This was obviously based on part of the Sermon on the Mount from the Gospel according to St Matthew (chapter 5 verses 3 to 11). We also had a couple of social evenings which gives us a chance to get to know each other better and to support each other and this was particularly relevant this year as we lost a dear friend in Anne Jenkins when she died of cancer. Anne, together with her husband Steve, both members of the Methodist Church, had been a member of our group for many years. We are a small group of seven and meet at the home of Sandra Ludlow at the bottom of Kindersley Way (thank you Sandra). If anyone would like to join us then please make contact. We have yet to decide what our next study will be - our next meeting will be decision time!

#### **24. HEALTH & SAFETY COMMITTEE - Carol Higgs**

The four members of the Health & Safety Committee have met twice during the year and considered all areas of health and safety in St Lawrence, Bedmond, the churchyard and the hall. In particular we issued new guidelines for using mowers and strimmers, reviewed the risks of using the ladders in the tower and did a risk assessment for the visitors to the tower during the summer fete. We review the accident book each time we meet, and review any incidents, making recommendations as to how these could be avoided in the future. We arranged for several gravestones to be laid down as they were a potential hazard, and we satisfied ourselves that the hire instructions for the hall conformed to the fire regulations. We are in the process of organising a first aid course.

The committee has four dedicated people in Robin Venn, Wendy Beaumont, Bill Sanderson and myself. We cannot be everywhere at every moment so health and safety is very much the responsibility of us all. Life is full of risk but we do need to ensure that we assess the risk, minimise it and look out for ourselves and for each other.

#### **25. 'MINIBUS' REPORT**

Of course we no longer use the minibus because there are only two

residents that we bring along on a Sunday morning - Peggy and Harry from Hewlitt - so those on the rota drive their own cars. It is such a good thing to do because Peggy and Harry both really look forward to coming and worshipping with us. Thank you to the drivers and their helpers - and, of course, we could always do with more help so please offer.

The residents from Tanners are brought in their own minibus by one of the staff most weeks because more help is needed by Peter, Eunice or Janet, one of whom is brought each time in a wheelchair. And, of course, Philip comes with them.

#### **26. SUNDAY COFFEE TIME - Wendy Beaumont**

This is an important part of parish life for many people. A time to get together and catch up on the week's news and perhaps more importantly a time to get to know new people.

After a number of years, Janet and John Swallow have given up organising the rota and keeping the cupboard stocked. We thank them for all their work and commitment as we thank also all those who have had to give up being on the rota, for both health and family reasons. Fortunately we have been blessed with new volunteers and with a little swapping around have now got a complete, if not minimal, rota. So thank you to all concerned. I am aware that some of you are unable to commit on a regular basis, but are around on a number of Sundays, so I ask that perhaps you can remember to note, as you get your drink, whether or not the kitchen looks busy and offer to collect cups or do a bit of drying up. That way the task is not so arduous and we can all play our part. But, if anyone would like to join the rota please let me know!

#### **27. TUESDAY COFFEE - Wendy Beaumont**

This continues to be a popular way to spend time on a Tuesday morning even though we sometimes need to keep our coats on! We have our regular customers as well as new people who are visiting the church or the village. We serve a range of hot drinks, juices and snacks (all Fairtrade) and since we started in May 2007 have raised over £1,200 for the church as well as donating some money to charity.

There are 12 friendly volunteers involved, with two on each morning. On an average our turn comes up 8 mornings a year with some of us able to do more than others. I would like to thank everyone involved but in particular Jill Matthews and Liz Burns who have had to give up because of work commitments, and to welcome Anne Ballinger and Sally and Bill

Sanderson to the team. I would also like to thank Pam and Marcus who get the coffee area ready so we can start straight after Morning Prayer. If you would like to join us then do pop along and if you would like to serve 'behind the bar' then let me know, we are always pleased to welcome new people to the team.

#### **28. FAIRTRADE/TRAIDCRAFT - Claire Edgerton & Wendy Beaumont**

This is the first time that 'Traidcraft' has appeared in the annual report because up until now it has not been a formal church activity. For a number of years it was run by myself (Wendy) at our church and other events, to promote Fairtrade and give people the opportunity to support this Christian based organisation. Profits were passed onto customers in the form of lower than catalogue prices and anything extra was donated back to Traidcraft for development work or used to purchase extras e.g. publicity materials for events and the storage cupboard in the church hall. After a number of years I have decided that I need to hand over to others and in the process put it on a formal footing as a church activity, giving the profits to the church to help with the deficit. It was with great relief and delight that I found others willing to take this on. Claire Edgerton is now responsible for all that is involved in ordering and keeping the stock in order; Norman Meldrum for looking after the accounts; and Claire Higgs organising the Sunday morning rota. I shall still be involved in one or two activities i.e. Bedmond coffee mornings and the Carnival. Over the years I have learnt a huge amount about this organisation and its pioneering work in developing products and promoting Fairtrade and I have been grateful for all your support. In these times when money is tight I hope you will still feel this is a worthwhile cause and, as I am constantly reminded, the products are of the highest quality. I will now hand over to Claire who will say a few words about her hopes for the future.

The future of Traidcraft is one I am very excited about. I look forward to the challenge of bringing a greatly worthwhile organisation into the forefront of everyone's minds through the sale of Traidcraft products at Sunday morning coffee, as well as passing on the message to other people. I will continue to order for the local council, the hall and community centre facilities and the coffee mornings both at Bedmond and St Lawrence. I am hoping to bring fresh and innovative ideas to help boost sales, and thus raising more money for the Church. Along with Claire Higgs and Norman Meldrum, as well as everyone else involved in sales, I wish to keep on growing Traidcraft in the same effective way that Wendy has been doing for years.

#### **29. SUNDAY LUNCH CLUB - Marcus Coultrup**

The Sunday Lunch Club, for elderly and disabled people in Abbots Langley was started in February 2003 in the church hall and since then has been a meeting place for a chat, some company and a hot meal. The numbers attending has dwindled down to just 3 people on a regular basis. Pat Russell left us when she went into a home prior to her death earlier this year. Eric who only joined us last year has moved into Margaret House where he is very happy. The remaining three enjoy coming and do not miss it if it can be helped. It is a great shame that there are not a few more takers. Those who do come seem to enjoy the meal and are also very grateful for the company of not only the other members but also all the helpers. They are all very pleased with the kindness and consideration they receive. A very special thank you to all the volunteers on the rota for their immense dedication and care for those who attend. It is their kindness and consideration that has contributed greatly and made this a very worthwhile task.

The now regular annual Christmas lunch 'party', when special invitations went out to former members and friends, went off exceptionally well with Linda, Pam and Susan cooking the traditional turkey with all the trimmings. The 25 present enjoyed some Christmas music, crackers, wine, mince pies etc.: a banquet indeed!

All volunteers still only do two duties during a six-month period, unless they specifically ask to help out on a further week. David Adams (with the help of Eileen, I'm sure) does a super job in getting the rotas done and distributed to all the volunteers. If there is any one who has a couple of hours to spare on an occasional Sunday lunchtime and would like to help out, David would be delighted to hear from you.

#### **30. FIRS, HEWLITT AND TANNERS - Sally Sanderson**

The monthly services at The Firs, Hewlitts and Tanners are looked forward to by the residents, and most of the staff, in these homes. Valerie Wagnall is now singing with me at The Firs and Hewlitts and we welcome any others who would like to join us. Our services last about half an hour, and we sing a lot of hymns, repeating many favourites, and have a quiet time of prayer in the middle.

At Hewlitts we miss Tony who died in February. He had a lovely smile and a great faith, worshipping weekly with his brother at Aldenham. Peggy and Harry come regularly to church from The Firs, and Philip from Tanners, with Eunice and Janet, having to alternate as the transport can only accommodate one wheelchair at a time. Peter comes when he is

well enough; he is the only original resident transferred to Tanners from Leavesden Hospital when it closed.

### **31. VISITORS AND EVENTS IN CHURCH - The Revd Dr Jo Spreadbury**

Where do we start when we talk about visitors and events in both churches? So much happened during 2010! There were Flower Festivals at both churches - at Bedmond on Mothering Sunday; and at St Lawrence as part of the Abbots Langley Festival of the Arts (ALFA). And whilst talking of ALFA, St Lawrence church hosted many events during that fortnight, and also the Craft Fair in the hall.

There were Churches Together services, the Mothers' Union Deanery Lady Day Service and the Methodist Covenant Service - all held in St Lawrence. Charlotte Ballinger preached at St Lawrence prior to her ordination in July; the Very Revd Jeffrey John, Dean of St Albans, came to celebrate the Festival of St Lawrence with us - and stayed for the barbecue (in the hall - it was wet!); the Revd John Russell presided and preached in August; and Mr David Nye preached for our stewardship campaign in the autumn. The Archdeacon, the Venerable Jonathan Smith, led a Communion Service at Bedmond one Sunday in July. A variety of local hospital/hospice chaplains (including Lynn Bassett, Verity Harvey and Liz Hughes) led our thoughts during Holy Week.

The Revd David Gamble, President of the Methodist Conference, spoke in St Lawrence as part of the CTAL Lent Lectures. Martin and Gill Heath spoke about USPG at last year's Annual Meeting; and we had a member of the local Gideons International, Jack Watson together with his wife, to speak at an Evening Focus in October for Bible Sunday.

The local schools, Abbots Langley, Tannerswood, Divine Saviour and Bedmond, continue to visit as part of their national curriculum studies; Pumpkin PreSchool held their own Harvest Festival in St Lawrence; and the Scouts held their annual Christingle in December. Breakspear School Carol Service was not held in St Lawrence for the first time - the logistics of having to bring and care for so many children in wheel chairs with our narrow aisles has proved too hard to sustain.

As for music: Alan Vening gave a series of piano recitals during Tuesday Coffee early in the year as well as performing as part of ALFA; there was a charity concert by Catherine Evans to raise money for the Rafiki Thabo Foundation; the Old Parmitarians Choir held a concert; and we were entertained by the Danish Youth Chamber Choir; there were also concerts by Mosaic, the Abbots Langley Orchestra and the Abbots Langley Singers. And not forgetting Trevor Moss & Hannah Lou, a folk

duo, singing at Bedmond as part of their 'Tin Tabernacle Tour' earlier this year.

## **BUILDINGS & MAINTENANCE**

### **32. PROPERTY COMMITTEE - Richard Kendall**

The main task undertaken at St Lawrence in the past 12 months was the renewal of the south aisle roof, a Category 1 item mentioned in the most recent Quinquennial report. Sadly, as part of this work, it was necessary to dispose of the bees which had been living under the old roof for many years.

Expert advice was sought about the need for repairs to two stained glassed windows in the Corpus Christi Chapel. We anticipate obtaining the necessary faculty for this work, as well as the replacement of a plain glass window at ground level in the tower (south side), shortly. Our grateful thanks go to the Friends of St Lawrence for funding both this project and the work on the south aisle roof; without their generous support, the church would find it very difficult to undertake important tasks of this sort.

A faculty for an extension of the Garden of Remembrance in the churchyard, on the north side of the present site, is also expected soon.

We have been advised that a new boiler at St Lawrence is urgently required because the present one is near the end of its useful life; we hope a replacement will be installed prior to next winter. Also being considered is a project to erect a small extension on the north side of the church, probably to include a toilet, kitchen and meeting room. This idea is at a very early stage and no decisions have yet been made.

The principal work at the Church of the Ascension (Bedmond) has been the replacement of the main (nave) roof with new sheeting with an expected life of at least 25 years. This will obviate the need for regular repainting which, in recent times, has been required every four or five years. The rear roofs - vestry, chancel and toilet - will be renewed in the spring of 2011. Repairs to the window sills at the east and west ends of the church have also been undertaken during 2010 as has the replacement of the external vestry door.

Only minor work has been needed this year at 40, Kindersley Way.

My thanks go to all who have served on the Property Committee during the year as well as those who have performed important practical tasks

on our properties, including the members of the Churchyard Working Party.

### **33. CHURCH HALL - Mike Jefford**

Very few things changed with the hall operation during this year. We maintained the rates to our regular users in order to help with the current financial situation. The pre-school have extended their operating hours; the ballet school are temporarily not using two evenings a week. This situation may be restored to the full usage after the ballet school changes hands sometime around Easter. In the meantime, the keep fit group have been taking up some of the time on one evening. All of these bookings work well around our normal church activity usage. We hosted the breast-screening unit in the car park for three months.

We have had to make some minor repairs, some due to normal wear and tear and a couple from the effects of vandalism but all in all no major problems.

The floor was very well polished during the summer holidays by Liz and Keith Dormer-Ainge to whom we are very grateful, but unfortunately the same floor was damaged within the first couple of weeks of completion by the misuse by a one-off hirer.

The hall remains structurally sound but we may need to consider some redecoration in the future.

The committee has met five times during the year. Unfortunately we lost the services of Hugh Gamble who felt he needed a change having served this committee for some years, for which we are all very grateful. We have enjoyed a fairly lucrative year despite having to make a donation to the cost of re-flooring the C.A.B. as agreed some months previously and we end the year financially secure and able to continue with the same committee for which I am very grateful.

### **34. CLEANING - Eve Durtnall**

Here we are again one year on. I'm sorry to repeat myself, but please, please can we have more help. Just one hour every two months, not hard work, just light sweeping, 'hoovering' or dusting, whatever you can manage. Please contact me - Eve on 01923 265094.

I would like to welcome Kathy Tyrell who has recently joined our team and also to thank those who retired in the last year. Thanks also to the "The Teams" who do a grand job keeping the Church looking bright and

welcoming. Also a big thank you to the office for printing the lists.

Happy dusting for 2011!

### **35. CHURCHYARD WORKING PARTY - Nigel Higgs**

The Churchyard Working Party has had another great year and is grateful to those who have helped. This year David Williams has joined us and Robin Venn has been helping out during the week. We have managed to run out of jobs during one of the summer months when the grass finally stopped growing due to drought. The heavy snow fall at the beginning of the year and in December did not cause any hindrance having thawed before our first meeting and not having arrived by our last meeting of the year.

The spring is the best season of the year in the Churchyard with many people from the village commenting on the daffodils, snowdrops and this year the crocuses that were there in abundance. The wildlife notice board continues to interest those who pass by.

In the autumn we acquired a light weight brushcutter as an insurance against the existing one breaking down. We have also had a health and safety audit resulting in guidelines being produced.

Thanks to the rest of the regular team Maggie Baughan, Keith Fakes, Richard Fisher, Geoffrey Flanders, Carol Higgs, Brian Higgs, Mike Jefford, Bernard Moore, Jean Pugsley, Pam Rastall, Sue Tomson and the person who makes the tea and coffee - Richard Simons. Thanks to you all.

## **SOCIAL**

### **36. SOCIAL COMMITTEE - Roy Bratt**

The 2010/11 year began with the Easter Monday supper to feed 40 weary walkers back from the Abbey. Held in the hall, shepherd's pie and fruit crumble were served. Our first visit to the West End came on 21st April and what a pleasant surprise; we had heard that 'War Horse' was different, but it turned out to be an excellent production at the New London Theatre. 52 seats were taken.

The Annual Church Fete was held on Saturday 26th June; a lovely day with sunshine saw the Rachele School of Ballet, with Miss Williams in charge, perform beautifully. The £2,300 profit was split between the Abbots Langley Community Centre and 'Ascend' in South Oxhey.

In the summertime there were two 'Farewells' held in the hall. On 20th June we said good bye to Charlotte Ballinger - off to Barnet and on the 15th August, a lunch was held as a thank you to Alan Vening.

The ALFA weekend (9th-11th July) saw lovely weather. The Social Committee were responsible for offering refreshments to visitors who came to the Flower Festival and Craft Fair. Over £300 profit went to Church Funds. The ALFA Cheese and Wine Party was held on Sunday 11th July following the Songs of Praise service at St Saviour's.

In the autumn, a 32-seater took us to 'Hairspray' at Milton Keynes on Tuesday 28th September and at the end of October 32 of us went to the London Palladium to see 'Sister Act' - both shows were very enjoyable.

The annual Harvest Supper and Barn Dance took place in the hall on 25th September; everyone enjoyed the Barn Dance which is always good fun.

The Nine Lessons and Carols Service was held on Sunday 19th December and was followed by mulled wine and mince pies in the hall.

Following the Confirmation service in Church conducted by the Bishop of Hertford on Sunday 16th January, refreshments were served in the hall. The Bishop of St Albans led the service on 20th February to celebrate forty years since the Church Fire - a lunch was held in the hall afterwards.

A party of 32 went to the Royal Albert Hall on Friday 4th March to see 'Madam Butterfly' in the round.

We are hoping to introduce some new events in the next year and have put out a questionnaire listing the new ideas; please give us your thoughts and return the questionnaire to Pam.

Many thanks to everyone who has helped and supported us in the past year. My thanks also to a hard working committee which is made up of Pam Rastall, Linda North, Claire Stephenson, Claire Higgs and Greta Mowat with help from Rebecca Gamble. I will be standing down after 11 years and Linda North will take over as Social Committee Chairman; I will however remain on the committee.

### **37. MOTHERS' UNION - Jill Matthews**

The Mothers' Union continues to thrive in St Lawrence. We have twenty-six enrolled members including two men, and five official 'friends', although other friends join us for some meetings. We have met twice monthly, once in the morning and once in the evening; the

morning meeting is preceded by Corporate Communion. The evening meeting often takes place in Bedmond Church.

During 2010, we held a pancake party on Shrove Tuesday; made palm crosses for Palm Sunday; visited Ginders, the undertakers; manned the household stall at the church fete; we learnt about osteoporosis and The Salvation Army (on separate occasions!); we had discussions and sometimes we just chatted! We raised £370 at the November Coffee Morning that we hold jointly with the Friends of St Lawrence. The money raised was shared between various Mothers' Union projects, both at home and overseas.

This year we have a varied programme of events, speakers and outings - most of which are to do with the aims and objectives of the MU - that is to support and encourage marriage and family life. Please pick up a copy of the programme from St Lawrence and come and join us - you will be made most welcome! If you want to find out more about the MU, please look at the notice board in the church hall or visit the website [www.themothersunion.org](http://www.themothersunion.org).

### **38. FRIENDS OF ST LAWRENCE - Andy Taylor**

2010 proved to be a better than expected year for the Friends in that, not only were the repairs to the South Aisle roof completed on time and under budget, you raised sufficient funds for us to be able to recently send a further £5,500 to the church to fulfil our commitment to cover all the repair costs. £1,000 of this total was provided by a successful grant application to Cllr Paul Goggins, and we are extremely grateful to him and his office for looking favourably on our work.

Further to that, we have also been able to send £1,000 as a first stage payment to cover our next project - the repairs to the two large stained glass windows behind the choir stalls and the replacement of a window in the choir vestry. These repairs are expected to cost in the region of £14,000, which is a staggering amount, but if you consider the large windows actually have to be removed, transported to the repairer's works at Hunton Bridge, returned and refitted, the figures really do add up.

You have again continued to support the planned activities in your droves and your committee are grateful for your continuing (and apparently, unending) support.

Apart from the regular events that seem to be so popular, we are moving into new territory with our "Collectibles and Antiques" event in

May, kindly suggested by Pat Hibberd who is also doing an enormous amount of work to make this a success. So, please pledge any items you no longer require - someone else may very well wish to own them!

2011 will see the end of an era for us in that the Tomsons are holding their final Open Gardens, from which we have benefited financially for many years. We sincerely thank them for all they have done for us.

I'd like to publicly thank the "Friends" committee for their continuing efforts. The members enjoy doing their "bit" to raise funds to keep our beautiful church as the centrepiece of our village, but we are always open to new ideas and new "talent" to join us and help us plan our fundraising. If you are interested in helping, just contact any of us, we'll happily give you more information.

The members of the committee are the Revd Dr Jo Spreadbury, Susan Coultrup, Jan Taylor, Pat Colwell, Mark Palmer, John Tapster and myself. The official Trustees of the Friends registered charity are Jo, Pat and John.

Here are the remainder of this year's planned activities to put in your diaries:

Friday/Saturday May 13 <sup>th</sup> /14 <sup>th</sup>	-	Collectibles & Antiques Event
Saturday June 18 <sup>th</sup>	-	Safari Supper
Saturday July 23 <sup>rd</sup>	-	Bar-B-Q
Wednesday September 7 <sup>th</sup>	-	Chinese Night
Saturday 8 <sup>th</sup> October	-	Quiz Supper
Saturday November 26 <sup>th</sup>	-	Coffee Morning

Please put them in your diary now!

As I write this we are also trying to organise a concert towards the end of the year; more news on this as matters progress.

Thank you once again and please don't hesitate to contact me or any other member of the committee for further information on any of our activities.

## ADMINISTRATION

### 39. CHURCHWARDENS' REPORT - Carol Higgs

The terrier and inventory of both St Lawrence and the Church of the Ascension, Bedmond are up to date. All Faculty documents are kept in the sacristy and copies are lodged with the Diocesan Office in St Albans. One new faculty has been granted this year for the complete re-roofing of the south isle. This work started on the 7<sup>th</sup> June 2010 and was

completed in time and on budget. Two further faculties are in the process of being requested, one for the renovation of two stained glass windows and the other for an extension to the Garden of Remembrance.

The Churchwardens are ex-officio members of all PCC sub-committees and are normally present at the Finance, Property, Health & Safety, Outreach and Communications meetings. Our sub-committees work conscientiously in support of our outreach, mission, and the maintenance of our buildings and the management of our finances. Being part of the St Albans Diocese we are naturally going to be paying regular visits to the Abbey. Good numbers of the congregation attended to see Charlotte Ballinger ordained deacon at the Abbey. She then took up her position as curate at Barnet. Slightly earlier in the year in April many of us were also at the Abbey to support three members of our congregation, Natalie Starr, Dawn Wade and Keith Fakes, as they were confirmed. We continued to visit for the Easter Monday pilgrimage, the Albantide celebrations, the sleep out, the Corpus Christi service and on many other occasions. We were also very fortunate to have the Dean of St Albans the Very Revd Jeffrey John come to us to preach on the Festival of St Lawrence.

We had to say goodbye to Alan Vening our organist in August as he moved away from the Parish to his new home in Brighton. As part of his leaving gift we sponsored an organ pipe in his name at St Albans Abbey.

During the summer the Revd Angela Milton joined our congregation and in November she was invited by Jo to take part in services. Angela used to be Vicar at a United Benefice in East Molesey before retiring in April. We look forward to Angela becoming a bigger part of our church life.

In May a group of 30 friends, including some from St Lawrence and some from the Methodist Church, went to Oberammergau. This was an opportunity that comes around only once in every ten years and I was delighted to be amongst the group that went.

There have been many fund raising events this year and as a result what might have looked to have been an ever growing deficit has been turned into a small surplus. On our general account the deficit last year was £16,243 and the budget we set for this year was a deficit of £6,944.

With a lot of effort and determination we managed to change this into an actual deficit of £850. An amazing achievement. Some of the fund raising events were part of the Abbots Langley Festival of the Arts but Bedmond kicked things off with a lovely Flower Festival on Mothering Sunday. In May, Sally Sanderson launched Mission Slab cake. Slab cake

stands for St Lawrence And Bedmond Cake. I am hoping that this is still going as I have not yet had an invitation to one of the coffee mornings (hint hint) and would very much like to be a part of this. The Abbots Langley Calendar which Jane McHugh has compiled and sold has also made a major contribution to our funds and to reinforcing the church as having a big part to play at the centre of the village. Thank you Jane for all that you have done.

This will be my last report as Churchwarden as I now handover the baton to someone else. The role of Churchwarden is extremely varied but generally involves management, maintenance and ministry. The office of Churchwarden dates from the 13th century, and is thus one of the earliest forms of recognised lay ministry. It is a role that I wanted to do and I was pleased to be asked if I would like to stand for election. Thank you to everyone who has helped me in carrying out this role during my term of office. I wish my successor all the very best.

#### **40. ELECTORAL ROLL - Pam Rastall**

At the APCM in 2010 the Electoral Roll stood at 299; at the APCM this year it is 300. Six members have died during the past year and two members have moved away; we have gained nine new members. There are other possible members in the pipeline but forms have yet to be completed.

#### **41. PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL - Pam Rastall**

PCC meetings are every other month so we meet six times in the course of each year. The Agenda for each meeting is set by the clergy and churchwardens who meet prior to PCC meetings. Topics on the agenda through this past year have included: Sally's Statement of Arrangements as a Reader; Margaret's study time and Jo's sabbatical; applications for faculties to extend the Garden of Remembrance and to renew the lead in two of the stained glass windows at St Lawrence; replacement of the boiler at St Lawrence and replacing most of the roofing at Bedmond; Living God's Love, the diocesan initiative, and participation in the Weddings Project through the diocese (more about that as the wedding season approaches). At each meeting there is also a written report, and discussion where appropriate, from each of the nine PCC sub committees. We also hear from Synod meetings (General, Diocesan and Deanery), and information is received from Churches Together in Abbots Langley.

#### **42. FINANCIAL REVIEW - Claire Stephenson**

The overall financial result for 2010 shows a deficit (before transfers and gains on investments) on the unrestricted funds of £1,189 (SOFA page 5). The General Fund (which accounts for our day-to-day running costs) shows a deficit of £850, a vast improvement on last year's deficit of £16,243. The fund-raising efforts made in 2010 raised net income of £13,308 which explains much of the turnaround this year. With the small deficit on the General Fund, it has not been possible to transfer any surplus to the Property Fund. However, with the Property Fund bearing some large expenditure in the year, we have transferred £5,000 and £12,000 from the Bedmond and Legacy Funds respectively. At the year end the Property Fund stands at £24,704 but we received £6,500 from the Friends of St Lawrence shortly after the year which has restored the Fund to above its minimum reserve. The PCC continue to explore ways of increasing our general income in order to reverse the trend of deficits on the General Fund.

For this parish, income received under planned giving (including tax recovery) totalling £109,697 (2009 - £105,175) represents 69.0% (2009 - 73.2%) of our General Fund income. We have budgeted to receive an annual equivalent income of £110,796 (including tax) for 2011.

The amount paid to charities and missions out of the General Fund in 2010 was £11,914 (2009 - £13,250). During the year we donated a further £7,857 (£7,256 - 2009) to charities from the Fete, charity collections and restricted offertories and we gave a grant to the Citizens Advice Service in Three Rivers of £6,004 (2009 - £6,004).

During the year we invested £150,000 from the proceeds of sale of 100 Gallows Hill Lane in the Church of England Fixed Interest Securities Fund managed by CCLA Investment Managers Limited. At the year end the total market value of our investments was £180,719 (2009 - £27,788).

The parish quota for 2011 will be £82,599 (2009 - £78,415).

The PCC is continuing the process of identifying the major risks which impact on the work of the church in this parish. An analysis of existing controls in place to deal with these risks continues to be developed by identifying further actions required to mitigate these risks. We already have a child protection policy in place which is reviewed and revised annually and we have procedures in place for the handling of cash. It is our policy to invest our fund balances with the CBF Church of England

Deposit Fund. It is our policy to maintain a minimum reserve of £30,000 in the Property Fund. The balance of other unrestricted reserves is reviewed quarterly but there are no minimum or maximum levels. It is our policy to make grants at the discretion of the PCC.

Great thanks are due to all those who have assisted in the running of the church finances, and in particular Jane McHugh who is the Hall treasurer and Marcus Coultrup as Planned Giving Secretary. Marcus administers the Planned Giving records as well as banking our income on a weekly basis.

### 43. CHRISTIAN STEWARDSHIP & PLANNED GIVING

- Marcus Coultrup

Our Christian Stewardship campaign this year was fairly low key with sermons followed up with a letter from the Churchwardens to everyone on the Electoral Roll. The response was slow but was fairly positive.

This is what has happened since the report to the last APCM.

Total number at the end of last year	173	89,808.00
Increased during the year		1,346.00
Lost during year (deaths, moving away, stopped etc)	-9	-3,828.00
		-----
At start of this campaign (October 2010)	164	87,326.00
Since Stewardship Sunday: New Pledges	4	2,880.00
Responses 'increasing pledge'	33	1,846.00
Responses which made "no change"	67	-
Responses 'reducing pledge'	8	-1,356.00
		-----
Total to date	166	90,696.00
	===	=====

Assuming that the remaining 56 members in the scheme, who did not reply, keep to their original pledges.

These 166 pledges represent 225 persons (as some pledges cover couples) - 2009: 233

Average giving per person - £402.83 per annum (2009: £385.44), that is £33.57 per month (2009: £32.12) or £7.47 per week (2009: £7.41).

The PCC are extremely grateful for your generous response and hope that your pledges will continue. Your giving is very important for the work of this Church as we seek to show God's love in this parish and beyond.

Thank you all for your generous and thoughtful response.

	2010	2009
Annual pledge between £1 - £250 (about £5 per week)	66 10,387	68 10,463
Annual pledge between £251 - £500 (£5 - £10 per week)	38 14,280	42 15,544
Annual pledge between £501 - £750 (£10 - £15 per week)	30 18,154	32 18,898
Annual pledge between £751 - £1,000 (£15 - £19 per week)	9 7,891	12 10,555
Annual pledge between £1,001 - £1,250 (£19 - £24 per week)	5 5,600	3 3,260
Annual pledge over £1,250 (over £24 per week)	18 34,384	16 31,088
	-----	-----
TOTAL	166 90,696	173 89,808
	=====	=====

## AND FINALLY ...

### 44. CHURCH OFFICERS - The Revd Dr Jo Spreadbury

As we prepare to say goodbye to Carol in her role as churchwarden, we must say special thanks for what she has done over the past year. Her organisational skills and ability to keep track on everything that is going on and to encourage us all to fulfil our commitments cheerfully and efficiently have been hugely appreciated.

We said farewell to Alan Vening as our organist in August. He has given so much over many years to building up and maintaining the musical life of St Lawrence and we are all grateful for his enthusiasm and musical talents from which we have benefitted both in services and in concerts. We wish Alan well in his 'retirement' to Sussex, and we welcome Steve Smith as acting choir director at St Lawrence. We thank Don Ballard for his faithfulness playing for the Bedmond services.

Also on the musical front we were sorry that Alison Carr has stepped down from leading the Junior Choir. Along with Claire and Andrew, she gave much enthusiasm and encouragement to bringing on the young voices and enlivening the Second Sunday services. Thanks to Claire and Andrew for continuing the excellent tradition of the Youth Choir (note the change of name!) for us, and thanks to all our choir members and musicians who lift hearts and spirits by their contribution to our worship.

Mark Palmer has retired from his role as Parish Child Protection Officer and we are grateful to him for many years of ensuring that this important function is carried out confidently and efficiently. This task has recently been taken by Maureen Taylor and she has already begun to master the processes involved in safeguarding the children of this parish.

Thanks were offered at last year's APCM to Katherine Littler who stood

down as a member of the PCC due to other commitments. The PCC and its sub-committees have continued to be the driving force behind much that has been developed and implemented over the past year. Thanks to those who have chaired the sub-committees: Finance - Ian Donald; Property - Richard Kendall; Hall - Mike Jefford; Outreach - Bill Sanderson; Communications - Carol Higgs; Children & Youth Work - Margaret Davis; Health & Safety - Carol Higgs. Roy Bratt is handing over chairing the Social Committee after leading an able team for eleven years. We are glad he will continue to be involved - Linda North has agreed to take on this role.

Both our churches are welcoming and sociable and this is at least in part due to the welcome visitors receive after services over coffee in the hall at St Lawrence and at Tuesday Coffee. We are grateful to all who contribute to the coffee rotas, and especially to Janet Swallow who has organised the Sunday rota for several years and, with her husband John, has ensured that supplies of coffee and biscuits have been abundant; she has now handed over to Wendy Beaumont. We are also grateful to those who contribute to the coffee morning rota once a month at Bedmond.

Our thanks must also go to all who have continued to play their part in the life of the parish faithfully over the past year - and that is all of you! Margaret has once again proved to be an able and equal colleague. She has made a valuable contribution to the youth work of the parish and has given great support to the Bedmond congregation. Sally Sanderson's contribution in preaching and leading services has been much appreciated again this year, and it has been good to welcome Angela Milton to assist with services following Brian Hibberd's retirement (for which he was heartily thanked last year, and presented with, amongst other things, a specially commissioned jigsaw!) Brian Higgs has helped train our new servers, and has continued to draw up the rotas for services. The flower arrangers created a wonderful display for the Flower Festival and they continue to make our churches beautiful Sunday by Sunday and especially to enhance our weddings. The cleaners have helped with the care and upkeep of St Lawrence week by week, and in particular Pam, Marcus, Robin and Joan have helped with sacristy duties. The churchyard continues to give pleasure to many passers-by, and to be an environmental asset, thanks to the volunteers of the Churchyard Working Party, led by Nigel Higgs. The Bellringers have not failed to make themselves available for special services and weddings, as well as calling the parish to worship every Sunday, and we are grateful for their commitment and expertise. We must also remember

that there is a good team of people who look after and prepare the church for services at Bedmond - our thanks to them. We are grateful for all that Pam and Lorraine do for both churches in the office.

Thanks, finally, to those who visit and look after members of the parish at home, and extend our pastoral care where there is need. The Pastoral Assistants - Marcus, Pam, and Annie - have been a great help to Margaret, Sally and myself in keeping in touch with those who are ill or in any difficulty. I am also aware that many in the congregation undertake visiting themselves in a personal and informal way - and this is a wonderful ministry which is much valued by those who want to stay in contact with the church, when it is hard for them to get about. We hope that all in this way will know that they are cared for and valued, and remain part of God's family.

## Diary 2011

### APRIL

- |      |             |   |
|------|-------------|---|
| 16th | 3-5.00 p.m. | Children's Easter Workshop in the hall                        |
| 17th |             | <b>Palm Sunday</b>  |
|      | 10.00 a.m.  | CTAL Blessing of the Palms on Kitters Green                   |
|      | 10.30 a.m.  | United Service in St Lawrence                                 |
| 21st |             | <b>Maundy Thursday</b>  |
|      | 8.00 p.m.   | Holy Communion including Foot Washing                         |
| 22nd |             | <b>Good Friday</b>  |
|      | 10.00 a.m.  | CTAL Walk of Witness from St Paul's, Langleybury              |
|      | 1.00 p.m.   | An Hour of the Passion  |
|      | 2.00 p.m.   | Proclamation of the Cross and Holy Communion                  |
| 23rd |             | <b>Easter Eve</b>   |
|      | 8.30 p.m.   | Easter Vigil with Baptism and Confirmation in St Albans Abbey |
| 24th |             | <b>Easter Day</b>   |
|      | 5.30 a.m.   | CTAL Easter Sunrise Service                                   |
|      | 8.00 a.m.   | Holy Communion  |
|      | 9.30 a.m.   | Easter Family Communion                                       |
|      | 11.00 a.m.  | Easter Family Communion at Bedmond                            |
|      | 6.30 p.m.   | Choral Evensong   |

25th **Monday in Easter Week (Bank Holiday)**  
9.30 a.m. Informal Communion prior to breakfast, walk to St Albans, lunch in the park, service in the Abbey, walk back and supper in the hall  
29th *Royal Wedding (Bank Holiday)*

### MAY

14th Friends' 'Collectibles & Antiques Fair'  
15th-21st Christian Aid Week  
29th 11.30 a.m. Beating the Bounds

### JUNE

2nd **Ascension Day**  
8.00 p.m. Parish Communion at Bedmond Church  
11th Abbots Langley Carnival  
18th Albantide celebrations in St Albans  
Friends' Safari Supper  
23rd **Corpus Christi**  
**(Day of Thanksgiving for Holy Communion)**  
5.00 p.m. Service at St Albans Abbey  
25th 2.00 p.m. Church Fete  
29th Deanery Synod

### JULY

2nd Ordinations in the Abbey including the priesting of the Revd Charlotte Ballinger  
9th CTAL Safari Supper  
23rd Friends' Barbeque

### AUGUST

10th 7.00 p.m. Patronal Festival of St Lawrence the Martyr  
8.00 p.m. Parish Barbecue in the Vicarage Garden

### SEPTEMBER

13th 7.30 p.m. Friends' Chinese Evening  
10th Bedmond Fete  
24th Harvest Supper  
25th 9.30 a.m. Back to Church Sunday and Harvest Festival in St Lawrence

### OCTOBER

8th Friends' Quiz and Supper  
20th Deanery Synod

### NOVEMBER

1st All Saints' Day  
2nd All Souls' Day  
10.00 a.m. & 8.00 p.m. Requiem Mass  
6th 3.00 p.m. Service of Thanksgiving and Remembrance  
13th Remembrance Sunday  
10.50 a.m. Act of Worship at the War Memorial followed by a service in St Lawrence  
3.00 p.m. Remembrance Sunday Service at Bedmond  
26th Friends' and Mothers' Union Coffee Morning  
27th **Advent Sunday**  
6.30 p.m. Advent Carol Service

### DECEMBER

18th 4.00 p.m. Bedmond Carol Service  
6.30 p.m. Nine Lessons & Carols  
24th 1.30, 3.00, 4.30 and 6.00 p.m. Children's Candlelight Services

### 2012

### JANUARY

6th The Epiphany

### FEBRUARY

22nd Ash Wednesday

### APRIL

1st Palm Sunday  
6th Good Friday  
8th Easter Day