

THE PARISH OF ABBOTS LANGLEY

St Lawrence the Martyr
Abbots Langley
with
the Church of the Ascension
Bedmond

ANNUAL REPORT 2015

www.abbotslangley.org.uk



StLawrenceChurchAbbotsLangley and TheTinChurchBedmond



2015 was a significant year for the parish - the start of building work to make the largest alterations to St Lawrence for a generation, and a farewell and thank you to Jo, Vicar since 2006 as she moved to become Precentor of Portsmouth Cathedral. There was great success for the organ appeal, with the first ever 'hymnathon' and the works to restore the instrument were completed in November. We welcomed Bishops Stephen Venner and John Gladwin to lead our Holy Week reflections as well as visiting preachers, the Ven Jonathan Smith, the Revds Neil Kelley and Robert Kozak, Br Jacob CR, and ordinands Tom McLean and Robert Coupland. On St Patrick's day we hosted the centenary service for the Post Office Rifles and it was a joy to see Emma, Mark and Sian confirmed by Bishop Richard at Easter and to welcome Bishop Michael for his first visit to the parish for our Patronal, and farewell to Jo in August.

2015 saw the first May concert series begin and we said thank you to Claire and Andrew as they handed over the Youth Choir, and hello to Sarah who took charge. The Archbishop of Canterbury visited the Diocese for the Albantide celebrations and Churches Together made a 'splash' with the Noah's Ark float for the carnival. Like every year, this was one of change, growth, development and challenge: from August we settled into the period of vacancy, and many took on additional responsibilities. Thanks are due to all who contribute to the life of the parish in any way, and principally for all who pray for our life together. We wished Jo well as she departed and continue to give thanks for her ministry here which others will build on: for David, Angela, Guy, Brian, Sally, Pam, Lorraine and Steven, and particularly for Jane and Bill and the PCC leading us into a new year and new opportunities.

See photos on the back page for many of the events mentioned in this booklet.

HEALTH & SAFETY COMMITTEE

The Health & Safety Policy is kept under review; and both churches, the hall, office, and churchyard, including grave stones, are checked regularly.

COMMUNICATIONS TEAM

Responsible for Outlook, the website, notice boards, publicity and 'Facebook', making the congregations and local community more aware of what is going on.

SOCIAL COMMITTEE

Events arranged included Jo's farewell on the day we also celebrated St Lawrence in August and a coach trip to Portsmouth to see her settled in; the church fete; a coach trip to a John Rutter Christmas Concert; and a very enjoyable harvest lunch.

PROPERTY COMMITTEE

As usual, a busy year maintaining both churches, looking after 40 Kindersley Way and keeping an eye on the churchyard at St Lawrence.

The Hall Committee was disbanded and responsibility for the hall building is now held by the Property Committee. The hall is well-used by community groups as well as for church functions. The CAB continues to rent the stable block.

SERVERS

We fulfilled the requirements for the year and would welcome more offering to join us; speak to Brian Higgs or David to find out more.

WORSHIP

BELLRINGERS

We ring for Sunday morning worship, on special occasions and for weddings when requested. We'd love some more ringers - why not join us on Monday evenings?

We tolled the bell 100 times at noon on the anniversary of each local soldier who died during the First World War, and will continue this through and anniversary years.

SIDESPEOPLE

This great team of volunteers provide an important welcome to newcomers, visitors and the regular congregations. They ensure services run smoothly and willingly volunteer for extra services such as festivals as well as for weddings, baptisms and funerals. Speak to Jane if you'd like to help.

DAILY WORSHIP

St Lawrence is open every day between 10.00 am and 5.00 pm for private prayer with Morning (9.30 am) & Evening (5.15 pm) Prayer said Monday to Friday each week, which anyone can join. Holy Communion is said at 10.15 am on Wednesdays and with Morning Prayer on Fridays at 9.30 am.

CHOIR

The choir continues to lead the music at our main services and made its first visit to sing at Chelmsford Cathedral in February 2015. In Lent 2016 we experimented with our first service of Sung Compline and in the forthcoming year the choir will sing at a service of thanksgiving for Her Majesty The Queen's 90th Birthday as well as a weekend of services in Bath Abbey.

YOUTH CHOIR

We offered grateful thanks to Andrew and Claire and welcomed Sarah as the new leader which has brought growth and change. Youngsters of 7 years and up are welcome to join.

SPECIAL SERVICES

There were services for the major festivals at both churches; we also kept the Patronal Festivals (Ascension Day in May; St Lawrence in August); we held a service for the Post Office Rifles in March, and for Churches Together for the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity; we also hosted the Methodist Covenant Service in September.

AVERAGE CONGREGATIONS

We have an average of 150 people to our Sunday services each week with many more at Festival times.

HOUSEGROUPS

There are five housegroups, meeting on different evenings of the week, in different homes, studying different books and issues - most of them would be happy to have new members so ask in the office for details if you would like to join one.

CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE

Seekers The annual party and Easter Workshop are highlights of our year. Sunday by Sunday we enjoy craft activities, bible teaching and games with enthusiastic leaders and helpers, before coming to join the service and tell everyone what we have learnt.

Creche Varies in numbers, and always on offer in the hall.

Tiny Tots Regular group for toddlers, carers and friends for songs, craft, prayer, chatter and cups of tea! 1st & 3rd Mondays in term time.

Dynamite Ceased meeting during the year; to be reviewed.

MESSY CHURCH

A great opportunity for children, carers and volunteers to worship, following a craft activity and prior to a meal, on the 2nd Wednesday of each month at the Methodist Church - all welcome.

BAPTISM, WEDDINGS AND FUNERALS

There were 42 baptisms; 4 young people admitted to communion; 3 were confirmed in the Abbey on Easter Eve; 13 weddings and 1 blessing after a civil marriage; and 47 funerals including those in church (19) and at the crematorium (28). Preparation and pastoral care is provided by clergy and/or laity before and after these services.

CHURCHES TOGETHER IN ABBOTS LANGLEY

A regular variety of different services based around the major festivals and activities held in different churches/halls throughout the year makes for a good, long-standing ecumenical feel in the village.

BEDMOND

A successful Fete and Harvest Supper, regular monthly Coffee Mornings, Festival Services, and working alongside the Bedmond Task Force including singing carols - all help with mission in Bedmond.

MISSION

SCHOOLS

Our contact with local schools continues with various classes visiting the churches. David is a governor at Bedmond School.

UNIFORMED ORGANISATION

The annual Christingle Service was well supported by the Scouts, Cubs and Beavers; with the equivalent girls now using the Methodist Church. A couple of the Beaver colonies visited the church for badge work.

SUNDAY LUNCHES

A home-cooked Sunday lunch for up to 20 elderly, lonely or disabled, mainly women, is offered on the 1st & 3rd Sundays of each month - and much appreciated. Thank you to the cooks and helpers!

FIRS, HEWLITT & TANNERS

We regularly give Peggy a lift to church, and others (often 2 or 3) are brought by house staff, usually in wheelchairs.

Nikki Williams (often with David) continues to go into the homes each month for regular worship with the residents & staff.

CHARITABLE GIVING

We support a variety of charities financially, both at home (3) and overseas (3) and regularly pray for them using information in the weekly leaflet; and further details are put on the notice board in the hall. We continue to support the people of Malosa in Malawi with specific fundraising, and we support our local CAB. A few people support the Watford & Three Rivers Refugee Partnership with food items.

CONCERTS & EVENTS

AL Orchestra held concerts during the year and the AL Players performed in the churchyard; we held a Moth Evening and a Dawn Chorus Event in the churchyard; we took part in the Transition Town Community Markets; the St Lawrence Fun Day was another successful event, including the Parish Bake Off; we took part in Open Church Sunday; both Church Fetes bring in many local people; and the Travelling Crib journeyed around homes as well as local shops; we hosted Christmas Carols in the churchyard for the first time, around the outdoor Christmas Tree with Crib figures. We walked the parish boundary on Rogation Sunday. Fundraising for the Organ Appeal included the first of our Spring Concert Series and a Hymnathon.

OUTREACH

NORTH AISLE EXTENSION PROGRESS

Building work started, foundations and the floor were laid; walls began to appear; work continues! Fundraising included a sponsored parachute jump, Village Recipe Book & a 'Path of Pennies'.

WAR MEMORIAL

The Fund continues to be used to keep the Memorial in excellent condition.

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A HEART FOR ABBOTS LANGLEY

The Coffee Shop project continues as a very successful venture with Friday mornings extremely well supported by the villagers and the response for volunteers very good.

TUESDAY COFFEE

Tuesday Coffee is an important meeting point for both members of the congregation and for visitors who drop in when they see the notice by the lychgate.

FAIRTRADE

Traidcraft had another good year; thanks to the team for their continued hard work and the congregation for their support - we are a fairtrade parish and encourage the use of fairly-traded goods at all events.

BEDMOND COFFEE MORNING

1st Wednesday each month, always busy - a real community event - come and join them!

MOTHERS' UNION

Palm crosses, prayers, pancakes, Simnel cake, Baptism candles, household stall at the Church fete, Coffee Morning, Remembrance Service tea, walks, meals, talks and chatter are all things MU has been involved in during 2015.

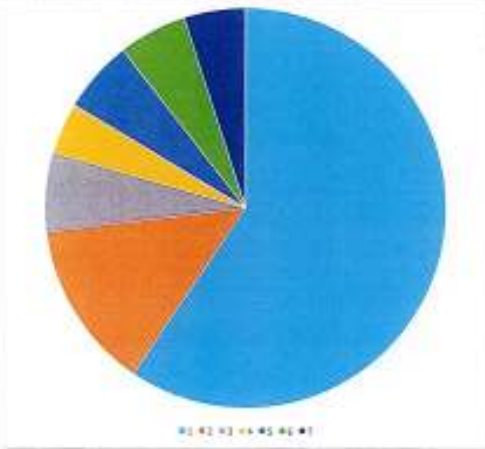
FRIENDS OF ST LAWRENCE

Continued support and generosity at events through 2015 has meant that the Friends were able to pay another significant sum of money towards the upkeep of the building, this time for the refurbishment of the stone tracery around the windows.

FINANCE

WHERE DOES THE MONEY COME FROM?

For our day to day running costs, most of the money comes from you in the form of planned giving, collections and the associated tax recovery.



1	Planned giving	87,128	58%
2	Tax recovered	21,456	14%
3	Other	10,159	9%
4	Collections	7,053	4%
5	Service fees	3,318	6%
6	Fund-raising	5,427	6%
7	Contribution from hall	4,000	5%
		185,532	

Other sources of income to other funds in the year included:
 £32,000 from the Friends of St Lawrence
 £28,848 from renting the church hall
 £1,500 grant from Abbots Langley Parish Council for maintenance of the churchyard.



Fun Day and Bake Off



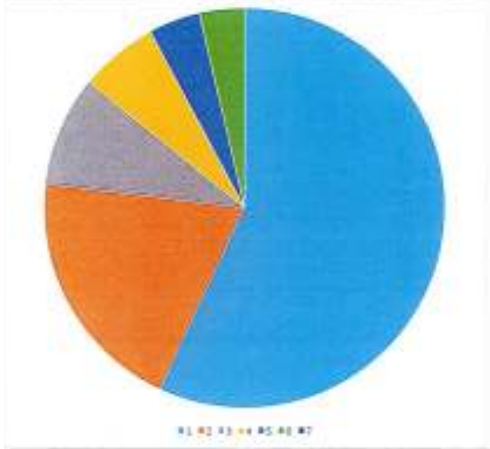
Fundraising



Calendars, Puddings, Vicarage Lent Lunches and various events for the organ refurbishment, (inc concerts & hymnthon), and the extension project (inc Village Recipe Book, parachute jump and the Seekers 'Path of Pennies').

HOW DO WE SPEND YOUR MONEY?

From our general income, over half is paid to the Diocese to pay for our clergy and the wider work of the Diocese and the Church.



1	Diocesan contribution	98,228	57%
2	Salaries and honoraria	34,842	20%
3	Administration	15,830	9%
4	Property and maintenance	10,881	6%
5	Missions and Charities	7,450	4%
6	Pastoral	6,264	4%
7	Transfer to property reserve	-	0%
		174,474	

Expenditure from other funds in the year included:
 £132,082 on the extension on the North side of St Lawrence church
 £20,578 on maintaining the church hall
 £4,158 on maintaining the churchyard
 £7,750 grant to the Citizens Advice in Three Rivers

For offering your time and talents - very many thanks to:

Churchwardens

Treasurers

PCC Committee Chairs & members

PCC & Deanery Synod members

Organists & Choir members

Outlook contributors
and distributors

Retired priests

Servers and linen
and robe washers

Knitters

Bellringers

Pastoral Assistants & all those
who visit the sick or housebound

Sidespeople - including those at baptisms, weddings and funerals

Housegroup leaders

CTAL Committee
members

Churchyard workers

Caterers & cake bakers

Children & Youth Group leaders and helpers

Bereavement Visitors

Sunday Lunch cooks
and helpers

Publicity people and
communicators

Coffee & tea makers - Sundays, Tuesdays, Bedmond & AHAL

Those who give lifts

Intercessors & readers

Flower arrangers

Cleaners and
tidy-uppers

Parish Safeguarding Officer

Friends Committee members

Silver and candle cleaners

Those who change lightbulbs and undertake minor maintenance jobs

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Money bankers

... & anyone else we might have forgotten, with our apologies
(and please let us know!).

