



The Parish Church of All Saints, Staplehurst

# Annual Reports

2006

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Dear friends,

Living the Christian way of life is sometimes described as like breathing in and out. It is a way of life which requires us to be nourished by God (breathing in) as well as involving ourselves in his activity in the world (breathing out).

As I read through the many reports in this booklet, I have been thinking how we not only need that two fold way of being in our private lives, but also in our church life.

Within these pages you will be able to read much about the ways we have been nourished over the past year and how we have helped nourish one another. There have been social events, including some exciting new ones, where we have got to know one another better. We have a newly appointed Youth Ministry Co-ordinator enabling us to develop our work with young people of all ages. Our repertoire of services has grown and involved more people leading and taking part. There are prayer groups, film groups, house groups and many mid week services, including that Saturday evening half hour slot for those with a busy Sunday ahead. We have a variety of musical input, with a flourishing choir and also a growing band of musicians. Alongside all our activities, many people have worked hard to see to our housekeeping and maintain our church building, its grounds and all that is needed for the smooth running of our worship.

But of course the “breathing in “would be pretty pointless without the “breathing out”. Those who go to school, college or the workplace each day know the challenge of making sense of their faith in the places they spend most of their time. For some it is in voluntary work, leisure activities, or at home and amongst family that they are attempting to live out their faith. There are many church members closely involved in village concerns, in such ventures as our Parish Council or the Friends of the New Medical Centre. And also there are those who have a particular concern for the needs of the underprivileged at home or abroad. Those who run our Fair Trade stall form our social responsibility committee and organise our charitable giving play a vital role here.

May I suggest that as you each read through this report, you might, like me, take opportunity to reflect on your Christian journey. Where and how do you breathe in and breathe out? Are you doing rather more of one than the other? Are you giving yourself real, regular opportunity to learn and grow in faith, with others, and are you also able to find some new ways of living out the good news in our village, our country or the wider world?

Much love

Gill

## **SECRETARY'S REPORT ON THE BUSINESS OF THE PCC 2006-7**

There have been six meetings of the PCC in the last year. Members of the PCC continue to be hardworking and very dedicated, working well together in all aspects of the life of our church.

Business during the year included the regular reports on the West End Project. The West End Project, having been completed, has proved to be a great asset to the church in so many ways, and has been in constant use throughout the year.

Mrs. Marion Whatmore has become our Youth Ministry Co-ordinator.

The PCC agreed to make a donation toward "The Celebration of Life" held in June. It was most warmly received by many who attended. Speakers and music groups took part. Clergy and ministers from all village churches were involved every day for the whole week, and all the youngsters from Staplehurst School visited the marquee.

Items for discussion during the year:-

- a) Rising cost of Parish Magazine – up to 90 pence per copy.
- b) Deanery Service held at Goudhurst church on 29<sup>th</sup> October.
- c) Proceeds from Harvest Supper donated to the Cathedral Project in Madagascar.
- d) Revd. Gill Calver became Area Dean for the Cranbrook Deanery in November.
- e) Members of the PCC met for an 'Awayday' in London. A Mission Statement has been produced arising out of the day.

Finances have been in the capable hands of Geoff Greetham, who unfortunately has had to resign owing to pressure of work. Patrick Harrison has taken over as Treasurer.

We were all very sad to hear the news of the death of Mrs. Ivy Dykes, who was for many years a very staunch member of the church, and was as much loved and respected churchwarden for six years.

The church organ is in need of an overhaul. The Friends of All Saints have agreed to contribute towards the cost. Estimates are being sought.

We continue to use the Free Church Room for our meetings and thank members of the Free Church for allowing this facility.

Finally, a note of thanks from me to Karen, who has the unenviable task of deciphering my writing after meetings and typing them up in preparation for PCC meetings.

*Sylvia Lade*

## **CURATE'S REPORT**

What a lot has happened in this past year!

Let me take you back to the summer and the weeklong 'Celebration of Life' event. This truly was a concrete (or should I say 'canvas') living out of our mission statement seeking to take our faith outside the church building. We were a visible presence in the heart of our village, we renewed and built new relationships with the other Christian groups in Staplehurst, we offered hospitality and education to our school – every primary school child came to the tent for a morning – we sent a group into schools that serve this area – Angleley and Dulwich Prep – we listened to well known speakers such as Fiona Castle and we experienced a variety of worship.

Our house move came at the end of the summer holidays. The diocese purchased a new house, which I think will be a great benefit to the parish in the years to come. Sophie and I have enjoyed being able to offer hospitality here – something we found very difficult in the old house- and look forward to continuing to be able to do so in the coming year.

I am still very thankful to Gill and the whole parish for the training I get here. I feel that this is a very good training parish as it offers such a range of experiences and worship styles reflecting the breadth of what it is to be an Anglican. I value the opportunities working with not only the young but also especially the elderly, particularly the midweek communions, the residential homes, home and hospital visiting.

I travel to Chatham once a month for more formal training working towards a BA (Hons) in theology. This is going well, I especially appreciate the opportunity to share experiences with my fellow curates – often thanking God that I serve my title in Staplehurst and not elsewhere in Kent!

I was elected a parent governor of Staplehurst Primary School this year. This has been not only good for my training but a great help in understanding more how this great influence on our community life strives to try to do the best for all the children that come through it's gates. I still take assemblies and help to run an after school club there.

Phil's imminent departure makes me realise the debt I owe him as a guide and colleague. Having been ordained the year before me, Phil has always been willing to share his experiences with me. I will miss him greatly and hope and pray that he, Janet and Joan will be very happy in their new parish.

*John MacKenzie*

## **CURATE'S REPORT**

As I write this short report it looks very much as though it will be my last one. I have been offered a House-for-Duty post in Devon and we have decided to accept it. So, first of all, I would like to take this chance to express my appreciation for all the support and friendship we have enjoyed – we have lived in Staplehurst for almost 30 years now. It has been a privilege to be part of all that has happened at All Saints over the years.

The last year has been particularly interesting for me as I have been able to be more involved in the ministry during weekdays following my early retirement. This is a very active church and still enjoys deep connections with many in the parish through its contacts with the school, the new Mini Saints group, the many baptisms and funerals. The love of God is shared gently and quietly through these formal connections but it is also shared by each member of the congregation in their life and work and we sometimes need to stand back and see the big picture, the whole web of connections between God and his people. This is not only an inclusive and welcoming community but it is also a very vibrant church, one which we need to value greatly.

Not that there is room to be complacent. We all need to continue to play our part in the life of God's church, to value the strengths we see at All Saints but also to be aware of areas where we and the organisation of the church can do more. I believe that, contrary to much opinion, the church in general does have a future and in particular this church has a role to play in 21<sup>st</sup> century Staplehurst. I hope that we can embrace and welcome the challenges that lay ahead.

All Saints will always have a special place in our affections and Janet and I genuinely hope that people will stay in touch with us and that we can continue the many friendships that we enjoy. We are only a short (!) journey away.

Much love

Phil

## **READERS' REPORT**

Lay Readers throughout the Church of England perform many diverse roles within the worshipping life of their communities. In Staplehurst, both Peter and Lesley have continued to contribute to the main church services by reading the gospel, leading intercessions, reading, serving and lay administrating, quite apart from Lesley's role within the choir. Peter now serves as Reader Emeritus, a very grand title acknowledging his continued participation in church life with the recognition of his status as one of the senior members of the team. There is continuing debate in the Church about the nature of the role of the Reader in the light of the development of other ministries and the historical nature of different people's ministry in their local community. It seems that Readers have been eminently flexible in the tasks they have undertaken which has made the definition of their role difficult. No doubt we will continue to do whatever is needed!

*Lesley Whitwood*

## **CHURCHWARDENS FABRIC REPORT 2006/2007**

Firstly my thanks go to Alaine for her help and support during the past year as my fellow warden.

Boundary fencing was erected in the Churchyard extension. Bishop Graham consecrated the ground in March 2006, subsequently Wendy Green and her team have planted hedging along the fence, some 1500 plants. Warning/Safety signs have now been placed at all entrances to the churchyard to remind people of the potential hazard headstones can represent. Cecil Scarff has carried out sterling work renovating benches in the churchyard and agreed to weatherproof the main road wooden notice board.

The new kitchen and toilet is now finished and proving to be a real asset. We are still awaiting a full breakdown of costs for the final account. After a major trip hazard was identified by Kevin Fulcher, a new carpet has been fitted in the choir vestry. The interior notice board which was originally in the children's corner has now been relocated to the east of the Vickery window. It is nearly 20 years since the church organ had a major overhaul. With this in mind meetings have been held with Lesley Whitwood, the organists and organ specialists to decide what work is required to keep this instrument in good order. It is hoped that a decision will be made later this year. Lighting within the church is still a problem. A meeting has been held with the Diocesan Adviser on Church Lighting and various ideas have been suggested. It is hoped a solution will be found very soon. Plans are being finalised by our Architect for the re-ordering of St. George's Chapel and costs estimated.

To comply with the Disability and Discrimination Act, plans are to be prepared for the re-ordering of the Parish Room. This will include a disabled access toilet together with an access ramp from the pavement. These plans will also take into account updating the kitchen facilities using units and appliances kindly donated by Peter and Ann Brenchley.

Following advice from The Diocesan Advisory Council, a Type 1 Asbestos Survey was carried out on the church and parish room. Three samples were sent for testing, including the organ blower box. All came back negative. A Fire Risk Assessment has been carried out on the church building by Robin Oakley. A few minor issues have been identified which will be acted upon shortly. A similar assessment will be carried out on the parish room in due course.

Our inspecting Architect is currently investigating issues regarding the south facing roof of the south aisle. It appears from initial inspections that the original nails and battening of this section have now given way to the ravages of time. Quotations for this work are being sought.

Norman Wallis has carried out minor repairs to the tower roof flagpole tabernacle to address the problem of water entering the bell chamber. Fundraising for a new clock case has been led by Norman Wallis. The estimate for this job was approximately £1450 and fund raising has gone a significant way to raising this figure. The Friend's of All Saints have agreed to make good any shortfall in funds. A date is now being fixed for this work to be carried out.

I would like to thank the members of my Buildings and Grounds Committee for their support and work during the last year and all those who help in maintaining our church buildings in any way.

As this my last year as Warden, I would like to thank everyone that has supported me over the past four years. We have a great team of people here at All Saints with whom it has been an honour and a pleasure to work alongside and to socialise with. Although it is easy to get caught up in the day to day fabric maintenance issues, we must never forget that our church is much more than just the building. We must continue to work towards an inclusive ministry within our community and beyond, with a duty of care to make sure that everything we do happens in a safe environment.

I am indebted to Debbie, Daniel, Adam and the rest of my family who have supported me in all that I have been involved in, more often than not becoming very involved themselves. Very close friends including ex churchwardens have also been a terrific support.

*Andrew Brady*

## **CHURCHWARDEN'S REPORT**

I think this year has gone by even faster than the last. I have got to know more people, attended more meetings, listened and learned. It has been challenging and time consuming but also rewarding and enjoyable. Gill, Phil and John work so well together and make a great team, which contributes so much extra to the life of our Church. We will be sorry to see Phil (and Janet) go but they take with them to Devon our love and prayers for their future.

This is a Church that doesn't stand still. We try out different services, which may or may not suit everyone. About 30 people attended the first Easter morning communion service at 5.30 am last year, and the monthly Praise service has become very popular. We try different social events to encourage new members of our congregation to get to know others. We welcome people from our other churches in Staplehurst - how good to see Andrew Mills enjoying breakfast with us (had he heard how good Robin's fried eggs are?!).

Some of the "highlights" during the year have been – Gill's licensing as Area Dean, which we as a Church shared pride in; the Christingle service, when the Church was packed to capacity, what a wonderful start to Christmas; the Archbishop's visit to Staplehurst in January - to name but a few.

We have had several opportunities to meet with congregations from other churches within our deanery. The deanery service at Goudhurst was very successful, with people from all the churches taking an active part and meeting together socially for lunch afterwards. We look forward to being hosts to this service in November 2007.

At a PCC meeting with the Archdeacon last year we all agreed that a priority was to encourage children and young families to attend our Church and I am really pleased and confident that, with Marion Whitmore's appointment, our youth groups will grow. She has already set up Minisaints for the under 5s and re-started Explorers.

I would like to thank all who contribute in so many ways to the preparations required for services and to the daily upkeep of our Church. There are too many to mention by name but so much goes on "behind the scenes" to make everything run smoothly, thank you all.

As Andrew steps down as Churchwarden I would like to thank him for his help over the past two years and for his patience as I learned the ropes, and thanks, too, to Debbie and Daniel, always there with their support. In particular I thank Andrew for his work on the Buildings & Grounds committee - probably not a week goes by without something in Church needing looking at, repairing or changing. No longer will I be the "new" Churchwarden, I will now be expected to know everything (well that's what I expected of Andrew when I started!!). I'd also like to thank Mary, who stepped in to help while I was away in March; my husband, Brian, for his continued support and valued sympathetic ear; and most of all a big thank you to Gill, Phil and John for their ministry and inspiration to us all.

*Alaine Summers*



## **WORSHIP COMMITTEE**

Our worship committee has continued to extend the variety of services held at All Saints during the year, as well as amending some of the existing services. Inevitably such ongoing change is greeted with enthusiasm by some and disappointment by others!

It has been particularly heartening to see our young people participating regularly in our family services, as well as leading their evening service. “Supersaints” and the “Cru” produced a challenging Harvest festival, their leaders weaving old and new wording and music, in a service intended for all ages.

Under the capable guidance of our newly appointed youth ministry co-ordinator, Marion Whatmore, we hope to continue to extend the youngsters’ ministry as they lead our informal services. Our musical repertoire has always been broad and continues to broaden, thanks to the inspiration of our choir and director of music. It is good to have a praise band, fast growing, which extends our familiarity with some of today’s worship songs, widely used in other churches. Their leader Gary Morley has been a useful member of our committee this year.

The Worship Committee have regularly reviewed our services, their timings, genre and attendance, as well as their wording. We also considered how our very small people can best be amused during services. Some new equipment was bought.

A new version of the Remembrance Day service was produced and generally received well. Especially appreciated was the lighting of a candle by two members of our uniformed organisations, in memory of those who lost their lives in war. Next year we shall make sure the wick has been prepared in advance!

Our committee were concerned that the “user friendly“ cards for Book of Common Prayer services had not always been given out as regularly as had been hoped. It was felt these were a vital part of our ministry of hospitality to newcomers, who often struggle with finding the right pages in the prayer book.

A new service order for our Staplehurst “High Mass” has been produced and that service continues to attract a good number on the four times a year when it is celebrated.

Our varied programme of worship continues, thanks to the input of our enthusiastic team of lay and ordained ministers, musicians, readers, intercessors, servers and all those prepared to “come up to the front”. We hope that our committee can carry on encouraging our church’s belief in “collaborative ministry” in the years to come.

*Gill Calver*

## **EDUCATION REPORT**

The Sub-Committee has again looked at both adult and young people's education.

A Deanery Confirmation Service took place on 30<sup>th</sup> April 2006 at Frittenden. All Saints, Staplehurst had 15 candidates.

In the Autumn Gill ran a course entitled 'Collaborative People of God'. This was attended by 15 or so people who have the responsibility of coordinating different groups at church. It was aimed to give a deeper insight into good team working practices within a Christian context. This was a very useful course for those who attended.

A Film Group ran again this year during Advent and was very popular.

Three Lent courses were put on:- Phil led a quiet Hour, finishing with Compline at his house. John ran an afternoon Film Group and Gill lead the 'York Lent Course' on Thursday evenings. We felt that these were not very well attended, and will be looking at what people may like for 2008.

A baptismal meeting was held, when Gill, Phil and myself met with our existing baptismal visitors and people who were interested in becoming one of our visitors. We went over our current procedures and were delighted that Marion Whatmore, Margaret Thornton and Janet Osler agreed to join the team. We had over 40 baptisms this year and I would like to thank our team of visitors for all they do.

As well as our Good Friday and Epiphany 'All Age' workshops, which we held in church this year, All Saints also ran a workshop in June on the Surrenden Field, as part of the 'Celebration of Life' week. Much thanks goes to Thelma Manning and her sub-committee for all the work they do in organising these successful mornings.

Our young people's work has greatly benefited from the appointment of Marion Whatmore as Youth Ministry Co-ordinator. One of the things that Marion has managed to do is set up 'Minisaints'. A group for 0-5 year olds which meet in the Parish Rooms on a Thursday afternoon.

Marion and Sophie report elsewhere in detail on all the youth groups of the church.

Among other things, during the coming year Gill and John will be running a Bible study group; and a Parish Quiet Half-Day has been arranged for Saturday 30<sup>th</sup> June at Sandhurst Mission Church.

*Karen Kember*

## **SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY REPORT**

The main emphasis of this committee this year was the marking of the bicentenary of the abolition of the Slave Trade. Various activities were planned, culminating in the services and exhibitions during the weekend of 24<sup>th</sup>/25<sup>th</sup> March 2007. These included attending the Walk of Witness with our two Archbishops in London.

Christmas Ribbons of Remembrance were provided by Audrey Bullock. Lists of some of those persecuted for their faith were distributed so that Christmas Cards could be sent to them.

Pat Sherlock made a presentation to the PCC, explaining the work of the Pastoral Team.

Jo Green gave a talk on International Day of Prayer for the Persecuted Church about CWS's Free the Four Campaign.

We now have Christian Aid envelopes for recycling ink cartridges at the back of the church.

*Mary Shaw.*

## **PARISH MAGAZINE REPORT**

Many changes to the magazine this year. The price is up by 5 pence. We have new outlets, the Texaco Garage, the Bell Inn, Highgrove Garden Centre and the Herb Garden, selling between 10 and 18 copies a month.

We have changed the front cover, adjusted pages inside the magazine and are adding more photo's. We now have our own reporter (from the Byre) reporting news from church to the village.

I would like to thank all the committee for their work, and to our printer who delivers the magazines on time every month. Special thanks also to go our distributors for their vital contribution during the year.

Finally we wish Justin all the very best in the future as he starts a new life and career in Chichester. Many thanks for all you have done for us over the many years.

*Tug Tugwell*

## **CHARITIES REPORT**

We have continued to support a different charity each month as part of the overall charitable giving of All Saints. From YMCA to Farm Africa the charities during 2006 were varied and well supported.

In the past, the Committee has tried to choose a mixture of charities with a balance of secular and non-secular, as well as at home and abroad. For 2007, however, we received so many suggestions, from the congregation, of charities to support, that we made the decision to make our selection from those nominations.

There is a list of all the charities we will be supporting during the year on the notice board in the coffee area in church. We aim to put up on the board information about each monthly charity, as well as having an article in the Parish Magazine.

There is also a file, which we have left below the notice board, which contains the many thank you letters we have received over the years.

*Sheila Brooker*

## **SOCIAL EVENTS SUB-COMMITTEE REPORT**

We have had another very busy, enjoyable and successful year. We have had fun planning, organising and taking part in all sorts of events, some regular annual events as well as some new ones. I think all the events held have been successful and rewarding from a social point of view – we hope you agree.

We held the usual events corresponding to Church activities, ie pancake party and harvest supper, and we have provided refreshments after various Church events, most notable was Gill's licensing as Area Dean, but also wine and nibbles after several other events, all ideal opportunities for people to stay on and chat. We held Breakfast in Church twice during the year, the one in November was attended by 45 people. It's been wonderful to be able to make use of the new kitchen facilities in Church on many of these occasions.

We held a Parish Sunday lunch in the McCabe Centre again, which 48 people attended, a day trip to Ostend, this time using the ferry instead of Eurotunnel, and a trip to Biddenden Vineyards including a meal afterwards. The Open Air communion service at Maplehurst in September was a lovely service, and setting, and everyone stayed for refreshments afterwards. A new event - Carols, Casks and Candlelight - in December was a huge success, thanks to the hard work of Richard and his family. What a wonderful way to relax in the busy time leading up to Christmas. We were very ambitious at the end of the year in arranging a 4-day/3-night stay in Cologne for the German Christmas markets, which 33 people went on. It was a great success and we will look at arranging something similar in 2008.

The success of our events has been due to the hard work and enthusiasm of a really fantastic fun-loving committee. I would like to thank them all for their ideas, their support - and their partners, who have all contributed in so many ways. Special thanks to Val, as secretary, who has organised several events through the year. Our thanks to all who have helped and supported our events in so many ways – Yvonne and Patrick who have regularly helped at events, Robin, our chief egg fryer at our breakfasts. A huge thank you to my husband, Brian, for his continued support and help with all the events, and for his removal and bar skills in particular.

2007 looks like being an even busier year as we have taken on responsibility for co-ordinating some fundraising events for Church funds. We will still be holding several of the popular regular social events but in addition will organise some social fundraising events as well. In particular, you may have seen a note about Donations for Dining and we hope you will support this throughout the year. We hope you enjoy the events we put on, we are always happy to receive new suggestions and are also grateful for any help offered, we are a small committee. Please make a note of the following dates in your diary:

28<sup>th</sup> April – Coach day trip to Oxford  
9<sup>th</sup> June – Auction of Promises  
14<sup>th</sup> July – Garden Fayre  
2<sup>nd</sup> September – Barbecue  
22<sup>nd</sup> September – Coach day trip to Le Touquet  
6<sup>th</sup>/7<sup>th</sup> October – Harvest Supper / Harvest tea  
15<sup>th</sup> December – Carols, Casks and Candlelight

*Alaine Summers*

## **MUSIC REPORT**

The most pleasing aspect of the music report this year has been the diversification of the music provision in church. As usual, the choir have given excellent service to a variety of different kinds of worship. It has been wonderful to have the participation of a number of occasional singers for big occasions like the nine lessons and carols, and the Archbishop's visit. We like to operate a system where singers can join in for the services or events that fit into their programme: this can be frustrating if you have 30 people to choir practice but only 12 to the service; or, conversely 12 people to choir practice and 20 to the service. It does mean that we never know how many people to buy music for or how the balance of voices will work; but it usually does. However we have been really proud of the sound the choir have produced this year and thrilled to welcome new members in both the young people's section and the experienced singers. The junior section now meet at 6.45 on Fridays and have some time together before the adults join in. Any other young (or older) members are always welcome.

We continue to be supported by our excellent band of organists and piano players: Ted Hall, Steve Bennett, Bob Chapman and Delphine Wass. We have had to use the CD accompaniment on very few occasions this past year and we are very grateful for their expertise and patience.

The diversification of the music has been achieved by the development of the group to accompany Praise services and Youth services under the leadership of Gary and the continuing support of Debbie. This has added a really welcome dimension to the musical life of the church and has meant that Lesley can take a back seat musically for at least two services a month; for which she is most grateful.

There are major events planned for the future such as the "Crucifixion" on Good Friday, "Messiah" in September and a musical production in 2008. There is always room for more – come and join us!

*Lesley Whitwood – Director of Music*

## **SUPERSAINTS REPORT**

We continue to meet on the 2<sup>nd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> Sundays of the month, and aim to provide a fun environment for 3-8 year olds to learn and just be together. We have a regular attendance of about seven children.

In October, the children took the Harvest festival service. We were so proud of the way they were able to speak and sing and pray in church.

We have begun a new course called "Faith Maps" which more or less follows the liturgy the rest of the congregation is following.

Hopes to roll out Super Saints to non-Churchgoing children have been thwarted by a lack of helpers. Hopefully, with the success of Minisaints, we will see new children coming through over the next few years.

Heartfelt thanks must be accorded to Helen Stoneman, and Ann Hipkin, and to our emergency stand-in helpers, Delphine Wass and Rachel Layzell for all the time, energy and enthusiasm they give to the children.

*Sophie MacKenzie*

## **YOUTH MINISTRY REPORT**

I am very pleased to say that we now have Youth/Children's groups catering for those from 0 – 25 years old.

Minisaints - we launched in January and meet weekly during term time on Thursdays from 1.30 - 3pm in the Parish Rooms. This is a parent/grandparent/carer and toddler group for 0-5 year olds and over 50 different children have attended thus far. The weekly numbers vary (as does the weather!) but currently we have regular core of about 18. I am very grateful to the team of ladies who help with the registration and refreshments, especially Barbara Dear. Thanks too, to Ruth Humphries and Sarah Bond who help me to plan and lead the weekly stories, songs and craft activities that take place after a period of free play and refreshments.

Supersaints – many thanks to Sophie, Helen and Anne for leading this group and who report elsewhere on their activities this year.

Explorers – at the time of writing this report it is very much hoped that Explorers will have recommenced on 15<sup>th</sup> March and then meet weekly in term time on Thursdays from 4.30 – 5.30 in the Parish Rooms. Many thanks go to Anna Silkin and Richard Barclay who have agreed to help me run this group for 8 – 11 year olds. The scheme will cover aspects of the Old and New Testaments, Saints and Church life, interspersed with 'fun' evenings and outings.

The Cru – Thanks to Sophie and John who continue to lead this group for 11–15 year olds. They had a fun year – the highlight was an ice skating trip where they managed to escape with only a few cuts and bruises! The 'Cru' particularly enjoyed being able to plan and lead the Pentecost service and look forward to having the opportunity to contribute to the church's worship life in this way again. The 'Cru' is always on the look out for new members.

ASClub – Because a large number of our 'older' young people left for university last year we have joined YPF and 18/30 and the members now call themselves ASC (All Saints Club). We meet on the second and fourth Sundays of the month at 7.30pm in the Parish Rooms. We select material to be included in the Youth Service, play games such as snooker and table tennis etc., have discussions or just sit and chat while drinking tea and coffee and eating penguins – (the chocolate variety of course!) Thanks to Gill and John for their support here.

Last winter the senior Youth Groups joined together and had a sleep over in the church. They built 'shelters' from cardboard boxes and Gill served warm food from the 'soup kitchen.' The exercise was to help us to be more aware of the homeless and although we were inside, it got very cold during the night and I think some found the floor rather hard. The young people were sponsored and we raised over £60 to send to the Children's Society.

At the end of August, and before the great exodus to university, quite a large gathering of young people, parents and clergy descended on Cheltenham Race Course for the 3 day event of Greenbelt. This included lots of different speakers, exhibitions and good music; all religious themes and something to suit everyone.

*Marion Whatmore*  
*Youth Ministry Coordinator*

## **THE HEALTH, HEALING AND SUPPORT PRAYER GROUP REPORT**

The group numbers are now eleven. One more than last year. The group have continued to meet over the past year on the same regular basis as previous years. The group is presently formed of Ron and Barbara Dear, Jean & Des Liddicoat, Pam and Peter Mortley, Debbie Brady, Chris. Mahoney, Jean Clarke, Brioni Armytage and Sue Hollins.

Ron and Barbara Dear are accredited to the Healing ministry and the Laying on of hands. The Laying on of Hands with prayer is now offered as part of regular worship at the Holy Communion service on the first Sunday evening of each month. Do come and use this service when you feel the need.

A leaflet, which outlines the work and aims of the group, is available in the Church Porch or from the writer.

We support, with our prayers, those who ask and those we know who are ill or having other difficulties with their lives. Over the past seven years we have supported and prayed for over 612 people and families, and know we have been of help. Some of the first people we prayed for are still on one or other of our Prayer lists, and continue to be supported in prayer on a daily basis by the individual group members.

Let us help you when you are in stress.

We now maintain three separate prayer lists. First, the official 'Church Prayer List' which is published as a part of Church Notices each week and is monitored by the writer. The second is the 'Confidential Prayer List', which is for anyone requiring prayer who, for any reason, does not wish to be on the church list. The third is the 'Support Prayer list' and is primarily for those who have problems other than desperate illness, for example those who are in cancer remission or have financial or other personal problems. Contents and details of all lists remain within the group, or to the individual members of the group when specifically requested, and not divulged or discussed outside. Confidentiality is strictly enforced.

Prayer for healing and support should be started as soon as possible, like going to the Doctor suspecting something before going for tests. We have been thanked by many for whom we have prayed and they, and we, are certain that God responds and hears our prayers. The earlier we can start the better.

Please ask me, or any member of the group, for help and Prayer when you, or someone you know, is in need. You will be surprised and thankful for the amount of help and comfort the Lord *provides to those who ask.*

*Ron Dear (891407)*

### **THURSDAY PRAYER GROUP**

We still continue to meet on the first Thursday of the month at Spilsil Court, the home of Doonie Marshall. But with the death of Pam Winnett and now Joan Parker moving away (with Janet and Phil), our numbers are very small. We would love anyone to join us for an evening of worship and prayer, followed by refreshments.

*Shirley Skinner*

## **MONTHLY PRAYER MEETING – MAPLEHURST**

We meet on a Wednesday evening – 8.00 p.m. every month to pray for Gill, the leaders and members of all our church groups and activities. Our numbers are few, but we are faithful in prayer as we feel this “back up” is so important. If any pray-ers would like to join us you would be very welcome.

*Brioni Armytage*

## **HOMEGROUP**

A number of us meet at 2.30 p.m. every other Thursday in Iden Crescent in the home of John and Sue Green (Sue is disabled) for prayer, bible study, fellowship, holy communion and always a cup of tea. It is an informal time together and our subjects are varied. If anybody would like to join us, please ring me on 891 208.

*Brioni Armytage*

## **PASTORAL MINISTRY**

The past year has been a busy time for the team but also very rewarding. We continue to visit the sick, the bereaved and occasionally to administer Holy Communion. We can also provide hospital transport when required.

We are always pleased to have extra help from new members. If you feel you would like to join us, please speak to Gill or to John, or to me.

*Pat Sherlock*

## **MOTHERS' UNION REPORT**

The Mothers' Union is a worldwide Christian organisation within the Anglican Church, with over three million members. Our aim is to be united throughout the world by prayer, worship and service.

Here in Staplehurst we meet once a month for an informal afternoon at the home of one of our members. We welcome new members as our task is great, though somehow we manage to support 127 workers in 92 Dioceses in 30 countries! The Mothers' Union is established in 191 Dioceses!

*Sue Hollins, Branch Leader*

## **FLOWER REPORT**

I am sure you would all like to thank the bank of flower arrangers who give their time and talents and sometimes greenery and flowers, making our church look even more beautiful. A special thank you to the even more dedicated people who are in charge each month and spend many hours organising, doing and watering. We are fortunate to have you all here.

We are continuing with our memorial pedestal by the Book of Remembrance. These flowers are only there if you have your name on the list to provide flowers in memory of a loved one. The list is there at the back of the church in the coffee area (except one week when I am re-writing it). Also the normal collection for lilies at Easter will have taken place.

If anyone would like to join our band of flower arrangers please talk to me.

*Audrey Bullock.*



## **FRIENDS OF ALL SAINTS**

Over the past year The Friends have organised a full programme of events including a Beetle Drive, Brain Game, Antique Valuation Day, Sponsored Walks, and a demonstration of Flower Arranging. In addition there were three very different concerts plus the Summer Fete and Shepherds Market. Writing this in February, the total amount raised since the 1<sup>st</sup> April 2006 stands at £5,118.75. This sum includes subscriptions and the £50.00 per month we receive as adoptee of the Bell Lane recycling centre.

It has to be said that whilst some of these events were well supported, regrettably quite a few were not. The committee have concluded that perhaps, with everything else going on in both the Church and the village generally, there were just too many events last year. This year it is planned to concentrate our efforts on fewer but, hopefully, well supported functions.

During the year we have made a further contribution of £12,309.72 towards the West End Project.

At our AGM in May there was a very positive discussion on ways to improve recruitment. As a result we placed an advertisement in the Parish Magazine for two months in the autumn and enclosed a flier with the December update from the Parish Council, which was delivered to every house in the village. These efforts have resulted in ten new members.

Whilst the committee organise events we are heavily reliant on help from many people. I would like to take this opportunity to thank all those who have lent a hand and everyone who has supported us in our efforts over the past year. If anyone feels they would like to serve on this fundraising committee please contact me on 890344.

Brian Humphries  
Chairman.

## **‘CHURCHES TOGETHER IN STAPLEHURST’ REPORT**

The ‘Churches Together in Staplehurst’, previously ‘Staplehurst Fellowship of Churches’, changed its name towards the end of 2006 as it was felt that the word ‘fellowship’ did not resonate with many non-church people.

The committee aims to serve all the local churches and provide links in the following ways.

We continue to print and distribute both the Easter and Christmas service cards with support from all four churches. The same support also assists us to co-ordinate the annual Christian Aid envelope delivery and collection.

The Tuesday morning coffee mornings held in the URC schoolroom continue to prove popular and give us a small cash flow.

This year the ‘Celebration of Life’ event took place in Staplehurst and our members helped provide refreshments and other practical support. Our Treasurer kept the accounts for the event.

We continue to co-ordinate a joint Church service on the fifth Sundays when they occur, arrange the World Woman’s Day of Prayer and the annual Christian Unity Service.

We hope in 2007 to arrange more inter-church social events.

*Margaret Ashby*

## **‘HOLY DUSTERS’ AND BRASS CLEANERS**

It is very gratifying to hear comments from many visitors about how clean and well-cared for the church is kept – I feel I am keeping up the ‘Lade’ tradition!

A small group of four people, whom anyone can contact, are – Margaret Friswell, Pat Sherlock, Norman Wallis and myself.

Unfortunately, some ‘Holy Dusters’ are moving, which means we need more help. So, if you feel you can join this august band, who do a magnificent job of work every week, please contact the undersigned, Margaret Friswell, Pat Sherlock or Norman Wallis, and a small area will be found for you to clean.

I must thank Glenda Groves, our Sacristan, for keeping me ‘up to date’ with areas that need our cleaning attention – what would we do without her!

The brass cleaning is a messy job, but it looks so good every week. Thank you all.

*Sylvia Lade*

## **SERVERS’ REPORT**

2006/7 has been a challenging church year for our Servers. Once again, my sincere thanks goes to the stalwart service given by the existing loyal bank of Servers.

The latter part of 2006 saw the recruitment of some younger members from ‘The Cru’, to take part in the Family Communion and some of these are showing signs of becoming very good Servers, to the extent that I would wish them to serve in the larger services. further encouragement and teaching should enable other new recruits to fulfil their duties in services.

A highlight this year, certainly for me, occurred in late January 2007, when the Archbishop of Canterbury officiated at Parish Communion. I think that I can say that it was a stimulating occasion for all that partook at that service.

Once again, my sincere thanks goes to all Servers for their loyal service given to the Church.

*Ian Groves, Head Server*

## **BELLRINGERS REPORT**

At the Bell-ringers' AGM held in November 2006, the ringing officers remained largely unchanged with the exception of Vice Captain. Unfortunately Jackie Scrace no longer rings with us so Ann Fulcher agreed to stand and was voted in nem con. Ringing Officers for 2006/2007 are:- Tower Captain, Sue Bassett; Vice Captain, Ann Fulcher; Secretary, Shirley Norfolk; Treasurer, Patrick Harrisson and Steeple Keeper, Chris Bassett. The bell-ringers' fund remained sufficiently healthy to enable the purchase of new ropes when required and to cover minor ringing expenses. No major expenditure was expected in the near future. A donation of £250 was agreed towards Church funds for lighting and heating of the belfry. In addition, a donation of £10 per wedding will be made to Kent County Association Bell Restoration Fund.

2006 was fairly lack-lustre in ringing terms with only one quarter peal having been rung and few new methods being learned. The annual ringing outing in September was an enjoyable day out and very well organised by the Barclay family once again. Our bells continue to be enjoyed by visiting ringers and for district training events. Average attendance by ringers on practice nights and Sunday Services was continuing to decline, but the early part of 2007 looks more promising. We were extremely pleased to welcome two learners, Alison Alderson and Colin Friend, who are making steady progress. Alison even took part in the district striking competition in November and gained valuable experience from this. Daniel and Adam Brady returned to ringing and are a great asset to the band. Having young and intelligent minds mean they are both making stupendous progress in their ringing skills whilst kindly supporting other local bands who are struggling. Our band is eagerly awaiting the arrival of an experienced ringer who is moving from Medway into Staplehurst during March. She will also help to boost our team skills no end.

We shall very much miss the company and skills of Janet and Phil Osler as they move to Devon soon. However, we wish them well for the future and hope they will support their new local towers by joining the ringers there.

We still remain hopeful that two lapsed ringers in particular will return to support the band with their ringing skills. We also look forward to university holidays when students return to bolster our band. In the meantime we continue to encourage fresh people to come forward to learn to ring.

Despite transient difficulties, we are extremely fortunate to have an excellent set of bells and a larger than average band of loyal ringers who are much appreciated. We all enjoy exercising our ringing skills and turn out rain and shine to let the parish know our church is alive and active. What more could anyone want? Come along on Tuesday evenings at 7.30pm to see what we are about. We will gladly teach anyone to ring and you might just like it!

*Sue Bassett  
Tower Captain*

## CRANBROOK DEANERY

Never let it be said that things are dull in Deaneries. It has been another interesting and busy year for our deanery with lots going on.

We continue to work at developing our mission document focussing this year on Education and Training and hoping to introduce courses at a local level. Our open meetings, when there is an invitation for people to join us, continue to be popular. In September we had a very open and frank discussion on communion before confirmation. The annual Deanery service was held at Goudhurst this year. A very big thank you to the team at Goudhurst it was a wonderful act of praise and worship. At that service we said goodbye and thank you to our Area Dean canon Peter Mackenzie who had served five years as our Area Dean taking us through a time of great change within the Deanery.

In November we welcomed Gill as our Area Dean in All Saints Church and the Deanery looks forward to a new era for our Deanery. There were complementary comments on our hospitality.

The Deanery Prayer Group continues to meet monthly and we now have most parishes represented. I am very grateful to Pat Sherlock who very faithfully represents Staplehurst on this group. There are plans to hold a Deanery quiet day in the spring.

For a while the synod has discussed changing the name of the Cranbrook Deanery to reflect the area rather than just one parish within the deanery. When, for last year's Friends of Kent churches annual cycle ride, Norman and I decided to tour the Deanery we realized that the route we would take formed a heart shape. This caught the imagination of the Synod and we talked of the name The Heart in/of the Weald Deanery. Realizing that this was probably a bit wordy the Synod has decided on **THE WEALD DEANERY** as our new name and will begin the legal process to change this. The Heart logo will be used on any publications.

Future plans included producing a Deanery Trail leaflet, which will link churches in the Deanery together.

Two dates for your diaries The Archdeacons visitation is at St Georges Benenden on Tuesday 15<sup>th</sup> May at 8.00pm. It is important that Church Wardens, Sidesman and P.C.C. members attend to be admitted into office. On November 4<sup>th</sup> All Saints' host this year's deanery service

Thank you to my fellow synod members and to Gill. I am looking forward to the new era very much

*Val Wallis Lay Chair Cranbrook Deanery*

## **DIOCESAN SYNOD REPORT**

### **May 2006**

Bishop Stephen (who gave the Presidential Address for this meeting), invited members to dream with him about what the Church will look like in 2020! We had two choices he said, either to change only when we had to, or to accept change as an opportunity. There would be, perhaps, half the present number of paid clergy, but a wide variety of other ministries, lay and ordained, paid and unpaid, with different models to suit different places and circumstances. These were not plans, Bishop Stephen said, but ideas for discussion. Needless to say, the Synod took up the challenge.

Budgets and Pensions, always on the May agenda, were discussed, and were accepted by the meeting. Two Diocesan Missioners have been appointed for work in the Diocese, one will foster fresh expressions of church around the Diocese and the other will encourage inherited traditions models of church.

The Synod welcomed the new Director of Ministry and Training, the Revd. Rob Mackintosh.

### **November 2006**

This meeting was devoted to discussing 'The Environment'. The intention will be to launch a move across the Diocese to take issues relating to environmental change seriously and theologically. It is hoped that a Diocesan policy will be agreed at the next meeting, and a response pack for use by members of Deaneries and Parishes will be produced.

Bishop Stephen announced the retirement of the Archdeacon of Canterbury, Ven. Patrick Evans. Synod goodbyes were said as this was his last Diocesan Synod.

*Sylvia Lade, Synod Member*

**PARISH CHURCH OF ALL SAINTS, STAPLEHURST MINUTES OF EASTER VESTRY  
MEETING HELD ON MONDAY 24<sup>TH</sup> APRIL 2006**

Rev. Gill Calver opened the meeting by welcoming all those who attended.

An APCM, Gill said, has up to now sometimes seemed like a performance review for the person in charge. However, she is not very keen on this idea and believes that we are all ministers in our own right. There is a lot of very good ministry in this parish and we all need to give ourselves a pat on the back.

After a PCC away day in 2002, we prioritised what we need as a church in this parish. As a result, a Parish Mission Statement was drawn up in 2003 and it was given out to all at the APCM meeting. Gill felt all the bullet-points were very relevant to our life and worship in our church. It is an invitation to all to take part and Gill challenged those attending to reflect on where they were playing their part in our church's mission.

Our Mission Statement is:

- a) At All Saints, Staplehurst, we welcome everyone and we seek to take our faith outside the church building.
- b) We bring our skills and personalities to offer to God's purpose.
- c) We seek to listen to God and act in response.
- d) We want to grow in our faith and we help others, especially the young to do so.
- e) We respect the past, respond to present challenges and prepare for the future.
- f) We work together with other churches in the Cranbrook Deanery and in Staplehurst.

Prayers were said by Gill taken from a book of New Zealand Prayers.

**1. Election of Churchwardens**

Andrew Brady and Alaine Summers were re-elected as Churchwardens.

Andrew was proposed by Izzy Jeffrey and seconded by Colin Whatmore.

Alaine was proposed by Izzy Jeffrey and seconded by Nick Wells.

No other nominations were received.

The meeting voted unanimously in favour to accept Andrew and Alaine as Churchwardens. Gill thanked them both for all their hard work and support throughout the year.

**2. Minutes of Easter Vestry Meeting April 29<sup>th</sup> 2005**

Proposed by Ron Hegarty and seconded by Ron Dear, it was agreed to accept the minutes of the meeting.

**3. Date of Next Annual Parochial Church Meeting Monday 23<sup>rd</sup> April 2007.**

Minutes were then signed as correct.

**PARISH CHURCH OF ALL SAINTS, STAPLEHURST  
MINUTES OF ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHURCH MEETING  
HELD ON MONDAY 24<sup>th</sup> APRIL 2006**

The meeting was attended by 60 people.

Apologies were received from: Barry Pearson, Bob Chapman, Revd. Phil Osler, Melanie Brooker, Wilson Rush, Glyn and Ruth Roberts, Sonja Drew, Margaret Friswell, Margaret & Cyril Thornton, Ian Groves, Ted Hall, Ann Fulcher, Sally-Ann Barclay, Maxine Wells, Janet and Iain MacKay, Audrey Hart and John and Valerie Dilnot.

**Minutes of the Annual Parochial Church Meeting 25<sup>th</sup> April 2005**

Proposed by Ron Dear and seconded by Pam Mortley, the meeting voted to accept the minutes of the A.P.C.M. 25<sup>th</sup> April 2005.

**Matters Arising**

A correction to item 7, paragraph 7 should read 'Ron Dear pointed out that had the bill for £5,000 for maintenance been claimed prior to the close of the yearly account, our accounts would have shown profit and not loss. Minutes were signed.

**Presentation of Electoral Roll**

John Stewart was thanked for his work as Electoral Roll Officer and said that as some people had moved away, the roll was down to 138 people. Proposed by Kevin Fulcher and seconded by Steve Bennett, the meeting voted unanimously to accept John to continue as Electoral Roll Officer.

**Election of Member to the PCC**

Gill thanked the members standing down as they had reached the end of their term on the PCC - Glenda Groves, Pam Winnett and Ann Tugwell. Izzy Jeffrey has now moved to Ashford and decided to come off the PCC. Three come to the end of their first term and stand for re-election -- Karen Kember, Audrey Bullock, and Andrew Brady, who now has another role within the church! Therefore Karen and Audrey were re-elected and new members elected were Pat Sherlock, Paul Gammon, Mary Shaw and Steve Bennett. Gill thanked all members of the PCC and welcomed the new members To their triennium of office.

**Annual Reported**

Having gone through the impressive reports, Gill invited comments from the meeting.

- a) Kevin Fulcher wanted to thank Gary and Diane for the new form of Praise Service. A letter of thanks is to be sent to Gary and Diane.
- b) Ron Hegarty commented on the format of the Parish Magazine, stating that it is now 25 years old and suggested ways in which it could be made more up to date. As the suggestions were quite lengthy, a copy is kept on file and will go to PCC members and the Magazine Sub-committee.

Robin Oakley supported the magazine and said he saw many from around the Diocese and our magazine was still one of the best.

Peter Mortley said that magazine circulation was approximately 1,000 homes a month. As the price of the magazine has risen this year, Glenda Groves, one of the distributors, said that no-one had complained of the cost.

Many voices were raised in support of the magazine.

- c) Gill thanked Delphine Wass for organising 'Points of View' for the past 10 years. Delphine is now taking a well-earned rest from 'Points of View'. Should the need arise, with a good speaker available, then the evening will be organised as before.

Shirley Skinner was thanked for her work as the co-ordinator of the Holy Dusters. As she is now needed more at home, she feels the time has come to stand down. A letter of thanks is to be sent to Shirley. Sylvia has agreed to take on this task (which her mother used to do) and was thanked for doing so.

Praise and thanks were given for all the work on the West End Project. Robin Oakley explained that there are still a few loose ends to clear up. The team are now very anxious to get all the work completed. A letter of thanks is to be sent to Mike Fann in his role as fund-raising co-ordinator.

### **Treasurer's Report and Appointment of Independent Examiner**

Geoff Greetham feels our financial position is getting stronger and thanked the financial team for their support. Our proportion of the Deanery Parish Share has been reduced slightly. The future is in the hands of us all and it is up to each and every one of us to pull our weight. The short term deposits have been maintained; Geoff says he is keeping them for a rainy day!

The Stewardship Campaign has realised an increase of 13% in our giving, which is most encouraging.

Gill thanked Geoff for all his hard work as treasurer and felt she spoke for all in saying she was delighted that he had decided not to resign his post, but to continue his work as treasurer, and also thanked Patrick Harrison, who is giving a considerable amount of time to help Geoff with day to day bookkeeping.

### Appointment of Independent Examiner

Thanks were expressed to Rory Silkin for his work as Independent Examiner. It was proposed by Izzy Jeffrey and seconded by Steve Bennett to appoint Rory as our Independent Examiner. This was agreed.

### **Election of Sidespeople**

The current list was read at the meeting. Pam Mortley, Ann Brenchley and Mary Shaw were added to the list. Fred Harding asked to come off the list, and John Dilnot and Gordon Temme are unable to continue for the foreseeable future. Proposed by Steve Bennett and seconded by Izzy Jeffrey, the meeting voted to accept the list for the forthcoming year.

### **Any Other Business**

- a) Peter Day spoke on behalf of the readers and felt a need to bring them together more often.
- b) Small chairs need to be available for the Super Saints on a Sunday morning. Sylvia said she would look into this.
- c) Mary Shaw drew our attention to the fact that the induction loop did not always work. Glenda said she found it good and could even hear in the loo!! Much laughter! Andrew Brady said that the hearing loop would be looked at.



- d) Robin Oakley said that after visiting other parishes in the Diocese, in his role as Heating Consultant, how very fortunate we are to have such an active parish that people from these parishes, after seeing our reports, could see how much work is done in Staplehurst and how very impressed they all are!
- e) Val Wallis reminded all of the service in Cranbrook on 16<sup>th</sup> May - Archdeacon's Visitation.
- f) Audrey Bullock thanked Gill for all her hard work.

Next meeting of the PCC is Thursday 11<sup>th</sup> May in church.

Meeting closed with Grace at 9.19 p.m.