

Report of the wardens of St Peter and St Paul Farningham

The parish of St Peter & St Paul is part of the United Benefice of Eynsford with Farningham and Lullingstone.

The Rev Gary Owen is our Rector, the Rev Dorothy McGarvey is Curate and Mr Peter Davis our Lay Reader.

We have Holy Communion on the 2nd and 4th Sundays of the month with Morning Worship and Family Services on 1st and 3rd Sundays. We have early morning Holy Communion at 8am on 1st and 3rd Sundays.

We have 9 members of The Parochial Church Council which meets 4 times a year. 4 members of the council are elected to The Benefice Council which also meets 4 times a year.

In 2015 it was decided that the 3 churches of the benefice would hold their own services. Our target initially was to have attendances of 30. Prior to that date the numbers in attendance from the Parish of Farningham had dwindled to an average of 13. The first service on our own in 2015 had 58 in attendance, but things have settled down to an average of 38. Our total attendance number this past year was 2599, if we add Weddings, Funerals, School Services and the Nativity Service this increased the numbers by 1528 to 4087.

The numbers at Christmas Midnight Mass have climbed steadily from 52 in 2015, 61 in 2016 and 87 in 2017. This year's Christmas Nativity had an attendance of 131.

Shand Hall

After 10 years we are nearly there! In April we received a 'body blow' when the developers Kent and Sussex Properties went into liquidation. The liquidators have steadily done their job and brought in another firm of builders to finish the development. They have repaired the hall, fitted a handrail on the stairs, made a new landing and made good the walls.

The problem with the electricity supply is being resolved by the liquidator's solicitor. The Diocesan surveyor will be compiling a report from his survey and will also do a valuation for Ecclesiastical Insurance.

We would like to thank Helen for all the work she has done on this and for the work she has done on our many faculty applications.

Quinquennial

We are moving to the conclusion of our Quinquennial Repairs. We have experienced long delays in our faculty applications to the Diocese, some of which was because of lost paperwork at Rochester – perhaps we are experiencing the effects of staff shortages.

The wall paintings will in the next few months be uncovered, a new carpet laid in the lady chapel (properly fitted) and the carpet in the Chancel will be removed.

We would like to express our thanks to the Trustees of The Friends of St Peter & St Paul for their generosity in helping to pay for the repairs.

Churchyard

Our thanks to Farningham Parish Council for paying the grass to be cut in the churchyard. Lothlorien, the firm who do the grass cutting, somehow manage to do it all in one day and that includes strimming around the graves.

Thanks to a bequest we were able to resurface the paths in the churchyard.

The wheelie bin seems to have deterred our regular rubbish hurlers who seem to have realised that the wheelie bin is the place for their rubbish and not on another grave.

Fundraising

The fete was a great success in June. The weather was good, the entertainment was good, and the beer was good, so I'm told. Our thanks to Barrie and his team for organising it.

The Christmas market in December was also a great success and thanks to everyone who contributed.

Lights of Love was very well supported this year and raised over £800.

Our thanks to so many people, to Barrie for making the choir practice so enjoyable and for his work with the new Folly Singers, to the Flower Ladies who keep our displays so fresh and to our Cleaner, Joanna Bolt, who helps so much, at the Fete, Christmas market and Lights of Love.

And our thanks to all who do the teas on a Sunday!