

St Anne's Annual General Meeting, 4th December 2011 Priest's report, All Saints 2010 – Eve of Advent 2011

General remarks

This has been a difficult year. Church attendances have continued to decline and some important services have had to be cancelled, not only on account of winter weather but also of non-attendance for other reasons. This has been disappointing and suggests that the seasonal worship needs of St Anne's should be reviewed so that clergy time is not wasted preparing unattended services.

Much time and energy has been spent on administrative and financial matters, on changing the Constitution to that of an incumbency and the title of the Priest in Charge to that of Rector. That objective has virtually been achieved now. The need to consider a new working agreement for the priest on the expiry of her initial two-year agreement at the end of October 2011 dominated many weeks during the summer and involved implementing a financial review and stewardship campaign at the request of the Bishop.

On the positive side, the Vestry has risen to the challenges with commendable enthusiasm. People have worked hard to introduce affordable changes and to raise some much needed cash. However, it is regrettable that even minor changes have encountered a spirit of resistance, while a sharp recognition of the need to move forward has led to further tensions within the Vestry. It is important that St Anne's addresses the need for flexibility and change in the near future, whether this be in our style of worship, our modelling of space or our independent status.

St Anne's is a beautiful and holy place where people encounter God in the welcome they receive and in the warmth of our fellowship. When we worship here we are aware of the Lord's presence among us. We have been given many gifts to celebrate and talents to utilize. Thanks are due to all who have contributed very generously of their time and talents this year.

State of the Congregation (based on the Eve of Advent 2011 return to the Diocese)

Total number of baptised members and adherents of all ages: 134

Number of communicant members (over 16, as defined by Canon 41, 2): 59

Number of baptised members under 16 belonging to the congregation: 10

Number of baptised children admitted to Communion pre-Confirmation: 2

Number of persons baptised: 2

Number of marriages solemnised: 0

Number of persons confirmed: 0

Number of burials or cremations: 1

Number of communicants at Eastertide (Easter week): 48

Number of communicants on the Sunday before Advent: 24

Total number of communions made, year ending Eve of Advent: 1355

Total number of home communions (from reserved sacrament): 89

There are currently 6 members who receive Communion at home regularly. Others have been taken Communion occasionally at home or in hospital, when unwell or on request.

The Worship Group

The Group has been stretched this year as illness and family responsibilities have taken people from us, but two new members have been identified to be trained and authorised to take on the roles of serving at the altar, reading the Gospel and administering the chalice. Three long-standing members are authorised to administer Communion from the reserved sacrament.

Seasonal worship

Our winter services were hit hard by the weather and the Advent Service was cancelled because of the snow. The children's service on Christmas Eve went ahead as usual, however, and attracted around 170 children and adults, while 15 attended the Midnight Eucharist.

Attendances during Lent and Holy Week were disappointing and the celebrations of Holy Communion on Ash Wednesday and Maundy Thursday had to be cancelled because the only person attending was the priest. St Anne's contributed a guided meditation on John 13:1-17 on Holy Tuesday, 19th April, which was attended by 10 people, most from other churches in the town. Two people (including the priest) kept the Maundy Thursday Vigil in the chapel till midnight. The Good Friday Service drew a congregation of 10.

The priest preached at the Harbour Service on 19th June at the end of Civic Week, which was also Trinity Sunday.

This year's Harvest Festival was held on 2nd of October and coincided with the start of the Stewardship Programme. The sermon was preached by the Rev. Bill Elliot, the Diocesan Stewardship Adviser. A bring-and-share lunch was held after the service.

A Service of Commemoration of the Departed took place on Sunday 6th November at 3.30 p.m. The priest sent out twelve invitations to families who had lost a loved one recently and one family responded. The attendance was small (8 adults and 1 child) but the service was greatly appreciated by those who did attend.

Children and young people

Apart from our Christmas Eve service which was well supported as usual, and one or two under-fives who turn up from time to time, our engagement with children continues to be chiefly through the schools. We continue to enjoy a good rapport with Belhaven Hill School and its Headmaster. Pupils and staff attended three services during the year, on February 13th, June 5th and 6th November. On each occasion the lessons were read by two of the pupils and in June the school choir sang an anthem after Communion and our piano was tuned for the occasion! The service on June 5th was especially joyful as it also included the baptisms of Emma and Cameron Bunyan.

In a repeat of the previous year's exercise, Dunbar Area Christian Youth Project Worker Richard Taylor brought two large groups of Primary 6 children to St Anne's on 17th and 24th November 2010. The children enjoyed their visits very much and each child wrote a 'thank you' letter.

Outreach services

Sheila took the services in Southfield Court, Letham Gardens and Lammermuir House on three Sundays this year: on February 6th, July 3rd and August 7th, taking on two extra duties for Our Lady of the Waves.

Study and reading

The Bible Study Group has met on most Thursdays after the morning Eucharist and we have continued to study Luke's Gospel under the scholarly guidance of Michael Van de Zande, apart from four weeks in Advent when we followed *Bridges to Contemplative Living with Thomas Merton*.

For five weeks from March 15th to April 12th, an ecumenical group of two or three Episcopalians and two Catholics met in St Anne's House to study the York Lent Course, *Rich Inheritance: Jesus' Legacy of Love*.

The Book Club has met for supper every second month to discuss some enjoyable or challenging reading. Outstanding items have been reviewed for the magazine.

Congregational reflections

We are indebted to our Mentor Claire Starr for continuing to visit us and for arranging two days of reflection during the past year.

On Sunday 29th May, Donna Cooper, a lay minister at St David's, Pilton, came to both services and had lunch with us afterwards, telling us the inspiring story of the growth of her congregation through an imaginative ministry of welcome.

On Sunday August 28th, Claire led a "visioning" day for members of the Vestry when we were invited to consider all we valued about our church and also what we might do better. The following Sunday we met again

to draw up an action plan and prioritise those ideas which we could implement right away with very little financial cost. Full details of the plan can be found in the October issue of the magazine.

Concerts and other events

The church hosted several successful musical events which brought in some welcome revenue. On December 19th, Karen Dietz's group, Dunbar Sings, gave a concert in partnership with the Dunbar Writers Group. We were disappointed that the Scottish Chamber Choir Christmas concert planned for December 11th had to be cancelled because of the snow, but delighted when the concert was rearranged for June 25th. We are indebted to Diana Buchan for all her hard work in organising this event. Maestro Alberto Massimo gave an organ recital to a small audience on Boxing Day, and three afternoon piano recitals (with supplementary use of the organ) on July 21st, August 4th and September 8th, each of which was enjoyed by an audience of 40-50, including many from the Day Centre. We are grateful to Margaret Laidlaw for arranging the summer recitals.

Many thanks are due to Gill Wilson for continuing to organise Anne's Pantries. These were held in the Day Centre on 13th November (Christmas 2010), 14th May, 11th June, 13th August, 10th September and 19th November (Christmas 2011).

We are grateful to Richard Moore for making tickets for the Melvyn Bragg lecture on the King James Bible available for the benefit of St Anne's. The lecture took place in St Giles' Cathedral on 26th April.

On June 19th St Anne's took part in a Dunbar Area Christian Youth Project event entitled *Holy Histories*. We opened the church to visitors and presented some significant events in our history. Thanks are due to Stephen Bunyan and John Sparksman for their presentations and for a display of memorabilia.

Continuing Ministerial Development and other activities

The priest attended a Diocesan study day with the theologian Alistair McGrath at Newbattle Abbey on 2nd June, and also the Clergy Conferences in Pitlochry in November 2010 and 2011.

She has continued to serve as a member of the Diocesan Spirituality Group and has begun a ministry of spiritual direction.

She continues to take the Midday Eucharist in St Mary's Cathedral once a fortnight and took the evening Eucharist on Ash Wednesday at Holy Trinity, Haddington during the interregnum and also the Area Council Eucharist at the 2011 Quiet Day.

She had an article on her October 2010 visit to Lebanon published in the New Year 2011 issue of *The Edge*.

Departure and transition

At the beginning of November the priest informed the Vestry that she had decided to resign the charge of St Anne's from the end of February 2012, housing being a major factor. She would be seeking redeployment in the Diocese, initially in a supporting role. This had been a difficult decision but she hoped that with the permission of her successor she would remain available to St Anne's in a pastoral capacity.

Rev. Sheila Cameron

4 December 2011