

SAINT ANNE'S PARISH REPORT AGM NOVEMBER 2008

People

Communicants at services this year: 2060 (in 2007: 2220; in 2005: 2200)

Baptisms: Hayden Flame (20/11/2007); Hannah Kaszuba (2/11/2008)

Marriage: Hugo Southwell and Federica Meoni of Edinburgh

Welcome to newcomers: Bill Jervis, Robin and Betty Scott, Enid Foreman

Rest in Peace:

Nellie Aitken, Freda Middleton, Meriel Woolff, Bill Barker, Olive Ogden, Vivienne Ross, Phyllis Porter

Authorisation as Eucharistic Ministers: Bill Jervis, Liz Mitchell, Gill Wilson

Life is never dull in God's communities: we might think we are pottering along comfortably, but God is a God of pilgrimage, adventure and surprise, and just as we think we have arrived he turns us upside down and inside out, and shows us that there is a whole new journey opening up ahead of us. Jesus said, 'I have come that they might have life, and have life in its abundance' (John 10:10), and an intrinsic quality of life is change, which we have certainly been experiencing here.

Last year three areas of growth were identified:

1. We need to strengthen our own inner core through prayer. We need to be bound to God if we are to be able to tackle anything. We need to be 'a sanctified people and St Anne's be seen as a sanctified place' if we are to be effective

This seems to have happened in the development of a prayer ministry here. We have the table at the back of the church with leaflets, candles to be lit as a symbol of our intentions, and an invitation to people to ask for prayer. There have been increasing numbers of requests for prayer, and these are reflected in the Sunday lists and even more in the Thursday morning slot before the Eucharist. There have been some wonderful answers to prayers, and people have felt great affirmation and support. It has also given those engaging in intercessory prayer much greater confidence in leading prayer and also becoming aware of pastoral needs.

Bill Jervis, when he was well enough, and Liz Mitchell have been faithful supporters of the daily prayer times on Wednesday after noon and Thursday mornings, and they have become clever about finding their way around the lectionary, and in the process beginning to feel more of what it is to belong to the wider Episcopal Church!

2. We need to think imaginatively about the resource that we have in the Hall and use it for the needs of those outwith the congregation

This remains an ongoing project. Sharon Forster researched potential usage, finding ten people or organisations who might be interested in using it on a regular basis. However, it has become clear that the fabric is so poor that it would require major renovations at a prohibitive cost, with no guarantee that this would ensure long term stability, and not one out of six contractors approached was willing even to give a quote. Brian Dale has supplied an approximate estimate of the price that could be realised selling the hall as is, or with plans approved for a dwelling place on the land. The latter could perhaps realise a sum sufficient to adapt the church to provide for social functions and perhaps even community use while retaining a sacred space at its heart. This is a large issue which will need discussion at a separate meeting once all the possibilities can be presented clearly and accurately.

3. We need to encourage and enable more members of the congregation to offer their gifts to the whole and so build up the next generation of leaders in our midst

Bill Jervis, Liz Mitchell and Gill Wilson were authorised by the Bishop as Eucharistic ministers, and they, with Stephen Bunyan and Joan Scott may now also provide Communion from the reserved sacrament at services using the liturgy available for this. Liz and Bill have found this a deeply rewarding ministry when they have done this on Thursday mornings and, when it has been necessary, on Sunday at the 9.15am service. Thanks are due to the congregations who have encouraged and affirmed them in their apprenticeship: ministry cannot happen without the acceptance of those being ministered too, so their role is just as vital in the work of God as that of the ministers!

Further Developments:

Parish Review with Bishop Brian and the LCM team (Rev Anne Tomlinson and our mentor, Claire Starr)

A report is available, and was published in the magazine at the time.

It was interesting to read the overview of Claire our mentor after that day:

I want to share with you what I saw on Saturday. I saw that God is gently leading you forward and you have been responding to this gentle leading by gently moving forward. The work you have done over the last 8 months has been about building good foundations, building good cohesive groups, who interlink, not only with each other but with the community you live and work in; you have naturally been a presence in that community, without even realising that you have been exercising a ministry there. The community appears to appreciate St. Anne's as a good and positive presence to be relied on – most churches would give their eye teeth to have a full church for an Advent service and it not “our own congregation”; what an outreach!! You have waited patiently, I think, for God's promptings and responded to them; you have not got in the way or resisted these, but gone where you have been led. I urge you now to stay alert, in tune and continue to trust God's leading go out as God's people into the community hungry for the Good News you have to share.

And a challenge from Bishop Brian;

You are well placed to address many of the big issues that are affecting our world and thus the church - care for the environment/ecology (John Muir), incineration, natural/nuclear power and climate change. How can you listen to the community better and find out what they want?

And the conclusion provides us with a direction for the year ahead:

In summary we would want to commend what you have achieved these past eight months; much healing has gone on and there is, as we have said already, a palpable sense of charity and co-responsible working. You are set fair now to begin listening to what God is calling you to be and do in Dunbar in the twenty-first century and to organise your internal life more effectively to respond to that call. Work on enabling every member of the congregation to see that what they are already involved in and interested in is a valid and valuable part of the whole enterprise. Listen to what they – and others beyond the congregation - have to offer. Listen to what the world is saying. The Eucharistic prayer we used on Saturday has these lines: “Your Spirit lives in us so that we can look at the world with your eyes”. And as you do so, may your hearts be on fire.

Property:

The church is in good repair, except for some roof tiles which need repairing and the rones which need cleaning: this is under way.

The hall has been mentioned: this is an issue which must be resolved.

St Anne's House: Exterior decoration needed: a painter has been engaged.

The garden continues to flourish in the capable hands of Liz Mitchell, with help from Fred Wright.

Cleaning: this is being done fortnightly by Stephen Forster. ***The sponsored cleaner has now stopped, and we do need someone else for this on the alternate weeks. Church cleaning cannot be the sole responsibility of one volunteer.***

It is unfortunate that there is still no one who is willing to take on responsibility for ensuring that the property is maintained.

Sacristan: We still have no one to take overall responsibility for the maintaining of the altar linen and vessels, the preparation of the church for services, and the clearing up afterwards. This is going to make things very difficult in the months ahead if there is to be a proper reverence and care for this important area during an interregnum. Tasks could be shared, but there needs to be one person who makes sure it all happens!

Outreach:

Monthly communion services have continued to be well attended at Lammermuir House.

We are part of the rota of churches who provide monthly Sunday services at Letham Gardens, Southfield Court and Lammermuir House. These are appreciated by those who attend.

Financial Giving:

We continue to give 10% of the proceeds of our fund-raising events to a range of charities.

You are all to be congratulated for your generosity and commitment which has meant that once again we have ended up with a small surplus.

Thanks are due to all of you who make possible the ministry of Saint Anne's in such a wide range of activities:

Sundays (Music, serving in all areas of worship, cleaning, coffees, flowers); Thursdays (Intercessions and the Eucharist and Bible Study); The Book Club, Oasis Days, fund-raising, which has also become an outreach (Anne's Pantries and the Christmas Sale); the Vestry, and the Treasurer, attention to health and safety issues, and the warmth and support you all show one another.

Looking to the future:

As you move into this important time of review of the parish and discernment of the kind of ministry that you will want in the future, it is good to think that you will be safe in the hands of the Rev Canon John Lindsay, your mentor Claire Starr and Bishop Brian himself.

My prayer for you is that you move from strength to strength, as you listen to the calling of God, and his vision for you here, that seeds planted continue to flourish, and that you are reinforced in the joy of fellowship with one another in the service of God.

Thank you for all you have been to Bruce and me over the years!