Horley Team Ministry Rector’s APCM report 2020

Rev’d Canon Les Wells

As I write this report on the last year, we enter a strange time in the world and country with the Coronavirus pandemic. This has caused distress to many and there are many vulnerable people worrying about what will happen next.

We face a time when churches close on Sundays for services but open for quiet prayer for the communities which is a directive from ++Canterbury and ++York, the Bishop of Southwark is keeping us informed daily with the task force he set up. We are finding a new way to produce services for Sundays and for other times.

Prayer is so important now, seeking God and asking for His healing power to be upon us.

We launched “TRYPRAYING” initiative as churches for Horley. God will use this time for his kingdom.

Sadly over the last year we have lost long standing members of the congregations to death, Tony Pethers, Linda Pullen Bernice Hillman, Freda Stott, Zohra Masily, Sharana Gould and Ruth Farquharson. We also have others who are members of our congregations who are in nursing homes or living at home and not able to go out. All these people are of a great faith and have served the church with their lives.

As a parish we have run “Talking Jesus” in all three churches, and Christianity Explored which Naomi and Martha run at both St Wilfrid’s and St Francis’ churches. St Bart’s planned ALPHA but no one signed up, so we had to cancel. We held a confirmation service at St Wilfrid’s in January 2020, with 11 candidates and a mix of ages. + Jonathan Croydon conducted the service.

Over the last year, I have been involved in Diocesan Synod and Diocesan Council of Trustees. I was also asked to join the Deanery leadership team, and I am also a trustee of the West Vale Park trustees as the housing is in the North West part of the parish with 1500+ dwellings between 1-5 bedrooms. We also continue to have an influence on the ACRES development through the Diocesan school, Trinity Oaks.

As we look at the past year a lot of good things have happened, especially as we appointed Tim Hill as Pioneer Youth, Family and Schools worker. Tim has started arranging many meetings. The Diocese put in a bid for a five year funding for this post and were successful. As I write this Tim has sadly been furloughed along with many others within the Dioceses. Tim has two roles in the parish as he is also a Reader and anything Tim does presently is within his Reader ministry.

I am expecting to receive a curate in July, I have been meeting a person and the Parish Wardens have spoken to that person. This is exciting news for us as the staff team grows.

All three churches have taken a fresh look at their Mission Action Plan (M.A.P) which has been encouraging. The Canon Missioner, Jay Cowill, came to lead a session at St Wilfrid’s and to launch the M.A.Ps of St Wilfrid’s and St Francis’. St Bart’s had already started their M.A.P. All these will be ongoing documents.

News at Trinity Oaks School - Mrs Johnson has decided to move on. She was there before the school opened and has seen it through its growth. Mrs Johnson is joining her husband on his work travels.

We have had two rounds of advertising and interviews and have appointed Miss Tansley as the headteacher starting at the summer term. Miss Tansley is well known to the pupils and the staff team. The school has a strong staff team and a strong leadership team within. I always enjoyed going in and taking the collective worship and being part of the community in the school. I have a full role as School Foundation Governor as Rector, which means I sit on other committees.

Although we are not meeting and are not able to have the APCM or ADCMs presently I thought I would write this to go out as my report for 2020.

We will face great struggles financially within our personal lives. The church over the coming month and years will also find challenges with our finances. Both St Francis’ and St Wilfrid’s church halls are closed.

We are closed for public worship which has an influence over our tithing and giving. We are not taking weddings or conducting baptisms. (Emergency baptism can take place following the guidance of the church.) We are continuing to conduct funerals although under the guidance with both numbers who can attend and under instruction of the crematorium and the guidance over graveyard services. We cannot hold church services in the church but we can hold a small service at the graveside. We will look at how we can have memorial services in the church buildings in the future once we can open again.

A big challenge for us will be our finances. We will need to look at our future finances carefully when we return to normal after the Coronavirus. Many churches in the Diocese will be in similar positions over the coming year/s ahead. We are a big receiver from the Diocese of Southwark. As a parish we do not pay enough for one stipendiary priest, so we will face new challenges ahead. But we have a God who is gracious and loving and He will work out His glory throughout this time. Keep praying, don’t let these times overshadow God’s glory in Jesus; the Cross of that Easter brings us life in it fullness.

As we pray together, we need to remember we have the truth in God, Jesus said in *John 14:V6* *Jesus answered, “I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.*

What does this mean? We have a God who we can come to in times of difficulties and times of joy. We are in times when we need to come to God and seek Him in and through the Bible and during our prayers daily and when we come back together we need to meet weekly in our Church communities because God never wanted us to be on our own but within a church community.