

Report for St Mary the Virgin Thornborough.(Parish Council)

Well, I am thanking God for the very positive and exciting year we have just had! For-

The formation of a fund raising group,

The introduction of a website,

The beginning of the restoration works (French drains & lime plastering)

The parish share paid in full,

Some great porch sales.

Strengthening of friendships

Uplifting services.

And all the flower arrangers, cleaners, and all who have helped to keep the church open and viable.

But most of all for God's blessing on the community we serve and worship with.

Services

- Mothering Sunday & Messy Craft+ joint Chapel service

Messy Craft saw the icing of cakes, making boxes, posies and bunting to show cracked water jars and flowers.

The Chapel Scramblers acted out the story which reminded us that though we are imperfect, God uses us to bless those around us.

- Easter

The Easter Service was for a second year split into two halves. The first half hour was for families and children, and the second half was for those who wish to stay for Holy Communion. As we had over 70 for the first half it seems to work.

- Songs of Praise

last year we changed the BCP evensong Service to Songs of praise. This service introduced the singing of favourite hymns and songs accompanied by choir, alongside some testimonies of how God had worked in people's lives. Paul Hodges, started off the series with telling about how God fitted into his life of farming, heavy horses and Opera singing. This year we began with hearing how the Kitcat club came into being from Christine Barrel. From the numbers who came it appeared to have gone done well

- WW1 Labyrinth

Maggie Beach devised and produced a wonderful labyrinth to commemorate the beginning of World War1. With poetry, prose, music and memorabilia the visitor was encouraged to walk around the church holding a poppy & reflecting on the different interpretations and experiences of war- from both those in the trenches those left behind and the particular impact it had on women.

On the Sunday, the Chapel and the church worked together. Katie Morris researched some of those families whose sons had gone to war.

She then wrote some short cameos which various members of the community read. *William Jackman, Benjamin Bryar (Carpenter) William King (Agricultural labourer - son of Gamekeeper) As well as an aspect on how war effected the feeding of the nation and the work of the Chaplains.*

- Pet service

Sue Ambrose led the first pet Service in Thorborough for many years. Mainly dogs came with their owners although there was one cat and two very well

behaved horses took up their place in the Chancel.(before it was closed off) A wonderful sight!

- Harvest

Great Messy Craft for harvest – with tractors being the theme.

A crowded church with two teams being challenged to make a tractor out of large cardboard shapes. It reminded us of how God wants us to work as a team, using the skills in order to accomplish more than we can on our own, and to share what we have rather than think of ways of scuppering the opposition.

The Lenborough Singers came and raised the sound levels, especially with the Impossible dream and We Plough the Fields and scatter.

Best number of tractors ever (6!)

- Food Bank

One of the key responses that came out of the service was when Jan Davies, with her CAB hat on told us about the need for food for those who are struggling in our region.

We therefore introduction a Buckingham Food bank box which was placed in the porch for donations. I have to say I am amazed at the communities' generosity as I take a bag of groceries most weeks to the Parish church. THANKYOU

- Remembrance

A very moving service with Euan Mitchell playing the last Post and Reveille. All were given a facsimile of St John's Gospel given to the soldiers in the trenches by the mission society.

- Christmas Carol Service

The service started with Ellie Parker and Emma Jones playing a saxophone duet of 'O come O come Emmanuel' as the light was brought into the dark church and put on the altar. Members of the community read the various lessons, interspersed with carols accompanied by Collin Place.(organ) Ellie and Emma ended the service with The First Nowell, before everyone had wine and mince pies.

- Christingle

Sandra Cosby led the full church service with Marion Taylor and friends playing the uplifting music

Sandra's family also played during the giving out of the Christingle, which many remarked was a real blessing , while Charlotte and Joshua North sang the first verse as a duet of Away in a Manger. Not a dry eye in the house!

Schools work + Fete

I continue to go into the school once a week for Assembly, which remains a highlight of my week.

Both the school and the preschool used the church for their Harvest and Christmas services. They also help with decorations for harvest, and include the church in their fete.

This year we had the Springall's Pit Stop in the Church, with scaletrix , Formula 1 tyre racing, Lego , design a racing car, & How well do you know your cars quiz. The parachuting teddy was sadly a disaster as the wind blew them all onto the church roof! I am sorry to say one is still there.

Chapel

We continue to enjoy our joint services with the Chapel, and are particularly grateful for them hosting all of the services in the winter months.

July, this year, saw me under canvas again with the Scramblers at their Summer camp- a beautiful sunny weekend in all senses.

Public Meeting

On May 6th 2014 we had a meeting to see if anyone was interested in restoring the Chancel roof. Over 70 came and by the end of the evening a Support Group to raise funds for the work was formed,. Other gifts were offered- Expertise in setting up and being the web master of a St Mary's website Faculty application, Help with project managing Building advice, Grant application. Offer to make a ' thermometer'

The Fundraising started off with an evening Auction of promises- which raised £14,000.

A standing order form to support the church was also set up, which again had a wonderful response. (See report Anne Payne)

And in February this year a Las Vegas evening gave an opportunity for the dancers, thespians and artists in the community to share their amazing talents. £5,000 was raised towards the roof.

Chancel roof

At the beginning of May 2015 Lauranne Bubbins was instructed as architect for Stage 1 (investigation)

Victor Wojcik is project manager

Sadly our first attempt at a grant was unsuccessful but there is more we can apply for.

Other fund raising

- Ride and Stride

Jo Bursell and Gay Kennedy organised the Ride and Stride to raise money for St Mary's and the Chapel. Both the Bishop and Archdeacon of Buckingham joia variety of two and four legged friends in a walk from Thornborough to Thornton and back. Great fun and not to be missed next year.

- Old Gaolers

The next event was The Old Gaolers who came to tell us chilling ghost stories on a dark and windy night - which again was enjoyed by all who came.

- In March Eliie Parker and her friend Emma gave us a wonderful 'saxophone ' concert . A pulsating and energetic evening in all senses!

Notice Board and Prayer Corner

Juliet Gilliland helped with both refreshing the notice boards and information in the church, alongside designing a Prayer Corner which has been much used. A real encouragement.

Conclusion

As you can see, from all the activity that has taken place this year we have been truly blessed. My prayer is that while we continue to build our friendships , raise money to restore and reorder the church, we will also go on discovering the true meaning of having a growing relationship with Jesus Christ.

For as it say in Psalm 127 - Unless the Lord builds the house, those who build it labour in vain.

So lets keep being open to where the Lord is building and join in...and I can guarantee that we will be amazed at the progress we will make.

St Mary's Fundraising Committee Annual General Meeting

In May 2014 we formed the St Mary's Fundraising Committee to try and raise the monies required to repair the church roof. We have held one highly successful event, a Promises Auction in August 2014. Over 60 promises were donated and the bidders at the auction were generous beyond our wildest hopes with an incredible £11,500 being raised and with a further £2500 to come in from gift aid in April 2015.

We also mail shot the village to ask for regular standing order donations and this has resulted in a number of people making a regular monthly contribution to the support fund.

In addition we have received several one off donations ranging from £100 to £5000 with another £10,000 promised for when the work starts. Alongside this we have sold bric a brac at the church porch sales and car boots.

Geoffrey Goodger made and erected a thermometer for the church yard, which shows the total amount raised so far. It is to the credit of the small band of committee members that such large sums of money have been raised within this small village and also goes to prove how willing Thornborough is to support its church and community.

We have also been looking at ways we might be able to go beyond repairing the roof and make our church a more usable space for the future and ensure future revenues to ensure our beautiful church is kept in good repair.

Gussie had discussions with the school and they had a number of ideas on how they would be able to use the space if changes were made and additions such as toilets and a kitchen were added.. We also plan a survey to test the level of support there might be for a community shop.