

Rector's Report 2019

¹⁰I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and the sharing of his sufferings by becoming like him in his death, ¹¹if somehow I may attain the resurrection from the dead. ¹²Not that I have already obtained this or have already reached the goal; but I press on to make it my own, because Christ Jesus has made me his own.

I'm grateful to Roger for having pulled together all of the in reports for this year's APCM into one handy booklet and I hope that in due course you'll work your way through it. It makes for really positive reading. And I hope you'll be able to see that we punch above our weight for the size of congregation that we are. We have reached most of our goals that we set out to achieve. But since not even St Paul reached all of his goals, we're in good company. We will do what he did and press on!

One of the brilliant things we do is Little Rocks. Do you know that over 75% of the churches in the Diocese of Portsmouth don't have any children attending. Now is that because there is not children's work present, or is it because there is a general feeling when parents come that their children are not welcome. Apart from school holidays Little Rocks is always ready to run whether or not there are children here. So thanks to Helen Waghorn, Anne Young and Ellie who meet to plan Little Rocks and run it on Sundays. Look in the APCM report at some of the things they do and learn because it's wonderful. It means that our children are growing both in spiritual depth.

It's not just about families of course, but I know our older members delight in them being around. Can I ask you to please pray for the school here in Curdrige. Because of government policies smaller schools are constantly under threat, constantly having their budgets squeezed year on year. It's no fun. No teacher has had to be made redundant, because they're constantly juggling. Despite all that, Sally and her team are not standing still wringing their hands. New ways of teaching mean that every child's needs are constantly being assessed. It's a wonderful place, but they could do with more of us going in to hear children read.

Messy Church. Last year's report indicated that without additional help to coordinate this vital ministry Messy Church might have to fold. I'm glad that we've done better than just helping it to survive. With Jenny Carkeet, Veronica Mason and Catherine Pickles coming on board as planners and coordinators Messy Church is on a good footing. Our way forward with everything we do in church is never to allow one person to take all the responsibility, but to make ministry enjoyable by working in small teams. Anne Daniels has very recently come on board as the food co-ordinator, sharing the load further. Anne's not going to make the food, so we need more people to make Shepherds Pie or Macaroni Cheese to feed the families that come. Even so Messy Church is a huge undertaking. Why? Because it's what is called in the trade a fresh

expression of church. We are effectively no longer 3 churches, but 4 BCDM. Assemblies a few days before to encourage parents to bring children mean that number at MC in Curdridge are really good.

The challenge this year is to reach out to the parents. The other day someone said to me, "You know Messy Church is not just for the Children." The challenge this year is to reach out to the parents who have given us permission to reach out with the church's offer them as adults. Moving away from paper based records to electronically registering families will help us to do this. This for us is evangelism. Not so scary after all. But what I would love to see is this: more of us hanging around at Messy Church simply chatting to the parents. Taking an interest in them. Being the face of the church. We don't have this at present. Imagine Coffee after this service, but without the people. BCDM.

This key word that I've not mentioned so far is "Growth." Jesus was ruthlessly concerned about growth, whether it was the fig tree, the vine, the mustard seed, and so on. The story Jesus told about the fig tree was about growth. Or rather, that was one half of the story. The other half was about ensuring the conditions are right for the fig's growth. Digging in manure would help. We have to be constantly asking ourselves what will help the church grow in Curdridge. We need to be asking: 1) Are we PRAYING for growth. 2) How do we give the church PRESENCE in our village 3) why do we PROCLAIM the gospel and how do the do it 4) How do we PERSUADE people to consider a faith journey? The 4 P's!

The structures we use organise the church are from a time when it was assumed that people would always be wanting to go to church, and that faith was being nurtured from one family and generation to another. Very rarely was talk of nurture or growth mentioned in PCCs. This has definitely changed with our PCC in Curdridge. For the last 6 years we've structured our PCC agenda to ensure we have time and space to think about the spiritual growth of existing members, how we might grow in numbers and connect better with our village. This is the first half of every PCC meeting and we call it Transforming Church. But we want more time to properly consider the growth aspect of church life. After all it is the only reason for it's existence. The Synodical Government Measure 1969 states: The PCC has the responsibility of co-operating with the incumbent in promoting the whole mission of the church, pastoral, evangelistic, social and ecumenical.

So with all that in mind we are going a step further and devoting 2 PCCs to assess ways to grow our church. We will be starting this process on Saturday the 18th May with a vision day bring all 3 PCCs together at the Shedfield Study Centre. We're also trying more effective communication between our churches with all of the wardens and me coming together for Morning Prayer and a meeting afterwards once a month - something which has already started.

Discipleship. Discipleship is the word we use to describe our intentional decision to follow Jesus. We can be disciples by coming to church – I mean most Sunday's not just when the sun is shining. But we become disciples when we make a conscious decision to learn more. The disciples were people who sat at the feet of Jesus (literally) and discovered that his teaching could help them to live well among others and with themselves. [Risen film in Easter] [HC in Cricket. on 12th May]

Lent this year is full of amazing opportunities with our Lent series exploring Death and Resurrection through icon painting, music, poetry, with art, photography and literature still to come. We will be continuing into Easter with the course jointly developed between the National Portrait Gallery and St Martin in the Fields Church London called Inspired to Follow. Exploring faith and Christianity through paintings of the resurrection experiences currently held at the gallery. Please come. We can arrange lifts if transport is an issue.

Ministry has to be fun. Our church has a huge contribution to make towards the social life of our village. Just look at the Caleigh which was a hugely memorable night for church and village, As was Elvis, The Royale Wedding Fayre A powerful witness to the presence of the church in Curdridge. Events like these draw goodwill towards the church and strength our community is obvious and many hidden ways. Our Mens Breakfast for BCD at the The Bugle in Botley regularly attracts 35 people plus.

Last year our Centenary Remembrance events were exceptional with poetry reading and the of course Remembrance Sunday itself helping the whole village to think about and honour the Curdrdge war dead war. The amazing exhibition of artifacts and display boards here in church meant that we did not forget them and the sacrifice they made. We have instigated plaques at each end of the churchyard to show that that it contains some of the graves of those 1.7 million who died in in WWI&II.

As ever, I can't single out everyone for individual attention for obvious reasons, I do want to say thank you to everyone who works so hard to make worship possible here in Curdridge and service to village through acts of kindness, generosity in time and materially.

Can I thank our churchwardens on behalf of us all for their efforts which I'm sure do not go unnoticed by any of us. A personal thank you to them for their support towards me. Of course, none of the growth can happen if it's not supported by proper accounting for money, thank you to David. As you know the diocese put us through a process to see if our church was no longer viable. I'm glad to say that we we've been formally discharged from this process and we're off the hook - the main reason for this is that the majority of you have shifted away from the plate and now make your financial contribution to St Peter's using the PGS. We're now in the process of inviting the whole village to do the same.

I don't want to finish without acknowledging the huge debt of gratitude that we owe to Bev who was our Parish Administrator. We're beginning to see, even with all the streamlining that's taking place in preparation for a new person, the enormous contribution she made to the life of our parishes. While the role still exists, she as a person is irreplaceable.

Jesus said I am the bread of life ... those who come to me will never be hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty. [APCM Lights]