

## Holy Cross Church – Report to Annual Meeting of Sampford Arundel (Civil) Parish Meeting

7<sup>th</sup> May 2019

The past year has been a good one at Holy Cross.

The church continues to be open every day for anyone to come in to pray, to sit quietly or to look at the interesting historical aspects of the building. We now have a small spiritual library on the table at the back and anyone is welcome to borrow books from that. The churchyard is beautifully maintained by David and Roland (thank you) and provides a tranquil place where people can come and remember those whom they love who are no longer with us.

We now hold services on three Sundays a month. The 8 o'clock communion service was becoming more and more difficult to sustain so we join with Thorne St Margaret on the second Sunday of each month; there is now a choice of Evensong (1<sup>st</sup> Sunday) an informal family service – which may include a christening (3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday) and a modern communion service (4<sup>th</sup> Sunday). Of course we also host weddings, funerals and memorial services.

Rev. Anthony Budgett continues to help out when I am unable to take services. On 16<sup>th</sup> June this year he will be celebrating the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of his ordination by presiding at a special Communion Service at 10 o'clock. Everyone is welcome to join us for that (and partake of cake afterwards).

Working through the year:

- Songs of Praise on the village green was as popular as ever – the young people's music group was 'enlarged' by the addition of Julie and John Atkins' music group from Willand. (Julie and John now live at Whiteball).
- Harvest Festival service at the end of September, was followed, as usual, by a wonderful harvest supper. If you have never seen the church decorated for harvest you really should! Anthony Budgett took the children's harvest service in church a few days afterwards.
- October 21<sup>st</sup> saw our (now) annual pet service. The pets were very well behaved (and so were their owners!)
- Remembrance Sunday was a special one as we marked the end of World War I. The congregation was double what it normally is on Remembrance Sunday. The bells were rung to commemorate the ending of the War; our team of bell ringers included several people who had learned over the previous few months so that they were able to ring for this important Sunday.
- Our Christmas Carol Service drew its usual large congregation as did Midnight Mass on Christmas Eve at 10 p.m. (midnight in Bethlehem).
- On Easter Sunday we had a special Family Communion Service in place of a more traditional one. This seemed very popular as the congregation increased by 25% over the previous year.

I really must thank all the people who make being vicar of this parish so enjoyable – the Churchwarden Roland and all the Parochial Church Council who work so hard; Terry who opens the church each day; our organists, the people who decorate and clean the church, under the able leadership of Zoe, Ian who does lots of repairs (who do you call when no-one can get into the tower to ring the bells because the lock has ceased to function?) – and many, many more.

One thing I need to mention: We have managed to raise much of the £88,000 needed for the repairs to the roof and the West End Gable. Work should start shortly, but we are still around £24,000 short. We continue to hold our normal fund-raising events – coffee mornings, cream teas etc. but in order to avoid having to borrow too much from the Diocese we should be really grateful if any of you who value our historic church building were able to contribute in any way, small or large, to our fundraising efforts.

God bless you all. Rev. Dr Maria Hearl