

## **ST MARY THE VIRGIN RIVERHEAD WITH DUNTON GREEN EVENTS COMMITTEE REPORT - APCM 2019/2020**

Compared to last year, we had a fairly uneventful 12 months in 2019/2020 with no big birthdays or retirements to celebrate!

Leading up to Easter 2019, we held our usual end of Lent service on Friday 12 April, followed by a frugal lunch in the church hall, in partnership with the North West Fellowship of churches in Sevenoaks.

A sunrise service and walk, followed by breakfast, was held on Easter Sunday. It is always an enjoyable and happy start to Easter Sunday celebrating the resurrection of Jesus.

Unfortunately the church quiz, due to take place in May, didn't, due to a lack of interest, which was a great shame. We will try again another year though. Perhaps we should advertise it well in advance of the date so that people are able to "save the date"!

There were a few events in June. The first on Saturday 8 June, when the Diocesan Celebration of Thy Kingdom Come was followed up with a trip to Rochester Cathedral, organised by Christine Smith. The church had also been decorated with lots of paper people representing friends and families of the congregation. They looked very effective and were a reminder to us all to pray for our friends and families, especially those who don't know Jesus. The second was a strawberry tea held by Margaret and Bryan Nicholas in their garden which was well attended and very enjoyable. Lots of scones, jam, cream and strawberries, all very good for the figure! The last June event was a stand for St Mary's Church as part of the Dunton Green Fun Day, where we served refreshments and advertised our church services and events.

As, sadly, Martin and Maggie had retired in March, the annual Vicarage Bring and Share Lunch, which had become a popular event, had to be replaced by a Church Bring and Share BBQ outside the church hall on Saturday 20 July. The weather was kind to us and a couple of the men showed off their barbecuing skills cooking lots of beef burgers and sausages, as well as some vegetarian options. I wouldn't say we were inundated with people but those who attended enjoyed the food and fellowship together.

The Riverhead Carnival again took place on Chipstead Common in September and St Mary's had a home grown and home-made stall. Unfortunately the goodies ran out very quickly, which in one way was a blessing as there was nothing much left over to get rid of, but it did mean there wasn't much to offer towards the end of the afternoon. Hey ho!

Harvest Lunch followed in October, prepared by the Sunday Club. It was very well attended and Sunday Club did an excellent job of serving everyone a three course meal of a soup starter, jacket potatoes with various fillings for the main course and apple pie or apple crumble for dessert. Yummy! Well done Sunday Club.

We held the annual All Souls service in November which was followed by tea and cake in the church hall for those in the Parish who have lost loved ones.

Of course, our renowned Christmas Tree Festival took place over the weekend of 7/8 December. Our best year yet for Christmas Tree entries and visitors. Also the charity collection took a record amount. There were some very quirky and imaginative Christmas trees. One in particular was made of plastic water bottles and lit up with cork lights. It was called the "recycled tree". Very inventive! The short carol service amongst the trees was also very well attended. It's wonderful to see so many families in church enjoying the carols and bible readings. We hope and pray that this event continues to be as popular and successful in the coming years.

During the last week of February 2020, several Estonian clergy had been invited to stay in the area and Janet and Barry Sharp had offered to host one of the clergy during their stay - Deacon Ülle Reimann. By all accounts, it was a very busy week for them all. The visit ended on Sunday 1<sup>st</sup> March and St Mary's held a service and a sandwich lunch in the church hall to say goodbye to Janet and Barry's visitor. Sadly, it was sparsely attended. However, it was good for those who did attend to be able to meet and chat with Deacon Ülle. Little did we know that this would be the last event before everything went into lockdown.

The Coronavirus pandemic, of course, has had a huge impact on everyone in 2020, eventually causing us to close the doors of our beloved church in March. It also meant that the events we had planned from March onwards had to be cancelled, including postponement of the APCM. We just hope and pray that it won't be too long before things return to a near normal life again and we are able to worship safely together in church with service books, hymn books and kneelers, plus the organist and choir.

As always, if anyone has any suggestions for events that could be included in the 2021 programme, or would like to join the team, please don't hesitate to contact one of us.

### **The Events Committee**

Margaret Nicholas, Margaret Curtis,  
Veronica Todd, Diane Williams,  
Jill Dickenson, Sarah Stott, Christine Smith