

## Churchwardens' Report on Fabric, Goods and Ornaments

As we conclude our second term of office, we are aware of how much we have yet to assimilate. As you will know, your churchwardens are officers of the Bishop of St Alban's, who expects us to support Derwyn, and relieve him of as many administrative burdens as possible so that he is able to concentrate on mission and ministry. We pray for, and with each other.

In addition, we represent all the people of our parish, not just the congregation or those on the electoral roll. They are all remembered at 9.30 am on Saturday mornings during "Prayers for the Community." We are most grateful to be supported by our PCC, the Finance Committee, and all of those who work quietly in the background to help us.

It has been an extremely busy year in church as we continue to welcome back schools, choral groups and societies, and one off recitals. Many of these events ran together, with a well - received organ recital programme, throughout the summer of 2023. Such events have generated important income for both St Michael's and local charities. Given the status of the church in the community, St Michael's is a popular venue. Stewards are always appreciated, and this is an enjoyable task should you wish to join us.

As churchwardens, we are charged with the responsibility of keeping this wonderful Grade I listed building in good repair. Our fellow wardens, Peter and Terry are instrumental in this. They spend many hours wrestling with exterior maintenance, water ingress, roof inspections, heating failures, and alarm and fire maintenance. Not to mention day to day emergencies. The boiler became troublesome in early 2024 and our thanks to Terry for getting it fixed so promptly, given the difficulty of finding plumbers in periods of cold weather.

Much preventative work takes place during the year, via working parties with Terry and Peter. Once again, we would appreciate more volunteers to help with both interior and exterior maintenance. Please approach any of the wardens to ask for more information. Our next working party will run in parallel with our **Parish Coffee Morning, Saturday, 8<sup>th</sup> June at 10am**

Having received our Quinquennial Report (five yearly) from the architect, we set about gathering quotations for the repairs that were marked as priorities. We are pleased to report that repairs to the plaster work, and other work in the chancel, near a roof boss, requiring scaffolding, have been completed successfully. We extend our thanks to all for their patience whilst the works were being carried out.

Cowell House remains tenanted, and thanks once again to Terry, who helps to keep it in good repair.

You will also be aware that, together with St Mary's Saffron Walden, we had some problems with the effects of lightning, after a particularly ferocious storm in early autumn. There was damage to much of the church electrics, from the office, the Tower, the organ to the sound system, which resulted in an extensive insurance claim. After much work, and negotiation, and our thanks to all those involved, our claim has recently been settled satisfactorily.

We have much to give thanks for: our devoted teams of cleaners and flower arrangers, often working side by side to keep the church sparkling clean, and beautiful: All working together to the greater glory of God.

We give thanks that Jonathan Muscroft- Inglis has joined us as an assistant warden, and Dotun as our Safeguarding Lead.

Our congregational numbers remain high, with Christmas and Palm Sunday being particularly well attended. It is good to see so many young families sharing worship. Easter's joyful Holy Communion 10am service was attended by more than 200 people. Our worship is vibrant and prayerful; inspired by choir, organ and all those who take part. It is uplifting to see the growth of Godly Play, with their inspirational helpers, guided and encouraged by Katharine. The delight with which the children make music alongside the hymns, speaks for itself.

Finally, it has been a great privilege to work with such devoted and committed people, to have such willing and gifted volunteers, to be able to share worship, and the opportunity to go deeper into God together. Derwyn, and clergy team, and you, our congregation, we thank you so much for guiding us, supporting us, and praying for us, for giving us your trust love and support.

The heart of being a churchwarden is responding to God's call, through God's people.

Gill Johnson and Claire Conquest

Churchwardens

May 2024