
ST MARK'S ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF PARISHIONERS 2009

REPORT FROM THE WARDENS ON BEHALF OF PARISH COUNCIL

Members of Parish Council

Rector	Chris Albany
Wardens	Barbara Booth, Alan Little, Susan Szalay
Members	Wesley Fairhall, Chris Hobart, Mere Hudson, Robyn Ingersole, Marilyn Melhuish, Eric Plumer
Treasurer	Jim Moore (member of Executive)

We give thanks that the past twelve months have seen St Mark's church continue to flourish and grow.

We regularly see and welcome new faces in our midst and parish giving has been sustained over the past year with a gratifying response to our financial need to refurbish the organ. Our Natural Church Development survey reflects this growth and health with an improvement in our overall score and in almost all quality characteristics.

First and foremost, we seem to be a warm and friendly place. This is reflected by our consistently very high NCD score for Loving Relationships and supported by many comments we hear around the parish. We have a well supported roster of cheerful welcomers for our services, and an increasingly popular and extended morning tea after church. Friday at Home continues as a monthly space to wind down, catch up and get to know people better. Our fundraising activities for the organ were also great fun and fellowship, with concerts and dinners jostling for time through the year. But we are not just party people!

We are better at connecting with people around us, reaching out with the good news of God's love in ways that meet community needs. This is shown in our NCD Need Oriented Evangelism score, which has simply soared in the past two years. Some specific activities in this area for 2008 were the Volunteers Service and Lunch, SMACKS (our kids' club), our annual Pet Service and constant and successful advocacy against extended hours for the King's Head Tavern. The talks and concerts for the organ fund also strengthen St Mark's as a focus of community in this area, as do old favourites like the Fete and Art Show. We have laid good groundwork to build even further on this with Connect 09, with initiatives such as Sisters on the Planet earlier this year. Watch this space!

In 2008 we also improved markedly in the NCD area of Effective Structures. We were put to the test by the need for the organ refurbishment, but we met and frankly rolled over this challenge, thanks to the generous giving of parishioners and the organizing talents (and performing talents) of so many at St Mark's – although Lois Little's energy and leadership were outstanding.

We have also worked within Parish Council to improve our effectiveness so we can expand parish activities without needing Chris to be the leader of everything. We have developed sub-groups with responsibility for key areas of church life, with a view to involving more people in areas for which they are gifted and interested. The groups and related NCD areas are:

- ✦ Connect 09, covering our outreach to our local community for this special year as a foundation for ongoing need-oriented evangelism, but also focusing on passionate spirituality through special services;
- ✦ The Socialists, responsible for social and special events, covering NCD strengths of loving relationships and need-oriented evangelism;
- ✦ A worship planning group, relating to NCD areas of inspiring worship services and passionate spirituality;
- ✦ Pastoral care group, relating in a different way to both loving relationships and need-oriented evangelism;
- ✦ Adults growing in faith, supporting NCD characteristics of holistic small groups, passionate spirituality, and need-oriented evangelism
- ✦ Family ministry, covering a wide range of activities, with initial focus on SMACKS, but with a view to supporting Sunday School, School Scripture, and Mums&Bubs;

✦ Parish property group, dealing with both day-to-day maintenance and planning major improvement projects when needed and affordable.

The aim is that these groups meet regularly, report back to Parish Council to check everyone is in agreement and coordinate activities, then get on and do what is needed. Clearly there may be some minor change in memberships and responsibility within the next Parish Council, but new members will be able to find their niche rapidly. Conveners are also encouraged to involve parishioners who are not on Parish Council.

We continue to be blessed with Chris's leadership and the gifted ministry of so many church members. Our worship services inspire us even as we branch out into different forms – quintessential services, monthly family services, pet service, mums & bubs. We have a range of small study groups and a developing partnership with St James Institute for further activities for growing in faith. All these will help us to work on our minimum NCD factor for 2009 – passionate spirituality.

One special mention is essential for this report to the parish. Following his retirement last year from Parish Council after 50 years service, Jim Moore is standing down as treasurer after 18 years in the job. Clearly he is not some fly-by-night! Jim has kept meticulous track of St Mark's finances even as he has negotiated his way through the often tortuous rulings of the diocesan regulations. Parish Council deeply appreciates his devotion to this church over so many years, in so many ways. Thank you, Jim.