

REPORT TO THE PCC BY THE YOUTH TEAM – FEBRUARY 2019

Team leader – Deborah Lock

Core Team Members – Lulu Button, Debbie Bradley, Jonathan Atkinson, Jane Anderson, Sue Gray

Other members – In addition to the above, many people are involved in leading and facilitating our youth-related activities. They are also considered part of our youth team. Without everyone's huge commitment these activities would not be possible.

Frequency of meetings – Twice a year

1. The team aims to provide **a range of Christian activities** for young people from babies to teenagers, in accordance with the attached Terms of Reference.
 - **Gems** playgroups every Monday and Tuesday morning – a substantial outreach effort.
 - **Young Vines**, our parent and child 'messy church' service with refreshments and crafts every Friday morning.
 - **Sunday Club and SPARKS**, on Sunday mornings (unless there is all-age worship and just during sermon on 3rd Sundays).
 - **Family Time** – initiative aimed at families with primary-aged children, once a month 3rd Sundays
 - **TAG** – the monthly youth group for 11+ year olds
 - The team of **altar servers**.

Leaflets with the term's activities are available for all Sunday youth activities so that parents know what is happening and new members can be informed. These can also be found on the website.

2. We've continued to organise Children's Church for 2nd, 4th and any 5th Sundays of the month beginning altogether with songs and story and then splitting into two different age groups: 4-7 years (Sunday Club) and 8+ years (SPARKS) for activities and discussion. Last term we explored the story of Creation, Noah, Tower of Babel and Abraham as well as celebrated key dates such as Remembrance Sunday when the Baptist church joined us, and Pumpkin Heroes (World Vision) for All Hallows. December involved our usual preparations for The Nativity Play Service. It was lovely to see our regular youngsters courageously and enthusiastically take on speaking roles, and yet this service is an opportunity for all youngsters who attend to be involved. This term we've selected key events and parables of Jesus from the Gospel of Luke. The children are always very eager to show their efforts and share their thoughts to the congregation during the Notices. Our 3rd Sundays continues with the younger group in the crèche room during the sermon, and SPARKS in the Church Hall when Jane leads them in more detailed Bible study. This pattern for 3rd Sundays is the next item under review. With many thanks to Lulu, Debbie and Jane for leading and preparing activities and all those who help with these sessions, including Sheila

Jackson.

3. Children and families continue to take an active part in 10am Worship on the 1st Sundays of the Month, including with readings and saying prayers, which provides them with the confidence and sense of belonging to the community of St Peter's. We also continue to have a flow of new servers joining the Servers rota, and value their involvement in our Communion services.
4. In September, TAG returned to being once a month with a programme list of activities as a handful of new members have joined us. This included a start-of-term pizza and games evening, an outing to Air Hop in October, a Light and dark fun evening in November, and concluded with a meal out at the tapas restaurant La Terraza in December. This term we've had a film evening at Jonathan Atkinson's house and will be making pancakes and thinking about Lent in March. Attendance is between 3 and 5 young people.
5. Family Time at 4 has continued on the afternoons of the 3rd Sunday of the month. For those attending, these have been enjoyable sessions with activities including bread-making, making candle-light holders, and seasonal trees, exploring themes of 'I am the bread of life', 'I am the light of the world' and 'there is a season for every activity under the heavens'. Attendance for most sessions is between 3 and 6 children with their parents, including families passing by and dropping in. The sessions last term involved teams of volunteers supporting Jonathan Atkinson and Heather Hohmann with welcome, storytelling, craft and teatime refreshments. We continue to publicise the sessions on social media and to the schools, as well as personally inviting those who left Young Vines at the end of last term and Welcome/Baptism families. The future direction of Family Time at 4 will be assessed once Jacqui joins us.
6. Young Vines is led by Sue Gray and meets weekly during term time. Martin's departure meant that we had to find leaders for his two sessions per month. We had a great response from the mums and the helpers, and together with Sue doing some extra we've managed to keep providing weekly sessions.

We continue to be blessed with great teams of craft providers, refreshment helpers, leaders and story tellers. Sessions include stories from the Bible, action songs and marching round the church. Crafts and juice and biscuits are an important part for the children, and tea/coffee and adult conversation for the parents/carers. We've encouraged Young Vines families to get involved in other church activities e.g. Family Time, Morning Worship, but haven't been very successful. We will continue to work on this!

Please pray for us all as we continue to plan and deliver our Young Vines programme, and attract under 5's and their parents/carers.

7. Our relationships with Bell Farm and Burhill primary schools continue to flourish and, despite the reduction in clergy resources during the vacancy, Jonathan and Sue are managing to deliver Bible-based assemblies in both schools most weeks. We continue to make contributions to RE teaching at Bell Farm and Year 3 visited for their annual church tour and 'mock baptism' in October. Both schools joined in with our Harvest collection for the foodbank. Burhill continues to use St Peter's for its special services, and this year Bell Farm also held a Christmas service in church. This was a great success and the school has asked that it should become an annual event.

We were recently asked whether any of our people would be willing to get involved in supporting the local primary schools, and three members of our congregation have already volunteered to provide classroom support (listening to children reading etc) and another member is actively exploring the possibility of becoming a school governor.

Phil Fellows, the Pastor of Hersham Baptist Church, has also recently become a governor at Bell Farm, and we have agreed that he will provide additional resources for our Christian input into the primary schools.

As previously reported, our work at Three Rivers Academy (formerly RES and Rydens) is somewhat stalled at the moment because of lack of drive from their RE department, and of course their main focus has been on settling into their new building and pressing for improved academic standards. We are, however, continuing to maintain links with the Senior Management Team, which will enable us to press forward when the time is right.

It was very pleasing that all three schools referred to above, and Burwood Pre-School, were very keen to reinforce our relationships by having members of their top teams taking an active and visible part in welcoming Jackie at her Induction Service.

8. From the moment Gems returned early in September we have had a never ending stream of families come through the door. Since Christmas the numbers, on a Tuesday morning in particular, sometimes brings us to capacity. The corridor, kitchen, and end of the hall has a look of Mothercare in the sales!!

Gems has a very loyal team of volunteers and paid helpers without whom we couldn't manage. There is a lot of planning, crafting, accounting, listening, cooing, mopping spills and tears, refreshment making, clearing, cleaning, tidying and generally making the group and hall run smoothly. Their help is invaluable and it is a joy and bonus that a culture of support has grown up and we regularly socialise.

It has always been a bonus to welcome the Ministry team when they are able to pop in, as it reinforces the link between the church and community. Having Sheila S. working in the hall on Tuesdays for the last year has been lovely and her visits are valuable and sensitive. Advent was celebrated this Christmas by us telling the nativity story with knitted figures and a stable and all children received a nativity sticker pack

to take home. We collected food at Harvest for the food bank, money for Children in Need in November and ended the year with two very successful parties, with St. Peter's providing a great Santa from our pews! We celebrated our opening 21 years ago in January with lots of cake, fun and balloons. It's incredible to think some of our very first children are now graduating or leaving school. We continue to squeeze more and more families in; "If only the hall had expandable walls" I am often heard to say...However no one complains.

Gems is perpetually promoting events, services, Young Vines etc. at St. Peter's, and in the Autumn we tried introducing a prayer tree, somewhat unsuccessfully. I feel people are just too busy at Gems to take it on board but we are frequently asked about the church, services, baptism, etc and it's brilliant having Sarah just along the corridor.

Gems runs to serve the community and I (Lulu) feel proud to think it does it well.

Please pray for all the youth activities, the leaders, and for the young members so that they are nurtured in their Christian discipleship and spiritual relationship with God.

And pray for our commitment to action "**Transforming church, transforming lives**"

Goal 3 Growing youth and children's ministry:

"for every parish to develop a safe, attractive and spiritually-enriching children's and youth ministry, encouraging sharing of resources where appropriate."