

St Mary's Monthly Message

October 2023



A Note From David

BY THE RECTOR

Dear Church Family,

In this newsletter, we are looking at the plans that the leadership of St Mary's have agreed, after prayer, that takes the form of a Strategic Plan. We all know that clarity of vision is very important and St Paul certainly knew this and encouraged others to have this in mind when, using the illustration of an athlete, he wrote, 'But one thing I do: forgetting what is behind and straining towards what is ahead, I press on towards the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenwards in Christ Jesus' (Philippians 3: 13,14). Paul knew the importance of being focused and not being distracted, and he also knew that, whilst we need to be led by the Holy Spirit, God has given us our minds to discern the path God is leading us on. This, in turn, leads to all God's people being happier, as their vision and purpose is clearer. For when someone suggests an activity or an event, we can simply ask, "Is this in line with our priorities and where God is showing growth and fruitfulness?" If it is, then we can do it, and if it isn't, then we can direct it elsewhere.

As with the vision that God gave to Moses or Joshua or Nehemiah, to enable them to lead the people of God strategically and do some specific things, so God continues to lead us today. Whether it was God calling Moses to lead the people of Israel out of slavery, or when God made succession planning clear and that Joshua was to be the next leader, or when Nehemiah was called to work with others rebuilding the walls of Jerusalem, God shows us that is not averse to planning! And when Nehemiah took a strategic approach to reconstruct Jerusalem's walls, he needed to evaluate their status, calculate the expenditure, and appoint leaders and helpers to help him complete the task. In short, each prayerfully followed a plan, and wasn't Jesus' ministry all part of God's plan to bring redemption to mankind as Jesus came to "seek and save the lost." (Luke 19:10). Proverbs 16:3 promises: "Commit to the LORD whatever you do, and he will establish your plans." So, we should prayerfully set goals and pursue them with the confidence that God will help us reach those goals, as we trust him day by day. Together let's seek to be rooted and fruitful in the days to come.

Every blessing, David

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*St Mary's Strategic
Plan explained*

In Other News...

Dates for your Diary

*Prayers for this
month*

Introducing St Mary's Strategic Plan

In Lewis Carroll's Alice in Wonderland, Alice came to a fork in the road and saw a Cheshire cat in a tree. She asked, "Which road should I take?" The Cheshire cat replied, "Where do you want to go?" Alice answered, "I don't know." "Well," said the cat, "it doesn't matter. Any road will get you there."

This is why our leadership team, the PCC, is pleased to share with our church family the Strategic Plan for St Mary's. It aims to set out our priorities as a church, to focus our energy and resources, and to ensure that we are working towards the goals that God intends for us. In other words, it will help us know where we want to go. Our key priorities for a three year period, after which the plan will be reviewed, and set out below in an abridged form, arose from prayerful discernment by PCC members who were asked to choose the areas that they considered the most important for our church.

This process resulted in three key strands, each with three key objectives that we as a church, will be working towards over the next three years. Each strand has a "Strand Champion", a key leader who will take responsibility for ensuring that we are working towards the objectives.

Strand 1: Making Disciples, Bible teaching and Prayer

Champion: Andrew Walmsley

Objectives:

- to develop deeper personal discipleship
- more members of our Church Family engage in Bible teaching and prayer through Life Groups
- more members of our Church Family are supported in developing a meaningful prayer life.



Strand 2: Children, Youth and Families

Champion: Anna Pile

Objectives:

- St Mary's Kids and their families are supported towards a growing relationship with Jesus Christ
- positive relationships with Princes Risborough schools are developed and maintained
- relationships with families in our community are developed.



Strand 3: Missional Communities

Champion: Sue Hughes

Objectives:

- building missional communities with those who would not engage with traditional forms of church
- empowering these missional communities to make and develop disciples
- to prayerfully develop these communities to listen, love, build community, share Jesus, build church, and repeat the journey.

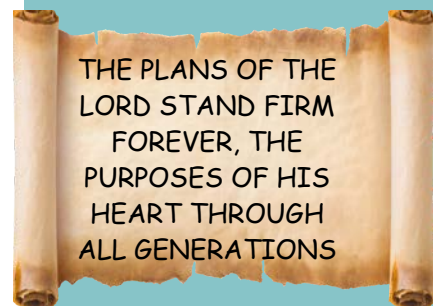


You may ask what difference will this make to us? The purpose of the Plan is to help us stay focused on our goals, and hopefully less distracted by projects that do not meet God's purposes for St Mary's. A small group will look at proposed projects to help guide them towards our "Strands" and then, in turn, we will all share a single, forward-focused vision.

If you would like to know more or get involved, please contact Louise Fell
mrsloisefell@icloud.com



Planning through Post It notes and Prayer



PSALM 33:11

Late News!

Ride and Stride 2023. Many congratulations to Michael Hoey for raising a magnificent £1,465, by cycling to 46 churches. Half of the money is for St Mary's church funds and half for the Bucks Historic Churches Trust. Thank you also to the team who welcomed 46 riders and walkers to St Mary's through out the day.

In other news...

At their September meeting the **PCC voted to support the following charities** for the year 2024:

Major Award (3 years) – St Pauls Church and Bryansford Parish Church of Ireland
Two small rural parish churches which need revitalization. Revd Pat Kerr (our former Curate) has a desire and focus for families ministry and outreach to the community. The grant funding from St Mary's will be used for outreach and mission projects.

Minor Awards (1 year):

- A Rocha UK, Caring for Creation – a learning community of churches aiming to care for God's world
- Hamlin Fistula UK – supporting the Addis Ababa Fistula Hospital in Ethiopia
- Mercy Ships – hospital ships providing free healthcare to some of the poorest countries in the world
- One Can Food Bank and Trust – providing weekly food parcels to those in need in our community
- The Princes Centre Ltd – day care for the elderly and adults with learning disabilities
- Project Possible – helping overseas communities to develop sustainable working lives.

This year **Harvest will be celebrated on 1st October**. We will be collecting for One Can so please bring your donations of food if possible. Please see the website onecantrust.org.uk for the items most urgently needed.

CTR event - **Conversations around Climate Change** 8 October at 6pm in the PR Baptist Church. David Gregory, Baptist Missioner for Science and Environment, Leader of 'Messy Church Does Science' and speaker with 'God and the Big Bang' a forum for exploring science and faith. After the talk there will be the chance for questions and refreshments will be served. All Welcome.

The next **St Mary's Unplugged** will be on Sunday 1st October at 6.30pm. An opportunity to unplug from the world around us and seek God's presence as we spend an extended time together in worship, through song, a brief message and prayer. Led by David and Tim Horton.

Could you serve drinks and biscuits and chat to, and possibly pray with, teenagers as they come out of school on a Wednesday afternoon for an hour? If so, contact Lisa Dollery at **Wycombe Youth for Christ**: lisa@wycombeyfc.org.uk or speak to Louise Fell.

Would you be interested in **confirmation or adult baptism**? If you are curious about how to take your faith further in one of these ways contact Andrew Walmsley (curate@stmarysrisborough.org.uk)

Hosts are still needed for **Ukrainian refugees**, both for new arrivals and for those who are ready to move from their original sponsor. Also, if anyone has or knows of property that could be let to Ukrainians, please contact **Lizzie Thomas-Davies, Trustee of the Ukraine to Chilterns Charity**. The Ukraine to Chilterns Charity and the council are working together to support the landlord, Ukrainians and their sponsors to enable the move to independent accommodation. Contact details: lizzie@thomas-davies.com or phone 07879420264.



Pat Kerr, and his wife Jenni,
St Paul's Castewellan and
Bryansford Parish Church



Harvest Donations to
One Can Trust



Conversations around
Climate Change



Hosts for Ukrainian refugees

Sign up for our weekly e-news by going to the homepage on our website. Receive all the news from St Mary's direct to your phone!

Dates for your Diary

Monthly Lunch Club: Wednesday , 4 October 10:00am to 3:00pm.

Deanery Confirmation Service, Sunday 8 October, 4pm, Dinton Church

Climate Change Open Evening: Sunday 8 October, 6pm, Baptist Church

Bereavement Drop-in: 3:00pm 9 October in the Chapter House.

Tea for All: Sunday 22 October, 2.30pm in church.

Time to Remember Service: Sunday 29 October, 3pm in church.

Light Party for children & families, Tuesday 31 October, 4-6pm in church

Youth Club: at Baptist Lower Hall Thursdays in term time 5:30-7:00pm.

Youth Alpha: every Tuesday (except 24th) from 7.30pm to 9pm in the Connexions Cafe, Elim Church.

Play Cafe: every Tuesday during term time from 9.30am to 11am in church.

Services at St Mary's and St Peter's

Holy Communion at 8am (*said*)

Parish Communion continues at 9.30 on Sundays in church and live streamed to your home. See the St Mary's website for the link to our YouTube channel.

Live@St Mary's all age service at 11.15 in church. Kid's Church welcomes children to join them for activities during this service - contact the Parish Office for further info on sessions.

Mid week Holy Communion is on Wednesdays at 10.30 followed by coffee.

3rd Sunday in the month (15 October at 6pm), **Harvest Evensong & shortened HC, St Peter's Church, Ilmer.**

For your Prayers this month

A Prayer for God's Guidance

Heavenly Father

You know every decision we need to make and every challenge we face.

Please forgive us for the times we try to make decisions without your guidance.

Give us your strength, wisdom and direction.

Amen

A Prayer for Peace

Dear God, Our world is torn with war and violence. We pray that you provide this world with a peace that is only found in you.

We pray for those who are suffering and that you provide them with both physical and mental healing.

Amen.

We remember: Averil and David Stephenson and family following Averil's mother's death in September; and the family of Francesca Purssell.

We uphold in prayer: The Seward Family, Kaye Watters, Erica Killoh, David Coleman, Malcolm Cloutt, the Rolfe family, Claire Barbary, the Drewett family, Ann Trollope and all those bereaved, suffering ill health or facing operations.

Please pray for:

- all those in our community who find themselves in food poverty
- our leadership team as they step forward in faith to implement the Strategic Plan
- the leaders and young people attending Youth Alpha, as they begin to explore faith together

Copies of this newsletter are available in Church for you to collect and pass on to friends and neighbours.



Join our weekly prayer meeting on Zoom every Wednesday at 9am - Zoom invite available from the Parish Office .

We encourage everyone to pray for one another. Ask the Parish Office if you would like to receive details of prayer requests.

Prayers for Ukraine: are held weekly on zoom - Fridays @ 9.00am. Zoom Link - Meeting ID: 714 5146 5358 Passcode:262GY9

*Contact the Parish Office
parishoffice@stmarysrisborough.org.uk*

*Telephone: 01844
273300*