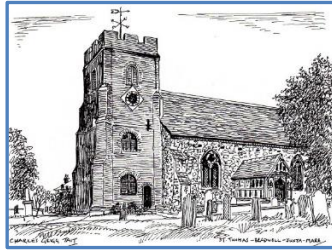


Church Reports



Church Report

2019 was such a good year with so many services, confirmations and social events, even coming into 2020 we had Beetle Drive and Pancake evening, but then came the Lockdown! All our Easter services, our weekly worship, social events and all the 100-year celebratory services and events at the Chapel all had to be cancelled! What strange times. But despite this we have continued with other forms of worship that brought us closer together as a church and as a benefice. It has also involved those who are only occasionally able to come to church now being able to worship in their own homes whilst still feeling part of our church. As time has gone by, we have all learnt to adapt our worship and church activities to suit the situation, with outside services in the churchyard, flowers being again arranged, Bells being rung, many being involved with reading the bible readings, writing the prayers and taking part in the online services that have held us all together. What a lovely rogation service we had when we were able to once again see members of our communities, even if it was on a screen. Our website which was having about 70 unique visitors and 82 visits a month in January was suddenly up to 797 unique visitors and 1415 visits a month in April. Thanks to all who helped in these services and activities that have helped us through these times. Thanks also to Laurie who helped so much with the YouTube input etc. We have had, and still have, so many lovely messages about these services each week.

David and Theresa Churchwardens

Deanery Synod Report

The Deanery Synod met last June and then again in November 2019, we were due to meet again in March but this was postponed due to COVID 19 and the lockdown. Eventually we met via zoom in July and another zoom meeting is being planned for November this year.

Back in June last year our speaker was the Very Rev'd Nicholas Henshall, Dean of Chelmsford. He gave us a brief outline of his background and his work in Chelmsford. He then talked about ministry and what a church is and what the vocation of the Church is.

At the November meeting Rev. Brigid Main gave a presentation entitled "Celebrating 'sacred' space". Mrs Irene Allen was elected Synod Secretary and Peter Baiden was elected to the Standing Committee. The Treasurer gave a report which stated that the Synods finances are healthy due to a decrease in costs although the Parishes contribution has

remained the same since at least 2003. After Rev. Peter spoke about the Southminster food bank a donation of £350.00 was agreed. The chairman (Rev. Peter) spoke about MMU's and that the plan was still in 'transition'.

The zoom meeting, in July, had John Orchard as the speaker. He works for the CMS (Church Mission Society) and so he told about the Society and how it is needed in particular in Africa. John ended by saying he would love to come and speak to individual churches either in person or through a zoom meeting. We ended with a discussion on the reopening of churches and APCM's.

Theresa Reed

Flower Group Report

The Church flowers have again looked beautiful over 2019-2020 with amazing displays at Easter, Harvest and Christmas 2019. We now have 17 regular arrangers and others who help at Church festivals.

The Flower and Bells festival in May 2019 was a great success, with amazing flower displays portraying Church Music carried out by so many talented people. It was a great village event that involved many people and raised a large amount of funds for the organ restoration. From March 2020 we had the lockdown but still managed to show Easter Church flowers to music online, with a lovely Easter display by Nancy behind the locked glass doors.

In March we started a Flower Arranging course and 10 signed up for an eight-month course, but after the first session we went into lockdown, when possible it will continue. The church was without flowers from Easter till the end of June when the rota started again and the church was open twice a week. Thanks to all the arrangers who work so hard for the church and its lovely that the group are all such great friends and are supportive to each other.

David Thorpe

Bell Ringing report 2019-2020

Throughout 2019 we were pleased to be able to ring for all Services, and of course enjoyed our Friday practices. We took part in various ringing events organised by the Essex Association. In May the Flower and Bells festival gave us an opportunity to explain more about bellringing. About this time we experienced a 'bus stop situation. You wait years for new ringers to come along, then Kim Eyre and Ron Galloway independently joined our band. Both made excellent progress until.....But recently we have arranged a socially distanced practice for them, and they have proved that as with riding a bike you don't forget how to do it.

We lost two of our number. Paul Thurgood moved away to Great Totham, and we wish George Welham well in his apprenticeship – he keeps in touch.

Bellringers don't allow a minor pandemic to stop them. Once lockdown eased we worked out how 5 of our 8 bells can be rung within regulations. We have rung for a Service and indeed for a wedding. We shall not be silenced.

As always, even during this strange year, I have continued to be humbled by the love and support and friendship from my colleagues in the tower – in spite of not being there physically.

Brian Clayden Tower Captain

Magazine report

St. Thomas's Church Village View Report for 2019 – 2020

The Village View for Bradwell-on-Sea and St. Lawrence has had a busy year with most months being a 24-page magazine. During the year we have had new articles being written from individuals and groups within the two Parish's.

There are three Editors and Proof Readers who edit Village View on a three-monthly cycle and Distributors who distribute Village View to your door each month.

During the Lockdown since March we have not been able to print the magazine until this month which has made it difficult for some readers to read it on the Website, but this month we were happy to be able to print it and circulate to all our readers.

The Village View remains free to our readers and last year we thank the person who covered the printing cost. Roger Scurrall

End of Reports