

Church Reports



St Thomas Church, Bradwell on Sea

APCM – May 2021

Rectors Report

2020 was a difficult year, not just for us, but the whole world. As we learn to live with Covid-19, we are very grateful that we have a vaccine to help us live it and to start to live our lives again. In 2020, we managed to open for a short while between July and December, but these were only monthly services, due to the local Benefice decision to have one service in the Benefice of 4 church's once a week.

We have sadly had a number of funerals in the parish and we continue to support parishioners during this difficult time.

Due to the generous giving, we managed to pay the parish share. We also give thanks to David, Theresa, Roger and Laurie who have looked after the church, churchyard and cemetery and who filmed the online services and thanks to others who also contributed to the weekly online Benefice services, with some services held at the Chapel as well as the church. This has been a new ministry for us and one I hope we can continue with in some way.

As we look forward to open up again at Pentecost on 23 May, we do so in a positive note that the majority of us have been vaccinated and that we have a number of weddings in 2021 and we hope that we can put on some events in the church, care home and chapel in 2021 and start to get back to some kind of normality. We are also looking to start to become an Eco Church by 2030. We have also had a change in our safeguarding officer who is now Graeme. We thank Richard for his service as safeguarding officer over the past years. A thank you to David and Theresa too for the work of our online Easter Messy Church.

Also, a thank you to Brigid for helping the church at Latchingdon with their services and our online services too. I have also been providing the school with weekly collective worship videos and attending online school governor meetings. Hopefully, we can continue our assemblies and school church services from September. A decision regarding the school pilgrimage and the Diocesan pilgrimage will be made in late April. There has also been a change in the Governing Board of the school becoming more focused and joint with other schools, of which I will not be part of. However, there will be a new community board which

myself and the Head will be setting up in due course, which aims to bring the school, church and community closer together and can feed issues into the Governing board.

A big thank you to the flower ladies for their wonderful efforts for some services and to Brian and ringers for ringing at special times during the pandemic, remembering those who have sadly died.

Revd Steven Poss

9th April 2021

Churchwardens Report

Over the last 7 months we have only had one service in church at that was the All Souls service, which was well attended and we were even able to sing standing apart in the chancel. The winter lockdown then started and the next time we were able to meet was in December standing apart in the Churchyard singing carols around the Christmas Tree. Again well attended with nearly 50 people of all ages rejoicing in singing carols and the ability to meet in a group. Then the lockdown got stricter so the next time we met was in the churchyard for a short Good Friday service, followed on Easter morning when we were joined by the Bishop of Bradwell at St Peters Chapel with 30 people. Thanks to the Othona Community for the fire and breakfast.

Since we recorded Christmas Carol service and distributed it via YouTube we have recorded services every week. We appreciated it was not the same as meeting in fellowship together but it was the next best thing. So many people have participated in the services from the four parishes the filming often felt like a service where all enjoyed the fellowship of the event. It was lovely to see the children from the parish and the school taking part, especially with the lighting of the advent ring and the Epiphany service. Several people have commented that watching the services on their televisions was as good watching Songs of Praise, well done Laurie with the hymn lyrics. With some weeks we have been getting over 100 viewings, so we appear to be getting something right.

With the Bishop telling us early last year that after the lockdown we perhaps shouldn't bring everything out of the cupboard that we put away at the lockdown and after the success of the recorded services we are looking at a new service plan across the benefice to bring our worship into the 21st century and reflect the communities we now live in, with perhaps spreading our worship over the week rather than just Sundays. For the rest of 2021 we will be trying out new things to see what the congregations might like. Thanks to all who help in any way to keep our church alive in our community.

David and Theresa Churchwardens

Deanery Synod Report

In the last year the Deanery Synod has taken place via Zoom. We met in July and November in 2020 and again in March 2021. The speaker for July was John Orchard who works with the Church Relations Team and for CMS. The aim of CMS (Church Mission Society) is to get churches involved, praying for and being inspired by mission.

In November the Diocesan Environment Group spoke. They were our Archdeacon Elizabeth Snowden, James Gilder and Rev Julia Lacey. Their aim was to help Parishes become more environmentally friendly and reduce their carbon footprint. Archdeacon Elizabeth talked about the Energy Footprint Tool which we ought to download and complete. We then approved the constitution of the Maldon MMU.

At the March meeting Rev Canon Mike Power, the Mission & Stewardship Advisor for the Bradwell Area spoke to us. He talked about giving within our parishes giving a variety of figures. For the future we need to focus on 'Generous God, Generous Discipleship'. He agreed to come and talk to PCC's about Parish Giving. In other matters the Dengie MMU was progressing well and a presentation was planned to be given at the June meeting. Rev Begley mentioned the Energy Footprint Tool being on the Church of England website if it wasn't on the Diocesan one.

Theresa Reed

Flower Group Report

The Church flowers have again looked beautiful over 2020-2021 with amazing displays at Easter, Harvest and Christmas 2020 and Easter 2021. We still have 17 regular arrangers and others who help at Church festivals.

In June we hope to restart the Flower Arranging course which was stopped last year in March after the first class. All are keen to restart the lessons next month.

Thanks to all the arranges who work so hard for the church and they are all looking forward to the future displaying their art in the church and chapel.

In 2022 from Thursday 2 June, we will see a four-day weekend to celebrate Her Majesty The Queen's Platinum Jubilee, I can see another flower festival coming!

David Thorpe

Bell Ringing report 2020

A sad report this year – although there has been some activity. As Covid regulations relaxed somewhat we were able to ring just five bells on two occasions, for a service in July and then for a wedding in October. More recently the half-muffled tenor has been tolled in memory of over 100 thousand lost lives, and then marking the death and funeral of Prince Philip.

We have not neglected practice and learning. Again as regulations allowed, three of our ringers were able to visit Prittlewell's Saturday morning ringing school on two occasions. This was considered very profitable. We were also able to give our two newer ringers the opportunity on one occasion to test what they had been told – bell ringing is like riding a bike – once learned, never forgotten.

Less time ringing gave the opportunity to enter details of the various peals and quarter peals rung on our bells in the Ringing World's database "Bellboard", so all have access to this information.

Nor has our social life been neglected - using zoom meetings we have kept in touch – with the benefit that we were able to renew contact with the New Zealand friends who used to ring with us.

And now we look forward to being able to meet more often. Bellringers have a strong community spirit and feel it important to help local hostelrys cope with these difficult times. We so hope it will not be too long before bells can ring out again over Bradwell. Our first ring will be on muffled bells, in memory of all that has happened to so many people. But then.....the muffles will come off, and I do know where the tower cork screw is.

Brian Clayden – Tower Captain

Magazine Report

Village View

The village View in 2020 was only printed and distributed for 6 months during the year due to COVID 19, the magazine was however produced and was published on the Church Website.

I would like to thank all who contribute articles each month, and if you have news or would like to contribute to Village View we will be pleased to publish your article.

I would also like to thank the three, Editors and Proof readers and Distributors in distributing Village View.

We are looking for three Distributors to take on areas of the village, if you have time and would be willing to take this on please talk to Roger.

Cemetery Report

During the year the Cemetery has been kept in a tidy state, with the cutting of the older part being carried out in February, June and October around the growing season and after the flowering of the primroses and bluebells.

During the winter months the perimeter hedge of the new part of the cemetery was cut back, self-sown blackberry bushes removed and the lime tree shoots removed.

It is very pleasing that the many visitors that visit the cemetery are pleased that the cemetery is looked after and at the same time the nature in the cemetery is respected, of flowers, birds and insects, rather than being allowed to grow wild.

Thank to Paul Stinson who looks after the cemetery during the year

End of Reports