

Treasurers Report for the Year Ended 31 December 2010

Accounts for the year ended 31 December 2010

2010 has seen many issues arise in the finances of St Francis.

During the year it became apparent that our income for 2011 would be much reduced from the loss of several of our regular givers throughout 2010 and that our expenditure would be increased due to a variety of reasons which were outlined in the Stewardship Campaign Brochure issued to you all in February. The PCC recognised the gravity of the situation during 2010 and in advance of their occurrence took action to try to reduce the impact of these issues. A full Spending Review was carried out and areas where savings could be made were identified. Our Charitable Giving arrangement was reviewed and amended. Members of the congregation to reduce capital expenditure carried out refurbishment work. All of this was in an effort to build a “cushion” in 2010 for the rigours to come of 2011. This we managed to some extent.

The surplus of income over expenditure in our General and Hall Funds totalled £11,590 in 2010. Given that our expenses amounted to more than £11,300 per month in 2010 we have managed to build a cushion of one months' expenditure for 2011. Whether this is enough remains to be seen.

I mentioned earlier the amendment of our Charitable Giving policy. This resulted in our tithing reducing to £6,800 in 2010. However our various charitable appeals – Lent/Harvest/Christingle – raised a further £5,500 which gave us a total for our Charitable Giving of c.£12,300 which equated to just under 11% of our regular giving for the year. It will be our continued aim under the new policy, to donate an amount equivalent to 10% of our regular giving to worthy causes.

The rental of our premises saw almost a 20% rise in our income from this source and fundraising events yet again played a major part in our finances during the year with net proceeds to St Francis of over £5,600. A huge thank you is due to all involved in these events and also congratulations to the magazine team who saw advertising revenue exceed £1,000 for the first time during the year.

The other major event during 2010 was the sale of the property at 12 Downfields, Welwyn Garden City and receipt of our share of the proceeds under the equity share scheme we were party to with the Church Commissioners. The property was sold for £240,000 in November 2010 with St Francis receiving c. £75,000 as our share.

The Youth Work Fund was partly financed in 2010 by grants received from the Diocesan Mission Fund and the Carpenter Trust. Regrettably these grants have now reached their end but further applications to secure grant funding for the

future have met with some success. A £2,000 grant from the Verulam Trust has been secured for the current year and efforts continue in this direction.

This is the last time that the Accounts will be presented in this form as the finance package we have used over the past 10 years is no longer being supported and kept up to date. A new system has been running alongside the old system for 15 months now to ensure its correctness and we are now in a position to adopt it totally. It is a package recommended by the Diocese and conforms to all Charity Commission requirements.

Again I would say that my position as Treasurer is made so much easier because of the willing assistance given by several other people. These reliable volunteers have my sincere thanks for all their efforts during the year. They are:-

- Patrick Vaughan – Assistant treasurer
- Richard Blanch – Church Membership Fund Treasurer
- Margaret Ryder – Chief Cashier
- Keith Crabb and Craig Lowes who handle the recovery of the Gift Aid Tax from H M Customs and Revenue

Finally I would like to thank Femi Bart-Williams who once again undertook the roll of Independent examiner on a no fee basis and I am pleased to report that he has expressed his willingness to do so again for 2011.

Stewardship Campaign

At the time of writing this report the results of our Stewardship Campaign – “Balancing the Books” are not known so the budget for 2011 has been compiled without taking account of any results from the Campaign.

Budget

The 2011 budget presented refers to the Unrestricted Funds only as these are the funds available to meet the Church running costs and have no restriction placed on them. It reflects the anticipated reduced income and increased expenses detailed in the Stewardship Campaign, which brings out a projected deficit of £9,000 for the year compared to a surplus of £11,500 in 2010.

In addition to this deficit we have to raise a further £3,000 to cover the costs of our Youth Work in 2011.

This will be a difficult year for St Francis but the action taken by the PCC last year to create a cushion will be of assistance to us. However the real problem facing St Francis is the reduction in the number of regular givers and the reduction in that regular giving. By the time of the APCM the results of the Stewardship Campaign will be known and I shall advise then of the effect that this has had on the 2011 budget figures.

Dougie Agnew, Treasurer, March 2011

Churchwardens' Report on the Fabric, Goods and Ornaments of the Church 2010-11

This has been a comparatively quiet year following the extensive work done to the roof and exterior in 2009-2010. The coming of a new Priest-in-charge has given us the opportunity to look through fresh eyes at the space and worship possibilities at St. Francis, but Jenny understandably wants to spend time becoming familiar with everything that happens in the Church before considering significant changes. However, the font was moved to the East end soon after Jenny's arrival, and the pulpit and lectern are now being used regularly at Sunday services. We're grateful to the Friends of St. Francis for updating the Clergy board in the nave and adding Jenny as Priest-in-charge.

Much of the work done in the Church this year has been done by a wonderful group of volunteers who have given large amounts of time to decorating and cleaning major parts of the church and meeting areas.

The Rural Dean commented on this when he carried out the Archdeacon's Visitation in September. All was found to be in order during this annual 'inspection'.

In August, under the supervision of Ron Claxton, a group using scaffolding and pulleys lowered the St.Damiano cross in the chancel so that Eileen Potter and her team could clean it and make any necessary repairs (this should be done every three or four years). This operation went well, but the back and sidewalls of the chancel appeared decidedly grubby when the cross was removed. The 'heavy' gang immediately set to clean and re-paint the chancel in time for the cross to be replaced. This was done in three days, and it looked superb when it was finished- really good example of teamwork and commitment.

Later in the year many of the same team did a splendid job decorating in the Parish Room and nearby toilet, which included boxing in pipes in the cloakroom. These rooms look so much better and fresher, and have made a difference to church groups who regularly use them and outside organisations that hire them.

Dougie and Marcia Agnew have done a considerable amount of work in the cellar, which is looking much fresher, and now has a better sofa. This makes it far pleasanter for the school group who work there on a Monday, and it is hoped that various youth groups will make use of it again

Earlier in the year there was an incident where criminal damage was done to lead on the hall roof. The culprit was caught and charged, but the repair cost the Church £250 as we have an excess on the insurance policy. This was our only insurance claim in the year.

There was a leak in the St. Clare Chapel soon after Christmas- a ten-year-old repair had not survived the December snows. The builder who did last year's work speedily repaired this, and no more water has appeared.

A major piece of work this year has been to service and overhaul the sound system in Church. Ed Giberti and a small team have spent a considerable amount of time working with DM Music to improve and service the system on a restricted budget. Recently they have been able to rectify faults occurring in the 'Loop' system by fitting a used but more modern amplifier, this has been successful and we are looking to buy this at a reasonable price. We are very grateful to Ed and his team for the considerable time they have spent doing this.

The church grounds have to be kept under constant review, and concern was growing about the low branches around the grounds, particularly over Frankie's garden. It took some time to obtain the necessary permission from the local council, but the work to cut back the trees finally took place in mid January. The contractors did an excellent job, under the close scrutiny of Graham Barnes, who knows the grounds so well.

Frankie's Garden is safety checked on a weekly basis, and annually monitored by ROSPA. Now the branches have been cut back, the wood chip which surrounds the apparatus needs to be renewed. Hopefully this will be done after the Men's Breakfast meeting in April.

Jenny Fennell had the idea of putting the chains around the corners of the verges in the car park- they look neat, and have enabled the verges to grow back.

The Spring Clean last February made a huge difference to the look and feel of the Church, and we have tried to keep it clean over the year. It is a large space to cover, and we have been having discussions with the cleaning contractor recently about how standards can be improved. From the middle of March cleaning will take place during the day, which will make it easier for us to check. Hopefully this years spring clean will get the Church back to a high standard of cleanliness.

At the time of writing, a new small hot water boiler is being fitted in the small kitchen, which should make life much easier for 'Coffee for All', and the Evergreen Ladies, and a long curtain fitted over the recess in the Church Entrance. So nothing stands still at St Francis! But so much happens as a result of people giving up time, and using the many skills we have in the congregation. We have saved thousands of pounds this year by people using their time and talents in the Church.

We have received tremendous support from the 'maintenance' team Keith Crabb, our new verger and Aleya Barr, not forgetting Pui San. They are our ears and

eyes, and nothing is ever too much trouble. Between them they are always there to assist in letting people in, locking up afterwards, and overseeing work being done. So a big thank you to them, and everyone in the Church who help to make it the splendid building it is.

Jan Nafzger and Brian Towndrow March 2011

Report on Deanery Synod Meetings 2010-11

Deanery Synod is the bottom tier of Synodical Government of the Church of England. Above it is Diocesan Synod, which governs the management of the diocese, and General Synod, which governs the management of the Anglican Church in the UK. Deanery Synod comprises all clergy in the deanery and lay representatives elected by the APCMs of the deanery's churches. Deaneries are headed by the Rural Dean (the shape of our deanery is such that this is a shared post) appointed by the bishop, who has responsibility for overseeing the parishes in the deanery. Every three years Deanery Synod elects representatives of both clergy and laity to Diocesan Synod, which also includes all of the bishops of the diocese. (Diocesan Synod members elect representatives to the General Synod – this happened in 2010 - which also includes the Archbishops and the diocesan bishops, and also to the various Diocesan Boards and other groups collectively responsible for management of most diocesan activities.) Elected members serve for a three year period, and may offer themselves for re-election.

This year was the third of the current triennium of the Welwyn Hatfield Deanery Synod, and St. Francis had three lay representatives, John Butler, Anthony Packer and Tony Young. For the triennium starting in 2011 we are entitled to four representatives.

Last summer, after debate, Welwyn Hatfield Deanery Synod reduced the frequency of its meetings from four to three times a year. Two meetings were held at different churches in the deanery. A short *Parish Profile* enabled members to learn something of the work of these churches, their problems and successes. It is interesting to see the differences, for not only are the buildings different but no two churches are quite the same in the services provided, nor are they exactly the same in the way they conduct their worship, in their favourite hymns, etc. or their outreach, and this can be a source of ideas for others to try. At each meeting reports were received from attendees at the Diocesan Synod, and at General Synod if there has been a meeting, enabling any actions to be flowed down. The Synod always takes the opportunity, by means of invited guest speakers, to keep itself up to date with matters which affect the Church, either as a whole or in its area. The first meeting of the year was a break with tradition, as Synod was invited to visit Luton Airport to learn about the work of the Airport Chaplaincy Team and have a guided tour around that part of the airport. At the second meeting the Archdeacon of Hertford spoke on Bishop Alan's three

pastoral themes: '*Going Deeper into God*', '*Transforming Communities*' and '*Making New Disciples*'. At the time of writing the third meeting has not yet taken place, and the guest speaker's subject will be "In a Changing World".

Deanery Synods can be asked to debate points raised by Parishes, and have the right to ask Diocesan Synod to debate points that they have raised. They may also be required by Diocesan Synod to consider some new topic that is passed down from General Synod, and then pass the information back. There has been no requirement for any of these in the past year but in 2011 there will be two such topics: Women Bishops and the Covenant between churches of the Anglican Communion. However, it is understood that a matter raised by one of our parishes, which Deanery Synod in turn referred to Diocesan Synod, was included in the agenda for the recent General Synod.

The Synod Standing Committee has representatives from all member churches and also carries out the duties of Pastoral Committee, monitoring the pastoral needs of parishes, including those where there is a clergy vacancy, to ensure needs are met and that any problems have been identified and acted upon in a timely manner. At the start of the year there were seven vacancies in the deanery and these have almost all been filled.

Deanery Synod is also responsible, through its Standing Committee, for monitoring the Parish Share. (This is the amount that each Parish pays for the running of the Diocese and for the services it provides and which, when totalled, is approximately equal to the cost of all of the clergy stipends.) Once again this year the Standing Committee fulfilled its obligation to review applications by two parishes that found they were unable to meet the full amount, meeting with the church treasurers concerned, before making their recommendations to the Diocesan Board of Finance.

Anthony Packer, March 2011

Charities Committee Report

Committee: Margaret Ryder, Sandra Partridge, Isobel Greenwood, Christine Philips, Anthony Packer, Stuart Richardson, Liz Green and Jan Nafzger.

We were very sad to lose Edgar Boyes when he moved away in May. We miss his common sense and wisdom at meetings, and his practical help when there are jobs to be done.

Jeanette Walboom resigned in October for personal reasons. We miss the contribution she made, particularly to the work with the school we support in Sierra Leone.

Over £15,000, partly from the budget given by the PCC, and the rest from special collections, was sent to a variety of charities in 2010.

We continue to support the usual wide range of charities at home and overseas. We attempt to monitor these closely and at the moment feel that we should support the charities we know well, many of which are struggling in this difficult financial climate. By October the committee was aware of the financial situation of the Church, and the projected shortfall in income. Two meetings have been held with Jenny Fennell and members of the PCC (several of us wear two hats at these meetings, which can be a little uncomfortable!). As a result it has been agreed that we will not set a budget in 2011 in the same way as other years. Grants to the charities we support will be looked at on a quarterly basis, and made according to how much the church has received in income, and how much special collections have made (emergency collections will not be included). The only moneys sent in the last quarter of 2010 was a regular payment to St. Andrews Evangelical Mission in Lima, and donations to the Mixed Group and Crisis who especially need money at Christmas. Stuart and Dougie will liaise at the end of March (the first quarter) and a decision will be made about how much can be given to our supported charities in this quarter.

Christian Aid week in May became a bit stressful when with only 10 days to go we hadn't received our envelopes and materials to give out to collectors. Anthony managed to get the materials sent, and the committee were superb in coming at short notice to divide it up. The congregation were fantastic, and we were able to cover all 30 rounds! We raised £2140, which is as good as last year. Many thanks to everyone who collected and counted.

There has been a change in the situation with regard to the school we support in Kent village, Sierra Leone. Yvonne Thompson, our main contact is leaving to live in the USA. She has arranged for a group of people closely connected to the village and the Anglican Church there to monitor and administer the money we send. Her hope is that the church will take full responsibility for the pre-school we mainly support in the next 5 years. It was agreed at a meeting with Yvonne in September that we will continue to support the school until we know they have an alternative source of funding.

This year's Harvest Appeal was on behalf of the Bishop's Harvest Appeal, a project in Uganda being run by Tear Fund. Collections on Harvest Sunday, and a bring 'Bring and Share' Harvest Lunch raised over £870 at the end of September. Shoebox and Toy Sunday saw over 30 boxes, and a splendid number of teddies brought in. We are grateful to Stuart Cunliffe who as usual transported them to the Refugee Council in Brixton.

The Christingle services on Christmas Eve were well attended and £1000 has been sent to the Children's Society (less than in the last three years, but still a splendid total).

Just before Christmas we were greatly saddened to hear of the death of Brian Atwell, the founder and powerhouse behind the orphanage we support in Peru. There is a great team working to keep the home running as it has always done. To support them, and in memory of Brian we are proposing to support the orphanage for our Lent Project.

2011 has already been busy- Children's Society boxes have been taken in and collected (over £400 so far), and a Charity Lunch for Rotary held in the hall on February 1st raised £326 for Leprosy Mission.

Jan Nafzger, March 2011

Report on the Altar Servers 2010-2011

Currently there are a total of 26 people who have responded to God's calling to serve at His altar in St. Francis for one or other of the Sunday and weekday services. Of these, 5 are away at university and only available during the holiday periods, and Kate McQuillan will be on maternity leave after Easter. 9 of our servers are in the under 18 age group, three of whom received their Servers' crosses in the early summer of 2010.

All altar servers follow in the footsteps of the young child, Samuel, whose service at God's altar in the temple is recorded in the Old Testament. They ensure the altar and its surrounding area are both prepared and remain with everything available at the right time, so that the priest is totally supported and free to concentrate on the prayer of the service. If the priest needs something during the service the servers ensure it is there, either on request or, preferably, by anticipation. (All servers will tell you that the experience is quickly learnt and copies of the new service booklets have been marked up to provide guidance.) At a Communion Service the servers must also ensure that everything is ready for the congregation to receive their communion: that a full chalice team is on hand, kneelers are in place, those who need special wafers or non-alcoholic wine receive them, the whereabouts of any to whom Communion is to be taken is known, and that assistance is available if further bread or wine require consecration. Afterwards, of course, the altar has to be cleared, the vessels properly cleaned (the younger servers have always been very good at offering to wash up after the 9.30 service), and everything put away. This, like so much in the church, takes time – half an hour before the service, and about fifteen minutes afterwards – but like all time in God's service, it continues to be a rewarding way of coming closer to God, whilst at the same time enabling others to do the same.

In addition to the Communion Services on Sundays servers play their part at the evening service on the last Sunday of each month, at the weekday evening Communion Services which take place on special occasions during the Church

year, at Carol Services and all the other extra services at Christmas and Easter. They assist at the interment of ashes, and in many other ways.

During the year 3 of the younger servers left the serving team, two because of study commitments and one is now working in Italy prior to taking up her university place. Wendy Lord, my predecessor as Head Server, and Ralph Maslin have retired completely on health grounds, and Margaret Ryder has ceased serving at the 8.00 service. We have welcomed Jan Nafzger and Joan Gilbert to serve at the 8.00 service. Jan also provides cover for Kitty McGredy if required at the weekday services. John Butler has not been able to serve at the 8.00 service as often as he would have wished due to illness, and another server is needed to provide cover. Matthew Henthorn moved up to the role of crucifer at Christmas time and has taken this additional responsibility in his stride.

Serving at God's altar is a calling for people of all ages, and there is a fairly even split between the age groups. A few more would bring the team up to full strength, and anyone wishing to test this calling would be welcome. If you would like to know more, please contact me.

Anthony Packer
Head Server, March 2011

Fellowship of Prayer

We have lost one or two members through death and changes of circumstances and one or two of the people we pray for have died or moved on but the leaflet and it's prayerful work goes on. We are now sending some copies electronically, which is an innovation. Otherwise we are managing to keep Rita's work going regularly. Without Naomi I could not produce the leaflet or the update, so, my gratitude to her for her hard work and expertise.

Carolyn Annand, March 2011

Visiting Group

We have a small, loyal group of pastoral visitors who call on people three months after bereavement and again a year after a death. If the bereaved are not local we write or telephone to let them know they are not forgotten. We see to it that the bereaved know when their loved one's name is going to be read out in church on the date of their anniversary. We also organise and present two services a year; one informal, in May (15th this year), and one Eucharist with lighting of candles and reading out of names in November. We are always ready to welcome new members into the group.

Carolyn Annand, March 2011

Hospital Chapel Team

We still take our turn with the other Churches in providing assistance to patients attending Sunday services in the Hospital Chapel. Our turn comes round roughly every four to five weeks. The congregation varies between five and twenty patients of whom quite a few can be in wheel chairs. From our full team of nine we usually have enough to draw on say four people at a time for duty but we could do with one more volunteer in the team.

Donald Ould

Social Committee Report 2010

2010 was another very busy year for the Social Committee, especially with so many expectations of the fundraising these events generate.

We were a core group of 6 members for most of the year although the autumn saw the resignation due to work commitments of Linda Vincent, the Committee Chair, and Julie Lowes. We are deeply indebted to Linda for all the amazing leadership and co-ordination skills she brought to the group over her tenure, and to Julie for her fantastic enthusiasm and reliability. We also have a number of stalwart 'floating' members who help us out constantly with dull stuff like laying-up tables, putting out glasses and filling them, washing-up, stacking chairs etc, etc the list goes on, and we are hugely grateful to them.

Our first event of 2010 was an illustrated talk given by Dermot Wynne about Moorish Spain, a subject he knows much about and, as with his previous talk of his Pilgrimage to Santiago de Compostela, was extremely interesting and entertaining. We enjoyed a Tapas-style supper midway through the evening washed down with plentiful Sangria!

May saw the return of the Quiz Night, a very popular event with over a hundred people in attendance. Tony Young stepped up as Quiz-meister again doing a very good job of keeping everyone in order! This is a an event that takes a lot of forward-planning and co-ordinating because of the numbers requiring a hot fish and chip supper, delivered midway, and of the volume of tables and pews being moved for the event to happen in the Church. The audio system is also in full use and none of this could happen without many people giving their time, and expertise willingly. The visual and music questions all take time and were brilliantly put together by Bryony Young before she went away to work on the South Coast for the summer (mostly because I wouldn't let her go until she'd done it!)

The summer months saw the return of the Garden Party, another large undertaking, which took place as a forerunner to Liz Green's 'retirement' concert in the evening. Lots of stalls decorated with bunting were set up in the garden offering plants for sale, books, hand-made cards and jewellery, decorated cake competition, games and activities for youngsters and, of course, the tug of war! This was fiercely fought, with a modest amount of cheating, and was eventually won by the choir boys (!)

After a wonderful concert in church with all the Choirs performing, in tiptop form, everyone retired outside to enjoy a delicious BBQ cooked to perfection by Tony Young (him again) and Rob Smith, all washed down with Pimms. We were blessed too with a wonderful summery evening.

The autumn featured a wonderful concert by Andrew Watkinson's Pentatonic Ensemble, always an absolute privilege as well as a pleasure to hear internationally acclaimed musicians playing in our own church.

The Committee also organised a Barn Dance, which, sadly, was the least attended event of the year and just broke even. However, in spite of a last minute change of caller, a very good time was enjoyed by everyone-and our new Priest-in-charge and her husband demonstrated what fine dancers they are!

Finally, whilst not strictly Social Committee, the Christmas Tree Festival was our biggest endeavour of the year, with many members being part of both.

Every year at St Francis we aim to hold a number of events for the enjoyment and fellowship of our own churchgoers, but also to be able to welcome as many visitors as possible inside-to see what we offer. Raising money sometimes seems to be at the forefront but it shouldn't be at the expense of fun and coming together. That is the aim of this Committee.

If you are willing to become a member of the Social Committee, and are able to come to the occasional meeting, we would love to hear from you-we put on the events we think people will enjoy but without new input we may not always get it right. Also, as we are currently without a 'Chair', each event will be organised by an individual, or pair, so if you want to be involved with any of this year's events, particularly the Summer Concert, speak to Pui San in the first instance because the diary of events is in the Parish Office.

Sue Young, March 2011

The Friends of St Francis

We reported in the year 2000 that the grants made to the Church since the inception of The Friends in 1979 amounted to £3666. In the last 10 years we have granted a further £3364 including a contribution of £1500 to the development fund and donations for the Vicars Board, clergy chairs, hymn books and the Lavabo Bowl.

We have continued to build up the Fund in Government stocks by reinvesting interest.

Contributions and perhaps legacies to boost the Fund will of course always be welcome.

Jan Nafzger will be taking over as secretary in May.

Donald Ould, March 2011

Coffee For All 2010 - 2011

During the last year we have sadly lost several of our visitors who have supported Coffee for All (CFA) since its inception 4½ years ago. However, we have continued to grow in numbers, and as always CFA as a meeting place for all groups within the church and other visitors from around Welwyn Garden City.

I understand that not only is the Fair Trade tea, coffee and biscuits the best available, at the price, in the town, but that the company present is always very friendly. Come and see for yourselves!

The amount contributed during the year was £430, of which CFA were able to provide a wheelchair in the church, for instant use, and has made a contribution to the new water heater in the Parish Room kitchen; which is now installed. It is also intended to give further contributions to the refitting of the Parish Room kitchen during the coming year. These activities are only possible because of the loyalty and generosity of our regular visitors.

CFA has also helped with other church events when needed.

A big thank you must go to the team of helpers who run CFA so cheerfully and with such consideration and care for our visitors.

Donald Lawson, March 2011

Work with Children and Families at St Francis

2010-11 has been an exciting year for children's work at St Francis. Two new initiatives have been the introduction of Messy Church and the coming together of those who work with children in churches across the town.

Messy Church

Held on the 3rd Wednesday of the month was launched in September and is much appreciated by children, carers and helpers, with between 60 and 70 people enjoying crafts, worship and a cooked tea. It could not happen without a great team of caring and creative volunteers - with special thanks to Sandra Partridge for organising all the catering. Meetings of those who lead work with children in our local churches began termly in summer 2010 for prayer, support and sharing good practice and are much valued.

Work with local schools

Our links with local junior schools continue to flourish and grow and will provide the basis for my sabbatical, (May-July 2011), with the hope of making our resources available to other churches in the St Albans diocese and wider church (on the model of Messy Church). With a dedicated team of helpers our activity days in St Francis Church enabled 400 Applecroft, Peartree and Templewood junior pupils (years 3, 4, 5 and 6) to engage with stories of Jesus in June 2010, with the Christmas story in December and the Easter story in March 2011.

In addition Applecroft, Panshanger, Templewood and Codicote Years 1 and 2 infants had sessions to find out about the church, learn about our stained glass window and enjoy Frankie's Garden.

Applecroft year 2 presented us with 4 new 'stained glass window panels' and their old ones are now in the North Chapel. Applecroft and Templewood Nursery again invited me to share the Christmas story with their children. We continue to take assemblies in Applecroft each Tuesday for infants and Thursday for juniors and on occasions in Templewood. Visits to Francis Church have featured in the various schools' newsletters to parents and in displays in schools. We value all these opportunities work to work with local schools, particularly since none of these local schools are Church Schools - I was delighted to be asked to judge Applecroft's Got Talent for Comic Relief and to be working with Applecroft to help them become a Fair Trade School.

Our role in the Applecroft Children's Centre partnership enables us to liaise with them over the New Zion Food Bank and advertise Messy Church. Again I shared in the Lakeside School's Harvest Festival service in October and Christmas Carol and Nativity service in December 2010 and all 60 children visited the church after the Christmas Tree Festival. Stanborough School Refusers continue to meet in

the cellar on Monday mornings. Thanks to Susan Welton and her team for their commitment to this work.

Services at St Francis.

YACC (Youth and Children's Church) at 9 30am has struggled with the variable numbers of children and the need for new helpers to organise worship, teaching, craft activities and refreshments. We are very grateful to Carolyn, Wendy and Linda Vincent for their hard work over many years and thankfully now have some new volunteers who will help once a half term – however more helpers are needed.

The 11:30am service has fluctuating numbers amongst a large number of families and there is a real need for more wardens for this service to help us welcome, set up and clear away - we really appreciate all Stuart Cunliffe's work.

Baptisms - of the 13 baptisms (March 2010-11), all were at 11:30am and 3 baptisms are now booked for after Easter 2011. One baptism couple were married in St Francis in June 2010.

The Pram Service on Wednesday mornings at the back of church continues to thrive. We thank Liz Green and now Stephen Henthorn for their work in leading our singing. This short service has led to baptisms, weddings and Sunday attendance. Most families go to Toddle Time in the hall (and outside in Frankie's Garden when fine). We're very grateful for the very active Toddler Committee.

Journey to Bethlehem, Mary Joseph (& sheep) visited some homes in the parish during Advent 2010 and were returned at the Christingle services.

Revd. Jenny Gray, March 2011

St Francis Youth Report 2010 to 2011

Last year we made changes to the way things were done at St Francis youth from May 2010 we added Wildfire to the Friday evening sessions where we but back Rock Solid to early time at 5pm. So now we have

Rock Solid 5pm to 6.30pm ages 10 to 12 School years 6 to 8. This still has a number of young people coming, which is 17 at this time. But there been some young people from Rock Solid who have now moved up to Wildfire in which in September time they would have disappeared from the Church because they were too old for Rock Solid.

Now we have Wildfire, which saw low numbers at 1st, then it grew to 22 young people before 2011 we had about 28 young people where about 4 young people gave commitment to follow Jesus as their Lord and Saviour.

There has been a few young people who believe in God and have faith in this area

but there are some who don't believe in God.

Wildfire is for Young People who are age 13 – 15

For Schools work we are now in Stanborough School where we have drop-in session every Thursday afternoon which sees about 40 to 60 young people attending.

Tim Lengden
March 2011

St Francis Men's Group

Men's Breakfast Programmes: 2010/2011 List of Attendees

Aleyn Barr, David Buck, Edgar Boyes, (retired), John Butler, Stuart Cunliffe, Rev. John Cuthbert, Ed Giberti, Dick Johns, Chris Lake, Don Lawson, Craig Lowes, Ron Marks, Stephen Marshall, Ralph Maslin, Stuart Richardson, Rev. Anthony Salmon, Noel Smith, Don Tester, Bill Turnbull, Keith Wilson, Dermot Wynne, Tony Young.
In memory, John Burnell.

<u>Dates</u>	<u>Speaker</u>	<u>Topics</u>
2010		
Sat. 10 April	George Buckley	"Toastmaster-ship"
Sat. 8 May	David Buck	"Israel, then and now"
Sat. 5 June	Ralph Maslin	"A Life of Crime"
Sat. 3 July	David Nice	"Anyone for Democracy"
Sat. 4 Sept	Simon Fennell	"The Lawyer, the Bishop And the Wicked Lady, is this some kind of Joke?"
Sat. 2 Oct	Stephen Marshall	"My Time in Jail"
Sat. 6 Nov got there"	Derek French	"Saving Bank Branches, How I
2011		
Sat. 9 Jan	Bill Turnbull	"Once a Scout, always a Scout"
Sat. 6 Feb	Rev. Martin Durham	"The agonizing grip of God's hand" (Ladies Invited)

Sat. 5 Mar	Aleyn Barr	“See the Pyramids along the Nile”
Sat. 2 April Experiences”	Bill Turnbull	“Scouting Anecdotes and Shared
Sat. 7 May	Freddie Godshaw	“My Life and the Displaced Book”
Sat. 4 June What they got Up to”	David Buck	“Your Ancestors and How to Find

Other Highlights included:

- Oct. '10 The “Affirming Liberalism Conference” at historic Wellington College, Surrey
- Feb. '11 Dermott Wynne’s Pilgrimage to Santiago de Compostela, Spain
- Nov. '11 Pilgrimage to Israel, hosted by David Buck

The Men’s Group offer their collective thanks to David, Aleyn and Craig for organising a variety of unique breakfasts, with “guest chef’s” appearances on a few occasions. Thanks and appreciation also goes to David and to those who invited a most entertaining group of speakers with highly contemporary topics that gave rise to interactive debate and discussion.

The Men’s Group mission is to support the St Francis ministry team, provide continuing resources to Church Activities, foster fellowship and friendship within the congregation and the Parish, and helping others personally and professionally when possible.

The St Francis Men’s Group meets on the first Saturday of every month from 8:00 – 9:30 AM except in August in the New Parish Room. Membership is open to all men of this Parish. Please contact Aleyn Barr, on (01707) 326937, David Buck on (01707) 336827 or e-mail: dbatwgc@tesco.net or Ed Giberti on (01707) 394884 or e-mail: edgibertiwgcuk@aol.com for information.

Report submitted by Ed Giberti
17 March 2011

St Francis Choir

It is now some 7 months since I came back to St Francis with responsibilities for the main choir, and in this time I have focussed mainly on the junior choristers and recruitment. One change I made which was immediately apparent was the combining of the girls and boys into one choir. This was a decision not made lightly but after a great deal of thought and discussion, with, I must admit, a

certain level of concern! 7 months on, I am delighted with the way the boys and girls have amalgamated – they truly work together as an excellent team! Well done to the boys for being so gracious and bravo to the girls for making history in St Francis Church.

We need more choristers urgently. Most of the senior boys are close to the time when their voices will change (two are almost at the end of their junior singing career as I type this), and there is quite a gap in age between these senior trebles and the juniors who are rising up the ranks. My goal is to have 24 juniors in the choir at full strength, ideally made up of 12 boys and 12 girls. I have held auditions at Templewood and Springmead before Christmas and have recruited 1 boy and 3 girls as a result of these visits. Very recently I visited Applecroft School for the first time and initial results of this visit are looking very promising (there were many children who were very keen to learn more about the choir, of which 26 in number had outstanding voices). So over the next few months you will hopefully see the choir stalls becoming rather more crowded than in recent times!

The gentlemen of the choir continue to give much of their spare time freely and willingly for which I am very grateful. We will be saying goodbye to Stephen Henthorn when he goes to University in October – he has served the choir well both as a treble and alto and we will miss him greatly.

My thanks to Robin Coxon for his organ playing and support since I returned and also to Liz Green who has made my return to running the choir delightfully smooth!

The Advent and Christmas services were successful and I am looking forward greatly to our choral services on Maundy Thursday, Good Friday and Easter Day.

In August the choir will be singing for a week in Ripon Cathedral, North Yorkshire, so if you find yourselves *up north* around this time do drop in to evensong!

With best wishes
Richard Harrison
March 2011

Parish Coffee

Over the last year the fellowship enjoyed over a welcome cup of coffee after the 9.30am service seems to have blossomed and many newcomers and visitors have been made to feel very welcome.

I should like to thank all those who have faithfully provided this very popular service, as well as admirably coping with either swapping or by noticing when teams are undermanned by offering their help on the spot.

As well as enjoying this valuable social time we are also able to contribute in no small way towards Parish funds.

If you are not already on the rota, which only comes around every 14 weeks, and can offer help please phone me on 01707 323894. I have at least 2 spaces to fill.

Once again may I say many thanks for all your help and support.

Yours in fellowship and anticipation.

Susan Welton
March 2011

FLOWER TEAM

In early September we met with the Priest-in-Charge to agree the way forward for flower arrangements and their locations within the building.

The Flower team prepares weekly floral displays at various locations in the church throughout the year, except during Advent and Lent when no flowers are displayed.

More luxuriant displays are prepared at special occasions during the year, such as Easter Day, Harvest, Remembrance Day, Christmas and weddings. Daffodils are provided on Mothering Sunday and there is also an Advent ring.

Many thanks to all on the team for organising the rota, buying flowers, planning and setting up the displays, keeping the flower cupboard well-organised and the many other tasks associated with arranging flowers on Sundays; not forgetting the task of watering them during the following days to keep them fresh.

Grateful thanks to those congregation members who have provided donations – envelopes for this purpose are to be found by the pigeonholes at the west end of the church together with the list in the porch.

During the year we welcomed new members Margaret O'Donnell, Hilary Marshall and Mandy Kirk Woolman, who will all be starting in 2011.

And said farewell to Barbara Sharp and Phyllis Weaver who are no longer able to participate. Thank you for your flowers and good company.

The team now consists of the three new members above, together with
Diane Kay Pearson, Wendy Chalker, Judith Claxton,
Hemmings,
Helen Cook, Alison Daniels, June Hill, Berry Max-Wilson,
Heather McVitty, Christine Phillips, Clare Smith, Moira Squires,
Wendy White, Anne Woolmington, Sue Young
Shirley Mandefield & the 7th Rainbows, and the undersigned.

Jenny Blanch
March 2011

Group for the Ministry of Prayer and Healing

Prayer is central to the life of St Francis and the core of our work is praying in a totally private and confidential way with individuals for their own particular needs.

The Group meets each Sunday before the 9:30am Eucharist to pray for the worship, for the congregation and the life of the Church. We also meet weekly and on one evening a month for study, meditation and prayer, which enriches our inner lives and strengthens us to pray with others. For anyone to share their burdens and to be truly heard can be healing; together we are reaching out to God in hope and expectation of greater wholeness of body, mind and spirit. Those concerns may be for those dear to us, or for personal anxieties. Giving thanks is another vital aspect of prayer. Prayer needs to be sustained; it is entirely appropriate to come asking for prayer on several occasions.

We are currently concerned that far fewer people seem to be coming asking us to pray with them. Are you aware of this regular opportunity during the 9:30am Eucharist, (in the St Clare Chapel), or afterwards (in the North Chapel).

The Healing Group, March 2011

Linen Report

The Church linen has been well maintained during the year by a small team of helpers, each of whom takes responsibility for eight weeks at a time. Sadly our numbers are diminishing and this means that responsibility comes round more frequently, so more helpers are badly needed. The task is not particularly arduous and we help each other when there are difficulties, so do please consider if you might join us.

A hole was burnt in the Lady Chapel Altar cloth during the Christmas period, and this emphasises the need for all who handle candles to be particularly careful.

This also applies to soot marks from tapers and candlewicks, and spilt wax, as these are difficult to remove. Everyone's co-operation will be appreciated.

Pamela Hawkins, March 2011

Thursday Lunches

Thursday Lunches are still in good health after operating for many years and we still have some of the original customers, as well as new ones, and they are all friends now.

Our grateful thanks to all the helpers who give a couple of hours on a Thursday, including the Ministry Team, and we would be pleased to hear of anyone who would like to help once a month.

Kitty McGredy, March 2011

Evergreen Ladies

The Evergreen ladies are still operating once a month although we re much depleted due to the passing years and ill health; however those who come seem to be happy to sit and talk to one another. We have been very grateful to members of St Francis who have come to tell us of their holidays to various countries and showing some very lovely photographs – thank you, one and all.

Kitty McGredy, March 2011

Housegroups

Housegroups have continued to thrive at St Francis, each in their distinctive and different ways, offering fellowship, mutual support and opportunities to grow in faith using a wide variety of different material. 8 groups have been meeting on a variety of mornings, afternoons and evenings – some have continued in Lent while others have stopped for the Bishops' Lent Course Tuesday evenings or Thursday mornings in the parish room to reflect, discuss and act on a gospel passage.

St Francis is enormously blessed with committed leaders who meet termly with Carolyn and myself to feedback from their groups and plan future material and social activities. We are extremely grateful to all who lead and host housegroups and would encourage everyone in the congregation to consider joining a group.

Revd Jenny Gray, March 2011

Traidcraft

The Traidcraft stall continues to run on the second Sunday of the month after the 9.30am service. Our monthly sales are usually between £70 and £80 and we are very grateful for the support we receive. Best-selling items include coffee and tea, biscuits, marmalade, jam and honey. We also stock dried fruit, pasta and rice together with a range of paper products. New catalogues are available in February and August.

Andy and Val Luckins, March 2011