

**The Immaculate Conception  
Epping**



**Annual Report  
to the Parish  
October 2016**

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**PARISH PRIEST'S THOUGHTS FOR EPPING PARISH**  
**ASSEMBLY 2016**

Dear friends,

I wish to thank parishioners for the very warm welcome I have received from you here in Epping. It has been a very upsetting year in the parish with the uncertainty that arose when Fr James announced he was to retire in the Summer. Then, just four weeks before his proposed move to retirement at Leigh-on-Sea, his unexpected death on the feast of St Peter & Paul. During that bereavement period there was a sense of solidarity and togetherness as a parish community, and a certain Christian joy as well as sadness in the celebration of his Funeral Rites here and at Brentwood Cathedral.

I wish to thank Deacon Duncan who very generously postponed his holiday and managed things in the parish during the inter regnum. He ensured the weekend Masses were celebrated with the help of retired supply priests, to whom we are most grateful. Our thanks also to the staff in the Presbytery, and parishioners with particular responsibilities in the Church and parish for their dedication and service to the church and our people during that difficult time.

There is much in our parish, like the sense of community and friendliness, for which we can be really thankful to God. There are also areas where we need more and younger parishioners and families to take-on or share responsibilities and initiatives – social events in the parish, music in the church and youth activities are obvious areas for involvement and growth at this time!

The number of people attending Sunday Masses seems to be between 250 and 300 per week. The number attending weekday Mass is generally between 6 and 12. Bishop Alan has asked us to consider having weekday Masses at a time(s) that also facilitate people who are at work during the day. As a first response to this, I propose having an evening Mass on the first Friday of each month and am open to suggestions and discussion on how we might take this forward. In December, we will have a Mass of Thanksgiving for the blessings of this year, to be followed by a social event in the hall, to which all parishioners are invited.

I look forward to working with and for you in the year(s) ahead, with God's help.

May God bless you.  
Fr John (McGrath)  
Parish Priest Epping

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## MUSIC

A small team of musicians and singers lead the 'folk type' music at 11.00am but we are always looking for new members to sing or play an instrument with us. There is a wide age range from 10 - 80ish years and all are welcome! More importantly, we desperately need people to come forward and help with leading the music at the 6.00pm and 9.00am masses. Geoffrey our paid organist covers only some 6.00pm and 9.00am masses and Janet Clements who previously organised the music and played the organ for many years is not able to participate at the moment. 'Doris' our digital music machine is waiting in the wings for some volunteers to come forward and help lead the singing. Please consider joining our very friendly team.

Maggie Keeling

## STEWARDS OF THE GOSPEL

Over the next 20 years it is projected that numbers of parish priests will be roughly 50% of what we have today. There are two tasks for us, to increase the numbers of church going Catholics (and encourage more young men to embrace a vocation to the priesthood) and to plan for a future where there are not enough priests for all parishes and we therefore have to amalgamate communities/share priests and/or facilities. The Stewards of the Gospel are representatives of parishes who can help with both possible areas. Our tasks are:

- To examine our parishes to find out what is going on and pave the way for a plan for better evangelisation.
- To discern "which parish belongs to which" when it comes to working together in future.
- To be a source of creative inspiration looking for new ways to evangelise.
- To be the voice of the laity when it comes to discerning the principles and priorities on which future plans will be based.
- To be the voice of the laity when it comes to implementing the agreed principles in the particular local situation of our own parishes in co-operation with our neighbours.

Sue Sabin

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## **JUSTICE AND PEACE GROUP**

The work continues but we need more members for the committee. We support the very deprived parish of Lebohang in the diocese of Dundee in South Africa, to which we send 2.5% of our Offertory income, which amounts to about £1500 per year. Thanks to all parishioners for their generosity. Who would take on the role of our contact with this parish? Please let Deacon Duncan know.

Paul Ives is our guru on Pro-Life issues and promotes interest and action on any matter which is contrary to our Catholic views about the sanctity of human life. Speak to Paul (01992 577104) if you would like to know more or, better still, if you would like to join our Group.

Our letter-writing team continues to write letters on behalf of Prisoners of Conscience who are being tortured. The team presently numbers 17 and is seeking more members. It's not difficult or too time consuming to write these letters; if you think you may like to help, contact Deacon Duncan to find out more.

The enthusiastic team which carries out the annual Christian Aid door-door collection for our parish is flushed with success this year, having collected in their designated area of Epping. We have a new co-ordinator, JoAnn O'Neil who would be pleased to hear from you if you would like to help (telephone 01992 571571).

## **ADORATION GROUP**

Adoration of the Sacred Body of Christ in the Eucharist is held from 9.30 to 10.30 on weekdays, in Church. This is a silent time, and anyone is welcome to drop in to spend some quality time with Our Lord. Watch the back page of the weekly Newsletter for any updates.

## **FINANCE & DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE**

The committee met on 3 occasions during the year and, on each occasion, the accounts were scrutinised and found to be satisfactorily presented.

During 2015, Committee members were Richard Steggle (Chairman), Malcolm Heughan, Margaret Lechley and Margaret Steggle, who compiled the accounts and also acted as secretary. Fr. James and Deacon Duncan were ex-officio members.

The following are salient features of the 12-months' accounts:

Richard Steggle

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The following are salient features of the 12-months' accounts:

Richard Steggle

**FINANCE & DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE (CON'D)**

2014/15 Summary of Financial Statements	To April 5th 2016	To April 5th 2015	To April 5th 2014
	£	£	£
Offertory	54,857	58,691	61,012
Gift Aid Tax Refund	12,933	12,064	11,069
CAFOD	2,555	2,351	2,662
Offerings & Donations	5,433	4,570	6,322
Other Income	16,749	13,558	12,726
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>92,527</b>	<b>91,234</b>	<b>93,791</b>
Liturgical & Catechetical Expenses	4,874	6,266	7,205
Premises costs (Incl Maintenance)	19,700	12,051	17,809
Charitable Donations	19,920	13,701	12,212
Diocesan Quota, Sick and Retired Clergy Levy	15,680	13,927	14,055
Salaries & Wages	17,421	13,035	13,593
CAFOD	4,529	2,541	3,338
Church - Painting / Carpets	0	5,810	0
Office Expenses	2,623	3,466	3,486
Youth Expenses	200	1,636	160
Other Expenses	15,538	19,198	16,338
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>100,485</b>	<b>91,631</b>	<b>88,196</b>
<b>Excess Income over Expenditure</b>	<b>-7,958</b>	<b>-397</b>	<b>5,595</b>
Total funds brought forward from 2013/14	85,892	86,289	80,694
<b>Total funds carried forward 2014/15</b>	<b>77,934</b>	<b>85,892</b>	<b>86,289</b>

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Payments made from the two Parish Charity Fund Accounts

during the 12 months ending 5<sup>th</sup> April 2016

**12.5% Fund - including 2nd Collection Donations (except CAFOD)**

	£
Marraige Care Donation	£400
CES & Lourdes	£100
African Missions	£600
British Legion	£50
Nepal Appeal	£4,305

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<u>12.5% Fund - including 2nd Collection Donations (except CAFOD)</u>	£
ACAT Fund	£50
Day for Life	£350
World Mission Sunday	£500
Heart of Epping	£100
Alms	£30
Prison Advice & Care	£250
Sick and Retired Clergy	£1,450
Home Mission	£400
SPUC	£250
St. Patrick's Mission	£500
Apostolic Nunciature	£120
Pax Christi	£200
National Youth Day	£500
Norway House	£1,000
The Box	£1,500
Holy Places	£630
Sisters of the Needy	£300
Brentwood Children (Crib Offerings)	£300
<b><u>TOTAL PAID- OUT OF FUND to 5<sup>th</sup> April 2016</u></b>	<b>£13,885</b>
£	
Balance Brought Forward from 2014-2015	£7,247
Total receipts to Fund during the year 2015 - 2016	£11,026
Payments made from the Fund in 2015 – 2016	-£13,885
<b><u>Balance available on the 12.5% Fund at 5<sup>th</sup> April 2016</u></b>	<b>£4,388</b>
<b><u>2.5% Fund (Diocese of Dundee Twin Parish Fund)</u></b>	<b>£</b>
· Carried Forward from 2014 – 2015	£1,036
· Total Receipts during the year 2015 - 2016	£1,440
· Funds deposited with Embalehne	-£1,000
<b><u>Balance accumulated at 5<sup>th</sup> April 2016</u></b>	<b>£1,476</b>

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**Fund movement summary**  
**06 April 2015 to 05 April 2016**

Fund					Balances
	Balances				
	B/Fwd	Income	Expenditure	Transfers	C/fwd
	£	£	£	£	£
CAFOD - CAFOD					
Collections General -	2,523	2,555	4,529	401	950
General fund PRIEST - Priests Fund CharityB -	69,944	77,365	71,868	-9,416	66,024
	3,053	8,998	8,356	162	3,857
2.5 Offertory CharityA -	1,036	0	1,000	1,440	1,476
12.5%					
Offertory Youth - Youth Development Fund	7,247	3,613	13,885	7,412	4,388
	2,095	0	860	0	1,235
<b>Totals</b>	<b>85,901</b>	<b>92,532</b>	<b>100,499</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>77,934</b>

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### **BEREAVEMENT SUPPORT GROUP**

Meetings of this Group are arranged whenever there is a need. Urgent individual help is also available by contacting Deacon Duncan directly on 01992 577173.

### **THE PIETY STALL**

We have a selection of cards—Birthday, Sympathy, Mass cards, New Homes and many more. We have some lovely Christmas cards, religious, in boxes and loose ones. There are rosaries, prayer books, crosses and lots of other pieces. There will be a table in the Hall after every Mass once a month for September, October and November. Please see the newsletter. If you have any queries, please contact Janet Abbott on 571128.

### **READERS AT MASS**

Additional Readers are always welcome to join the 36 readers who are already on our rota. Training is given. Please contact Deacon Duncan for details 01992 577173.

### **ANNUAL BAZAAR COMMITTEE**

Janet Abbott organises this annual event with a happy band of supporters. It is a great parish social event as well as an excellent fund raiser. It is always held the 1st Saturday in December. New blood is always welcome, and we hope parishioners will support it all round. Watch newsletter for details.

### **HALL MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE**

Over the last 12 months the Hall Management Committee has met on 3 occasions to deal with the upkeep of the Hall including the generation of income and maintenance.

The Committee has had the same representatives this year with no 'new blood' coming in to assist. This like the year before is a long term concern that will need to be considered as we go forward.

The main areas reviewed at the meetings are Finance, Income Generation through Hall bookings and Maintenance.

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## HALL MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE (cont'd)

### Finance:

Year on year comparison shows the hall booking income has declined slightly this year. We are now at near capacity for permanent fixture which is an improvement from last year. Service charges were researched across Epping and ours is again comparative similar establishments. Following two years of major repair and maintenance projects the last year has shown a considerable drop in expenditure and has allowed the Hall Management Committee to donate £4000.00 to the Church Fund. As this year showed less out goings the cash position has remained healthy at this time even after the donation.

### Income Generation:

The main source of income remains the nursery and this income has supported the various projects throughout the year. The individual bookings have seen a slight drop over the last 12 months. As with previous years the Church does not advertise extensively for hiring's and only really advertises within the parish Newsletter.

There were no parish social event organised by the Hall Management Committee this year due to the size of the committee not being able to support the running of an event. With more membership social events could improve income generation.

### Maintenance:

There have not been any major maintenance or repair projects over the last 12 months. To make sure the floor is not damaged over the next 2 years, new grommets for all the chairs are being purchased for all the chairs to be renewed this is now under review as many chairs have lost the covers and we are looking into a different type that will continue to protect the floor. Going forward there are identified repairs this year and these will take place if we are able to complete them ourselves we will do this otherwise quotes are obtained for any work needing completion.

One major maintenance project that has been agreed at the last meeting was the overhaul of the toilets. Tiles are now coming away and the general appearance requires updating. In order to be competitive hall hirers within Epping and for parishioners attending mass clean modern toilet facilities are essential.

### Conclusion:

Over all there has been no significant change since last year and the Hall is still self sufficient and not having to rely on the Church support at this time.

Paul Harwood –Chair Hall Management Committee.

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Paul Harwood –Chair Hall Management Committee.

### **SOCIETY OF SAINT VINCENT DE PAUL (SVP)**

SVP is an international Catholic charity which does a great variety of work. In this country it is parish-based and in Epping we mainly visit people in hospital, in residential homes and their own homes. This year we made some 600 visits and continue our links with Norway House, the hostel for homeless families in North Weald. We also supported financially over 5 twin parishes in India (£600) and contributed £1000 to the SVP International Disaster Fund and the long standing SVP baby-feeding programme in South Sudan. A big “thank you” to **all** parishioners who have supported us in **any** way. If anyone would like to consider joining us we’d be delighted to hear from you, so please speak to Fr John for or any of us to set the ball rolling. Also if you know of someone who would like to be visited do please let us know.

Paul Ives.

### **PAX CHRISTI**

Pax Christi is the International Catholic Movement for Peace. The regular newsletter will be found on the CTS rack in the church porch and teh Pennies for Peace bottle at the back of the church after Sunday Masses for your pounds, pennies and cheques! It is emptied regularly and a cheque sent to Pax Christi and a note put in the Newsletter.

Pax Christi includes workshops in schools and parishes and welcomes new members, donations and legacies.

Paul Ives

### **JOURNEY-in-FAITH GROUP (R.C.I.A.)**

For those adults who are considering full communion with the Catholic Church, or those who wish to deepen their Catholic Faith, this Group meets between September and Easter on Wednesday evenings. There is a programme which covers most aspects of Catholic life (but hurry if you want to join this year!)

Fr John or Deacon Duncan will be pleased to hear of any possible interest in joining the Group, either this year or in subsequent years.

### **SOCIETY OF SAINT VINCENT DE PAUL (SVP)**

SVP is an international Catholic charity which does a great variety of work. In this country it is parish-based and in Epping we mainly visit people in hospital, in residential homes and their own homes. This year we made some 600 visits and continue our links with Norway House, the hostel for homeless families in North Weald. We also supported financially over 5 twin parishes in India (£600) and contributed £1000 to the SVP International Disaster Fund and the long standing SVP baby-feeding programme in South Sudan. A big “thank you” to **all** parishioners who have supported us in **any** way. If anyone would like to consider joining us we’d be delighted to hear from you, so please speak to Fr John for or any of us to set the ball rolling. Also if you know of someone who would like to be visited do please let us know.

Paul Ives.

### **PAX CHRISTI**

Pax Christi is the International Catholic Movement for Peace. The regular newsletter will be found on the CTS rack in the church porch and teh Pennies for Peace bottle at the back of the church after Sunday Masses for your pounds, pennies and cheques! It is emptied regularly and a cheque sent to Pax Christi and a note put in the Newsletter.

Pax Christi includes workshops in schools and parishes and welcomes new members, donations and legacies.

Paul Ives

### **JOURNEY-in-FAITH GROUP (R.C.I.A.)**

For those adults who are considering full communion with the Catholic Church, or those who wish to deepen their Catholic Faith, this Group meets between September and Easter on Wednesday evenings. There is a programme which covers most aspects of Catholic life (but hurry if you want to join this year!)

Fr John or Deacon Duncan will be pleased to hear of any possible interest in joining the Group, either this year or in subsequent years.

## **YOUTH IN EPPING**

There has been a focus on improving involvement from the Youth in our Parish over the last 18 months. Last year Justin Willis had led a youth group for young children (under 10) and ran a few successful events. Justin has since stepped down from his post. I met with Justin and Simon Armstrong, who has two young children in the parish. We discussed possibilities to engage young people. Simon intimated that he would be happy to help with event organisation.

A couple of young people have started reading at Mass which is both symbolic and a significant inspiration to others. James and Mary Ryan, Tom Day and I acted as Confirmation catechists over the last year. There was a very successful outing with the students to the retreat at Walsingham House. This concluded in the great blessing of Confirmation for eighteen of our young people on 12<sup>th</sup> October 2016.

Melanie Hollinshead kindly compiled a list of activities which the youth of the parish can engage with. I drafted a letter of encouragement and will act as a sounding board for anyone wanting to learn more about opportunities. This list will be distributed to our Confirmation class.

I floated the idea of speaking to the First Holy Communion parents to gauge interest in their children being involved in a Youth Club. This idea needs further discussion and we need to discuss how we encourage activity from young people across different age groups next year.

James Harold

## **WHISTERS GROUP**

A Group of 8-10 meets about once a month for a very pleasant Whist Evening. The standard of Whist is not demanding and new members are welcomed. Details can be found in the Newsletter, or contact Deacon Duncan on 01992 577173

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**CHURCHES TOGETHER IN EPPING AND DISTRICT (CTED)**

CTED endeavours to bring together all fellow Christians in the district to work and worship together for the benefit of the Epping Community.

We continue to support The Box, which has now been active for 10 years in helping disadvantaged young people and which has now moved into new premises adjacent to St John's Church.

During the year, Mary Morgan has resigned as our representative and we thank her for her many years loyal support. Maggie Keeling and Debbie Harrison have joined the Committee in her place. Please contact Maggie (01992 573962) if you would like to be more involved in ecumenical activities.



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