

Report to the Parish Council from St. Mary's Church April 2015

The Church Building

The Chancel roof project finally got underway in September 2014 and was more or less completed just before Christmas so that the church could be cleaned and decorated for Christmas services. The project involved re-roofing and plastering the chancel and included some window repairs and re-pointing. The project has run smoothly, with only unpredictable issues affecting the programme, and has been completed in line with budget. Although this major restoration work was taking place, the church building remained in use throughout this time. A number of community events were held in the church which led us to slightly revise our external booking form to ensure that in the future there will be a balance between community use and its sacred use.

In 2014 we also saw the completion of the Historic Core Project and the new paved area has been well used at events such as the Fair Around the Steeple and at the monthly Farmers' Markets.

Members of the M.A.P. (Mission Action Planning) group have met with a view to developing the inside of the church in order to make it more comfortable and user friendly. An Action Plan has been drawn up and a Church Development Group has been appointed to start looking at ways of implementing it.

The Events and Fund Raising group has continued to work hard to raise much needed funds, holding successful events such as the Italian Evening, the Christmas Fair and the Christmas Fair and, for the first time ever, a very successful Music Hall. The church has been used as the venue for monthly Farmers' Markets organised by Cleobury Country at which members of the church community sell refreshments as another fund raiser. Our thanks go again **to The Friends of St. Mary's** for their invaluable financial support.

Church Ministry

Four members of the Outreach and Pastoral GIG have been trained as Pastoral Outreach Workers and have begun their work in the local community

Our Youth Worker, Mark Greaves, assisted by a team of willing helpers, continues to hold Messy Sunday sessions once a month, targeting families who might not attend a more conventional church service. These sessions, along with the Encounter services are held in the Hub in the Methodist hall. New opportunities have arisen for some of the clergy and our congratulations go to Ashley on his appointment as Rural Dean and to Rev. David Baker who took up the role as Priest in Charge in the parish of Rickerscote, Stafford in the Lichfield Diocese.

Since arriving last summer, Curate Richard Mutter has become a well - established member of the clergy and we look forward to his licensing this summer.

In February we were all shocked and saddened to hear of the death of Rev. Geoffrey Smith. We give thanks for the friendship we shared with him and for his sixteen years of ministry in the Benefice. He will be greatly missed.

Jayne Brown (Churchwarden)