

St Thomas Parish, Rondebosch

Annual Vestry Meeting, 22 February, 2018

Churchwarden's Report

It gives me pleasure to present this report on behalf the Church Wardens Peter Oscroft and Hugh Nourse and alternate Ian Paul.

This is not intended as a blow by blow account of the past year, but rather a record of some of the outstanding events. We leave the financial aspects and challenges to be covered by our very able Treasurer, Peter Coutts and matters pastoral and spiritual to be covered by Father Keith in his Rector's Report.

We meet this evening in the upgraded Koinonia room, a true room with a view. Yes, we had to fell the old Syringa tree, but we hope that you will agree that the shade afforded by the terrace out there more than compensates for the loss of the tree and adds significantly to the amenity of this space. Thank you Hugh for suggesting that we fit glass doors to the entire width of the room !

Included in the alterations were the new offices, enlargement of the kitchen and rationalisation of the storeroom. We must thank Caroline, Margie, and Judy for the amazingly calm way in which they managed their temporary banishment to the end of the house and their eventual return to the new offices, without missing a beat !

On the infrastructure list, I must mention the very topical water situation. We are blessed with a borehole that yields sweet water, without the iron content that is a problem to so many boreholes in the area. Our neighbours at Bishops incur great cost to precipitate the iron out of their borehole water. We submitted an application to register the borehole with the City of Cape Town, but have not received any response. We should also note that every litre of water from our borehole is pumped up into the tanks behind the hall and then pumped again into the distribution network, so apart from the capital and system maintenance costs, we spend quite a bit on electricity. Our borehole water is certainly not free of cost. As the water is stored in the tanks where the temperature is high enough to support bacterial growth, the water certainly cannot be regarded as potable.

We have considered connecting the borehole supply to as many of the 17 toilets in the hall, Koinonia and church as is reasonably possible. This will not be an inexpensive business as we will effectively have to install a dual system around the campus, crossing under roads and paved areas. With the approaching extreme supply situation, we will need to take measures to prevent unauthorised access to the various irrigation water points on the property.

We are also set up to harvest rainwater off 50% of the roof above us, 50% of the hall roof and 50% of the church roof. Let us pray for rain to fill the tanks and help sustain our gardens, so lovingly cared for by Barbara Lee to whom we owe a generous debt of thanks.

Still on the plant list, we owe our thanks to Peter Muller for helping Peter Oscroft restore the rope that tolls our bell, which has called parishioners to prayer for over one hundred years. (there was no bell on the original 150 year old building)

I'm sure that everyone is aware, or has even had the distasteful experience of encountering some of the apparently homeless characters that frequent the shelter offered by the church and Koinonia porches and the Garden of Remembrance. We are grateful that Wayne Abrahams has come on board as Verger to assist with the management of the grounds and in particular to making our doorways clear each morning.

We increased the security of the Garden of Remembrance and the Koinonia/Hall precincts a few years ago, but it is becoming apparent that we have to consider raising the existing fences and to seriously consider enclosing the parking area.

We have for many years been losing parishioners to other churches and your Council has on numerous occasions applied its mind to stem the losses and to attract new members to St Thomas's. Council recognised that we need to concentrate on attracting the youth and with them their parents and friends. We have been extremely blessed over the past 20 months by the energetic and inspired ministry of Rev Lorna and her husband Drew working with the young members of the parish and the music team, together with our dedicated leaders of the three age groups of Junior Church, Inspire, and J Walkers, meeting independently on Sundays at 09h30 and corporately once a month at KFC – which has nothing to do with chicken, but simply and meaningfully, Kids for Christ.

The Messy Church initiative led by Rev Lorna and her team has brought in some new people and has caught the eye of a number of sister churches, who have been very nosy about how messy a church can be but we suspect that they also come along for the delicious meals.

We have also been blessed by Alex Nagel joining us to coordinate and procure teaching material for the leaders, to sort out and keep the social media platform updated and to contribute to the preparations for Messy Church.

Many of our younger parishioners have nurtured strong roots in their faith under Margie McFadyen's discipleship in preparing candidates for confirmation. We were very blessed to have our Archbishop Thabo presiding over our confirmation service.

We thank Dave Milligan for his great skills on the organ and for the way in which he has worked with the Music Group.

We were treated to an extra-ordinary Community Art and Craft Exhibition, which not only displayed some highly professional art, photography and craft but revealed the latent talent of some parishioners who have been modestly hiding their lights under proverbial bushels. The Exhibition was brilliantly sourced and curated by Peter Hyslop with the assistance of Mary Van Blommenstein.

We all enjoyed a most successful Food Fare, project managed by Jeremy Kannemeyer and his Committee. Apart from the great fellowship and gastronomic experience enjoyed by all who attended the Fare, the event raised an extremely valuable R 40 000.

We look forward to events such as the art exhibition and food fare in the year ahead and task the incoming Council to ensure that these and other similar treats become regular events in the year ahead.

Your Council recognises and thanks the leaders and members of the many ministries of the Parish, Fikelela, Sides-persons, Music groups, Lay Ministers, Prayer Ministers, Flower arrangers, Vestments, Sewing Group, Book Restoration, Sacristans, Red Cross Sandwiches, Teas, Transport, St Thomas for Touch, and all the helpers that volunteer to set up, serve and washup for our various events.

Please forgive us if we have omitted to thank anyone for their particular ministry of love.

Finally, we thank the team that keeps us all on track, on the administrative side, thank you Caroline for your devotion, knowledge, cheerful voice, helpfulness, patience and many, many hours in excess of your contracted time; and thank you Father Keith and Reverends Lorna and Nicky for your most valued and diverse ministries to the Parish.