

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

What's to do about Moses and Aaron? That's a present concern of the PCC, and quite complicated. Where did the paintings come from? Who was the artist? Can we prove that they belong to the St Bertoline's? If valuable, can we afford to insure? If we can secure grants, what would we be our share of the cost? What is beyond question is that their value to St Bertoline's is not to be measured in money, but rather that they are an intrinsic part of the Church's heritage, and a part of our heritage which is in a sad state of repair.

The restoration and Project 14 have now been completed. So we now start again, for our next Quinquennial Survey is due this year. Our Project 14 efforts have brought us the final instalment of the HLF grant of £7,000. Of course some of these are continuing obligations – the churchyard, school and historical group visits, the maintenance of the website, for example. Hopefully, the survey will bear the fruit of our efforts over the last five years, but there are bound to be things to be done before 2022 to keep us out of mischief.

What of the past twelve months? On the surface it seems to have been a relatively quiet year, but things have been happening. As well as the usual round – Parish lunches for Candlemas and St Bertoline, Pancake Supper, Strawberry Tea, Christmas Fair etc, there have also been notable occasions. In Church, we have had special services to mark the Queen's 90th Birthday, and our first parish visit from the Bishop Libby of Stockport – a great joyful occasion. Our Christmas services, the Carol Service and the Christingle, were packed as usual, and enjoyed by everybody. We also, for the second time, have hosted the Peace Service on September 18th – this time a number of our own choir taking part. We are booked for this again in 2017.

A notable feature of the past year has been the increasing co-operation between the Church and the community, specially as represented by the Barthomley Action Group, with whom we have shared a number of social functions – the Pancake Quiz on Shrove Tuesday and the Cheese and Wine with Auction of Promises on October 22nd. On November 17th a 'Do' was held at the Rectory to which the younger generation of Barthomley locals was invited. The evening was very enjoyable and worthwhile – we shall be repeating it.

A generation ago action was taken for the building of the Village Hall. Ever since then the Hall has been an invaluable asset to the community. During its life the Hall has been run by its own committee of management and has undergone several updates of its facilities. One such enhancement is just being completed. Throughout its life the hard work and devotion of its committee has served the Hall and Barthomley well, and to whom a great debt of gratitude is owed, not least by the Church. Many of those involved over the years have been, and still are, members of our congregation. May our Hall continue to flourish for another generation.

Statistics for 2016

	2016	2015	2014	2013	2012
Communicant					
Easter	63	60	63	57	79
Christmas	36	48	38	29	59
Year	2037	1981	2150	2034	2000
Baptism	19	25	22	23	30
Marriages	16	9	17	22	13
Funerals	5	5	3	3	7

For July 2nd plans are in hand to hold a service of Thanksgiving for Holy Baptism. We shall be inviting those families who have had Baptisms during the last five years, but it will also be an opportunity for all of us to take stock and renew the promises made at our own baptism – however long ago!

Just before Christmas we were saddened by the sudden death of Iris Hounslow. She was devoted to the life of St Bertolines and a great benefactor to us all, not least by her outspoken joy, week by week, in joining in our worship.

Our thanks to Carolyn Allcock who has been one of our Deanery Synod Representatives for the past nine years – a job not everybody is clamouring for! That position also involves membership of the PCC which she has actively served throughout that time. Our thanks to her as she lays down this task well done.

Long gone are the days when those being ordained were said “to be going into the Church”. The Church is the whole people of God and the cutting edge of the Church’s mission is in the hands of each and every one of us. Without the active role of the laity the clergy’s task is impossible. Today all depends on the devotion, time, and skills of every one. Here we are specially blessed by so many who serve the Lord with joy and enthusiasm. Angela and I thank you all for your encouragement and leadership in so many areas of the Church’s life.

**Darrel Speedy
March 2017**