

Vestry Annual Report

(for year ending 30 September 2009)

The past year has been one of great challenge and blessing. After the excitement of the move back into the church building and the launch of the strategy for 2009-14, we faced major challenges in increasing our income to cover our expenditure and recruiting volunteers for all our ministries and activities. We launched 'Making Church Happen' in November 2008 with a ministry fair, a communications programme, and an evening of prayer in January 2009. We have been overwhelmed by God's faithfulness to us (through the giving of time and money by church members) - that our regular giving increased by 45%, we ended the year with a financial surplus, and we have seen a large increase in the level of volunteer commitments to service.

Vestry has continued to meet, generally, twice a month; once to pray and once for business, whether as a full Vestry or through the Resources and Church Life sub-groups. During the year, we have clarified Vestry's role as "being responsible for setting and monitoring our long term strategic vision, and ensuring the efficient stewardship of resources". Responsibility for strategy implementation, operations and day to day running rests with the Rector and staff, supported by volunteers.

Since April, we have structured the programme for Vestry, and the Church Life sub-group, in line with the strategy. We have appointed Vestry members as strategy-links for each of *Worshipping God*, *Loving People*, *Serving the World*, Youth, and Children to ensure that we are doing all that we can, throughout the year, to implement our strategy. Once a year, we review systematically the key ministries within each strategy area, and consider our priorities for the following year. Since implementing this new arrangement, we have completed our first review of *Worshipping God*, and agreed a series of actions to enhance our worship and prayer life as a church. The principal conclusions on *Worshipping God*, which Vestry endorsed, are:

- There is a greater sense of expectation and awareness of God moving during the services, and we want to be increasingly open to His leading and direction. We want to develop the musical side of the 9am service, consider broadening the variety of music in the services, and involve the children and teenagers in worship as appropriate.
- The Week of Prayer went well - God spoke, people prayed and there was a real sense of community. We will repeat this in 2010 while putting more emphasis and resource into a monthly prayer breakfast and People at Prayer. We will seek to develop prayer ministry and be more creative in prayer during services.
- We will continue to involve more people in leading, planning and speaking at services and place a priority on teaching. Hospitality will continue and develop, before and after services. The Welcome team will further develop its role, and the Production teams will continue to deliver a consistently high standard of service production.

Over the autumn, we are considering our strategy and ministries associated with *Serving the World*, before reviewing *Loving People*, and Youth and Children in early 2010. Throughout this process, we aim to be diligent in pursuing our strategy while open to new areas in which God may be leading.

The Resources group has carried most of Vestry's role in over-seeing our staffing, finances, property and operations, many of which are reported on separately in other AGM reports. We have been frustrated by the difficulties in recruiting a new Associate Rector, but are in the process currently of considering further potential candidates. However, we are pleased to have recruited a new Youth Director who will start work with us in January.

Each Vestry member contributes a great deal of time beyond the formal Vestry meetings in chairing the sub groups (Church Life, Resources, Fabric, Finance, Staffing, 10% and World Mission) or over-seeing a key strategic/ministry area. I am indebted to each of them for their service and support, and wish to thank particularly Joy Nicholson, Susan Bryce, and Duncan MacLean who are all retiring from Vestry after six years of service.

We are therefore looking for three replacement Vestry members. We require two to serve on the Church Life group and one to serve on the Resources group. One of the new members will be appointed as secretary to the Vestry; another will join the Staffing group to help with staff selection, management and employment; and the third should have an interest in pastoral or youth work. It would be fantastic if church members in the 20s or 30s would stand for Vestry - so that Vestry becomes more representative of the age spread of church members.

Finally, I wish to thank Dave and all the staff for their service to us as church, and their support to Vestry during a challenging year.

Douglas Millican, Vestry Chair