

# Annual Report

## Year Ending December 2015

*Discovering the Heart of God  
in the Heart of the City*



# Rector's Report

## Rector's Report

If 2014 was the year of major staffing changes, 2015 has been a year of consolidation. The new structure has been finalised with all the posts now filled. In the year we welcomed Hannah Jackson as our Hospitality and Events Manager and Rev Dr Mike Branscombe as our Director for Care and Discipleship. Christina Brown was appointed as our Families Missioner towards the end of 2015 and we are looking forward to her working with us in 2016. Along with the rest of the staff team the continuing work of making our vision and strategy 'Discovering the Heart of God in the Heat of the City' a reality has been in full swing. There have been some real successes in the performance of the Tea Lounge and the room bookings which enhances the mission and ministry of the church to the city.

In addition to the usual level of activity in the church we have helped out in 2015 with Diocesan events such as the ordinations of deacons and priests that would normally take place in the Cathedral. The major interior renovations of St Philips meant we were asked to help out. It was a privilege to do so.

Highlights of the year for me have been the continuing faithfulness of so many in their prayers, worship, giving and service. Without such commitment this church would simply cease to be. I am personally very grateful to all the support I have received from the staff, our Church Wardens, Assistant Wardens, members of the PCC and the many volunteers who make St Martin's work. Much has been done in 2015 and a big thank you to everyone who contributed in any way.

The demands made upon the people of the community, the building and our spiritual resources have been very high again but this is St Martin's and we wouldn't expect it to be any other way. I am sure 2016 will be no different but with God's Grace and the work of the Holy Spirit we have nothing to fear.

**Stewart Jones**

**Rector**

# **Worship**

## **Worship at St Martin's**

Sometime ago I was asked by a visiting group of clergy what would we always do at St Martin's if there was no money left to run the Tea Lounge and other events in the church. The answer is easy: worship. The church exists to praise God, to proclaim Christ and to seek the power of the Holy Spirit to change lives including our own! Our worship remains at the heart of everything we do.

The pattern of services we have had for many years continued with consistent attendance at all of them. There has been some experimentation with the third Sunday at 6pm with Dom our curate doing a great job in liaising with Jazz Church and inviting them to lead a couple of services. This was very well received and will be repeated.

The numbers of people attending services has not grown significantly in 2015 but neither have they fallen dramatically. We should seek growth in our community and we need to rise to the challenge.

It has been a great thrill to welcome Rev Dr Mike Branscombe to the team and have the chance to share services with him. A much needed welcome boost to us all. Thanks too for the ministries of Rev Elsie Blair-Chappell, Rev Keith Claringbull and our readers Marion Woodward and Alan Sherrin. Alongside these diocesan licensed ministries we have had great input from John Gerightly our Reader in training, John Tattersall on placement with us from St John's College, Nottingham, Stephen Blair-Chappell, our Discipleship Pastor and Christina Brown our Families Missioner.

A big thank you to everyone who helps put the services together, leads and preaches and sorts out the practicalities too.

**Stewart Jones  
Rector**

# Music

## Annual Reports: 2015

### EVENING SERVICE

Like all the other Congregations, we were delighted to welcome Mike Branscombe to preach to us and lead the worship of the Evening Services.

This year there was again an Epiphany Carol Service in January as well as the three Carol Services in December. The Civic Service took place on July 14th. Choral Evensong on Remembrance Sunday again included poems and other material from the 1914-1918 War. There was no Choral Evensong on February 22<sup>nd</sup>, the occasion of an 'Event for Under-30s', part of the visit of the Archbishop of Canterbury, Justin Welby, to the Diocese of Birmingham. Once more the evening Ash Wednesday Service, led by the Rector, was held in the Chancel; it was again intimate in style and especially beautiful.

Prayer Service (Third Sunday): There was no Service in August, and in December it was replaced by the Jazz Church Service.

Evening Prayer takes place on fifth Sundays and also during the School Summer Holiday period; these Services tend to be adaptions of the Common Worship Service. This year the summer Services were focused on the Lectionary. Eleanor Hodkinson deputised for me in April and early May as Cantor while I was unable to sing, and she also does so when I am on holiday.

Choral Services: Additions to the Choir this year were Amy-Marie Field, Emily Preston, Rob Tilson, David Philips and Kate Wells, all undergraduate students. Linnéa Markgren continues to assist me most ably on a regular basis; her input is invaluable. Lewis Jones was available again, once Henry IV parts 1 and 2 (at the RSC) had finished. We were sad to lose Eleanor Hodkinson in July, on her marriage and move to Southend-on Sea.

The team of those on the Reading Rota is now even stronger, with Margaret Clewitt and Jo Murgatroyd joining us. May I thank Albert Thomas, Bridget Cameron, Catherine Pinnock, Christine Marshall, Clive Bevan, Colin Walker, Edward Gooden, Ian Lawrence (and Linnéa Markgren at Carol Services) for their thoughtful and expressive reading, and Clive, Colin, and Edward for their leading of the Intercessions. Rosemary Hawker, Albert and I act as 'reserves'. when needed.

David Griffiths has played the organ and piano for most of the Choral Services, Michael Davey playing when David had commitments elsewhere. May I also thank David Lane (St. Agatha's), who played for non-Choral Services when I have been away, and Stephen Blair-Chappell, who again played for Christmas Midnight Communion.

Last, and not least, may I thank Clive Bevan (Warden) for his unstinting support for the Evening Services, and also John Lewis, Albert Thomas and Paul Capelin.

**John Hawker,  
6pm Worship Leader and Choir Master**

# **Music**

## **Worship Team - Annual Report 2015**

It's difficult not to mention the difference the recent upgrades to the music system has made in the early part of this year as it has made such a difference, but more on that next year! 2015 has had some good moments to celebrate:

Some of the Worship Team went together to the Engage Worship Conference in Luton which was a good time to learn, worship and reflect as a team & also a great opportunity to get to know each other better. This was a great thing to do in order to strengthen and build the Worship Team away from serving at the front of church.

In the summer of 2015, we pulled together a choir from the congregation to sing on special services, starting with the Harvest festival. This occasional choir is a wonderful way to get different people from the congregation involved in music making at St. Martin's and it is especially great to see a mix of ages coming together to sing, have fun learning songs & worshipping together. The choir have so far sung at two services in 2015 the first being very successful in terms of the number of people who got involved and in the reception of the choir's contribution. Many thanks to Zoe Millman for directing the choir.

One of the main highlights of 2015 is that some younger people are becoming more interested in making music in the church and I am very keen to try and get these individuals engaged in the music life of St. Martin's as much as possible. A couple of young people have so far had the opportunity to play or sing a couple of times already which has been brilliant and we will be seeking to expand on that.

A real answer to prayer is that we can welcome a drummer onto the regular Worship Team this year! (And possibly some young people who play drums too!) A big thank you to everyone who has been involved in the music ministry at St. Martin's this year!

**Philippa Done  
11 am Worship Leader**

# **Parochial Church Council (PCC) Report for 2015**

Every Church of England parish church has a PCC. This is made up of clergy, church wardens, synod members, readers and representatives of the congregation. We are charity law trustees and our role is to support and encourage the clergy and other staff and generally to support and enable the St Martin's vision; our worship, pastoral and evangelistic activities. This includes consideration of policies and practise including on such matters as safeguarding, prayer ministry, data and IT and induction. We receive feedback on the core areas of our vision (welcome, care and discipleship) and on the broader Anglican Church including through reports on synods

The PCC Standing Committee (the clergy, the wardens, the Lay Vice Chair and one other elected PCC representative) has begun meeting a couple of times a year with Paul Capelin, our Operations Director, to provide further support to Paul in an overview of operations and report back to the PCC. We want to be conscious of our church life as a whole; the worship services throughout the week, Children's work, life groups but also Cuppa and Chat, the daily operations, the tea room and lettings of rooms and all the other aspects of our life together. This coming year is a time for review of our vision as the current vision document is due to expire. We welcome the prayer, support and input of the fellowship at all times but particularly as we take stock of the last 3 years and how God is calling us to move forward.

Thank you for your response to the stewardship campaign. The Church of England does not get support from the government, other than recovery of tax on gift aid donations like any other charity. Your giving is therefore crucial to the work of this Church. We are conscious of our responsibilities as stewards of the resources God has provided to us; people, buildings and finance. Please pray for us to be wise stewards of those resources; honouring God and facilitating His mission of calling individuals to be his disciples and us all in encouraging one another in our discipleship.

We have 7 core meetings a year. If you would like to be more involved in the life and work of St Martin's please prayerfully consider whether you should stand for election to the PCC. It can take a little while to get used to but I hope and believe we have open and supportive engagement, with everyone's contribution welcomed and listened to. Thank you to all who serve on the PCC. - **Ian Baker, Lay Chair PCC**

# **Church Wardens Report**

The Warden team has been very small this year. As a consequence of this, some services particularly during the week and on Sunday evenings, have not been covered. Since the autumn more people have joined the team, and this has relieved the pressure on The Crossing service. I would like to thank everyone who has served on the team this year. I would also like to thank everyone on the welcome team, the lesson readers, the Communion servers and the projectionists and those praying for individuals or leading intercessions for their service.

In July the Cathedral was unable to accommodate the ordination services, due to the Cathedral refurbishment. St. Martin's was commissioned to facilitate the services, and thanks to a small group of the congregation the services were conducted successfully with over 700 people receiving Communion over the weekend.

The challenges for 2016 include increasing the number of people who are trained to fulfil the warden duties on the rota for all services and maintaining an atmosphere of dignity and reverence inside the church, while being faithful and responsive to the teachings of Christ, whenever it is open to the public.

**Clive Bevan  
Church Warden**

# 2015 APCM Welcome Forum Report

The Welcome Forum met together four times in 2015 on 10th March 2015, 6th May 2015, 25th June 2015, 19th November 2015. At the beginning of the year the members of the Welcome Forum were Dominic Wright (Chair), Clive Bevan, Minnie Carew, David Hale Alison Haywood and Jo Murgatroyd. During the course of the year Alison Haywood and David Hale stood down and Colin Walker joined.

## Hospitality

A focus for the Welcome Forum in 2015 has been to encourage a welcoming environment through eating together as a church family. Minnie Carew and Jo Murgatroyd sought to increase the numbers of volunteers at such events. Bring and share meals were organised for Pentecost (May 24th) and Harvest Sunday on 27th September whilst cakes after the crossing service were organised for Mike Branscombe's licensing service on 26th July and encouraged at other services too. The forum recommended to the PCC that on Tuesdays a collection be held during the service rather than collecting money at the refreshments table due to the worry that some people might not join the time of fellowship after the service if they did not have money with them. Thanks to Clive for facilitating this.

## Disabled Access

The Welcome Forum was concerned that the highest possible standards of access for disabled members of the congregation was maintained. Dominic Wright had been made aware of a visitor who had been distressed when she hadn't been able to access the lift and locked disabled toilet. The involvement of multiple people caused embarrassment. This is an on-going problem with the need to balance security with access, which has not been fully resolved. The Welcome Forum has been in conversation about improved signage, which is part of a bigger project, which needs to be coordinated. We were grateful that the T-loop for hearing aids was fixed during the year but acknowledged that it should not be out of action for long periods of time. We would recommend that disabled access is discussed at PCC regularly (at least annually).

## Welcome Culture

Whilst there is very much a place for initiatives, ultimately the quality of the welcome experienced by visitors will be down mainly to the culture of the whole church. This is dependent on everybody to make a conscious effort to speak to new people and make visitors feel comfortable. The church must also continue to be led with welcome in mind. The PCC were asked in October to think about this culture and to commit to personal ways to contribute.

## Some Personal commitments at PCC

- Talk to people in the refreshment queue
- Say hello to people around me before the service
- Respect people who do not want to engage
- Try to learn people's names
- Talk to new young people in the pews
- Offer more welcome from the front & loiter at the back when not up front
- Introduce people to other people they might connect with
- Once a month I will stand near the door to invite people in/explain how long the service is/where the prayer chapel is
- When welcoming, speak a welcome to everyone passing including those who stand by the door just looking, without worrying them
- Speak with more people and seek to be more inclusive
- Get outside my comfort zone more often

# **Pastoral Care Forum Annual Report 2015**

The aims of the Care Forum outlined in the Vision Strategy are to ensure everyone who is a member of the church community is appropriately cared for, and to provide appropriate support for those in need.

## **Care within St Martin's - How?**

- Creating a culture of care within the community.
- Creating regional pastors with support teams. These teams will include caring for those who are housebound.
- Providing appropriate and consistent training for those involved in the regional teams.
- Encouraging all to find ways to serve the church and one another.
- Providing care and support for our volunteers.
- Encouraging all ages to be part of a support network. (Life group, prayer partners, social groups).
- Establishing a database.
- Organising regular social events.
- Working closely with CHH.
- Developing a team of listeners.

## **Care outside St Martin's - How?**

- Supporting the work of CHH.
- Developing the work and role of the Community Lay Minister.
- Focussing our mission giving to a limited number of groups or agencies both at home and overseas.
- To develop our involvement in the Diocesan link with Malawi.
- Being a place of welcome and safety to those in need.

Members of the Forum are: Bridget Cameron, Christine Marshall, Elizabeth Baker, Elizabeth Meaney, Lorna Honick, and Yvonne Thompson.

(Members who left during the year– Elsie Blair-Chappell, Jo Murgatroyd and Rob Jones).

The major items of discussion and implementation during 2015 were:

1. **Congregational Roll:** The Roll is fully operational. This gives the Clergy and key personnel access to up to date contact information about the members of the church and to collate statistical data for submission to the Diocesan Office.
2. **Home Communion:** The Forum have reviewed best practice in other parishes and written a protocol for lay members to be authorised to administer Home Communion to those who are unable to attend church services due to illness or infirmity. Three lay members have now been trained and authorised to administer communion in the home, on request from the Clergy.
3. **The Community:** To find ways of addressing the needs of those who are ill, housebound, can no longer attend church or need transport. This is an ongoing priority.
4. **Regional Pastors:** Further progress has been made to identify and establish procedures for seven ‘regional pastors’ (North, South, East, West, Central, Solihull & Out of City), who will coordinate and support members of the congregation to provide pastoral care and visiting, as required. Contact was made by pastors with members of the community over the autumn months, and the data updated as required.
5. **Beacons:** Several members of the congregation have volunteered to be Beacons who:
  - get to know the people who attend services and who sit by them,
  - Look out for them, and let someone know if they have missed services – perhaps by ringing them up.
  - Direct them to people who can offer prayer, support.
  - Direct them to where they can find out more about Jesus through courses, Life Groups etc.

**6. Care Training:** Future courses may take place, subject to funding, but at the moment the start of the work of the regional pastors will be reviewed during this year, to see how the new system works.

**7. Christmas Gifts and Visits:** We again coordinated the annual Christmas visits and distribution of gifts and we are grateful to Audrey Sherrin (for purchasing the gifts) and Rasheeda Robinson (for wrapping them) and to the numerous individuals who undertook the visits.

**8. Home & Overseas Giving:** As part of the new Strategy document, the Care Forum are now responsible for recommending the annual distribution of donations. A sub group collated feedback from the congregation of organisations that could be chosen to receive. Our recommendations for 2015 were amended and approved at the PCC, and a review of the future process will take place before the autumn of 2016.

I would like to thank all members of the Forum for their regular attendance at meetings, and their support and prayer throughout the year. At the APCM, I will stand down from the position of Chair of the Care Forum.

I have been Chair since 2010, and the work of the Forum members has made a significant difference to the care of the St Martins community during that time.

I am grateful to all members of the Forum, past and present, who have given their time and energy to make a difference, and to follow Jesus's example.

**"For as in one body we have many members, and the members do not all have the same function, so we, though many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another. Having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us use them: if prophecy, in proportion to our faith; if service, in our serving; the one who teaches, in his teaching; the one who exhorts, in his exhortation; the one who contributes, in generosity; the one who leads, with zeal; the one who does acts of mercy, with cheerfulness". Romans 12 v 4-8.**

**Yvonne Thompson**  
**Chair - Care Forum**

# **Finance**

"The last twelve months have presented St Martins with a number of challenges financially but I am pleased to be able to report that through hard work by staff, volunteers and the community as a whole we have exceeded some of the expectations that we had at the start of the year. The last year has seen significant improvements in the performance of the commercial activities of the church which has enabled the delivery of more pastoral and spiritual services and support.

Key to the changes have been the bedding in of staff changes that have taken place which has enabled growth and innovation in the room lettings and Tea Lounge. The staff working as part of these services have exceeded expectations during what has been at times a difficult year.

It has been pleasing to note that the new stained glass window has now been built and installed. This has been a long term project that has proved logically and financially challenging at times so securing completion has been a welcomed.

Whilst there have been good news stories financially we remain acutely aware that the environment in which we operate remains challenging. We will need to strive to improve commercial profitability further over the next year whilst also looking at ways in which we can minimise outgoings. We will, as always, rely on the generosity of those who are members of the congregation to support the on-going work of the church and we thank them all for their support."

**Lachlan Smith**  
**Chair of the Finance Forum**

# Fabric Report

## **FABRIC**

Key work carried out this year is:

- Complete check of Electrics in building, and £10k of remedial work carried out with appropriate certification.
- Upgrade of IT system, moving our email and office system to the cloud.
- Upgrade of Telephone system to use digital rather than analogue phones
- Installation of new window in Tower completed.
- Upgrade of light fittings in Sanctuary, Entrance, & South Transept
- Fresh Asbestos inspection & certification.

A substantial amount of the day to day maintenance has been completed by Stephen and this represents a tremendous practical and financial contribution to the Church

**Stephen Blair - Chappell — Church Warden**

**Paul Capelin—Operations Director**

# **ST MARTIN'S CENTRE FOR HEALTH AND HEALING**

An integral part of the St Martin-in-the Bullring community the Centre for Health and Healing aims, to alleviate the suffering and distress of the most vulnerable and excluded people in and around the city. The majority of people who use our service experience multiple disadvantage and are often some of the most 'damaged' people in society.

Our Counselling Service enables clients to understand, come to terms with and tackle often painful experiences. Counsellors support clients in developing a greater sense of self-awareness, understanding of relationships and past experiences and assist in the development of more effective coping strategies and life skills.

A corporate member of the British Association of Counsellors and Psychotherapists (BACP) and working within the 'National Institute for Clinical Excellence' guidelines (NICE), the Counselling Service employs 3 staff, over 30 volunteer Therapists', (all qualified up to a minimum of a postgraduate Diploma recognised by BACP/UKCP).

A wide range of approaches are offered including, Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT), Person Centre, Integrative, Psychodynamic, and Gestalt. This breath of approach enables the Service to offer clients the most appropriate therapy for their needs.

During 2015 over 7500 sessions were offered to over 750 clients. The following benefits were reported; 67% improvement in general wellbeing, 51% improvement with depression, 66% reduction in stress and anxiety, 18% in family relationships, 75% improved confidence and ability to interact with others, 12% gained the confidence to undertake some form of voluntary work, training and employment and 91% felt that the counselling offered had been useful/very useful

**Rob Jones- Director CHH**

# Cuppa and Chat

## Cuppa n' Chat Annual Report

Each Monday morning at five-to-ten, those of us preparing to welcome guests to Cuppa n' Chat at S. Martin's in five minutes time, sit together to pray. We hold before God all that will take place over the next two hours. We ask that we may welcome our guests as we would welcome Christ himself: that we may treat them as we would treat him; that we may serve them as we would serve him: that we may welcome him. Then at 12.00 noon, when we've put the tables and chairs away and finished tidying up, we gather again; and after going through the list of names of everyone who came, we give thanks for the previous two hours: for stories heard, encounters shared, strangers welcomed, opportunities enjoyed. We pray for these people; or rather, we pray, with these people on our hearts. And if prayer has any '*use*' it's not that we *tell* God anything (what can *we* tell **God** anyway?), or even ask anything much, either; but rather we open ourselves to the possibility that God might use our prayer to keep our hearts open to whatever. . . . . And 'whatever' includes the pretty wretched conditions from which some of the people who come to Cuppa n' Chat, come. So we also pray that it may be a place of warmth and welcome; of comfort, support, relief comfort, enjoyment, consolation and fun.

Two years ago, when Joy left to go on Maternity leave, about 20-or-so people came to the well-thought-through service she started. Usually now, most weeks, we'll welcome between 50 and 70. This is not down to our success, but to do with the increased hardship for people on the margins of society, especially people who are homeless.

In the last few weeks, as well as hot drinks and 'Pret' sandwiches and salads, left-over from Sunday, due to kind donations, we've been able to have records played and books to choose. Haircuts have become a very popular – thank you Iman from Oasis Church for coming to volunteer your skilled services. Just this week a doctor has approached us to see if he could open a pop-up Monday morning surgery, and we've now got more volunteers than we've ever had. And we've had some cash donations – which help too. So we're grateful and happy – but we need more books and records – and more prayer too, please. Ann, Clare & Sally, John (for a few weeks) Keith and Mike

**Rev Keith Claringbull  
Communities Minister**

# Prayer Ministry at the Crossing

## Prayer Ministry at the Crossing

We have had 5 new people joining our Prayer Ministry Team since last year making a total of 21 members. We offer prayers to the congregation at every Holy Communion at the 11 am service.

The team aims to meet twice a year for training and discussion on how the ministry is developing. We were not able to meet as a team during the past year. However, I met the 5 new members individually to initiate their induction and will be completing it before they are scheduled on the Prayer rota.

Our motivation to pray is the compelling love of Christ. People who come for prayer should be left in no doubt afterwards that God loves them.

We clothe ourselves with his compassion – ‘*Therefore as God’s chosen people, holy and dearly loved clothe yourself with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience.* (Col 3:12) We are also filled with Christ’s love ... ‘*and hope does not disappoint us because God has poured out his love into our hearts by his Holy Spirit* (Rom 5:5)

**Rev Elsie Blair-Chappell  
Assistant Priest**

## **Electoral Roll Report 2015**

At the time of the last Annual Parochial Church Meeting held on 28.04.2015, there were 274 names on the Electoral Roll.

Recorded below are the names of those who died during the year 2015 -2016:

Doris Davies  
Agnes Francis  
Iris Loach

The total number of names on the Electoral Roll is 301.

This information will be presented at the Annual Parochial Church Meeting on 26.04.2016.

**Bridget Cameron**  
**Electoral Roll Officer**

# **Kids Club /Mix Report**

## **Kids Club Report 2015**

During 2015, Kids Club continued to meet on the 1st, 3rd and 5th Sundays of the month with breaks for Easter, the summer holidays and Christmas. The regular meetings encouraged the attendance of a core group of children with whom the leaders were able to develop good relationships. The staffing of sessions was difficult on occasion however, as the team contained only the bare minimum of staff, with no way of covering for illnesses, emergencies or personal difficulties.

The children studied a number of themes throughout the course of the year, including learning about the armour of God and the parables of Jesus and stories from the Gospel of Luke. In addition, the children continued to explore major stories and festivals of the Christian faith such as Pentecost, and harvest and Advent. We were privileged as a team to be able to offer social sessions where the children could play games and get to know each other, cooking activities such as making chocolate Easter baskets and an end of school year trip to the Thinktank Science Park.

After many years of service, Sue resigned from her post as leader of the Kids Club team, moving on to the new challenge of working with the teen group. We would like to thank Sue for her hard work and contribution to Kids Club over the past years.

We would ask for your continued prayers for the children's work as we wait to see what God has in store for 2016.

**Christina Brown**

**Families Missioner**

# Healing on the Streets Prayer Ministry

A group of us from St Martin's and other churches in Birmingham go outside on Edgbaston Street to pray for people each first Saturday of the month.

On Sept 19<sup>th</sup> 2015 we had our training day at St Martin in the Bull Ring. We had about 60 people attending the course including a couple from America, Fred and Laverne Smith. I asked Fred to write a reflection of his experience on the day.

Both Fred and Laverne are lecturers at Liberty Baptist Theological Seminary. Laverne lectures on religious studies and Fred teaches world religions. He also has a special interest in worldview and culture. Recently, he published a book, 'Developing a Biblical Worldview: Seeing Things God's Way'.

Here is what he wrote about our Training Day. It is sooo encouraging and sooo exciting. Please read on.

*'My wife, Laverne, and I were eagerly looking forward to the HOTS (Healing on the Streets) day of training and ministry at St. Martins in the Bullring, and what God would do there. I had been reading e-mailed reports for about two years, and knew that God's Spirit was active in this ministry, and our expectations were high. We were not disappointed. The day divided into two parts, a training session and then the prayer ministry on Edgbaston St. The training session was held at St. Martins in the Bullring, beginning with biblical foundations, but also practical instruction in praying with non-believers. The real value of the training, though, lay in how it developed confidence in the leadership, as well as preparing us to minister as a team. The trainers, David and Linda Isgrave deeply love Christ, His church, and people in need. This was evident in the time we spent with them, and by the end of the session, we knew we could follow them confidently anywhere. In addition, testimonies from experienced prayer warriors among the group helped build a sense of being part of a team that was sensitive to the Spirit and ready to minister to whoever came by. After lunch we stepped out of the church onto Edgbaston St. Right across from the church is a huge outdoor market.'*

*People were coming and going, busses unloading, and vendors, offering everything from strawberries and squash and tomatoes to soap, cheese, Persian rugs and bedding. There was much shouting and noise. We set up chairs quickly and began passing out cards explaining why we were there, and offering to pray with whoever had a need. The passing crowd, of hopeless, weary, Christless humanity nearly overwhelmed me. I had to fight back tears as we prepared to begin offering prayer to whoever would stop. And stop they did. Moments after we set up, people began coming for prayer. They took seats and two or three of us gathered around, to pray for them. At times there were people waiting to be prayed for. The sense that we were involved in serious spiritual warfare was heavy on us all. The Holy Spirit was definitely present, and protecting us. We often dealt with people whose physical struggles masked underlying spiritual needs, and the prayer times could be intense.*

*There were mothers concerned that they might miscarry their next child, and people with pain, anxiety, and various spiritual issues. Some were worried for missing family members, and others were stressed over work or other issues. All were in need, and we saw God's hand at work many times. By the end of the day we were exhausted, spiritually drained by the effort and the spiritual warfare involved, but filled with joy. When we move in God's will, He empowers us and so we sensed his pleasure as we gave him glory in Birmingham that day.*

*So many people live hopeless lives without Jesus Christ and the comfort of His Spirit. We were able to demonstrate that God loves them, and that Christians care about them. Pray for them, that God will remind them of His presence, and point them, in faith, to Jesus Christ, the only hope for the world.'*

Why don't you come to one of our HOTS sessions? We would love to see you there.

**Rev Elsie Blair-Chappell**  
**Assistant Priest**

# **Winter Night Shelter**

Over the first six weeks of 2016, the night shelter was held on Sunday evenings at St Martins. Over the time we've served over 500 evening meals and a similar number of breakfasts. We slept over 300 folks and used 50 volunteers. Special thanks to all the volunteers who helped out in this venture.

**Stephen Blair-Chappell  
Warden**

## **St Martin's Tea Lounge**

### **Tea Lounge 2015- Hannah Jackson**

2015 was a busy time for the Tea Lounge at St Martins. Going into 2016, it is a good time to look back, reflecting on the positive steps the business has taken in the past 12 months...

-We began trailing new products and offers to see what our customers like, such as the 'Cake of the Day Deal', where you get a cake and hot drink for a reduced price. We also experimented with seasonal products, like pancakes and hot cross buns, most of which went down well.

-We tried to actively engage with room hire clients to bring in more business to the Tea Lounge. For instance, offering discount vouchers on food to those booking rooms, or the opportunity to have a 'Tea Lounge Lunch' as part of your booking. The latter was something particularly praised by the National Literacy Trust.

-We also aimed to generate more revenue through the Tea Lounge by renting it out during the periods it is closed (i.e. evenings and Mondays), and also offering reserved space free of charge to customers, if they buy refreshments. Initially offering the space for free helped us build relationships with certain clients who now rent out meeting rooms.

-Staffing was a particular challenge during 2015, but we were blessed that we always managed to have provision to get through these periods, and keep the Tea Lounge open and serving the community. Moving into 2016, it would be great to begin to build a closer relationship between the church community and the Tea Lounge- perhaps getting more members of the congregation involved as casual staff and volunteers.

**Hannah Jackson  
Hospitality and Events Manager**

## **2015 Deanery Synod Report**

### **Deanery Synod Representatives**

The Deanery Synod Representatives were:

Jean Jepson  
Bridget Cameron  
Stuart Ainslie  
Martyn Ursell  
Christine Marshall  
General Synod Member

Rachel Jepson

Clergy members

Revd Canon Stewart Jones  
Revd Mike Branscombe (from July 2015)  
Revd Dominic Wright

Main issues and events discussed included:

A feedback in May from the hustings meeting held in St Martin's in April for the candidates standing in the General Election. This was not well attended but was well organised and well worth doing. Thanks to Dom Wright for his hard work in setting this up.

The Deanery pilgrimage to the Cathedral in April as part of the 300th anniversary of St Philips as a church went well. We sang as we walked to the cathedral and prayed at key points on the journey. Around 100 people took part.

In May we heard from the Regional Fundraising Officer for the Children's Society, Roseann Boyce who explained how we as churches can support the work of the society and what they can offer us.

In October we welcomed Mike Branscombe to the deanery along with the new clergy at St Lukes, Amanda Howett and Tim Hughes. The new church starting at Gas Street would be open in February 2016.

At the October meeting a motion was passed by the synod on the cost of applying for British citizenship which in comparison to other countries is very high. The motion sees this as an issue of justice and was passed with 23 in favour, none against and 1 abstention. Helen Tomblin of Safe Families for Children presented the work this charity does and encouraged us to get members of our churches to offer support through volunteering. The charity seeks to offer support to children and their families before the situation becomes a serious crisis.

Ian Harper our Area Dean has done a good job this past year in helping the deanery work well along with Trevor Lewis our Lay Chair.

**Stewart Jones**  
**Rector**

# 2015 Curates Report

Although I had lived through all the seasons here before there were still plenty of new experiences. In July I presided at my first wedding. Over 30 weeks I led a 3D discipleship course with a small group of people mainly from St Martin's. I found this to be an opportunity for me to grow as a disciple as much as anyone on the course.

I hugely enjoyed organising a deanery-wide hustings for all the candidates mainly in Ladywood constituency, which became ecumenical too. During the year I developed an interest in the case of Asia Bibi who is a Christian on death row in Pakistan for blasphemy. I later met with Shabana Mahmood MP about this and also met Dr Khurshid Ahmed a local Muslim community leader. Through him I had an opportunity to ask David Cameron to put in a word for Asia Bibi when he came to Birmingham on 20<sup>th</sup> July to deliver his speech on tackling extremism. I don't know what if anything he was able to do but she did get a reprieve from her death sentence two days later. Please pray for Asia Bibi as the bomb on Easter Day 2016 in Lahore, which targeted Christian children, was directly related to her case.

Another new experience was a visit to Victoria School for children with severe disabilities. It was humbling to see the care they receive and to explain to them what Christians believe.

As the year progressed I was sorry to miss Professor John Hull's funeral on 17<sup>th</sup> August. He had a huge influence on me during my training. Towards the end of the year the carol services (Jazz Carols, Crisis Carols, Birmingham City Council) felt a great mission opportunity to preach the gospel to people who come to church less often and was a huge privilege.

**Dom Wright**  
Curate



## **ST MARTIN'S YOUTH CENTRE REPORT FOR APCM (2016)**

The centre has had a good year and continues to draw in new members, some of whom are new to this country. We have now reached the point where we are seeking funding to appoint a full time worker because our two part time workers cannot adequately cope with the numbers attending.

It is pleasing to report that for the very first time those who took GCSEs last Summer have achieved excellent results. Most of these have now gone on to college and one or two to apprenticeships.

We continued with our 'Widening Horizons' programme and during the course of the year some of our members attended cricket matches, participated in BMX/skateboard activities engaged in challenging and team building adventures on the Lickey Hills. These were all new to our young people.

A comedy night was organised by Rachel Hinks to raise money for the centre. A number of our members attended and helped run the evening and went on the stage to tell the audience about the work of the centre and how much they enjoyed being there.

In the Autumn, City of Colours (Birmingham street art and events) lead a graffiti project with our members. This was undertaken under the guidance of a qualified graffiti artist who took the young people to the Custard Factory to see other peoples' work and explained to them that they should not undertake 'tagging' of buildings. Since then, there has been no graffiti added to what was already on the centre! They very much enjoyed these three days spent on the project and successfully completed a graffiti wall in the car park. Two of our members were selected to be on the City of Colours Forum which they now attend.

Our two youth workers, Tom and Tolaya, do an excellent job working with groups and with individuals. They are very much sought after by both present and past members who seek them out for specific advice and support. We are lucky to have them.

We are very grateful to all our funders and those who give to us in kind. In particular, we should like to thank St Martin's Church and a large number of its members who support us in many ways and particularly in prayer. We have survived, I believe, due to this prayer.

We look forward to further new ventures which widen the horizons of our young people and have booked to go on a residential in the country in July 2016. This will be in addition to a number of other new programmes which we are developing.

**Bridget Cameron**  
**Acting Chair, St Martin's Youth Centre**