

CHURCH SECRETARY'S REPORT FOR THE YEAR ENDING DECEMBER 2015

Would the defendant please stand. *(Kay stands)*

Would you please identify yourself by giving your name. *(Kay confirms her name)*

Can you please confirm that you are the Minister of Word and Sacrament here at London Street URC. *(Kay confirms that she is)*

Before I put the charge to you, can you please confirm that in your plea you speak not just for yourself but on behalf of all members here at London Street. *(Kay confirms that is so)*

You are charged jointly with the members of this congregation that between 1 January 2015 and 31 December 2015, within the one holy, universal, apostolic church here at London Street, you have sought to bear witness to the Lordship of Christ in all areas of living and to make its own life of worship, fellowship and service a total act of offering to God. In doing so you and the members of this congregation have upheld the honour, discipline, work and worship of Christ's church by the consecration of individual gifts of time, talent and means.

Do you understand the charge? *(Kay confirms)*

How do you plead, guilty or not guilty? *(Kay pleads guilty)*

Please sit. *(Kay sits)*

The beginning of a New Year is a good time to take stock and review where you have been in the last 12 months. Some will make new year resolutions only to break them before the first month of the new year has finished. My report will look back over the church calendar for 2015 here at London Street. Events that have spiritually as well as physically challenged us, but will conclude with one question we should all ask ourselves: What is God asking me as a member of this congregation to do over the next 12 months as I continue to bear witness to the Lordship of Christ in all areas of living? A resolution then for each of us to consider. Kay has pleaded guilty to the charge put to her. Given that Kay speaks not just for herself, it is not Kay that is to be sentenced or to consider a resolution alone, but everyone who worships here at London Street. I will now put before you the evidence that I have collected in support of that charge. When I have finished it is you that must decide on the appropriate sentence.

The almighty God who created everything does not stand aloof and far from us. He wants us to know him as Father and through Jesus his Son we can learn how to relate to him. All true prayer Jesus said starts with knowing God as your Father. To encourage prayer within our family, we adopted in 2014 as part of our Vision20/20, to grow spiritually and prayerfully and during 2015 we continued to work on, as Kay has said so often, our mission of sowing, watering, reaping and keeping. The prayer group has met every Wednesday lunchtime throughout the year and on the first Sunday of each month we have a prayer breakfast. We issued prayer leaflets drafted by Lizzie John our prayer secretary, thank you Lizzie, and then in the Autumn our focus on prayer developed into a rhythm of daily prayer using the prayers and cycle of psalm

readings from Ffald-y-Brenin as our framework. Those who could not engage in prayer here at London Street were encouraged to use the Ffald-y-Brenin prayer leaflets at home.

Church growth was our second of the 10 mission statements set out in Vision20/20. Church growth is not simply a matter of more bums on seats on a Sunday morning. Whilst acknowledging the importance of our human earthly response to growth, we are still in the sowing and reaping stage of growth. God has used London Street in amazing ways. Our shoots of growth have included Bible study with Kay and Peter Bentall leading Lent house groups and in the Autumn looking at prayer in the New Testament. Kay has also led church membership classes. We have the Oasis and Youth cafés, the Little Angels toddler group, Messy Church, Friendship Hour, the Memory Tree social club, the craft group and 3C's. Our ecumenical links are getting stronger. We have a safe hub for those using the top of town during the evening at weekends through the work of the Street Pastors; we have the Food Bank with the support of Alison Jamieson and Chris Ayland; the Portuguese/Brazilian church; the abundant life African church and many other Christian organisations who use this building for worship and prayer. And let's not forget the uniformed organisations who meet here every Tuesday during term time.

In fact if you were to come into this building on any day of the week at any time, the chances are that you will find a number of groups and people using our premises and I'd like to say thank you to Peter Bentall for all the work he does in hiring out the rooms and in doing so provides an important source of income.

So let's have a closer look at some of the groups I have mentioned. On behalf of the Little Angels toddler group I'd like to call Anne Davey.

We are a core of people who bring their children every week to our Tuesday morning sessions and more on some occasions. Kay has planned the craft sessions to be relevant to each part of the year, for example we gave harvest hampers to the members and their families and also a present at Christmas. We had a very successful nativity service to which some former members of the group brought their children, as well as attracting other members of the congregation. During the summer we held a Teddy Bears' picnic with games and bubbles in Eastrop Park. Kay is very good at organizing the last half hour for singing and games before the children go home. I do some sessions of this if Kay is not available – not always remembering all the correct words to some of these songs – which invariably causes laughter. We are indebted to our Tuesday team of Kay, Leng, Elaine, Louise and Chris who regularly give up their time to help me in running the group.

Thank you Anne. On behalf of Messy Church I'd like to call Ian McCloy.

Messy Church is a way of 'being church' for families, which involves fun! Messy Church is a church, (not a craft club) that helps people of all ages, not just children, to encounter Jesus as Lord and Saviour. It reflects a God of unconditional love and is a church for people outside church, providing an oasis of welcome and a safe space in which to thrive.

Our Messy Church is known as the top of town messy church and is an ecumenical venture with All Saints' Church. We meet bi-monthly and follow a biblical theme each time. The families are welcomed into the Concourse where they register their attendance and they can play board-type games before moving onto the crafts, which are all linked to the theme. Whilst enjoying the craft work there is the opportunity for leaders to discuss aspects of the theme and of faith. After just over an hour everyone then goes into church for worship and celebration. The session ends with a meal which everyone shares together.

Over the course of 12 months we have seen our numbers grow with an average of 18 children with their parents/grandparents/carers. It is a great experience for everyone. 'As we are gathered Jesus is here!'

Thank you Ian. On behalf of the Memory Tree social club I'd like to call Claire Macro.

The Memory Tree Social Club is a weekly coffee morning for people diagnosed with Alzheimers and other types of dementia, and their loved ones. We have a wonderful team of volunteers, who look after our visitors with love, kindness and laughter. We are now in our 2nd year (our first anniversary was celebrated in September 2015). We have an average of 25-30 visitors every week, and their feedback is that we provide a unique and special place where they can relax, enjoy themselves, make new friends, and talk to other carers and people with dementia. Special mention must be made to our lovely team of bakers who provide us with freshly baked cakes every week - our guests always rave about the cakes! Around 45 people enjoyed a fabulous 3 course Christmas lunch on the 16th December, so the Social Club is benefiting the Oasis café too.

Thank you Claire. On behalf of Friendship Hour, I'd like to call Joyce Cook.

Friendship Hour, open to all, started with mainly ladies in their 30's and 40's. Thursday used to be half day in the shops so that was the day chosen. We still have no age limits and we welcome all who are interested. During the past year there have been changes in Friendship Hour. I felt I had to resign as Chairman after 12 years, the strain of arranging a weekly meeting becoming too much. Christine and Eileen kindly took over the reins.

In September, after the summer break, the group met to consider the way forward. It was hoped a way forward could be found and various suggestions were made. Games afternoons were used to keep the group together whilst investigating other ways forward. Finally a vote was taken and a decision made that the Club will change to meeting monthly on the 4th Thursday in each month. With this change we are confident in keeping Friendship Hour open in anticipation of our Jubilee in a few years' time. Pam Ralph and myself felt as it was now once a month we would both be willing to carry on with our roles as Treasurer and Leader.

As the only social group meeting from the Church for formal meetings it would be a pleasure to have more support from church members. Perhaps with a

monthly meeting more will feel happy to attend. Our programme is varied with the constant things being a welcoming drink and biscuit and friendship offered to all.

Thank you Joyce. On behalf of the craft group, I'd like to call Isobel Martin.

The craft club grew out of the interest expressed by a few of the carers who come to the Memory Tree. They were interested in learning a new craft and it was easier to do this at a dedicated time and place rather than taking time away from the normal activities on a Wednesday morning at the Memory Tree. We began in September and met twice a month on a Monday morning. An invitation was extended to anyone who was interested in learning or sharing craft information and we have members from outside the congregation and Memory Tree families. The members cover a wide spectrum of crafts and are happy to share news, patterns and skills. The group has averaged approximately 10 attendees per meeting. At the last meeting of 2015 it was decided to extend the meetings to every Monday.

Thank you Isobel. And on behalf of the uniformed organisations, I'd like to call Gill Craft.

The uniformed organisations continue to grow and we have Beavers, Cubs and Scouts coming along to join us on recommendation from friends, so they must be having fun!

Last year has seen us taking part in many activities both in the group and with others from the District. The Beavers had their usual Christmas party in January, something to look forward to after Christmas and the excitement has died down. Paultons Park in November, when the park is only open to Beavers and Cubs was a winner, we are learning to wrap up warm and have fun. Beavers also attended the District sleep over - not much sleep was had but they went home happy. Helen has taken on the role of Beaver Leader and is supported by Assistant Leaders Alison and Christina, our regular parent helpers David and Graham are a welcome addition to the team.

The Cubs are gaining badges under the new programme, including the photographer and local knowledge, scouring the town for blue plaques; if you look carefully you can find them too. Richard (Akela) and Mark are leading the pack, and we continue to have the help of our Young Leader Matthew, who is shaping up to be an asset to the group. The District Camp was held in the New Forest where we built rafts, took part in fencing and archery, did some Geocaching (this is an outdoor recreational activity, in which the Cubs had to use a Global Positioning System receiver to hide and seek containers) and had fun at the camp fire. We continue to do joint evenings with the Cubs and Scouts to build friendship and make the transition from Cubs to Scouts not such a daunting prospect, which is proving successful. My report next year will detail the fun of celebrating 100 Years of Cubs, something we are all looking forward to.

Scouts have lost a few to other activities and to Explorer Scouts as they turn 14 but it goes like that at times, some new friends have come along from the "Bring a Friend Night" and fun has been had with outside activities including plenty of camps in good and bad weather! Two of our talented Scouts were in the recent Gang Show, well done Abbey and Elizabeth, excellent performance and thoroughly enjoyed by all.

The group has enjoyed the church parades and our thanks go to Kay for making it fun. We took part in the St Georges Day Parade at St Mary's Church, always fun to march in the street with a band.

Finally my thanks must go to the Leaders for all they do, our Executive for the support they give us and of course London Street URC for being our sponsors. The main aim of the movement is to have fun and adventure and as a group we do just that.

Thank you Gill. I have two written statements to read. Firstly from Joan Musselwhite on behalf of the 3C's.

We meet on the 3rd Wednesday of each month in the concourse at 10.15 am for Company, Coffee and a Chat. There are usually about 10 and everyone is very welcome.

Secondly from Penny Dillely on behalf of the Oasis and Youth cafés.

The work of Oasis café covers much more than serving food to paying customers and during 2015 we have seen an increase in people with needs coming into the café week by week. In May we started to record the various needs being met on a daily basis. We found that we are almost daily giving free tea and sandwiches to a growing number of 'homeless' people. We open the church for prayer to any who ask and through this often signpost people to other agencies who are able to help them further.

We catered for 100 to celebrate the 5th anniversary of the town chaplaincy in September as well as regular meals for the church here, soup lunches elsewhere and individual celebrations. We opened the café on Saturdays during the Town Festival in July and many enjoyed a quiet coffee and a newspaper to read. In December we helped to set up the Christmas Day meal for those who would otherwise have been on their own. Our customer base continues to grow helped by events such as these which raise the profile of the café.

In May the cooks and others had a Food Hygiene certificate update; in September we again ran a soup festival, and at the beginning of 2015 we ran a jacket potato special offer. Rolling forward 12 months to December we found ourselves cooking over 160 Christmas lunches which were enjoyed by various groups who have become regular bookings. A new group of 30 have already booked for 2016!

Let by Kay and open to all we continued to have the Commissioning Services at the beginning of each school term. These give us the opportunity to reflect

on the work of both cafés and give thanks to God for all He has done and to pray for the coming terms work of the cafés and the staff.

Staffing is also part of the work of the cafés. Sadly two of our previous staff died during 2015, Mary Francis and Roger Day. We have been joined by several new members who have not worked for many years and have a great lack of confidence. To see these folk blossom into confident and more outgoing people who are solving their own problems is one of the great joys of this work and we give thanks to God for these answers to prayer.

We also provide work placements for lads doing catering courses at BCot. This involves giving 7 weeks of planned experience and a lot of form filling for us all.

The café also runs a bookstall business which is increasing, selling around £1,200 worth of stock during 2015. We continue to look for a manager who is able to increase the work of the bookstall. There are many groups who would benefit from having greater access to the books, however a person with vision is needed for this.

Last year the Youth café was opening for 2 days a week and business declined over the summer months as our older cohort gradually took on different lifestyles. During July we took part in the Town Festival providing several activities open to the public with the aim to invite teenagers into the Youth café. This was not very successful and the start to the new school year in September was very slow. We continued to have the monthly prayer mornings held on the last Friday morning of the month and during the October prayers sensed God calling us to prayer walk around the Costello School 7 times, as the Israelites did around Jericho with 7 circuits on the 7th day. During this time we experienced many answers to prayer and learnt much about prayer and had an increased awareness of God at work. Following the first walk 2 young people came into the Youth Café on the Monday, the following week 2 girls came in asking to give their lives to Christ, the week after more young people came in and now we are praying for more staff as we currently have 40-50 young people coming in over the week with around 15-25 a day. They make good use of all the equipment purchased in faith last summer and when there are small numbers of them they will often ask about the Lord and faith.

Thank you Joan and Penny for your reports

Our membership stands at 91. During 2015 we were saddened by the deaths, not only of Mary Francis and Roger Day as detailed in Penny's report, but also Joan Jones, Archie Thomson, Gordon Holton, Wyn Voysey and Netta Dickson. Our friends Eira and Gerry McCaughey moved to be nearer their family in Southampton and we welcomed in July, 7 new members: Barbara Banbury, John Coakes, David Corfield, Elaine Dawson, Pam Ralph and Edmund and Molly Shaw. Attendance at Sunday services averaged around 65.

We are blessed with having Kay preaching on most Sunday's and the teaching she (and on the odd occasion Sammy) bring through the Holy Spirit. But let us also thank our visiting preachers on the second Sunday of each month when Kay is in Tadley.

Thank you also to our musicians throughout 2015 – Mark Best, Peter Dixon, Ian Rees, Maggie Morgans, Alex Macro and Donna Stewart, with occasional input from Joyce Cook and the digital hymnal, and of course Kay herself. Our thanks go again to Mark Best for not only organising the musicians rota but also, with assistance from Chris, for arranging our pulpit supply. Sunday worship though is more than just the ministry of word and sacrament. There are many who work before and after the service and I'd like to thank all of them. There will be the drivers who give lifts to those who need one, Rob Williams who ensures that the heating is on if we need it, the greeters at the door organised by Jean Holton, the stewards organised by Joyce Cook, the sound system organised by Alex Macro, the reporting of the hymns we sing organised by Carol Scott as performing and copyright co-ordinator, the bible readers organised by Isobel Martin, the flowers organised by Liz Lindsay and her team, the provision of teas and coffees organised by Iris Wenham, the Traidcraft stall run by John and Margaret Carrick Smith, the ladies who wash and return the communion glasses, the counting of the offertory organised by the Finance Committee, the distribution of taped services by Alison Jamieson and of course our Junior Church staff and helpers.

I'd like now to call another live witness, Carol Scott, to give her statement for Junior Church.

First of all thank you to all the helpers and teachers that make the Junior Church such fun. There are 9 of us in total; of course we welcome volunteers to join us, no teaching qualification needed!! Our numbers of children attending change from week to week. Some weeks we have no children, other weeks we have 6 or more!! Each week is a challenge as the age range is from under 1 year to 14 plus and all children are welcome. We aim to provide the children and young people with a positive experience of church whilst learning what faith means. The teaching that we use is from Roots, and it follows the weekly Lectionary theme followed by Kay. At each festival we decorate a window sill in church with items made by the children. We also have a board that shows some of the children's art and response to the theme we have been following. You would be very welcome to come into the Hook Room after worship and see what the children have been considering that day.

Thank you Carol and to all the staff and helpers in Junior Church.

At the beginning of 2015 we had 10 serving Elders: Leng Ayland, Owen Collins, Joyce Cook, Alison Jamieson, Isobel Martin, Stan Marut, Ian McCloy, Jenny McCloy, Christine Robertson and Rob Williams. In addition we had 3 non-serving elders with a pastoral group each: Gill Craft, Maggie Morgans and Ian Scott. In May I dropped my duties as a serving elder as I took over from Joy Williams as church secretary. During 2015 there have been 11 elders' meetings and 2 extra-ordinary meetings. Every member of the congregation has been remembered by the elders in prayer in our devotionals. Items for discussion have been many and have included consideration of a Church Related Community Worker, the sanctuary ceiling, same sex marriage, worship, mission and festival events, policies, membership classes, bible study, employment of paid employees, church finance, and data protection and the church directory. To help with the business element of elders' meeting, 4 sub-

committees were set up to consider various aspects of life within the church and bring recommendations to elders meeting. They are the buildings and fabric group, the children's advocate group, the communications group and the church mission group.

On behalf of the buildings and fabrics group I'd like to call my 8th live witness, Joy Williams.

Early in the year work on renovating the ceiling in the Sanctuary was completed and new energy saving lights installed. Once the dust had settled the rest of the Sanctuary was redecorated.

In April a buildings and fabrics focus group was formed and their first job was to officially set up a rolling programme of works for the coming years but these are never set in stone and it was soon necessary to renovate the toilet for the disabled ahead of schedule. The rainwater leaks in the Concourse were a continuing problem but the centre gully was re-sealed, the drainpipe from the sanctuary roof which drains into it was renewed and slightly diverted, and the lead flashing hammered down. This has improved matters considerably although exceptional wind and rain still causes some drips. The unused and therefore potentially dangerous shower room in the basement was converted to a cleaners' store room leaving the existing cupboard with more room for the Street Pastors' Safe Hub equipment. A solar security light was also fixed over the side door, all at the Street Pastors' expense.

Some insulation work was done at the Manse and a dehumidifier has greatly reduced condensation there. The bathroom shower unit was replaced.

There always seems to be lights flickering somewhere in a building of this size and replacing them has been an ongoing job for the group as have radiators not heating up. These are simple jobs to put right but we need to know about them! Bram Corn - our Property Officer, Chris Ayland, Rob Williams and myself inspect regularly but if you see a malfunction anywhere please write details in the book which you will find in the "C" section of the dovecote adjacent to the elders vestry.

Thank you Joy and to the members of the buildings and fabric group. On behalf of the children's advocate group, I'd like to call Jenny McCloy.

The children's advocate group has taken a pro-active role in the activities within the church which are specifically organised for children and young people. Members last year included myself and Carol Scott as Junior Church leaders, and Joyce Cook who has delegated responsibility from the elders' meeting for the Scout Group and Youth Café, as a link between these young people's groups and the eldership. Our main concern during 2015 was to update the policy on the safeguarding of children and young people and to ensure that all those working with children and young people received the appropriate training organised by the URC. This important work has continued into 2016 and will be included in our annual report next year.

Thank you Jenny and to Carol Scott and Joyce Cook. On behalf of the communication group I'd like to call Isobel Martin.

The primary function of the communication group is to ensure that all types of communication about London Street and the URC, is imparted in a sensible and consistent format. Members have included myself, Owen Collins, Margaret Carrick Smith, Christine Robertson and Alison Jamieson. The group begun by compiling the initial information leaflet available to all visitors; putting together an information pack for regular, new attendees; and revitalising the prayer corner. Work in process includes updating the website to make it easier to use and signage within the building. One of the most obvious changes to come from the communication group is the new London Street logo which now appears on all our stationery and from January 2016 the new weekly diary.

Thank you Isobel and to all members of the communication group. On behalf of the world mission group, I'd like to call Alison Jamieson.

As the name suggests, the primary function of the world mission group is to promote within London Street our mission at home and overseas. In 2015 we, as is our custom, supported Fairtrade Fortnight and in Christian Aid Week all were encouraged to try door to door collection or to help in other ways. The total collected via London Street was just under £1,100, up by £200 from the previous year. At the Christian Aid Week service, contributed to by Charlotte Page our local Christian Aid rep, we learnt about the work of Christian Aid and made butter during the service remarkably easily. And the butter was used at the soup and cheese lunch after the service!

In June we heard from Trevor Roff, a speaker from Open Doors, who spoke about the start of Open Doors and how they work with and support the suffering church around the world. It was a most inspiring talk and the Open Doors weekly prayer diary has now been incorporated into the church daily rhythm of prayer.

Adopted by the elders as one of the four focus groups, we changed our name during the year from the World Church Group to the World Mission Group, which was felt to describe our role better.

There have been opportunities to contribute to various crisis appeals, as well as through the Communion Sunday retiring collection toward our developing country partners in Christian Aid and to the work of our URC brothers and sisters in Newham.

Thank you Alison and to all members of the World Mission Group.

The Finance Committee will provide church meeting with the accounts for 2015 and a report at a future church meeting but thanks go the chair, Alex Macro, and the committee members, Karen Bell, Joy Williams, Julie Bath and Julia Burrows for overseeing and applying the rules in relation to charity accounting.

In our January church meeting we discussed the issue of same sex marriage within the URC. London Street was well represented at a quiz night at the Loddon Vale

Bowls Club in raising funds for the Food Bank. We didn't win but we didn't disgrace ourselves either by collecting the wooden spoon.

In February Pat Oliver, a Church Related Community Worker (CRCW), led worship with Kay after which was the opportunity over tea and cake to ask Pat questions about the work of a CRCW. Sixteen people from London Street attended a first-aid course, and Joy and Joyce attended the safeguarding course run by the Wessex Synod at Camberley URC. Membership classes and the Lent house groups started. The elders from London Street and Tadley spent an Away Day together at St. Mary's in Overton considering pastoral oversight of a congregation, in addition to spiritual growth through bible study and numerical growth through membership classes. Four of the elders; myself, Isobel Martin, Ian and Jenny McCloy also attended development training for elders run by the Wessex Synod at Dorchester URC.

The beginning of March witnessed the removal of the scaffolding in the sanctuary as work on the ceiling finished and many of the rooms downstairs were redecorated.

In April the elders submitted a draft initial enquiry for the appointment of a CRCW at London Street to Church House through the Wessex Synod and the prayer corner was finished with the acquisition of two new chairs. Many from London Street joined Kay and the church at Tadley for a joint Maundy Thursday communion service and again on Easter Sunday for a sunrise service followed by a cooked breakfast at the Immanuel Centre. Later our friends from Tadley joined us for the morning celebration service here at London Street.

In April Roland Pletts gave a very interesting talk on Sukkot – the Jewish Passover, which he repeated again in October.

At last years annual church meeting, Joy Williams gave her last Church Secretary's report. I have written many annual reports both for work and as a volunteer but this is my first as Church Secretary. There is always a danger when putting together such a report that you unintentionally put a greater emphasis on one particular event, group or person to the detriment of another and I apologise in advance if that appears to be the case with this report. However I make no apologies in singling out Joy who has worked tirelessly in serving the Lord for a number of years here at London Street both as Treasurer and more recently as Church Secretary. Joy in your report last year you said that the Lord had his plans for you. He certainly did and I don't think you've had time to put your feet up yet. You have served Him well as a diligent official over a number of years and on behalf of everyone at London Street once again a big 'thank you' for everything you have done and indeed will continue to do.

Joy officially stepped down as Church Secretary in May and I took over. During May we invited Roland Pletts back to come and talk to us about prophecy and the feasts in the Bible and on May 16th we hosted the Growing the Church conference. The keynote speaker for the day was Michael Harvey, a founder of the 'Back to church Sunday' project. His message was both inspiring and challenging, it was a pity though that not many from London Street attended. On May 24th Kay led a Commissioning Service for the new management of the Child Contact Centre. Our thanks go out to Bram for

all the work he has undertaken, together with his volunteers, for many years as co-ordinator of the contact centre.

Also in May it was good to welcome a former worshipper back to London Street – George Jones, his wife and family. George left Basingstoke in 1947 and Jean Holton managed to find a picture of George in one of the church productions dating back to the 1940's in our archives. That leads me quite nicely in thanking Jean for the work she does as the church archivist and calling her as my final witness.

The church archives date back to 1710. I keep a record of the life of the church each year by archiving photographs, orders of services for weddings and funerals, Focus and any other literature that may be of value in the future. It serves as a useful reference point when planning events and services, and also for students seeking historical information for a degree or for individuals who have moved away from Basingstoke researching friends and relations. During the last 12 months I have put on display archived material during particular church celebrations.

Thank you Jean. You mentioned Focus in your report. We owe Christine Robertson a big 'thank you' for her editorial role in producing an excellent church magazine. Thank you Christine.

In June, London Street played host to two big mission outreach events. June 2nd was an incredible evening attended by nearly 500 people as we witnessed the Lord at work through the life of Brother Yun and Flame International. Then on June 13th 100 people enjoyed an evening with Adrian and Bridget Plass.

In July we celebrated the occasion of the baptism of Ruth Frances Nicholson, daughter to Brantley and Helen, granddaughter to Derek and Elspeth Anthony.

In August we enjoyed our annual garden party and once again we are grateful to Jeffrey and Maggie Morgans for making their garden available. Thanks also go to Alison and Isobel for organising the catering and to Peter for organising the tables and chairs.

For those of you who use public transport in Basingstoke you will be familiar with waiting an inordinate length of time for a bus and then three come along at once. Weddings at London Street seem to follow a similar pattern. During the Autumn we celebrated three weddings at London Street, all presided over by Kay. At the end of September Lucy Scott, daughter of Ian and Carol Scott, married Morgan Nathan; and in October John Coakes married Elaine Dawson and a week later my daughter Louise married Paul Murduck. I'd like to believe that I'm perhaps the first person at London Street to give away two brides on consecutive Saturdays as well as authorising their wedding certificates!

In September Alison and Joy took the residents of Pages bungalows on a sponsored ride and stride with the emphasis on ride rather than stride, and raised over £220 plus gift aid with half of the money going to the Hampshire Historic Churches and the other to London Street.

Thanks go to Gerry and Eira McCaughey who until September organised the distribution of the Reform magazine and thanks go to John and Elaine Coakes for taking this task on. September was also the month we had a Commissioning Service for the town chaplaincy, having been established for 5 years; and we celebrated with Peter and Ruth Bentall their Golden Wedding Anniversary, inviting all friends at London Street to a tea party in the Wessex Hall.

At the beginning of October we had our Harvest Festival service during which the uniformed organisations built their own shelters. Thanks go to Jean Holton who until this year had organised the distribution of harvest gifts and thanks go to Gill Craft for taking this task on.

At the end of October Roland Pletts exhibited some of his African art and gave a third talk, this time about his life in Africa and his calling to serve Christ.

In November we celebrated the occasion of the blessing of Finlay Collins, son to Clare and Chris Collins who attend Little Angels.

Our year finished with the season of advent and Christmas, a season full of hopefulness and expectation. For some though it is a season of hopelessness, the reality being huddling on the cold paving slabs outside our church, not even a stable to keep them warm. Our response was to provide a Christmas Day lunch at London Street, a three course meal with all the trimmings and a small present for those alone over Christmas and very successful it was too. Thanks must go particularly to Kay for the vision she had of doing something and to Joy for helping with the organisation. We filled shoe boxes for the Samaritans Purse and we brought gifts of toys and toiletries for distribution to the women's refuge and also for vulnerable teenagers setting up home for the first time.

Our premises have been used quite a lot during the year. I've already mentioned Peter and those in the buildings and fabrics group who oversee the maintenance of our building, but a big thank you also goes to our cleaners Graham and Roy. When it comes to our shop window and decorating the church, a big thank you to Alison Jamieson with support from Ian McCloy and Chris Ayland. In fact if ever we have another major refurbishment perhaps we should consider a dormitory for Alison as everytime I come during the week chances are that Alison will be there also.

We could also provide accommodation for Kay. We have a lot to thank you for Kay. As well as your continued physical presence at London Street Kay, we are blessed with the presence of the Holy Spirit when you preach the Word of God. In June I went to Ffald-y-Brenin and there met a lady who only a few days before I had briefly spoken to at Oasis. She moved to Plymouth from Basingstoke a few years ago. She spoke fondly of London Street and remarked that when in Oasis in May she felt the presence of the Holy Spirit. Those words are very much a statement of the work you have undertaken as our Minister and on behalf of everyone here at London Street, 'thank you'.

That completes the case for the prosecution. We started with a plea of guilty by the defendant to a charge aggravated by the fact that it has been conducted purposely

over a prolonged period of 12 months and there has been not one trace of remorse, nor indeed a statement from the defence. That's good news!

I want to conclude the case for the prosecution by turning back to the defendant. In the May edition of Focus, Kay in her article *The view from the Manse* wrote about the Holy Spirit dwelling within Christians to bring revelation and guiding us in our daily Christian lives. We are the earthly messengers bringing to others the news of the new freedom, new strength, new joy they too can receive by accepting Jesus as their Lord and Saviour. The first disciples were empowered and energised by the Holy Spirit. When we become Christians we too take the torch of the Holy Spirit, we are to light the path to Christ so that others too may find the way.

In finalising my report, I was guided to the opening chapter of Paul's letter to the Romans, in which he states that from the time the world was created, people have seen the earth and sky and all that God has made. They can clearly see his invisible qualities – his eternal power and his divine nature. In essence they have no excuse whatsoever for not knowing God. Through my report today I hope I have demonstrated that we have all seen God's invisible qualities at work here in London Street.

It is through the Holy Spirit that God gives us freedom of choice. That includes freedom of choice when it comes to sentencing. So I have presented the facts. It is now over to you. You not only have to consider the offence but also the offender, the defendant. Don't forget that the defendant is not just Kay but each and everyone of us. An aggravating feature when it comes to sentencing in the criminal court is a persistent offender – a person brought back to court for the same or similar offences and has failed to respond to court orders in the past. May each and everyone of us persist in knowing and praying that next year the charge made against us all is even more serious than the one brought this year. We can only do that by working together and using our God given gifts, be it baking a cake for the Memory Tree, volunteering to make tea and coffee after the service, stewarding on a Sunday morning, or putting yourself forward as an elder. But there is one thing we can all do and that is pray. So together let us do just that. Let us pray:

Thank you Lord for our church here at London Street, and for those who have worshipped in it over the years and for those who serve it today. May we continue to know your presence here Lord and open our hearts and minds to all that you have given us and may you in return graciously accept all that we have to offer you. We ask for this in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

That concludes my report for 2015. Thank you.