

## Your Rector's letter

*Dear friends,*

### **Clicker**

Some people wonder when they walk into church on a Sunday morning why the welcoming person at the door has a clicker in their hand. As you probably could guess, the clicker helps to count the number of people attending. We are required to meticulously count the attendance at church services. Two figures have to be recorded in the service register: the number of young people under 16 attending and of people older than 16. Keeping a record is important for national statistics but also for individual churches. For example at St Mary's we can analyse which services are more or less popular. Also at what time a service takes place is a determining factor. It is good to know whether or not church attendance remains stable, diminishes or grows, what causes fluctuations and what we can learn from them. It is not a surprise that attendance is related to what extent a service spiritually appeals to people.

### **More ups than downs**

Numbers have grown on a Sunday morning by 25% from 70 in 2009 to 87 in 2017. But in the last decade we have had better years than last year. Top year was 2013 with 97 regular attendees on a Sunday morning. This includes the 10.30am and 8am services. The worship group will analyse these figures and discuss if and how changes need to be made to the pattern of worship, so we can continue to offer services that bring spiritual depth and encourage our relationship with God.

### **First half this year**

I was worried about this year's figures as the winter had dragged on until the beginning of spring; we even had snow on a Sunday morning in March. Only three weeks before Easter winter still reigned. During the first 10 weeks in 2018 it was difficult for many to get to church because of the wintry conditions. But from Passion Sunday onwards numbers crept up nicely.

Here are the self-explanatory figures, which include the first half of this year (January-June).

	2017	2018/1
8am	10	13
10.30am under 16	6	5
10.30 am adults	72	65
Evensong	16	13
7 past 7	12	10
Taizé	27	25

Comparison 2017/2018	All Together	Matins	Family Eucharist
under 16	9/9	4/3	5/5
adults	69/66	70/63	70/66
TOTAL	78/75	74/66	75/71

### **Church visits**

Attendance at services is only one aspect of the church's involvement in the life of the community. The number of visitors or those who attend church events also reflects our outreach to the community. As you know we are in the middle of an appeal for the transformation project which will allow an even greater reaching out through the use of the community room (annexe) and a transformed church. Thank you for your support.

Also when the church is not in use, the building should be accessible for visitors. Therefore we set up a rota of volunteers who are willing to do a couple of hours of church sitting at summer weekends. We still need a few people who are willing to help so we can cover all weekends in August and September. Can you help?

### **See you**

I am looking forward to seeing you at church, or at the Lammas Day Barbecue and Curry Lunch, or after your summer break. May God's blessings pour down on you like the warm sunshine and gentle rain of this summer.

*Erwin*