

St Helena's Church Larnaca 2015/6

The Diocesan theme for 2015 was stewardship, and that has loomed large in our Council thinking. There has been fresh thinking about how we best support planned and realistic giving. Also we have rationalised our fund-raising events and opened a second Charity Shop. All of this has led to our first year of financial surplus for several years, and we are anxious to maintain momentum.

Our numbers at St Helena's are relatively small, and moves away of key people, as well as deaths, have provided new challenges this year. We are always keen to build our community, and this year we have experimented with different forms and times of service. We have also established our second Charity Shop at Pervolia as a venue for occasional worship. Services were held there at Harvest and Christmas, and the next will be held at Easter.

We are now in the process of redesigning our website. Also, we are pleased that our secretary, Deborah Graham, is to be the Island Coordinator for the Communications Team.

During the year we said Goodbye to Rev Sean Semple and Cathy, as they moved to the UK, and we keep in touch and hold them in our prayers. Geoff Graham was ordained deacon at the cathedral in Nicosia in June and was then appointed as our Non-Stipendiary Curate. We look forward to his being ordained priest in due course. Geoff led our Lenten Soul Spark course, and St Helena's has been the venue for other Spirituality Days organised by Canon Paul Maybury.

The Visitation service this year was an opportunity to symbolise our sense of community on the island with the making and exchanging of mosaic crosses. We exchanged our cross with Limassol parish. Both are now displayed in their respective churches. We have also been the happy recipients of two new banners, made painstakingly and beautifully by our nonagenarian sacristan Elizabeth Chinnery.

During the year we have, from time to time, been joined in worship by refugees from the Kofinou Camp in our district. We contributed towards the Christmas present initiative suggested by Rev Christine Goldsmith, and are hoping that a link that we have with a Canadian diocese will enable one refugee family to re-settle there.

We have reorganised our monthly Luncheon Club. Instead of there being a two course meal, we now provide a hearty soup and fresh fruit – all for three euros. Each meeting is now accompanied by a ten-minute talk from an invited speaker. We have learned more about the history of St Helena's, but have also concentrated on hearing from the organisations that the church supports as part of its tithing programme. So far we have heard from the Freedom Dolls Initiative, the Oasis project and the St Spiridonas Special School for disabled children.

We face the New Year with confidence.

John Holdsworth