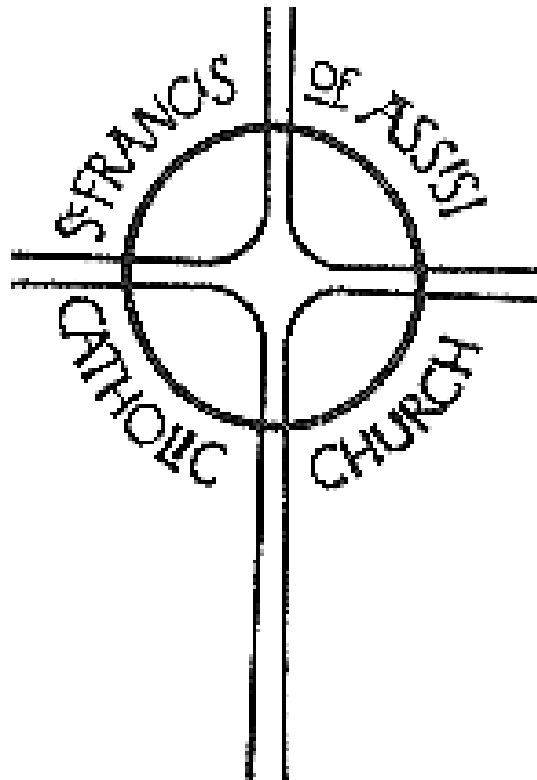


# Annual Report of St Francis of Assisi Parish



2008 - 2009

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**Parish Mission Statement**

Our Parish’s mission is to provide a sacramental home for our parishioners and to nurture faith, understanding and commitment in a welcoming community in order to carry the Good News by word and deed into the world around us.

## Report from Chair

It has been a pleasure to chair the parish council through yet another year of change and evolution at St Francis.

The year started with the slight reorganisation of the committee so that the sub-groups that we have would more closely follow those defined by the deanery. This has made communication and liaison with the world outside our Parish much easier and helped Father Kevin to know where to send the numerous e mails and messages we get every month.

We have enjoyed a very active year on the committee.

Highlights for me include

- A revamped and regularly updated website with much more information about parish life.
- The redecoration of our church and new water boiler in the kitchen.
- The introduction of a Parish 'Giving Sunday' where we look at what we are giving to the parish and renew this if needed. This year we have increased the numbers giving by direct debit and gift aid significantly doing this and I would hope that this idea would continue.
- The renewing of the Parish cleaning rota with a lot of new volunteers to help the existing team. Thank you to all who volunteered.
- Ongoing liturgy and music – both in Mass and in other groups throughout the year.
- Wonderful Youth Liturgy in Mass – both in the children's' liturgy groups and in the Youth Mass. We have also provided more liturgy sheets for young children to use in Mass.
- Amazing efforts at fundraising by the Justice and Peace group – both for CAFOD and Fr Francis. Thousands of pounds have been donated by the parish and I think a lot of fun was had along the way. The Parish Panto and Dr Who stand out for me as fantastic nights and well worth going to this year if you have not already attended.
- Ongoing work on the important subject of Safeguarding children and vulnerable adults. Members of the Parish have contributed to a national committee looking at the paper work behind this and we have been listened to. As a result the paperwork is due to be updated.

This is just a small part of all the wonderful work and life in our Parish and I'd like to thank everybody who contributes on behalf of the Parish Council. If you have not been on the council or would like to rejoin why not consider this? See one of the current councillors for details.

Dominic Shirt

## Mission, Justice and Peace

“And what does the Lord require of you?  
To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.” Micah 6:8

St Francis of Assisi’s Justice and Peace Group provides a forum for the members of the parish who are working in the areas of justice and peace to discuss, plan and coordinate activities concerned with local, national and global issues concerned with justice and peace. These include fund-raising, awareness, and spiritual activities.

At the beginning of the year, the Parish thanked Stephen and Eva Spooner for their years of service as Parish Cafod contacts.

This year the J&P group has organised the following events:

- Water Pump Appeal for Fr Francis’ parish in Uganda: raised £3511.97
- Dr Who Evening: raised £360 for Cafod
- Pantomime: raised £1375 for Cafod
- One World Week evening – speaker and video, with about 50 people
- Churches Action on Poverty: leafleting in Fargate
- Lenten Promises: parishioners were invited to make a promise to live simply; the promises were brought up as part of the offertory on the first Sunday in Lent
- Cake sale: raised £143 for Cafod
- Leafleting for European Parliamentary elections, to encourage people to vote for any party that is not the BNP: 1000 leaflets delivered.

The Traidcraft stall runs after 11am Mass each week and after 9am Mass on the first Sunday of the month. The parish, especially the Dance Group, raises funds for Sr Helen’s work in Rwanda. Coffee and tea are collected for St Wilfrid’s Centre. Christmas presents and Easter eggs are collected for the Roundabout Project.

At the last meeting, the J&P group thanked Dominic Shirt for his excellent chairing. Tammy Hervey is now the chair. Tammy Hervey and Phil Rostant are the new parish Cafod contacts.

Sian Price and Tammy Hervey

## **Pastoral Care, Community**

The main aim for this year was to try and establish a system for visiting the elderly housebound in the parish. A meeting was held in December 2008 and there seemed to be initial enthusiasm for the project.

Subsequent to this meeting expert opinion was consulted as to best practice in this area and initial guidelines were formulated.

Various difficulties were discussed including CRB checks and the safety and well being of parishioners taking part.

Sadly despite this we were unable to get the project up and running this year although it remains a work in progress.

On a positive note the sector reps also organised the parish picnic in July, which although not well attended was enjoyed by those who took part.

Diane Ryan and Clare Byrne

## Youth Work, Nurture

New books have been bought for the children's library in the Narthex, and we have established contact with Clare Lees, the North Sheffield deanery youth worker, and she has set up a number of "pic and mix" workshops for those working with young people in the church. A confirmation group has just started.

### Younger Children's Liturgy Group

But Jesus called the children to him and said, "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these. I tell you the truth, anyone who will not receive the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it." Luke 18: 16-18

St Francis of Assisi Younger Children's Liturgy Group welcomes children aged 0-7, accompanied by a responsible parent or other carer. We have large numbers of children attending Younger Children's Liturgy, often as many as 40 children. It forms an important part of the 11am Mass, and the life of the Parish.

The Liturgy is just that: the Liturgy of the Word for children. The children and their carers light a candle to invite Jesus to the Liturgy, do an act of penitence, listen to the Gospel for the day, and respond to it in an age-appropriate way, and say prayers for themselves, the church and the world. The responses sometimes include drama, art or craft work, to encourage the children to reflect on what the Gospel means for them. These may be brought up to the altar during the offertory.

This year, we have specially marked Advent and Lent, including the 'Alleluia box', where we 'put the Alleluia away', to get it out on Easter Sunday. We also regularly contribute to the Parish's Justice and Peace work by praying for children in other parts of the world.

The numbers of leaders on the rota dropped to a critically low point this year. However, two leaders who used to do Children's Liturgy but whose children are now a bit older joined the rota to help out, which was much appreciated. Anyone who would like to lead Younger Children's Liturgy should approach any of the current leaders, whose names and details are displayed in the Narthex.

Mary Vincent, Penny Watt and Sarah Lynch

## Liturgy, Spirituality and Faith Formation

The highlight of the liturgy and spirituality group was a series of four Lenten meetings using DVDs by Fr Richard Rohr, a Franciscan friar from the US who is well known for his scriptural knowledge. The series of filmed talks was entitled 'The path of descent' and the first session was prefaced by a talk from Adrian Scott, who knows Fr Rohr. Fr Rohr contrasted Jesus' life with the life led by many Christians today. He pointed out that keeping the rules will guarantee neither worldly success nor spiritual salvation. The talks were somewhat controversial and were followed by lively small group discussion. The meetings were well attended and it was felt that a similar format could be followed next year.

Members of the group and other from the parish have also been attending a North Sheffield Deanery meeting on Liturgy, Music and Spirituality at St Patrick's Church, organised by Deacon Bill Burleigh and Philip Jacob. In practice, the purpose of these meetings is to encourage good music in parishes throughout the Deanery.

A variety of groups with a focus on liturgy, spirituality and faith continue to thrive within the Parish including Bible Group, Churches Together In Hallam, Little Fishes, and the Rosary Group. Members of the parish continue to volunteer in a range of ministries' including Altar Serving, Eucharistic Ministers, Intercessors For The Parish, Musicians And Singers, Liturgists, Readers and Catechists.

Finally we have reorganised the parish library, which is located on a bookshelf in the Narthex, to the left as you come in!

We would welcome others to support the group and would welcome ideas for future events.

Mike Campbell, Jenny King and Gerard Crofton-Martin

# Communications

## Sector Objectives

The communication sector's objectives for 2008/9 were as follows:

- Maintaining effective communication with the parish (notice boards, newsletter, parish directory).
- Improve the usability of the social calendar – investigate a printed version for the notice boards for those without internet access.
- Updating the website and keeping it up to date in an effective manner.

## Maintaining effective communication with the parish

*Notice boards:* The notice boards continue to be used and are very busy.

*Newsletter:* This continues to be the main means of communication with the parish and works well. We are grateful to Noel Lynch for continuing to oversee its production.

*Email:* receives one or two enquires a month, covering anything from: “can I help with the soup run”, to “can I donate some money” or “I want to get married”.

## Social Calendar

Although the calendar is used on the website, I've still not found a satisfactory or easy way to print it. During the year we added a widget to the site so that the last three items added to the calendar automatically appear on the website homepage.

## Parish Website

Almost 1,500 people from over 40 different countries downloaded approximately 9,000 pages.

- Most popular pages are the homepage (35% of the traffic) and the newsletter (10% of the traffic).
- In October we added a Stations of the Cross page.
- In June we extended our ownership of the domain name (our web address) for another two years, up until July 2011.

## Future plans

I'd like to redesign the site, make it look a bit more modern and engaging. Introduce a search facility and change the way we handle feedback.

Emma Dale and Paul Middlemas



## **Maintenance and Finance**

### **Work over the last 12 months**

#### **Maintenance:**

Undertaken the repainting of the interior of the building.

Had the kitchen refitted with new boiler, fridge and freezer

Increased the number of cleaning volunteers to counteract the dwindling numbers that had resulted over the years by 17 to 36 (an increase of around 100%).

Had the outside upper woodwork areas of church repainted

Finalised the roof repairs following the theft of leading

Had portable electrical equipment and gas system tested as per annual requirements to meet current regulations.

Arranged for the redecoration of Father Kevin's flat.

#### **Finance:**

Undertaken gift aid promotions which increased the number of parishioners who gift aid their donation by 20 - bringing the total declarations to just over 100.

Encouraged a move to giving by regular standing order payments. We currently have 34 standing orders in place, paying just over £1,300 a month.

Give the figures for standing order payments in the parish bulletin, alongside the figures for giving at church, to give a better reflection of our total income

### **Planned work over the next 12 months**

Arrange the five yearly electrical survey of all fixed items of electrical equipment

Undertake the annual gas and electricity inspections to meet current regulations

Consider and review arrangements for regular maintenance of the gardens and grounds and take appropriate action. A volunteer task force to tidy up say every 3 months is one consideration subject to obtaining volunteers.

Undertake a further gift aid promotion to continue raising awareness of the scheme and to make sure that it is easy for parishioners to support the scheme if they wish.

Ron Jarman and Una Moran