

Vicar's Report

I do not want to duplicate the detail that is in other APCM Reports. I will take these 'as read' and concur with all the good comments that have been made. In so doing, I want to celebrate the volunteers across the church community who make mission and ministry possible. St. Andrew's is a family – and every member of the family has a part to play. I trust that, increasingly, people are finding their place within the church and it is evident that lay participation is increasing. I thank each and every one of you for your commitment and passion.

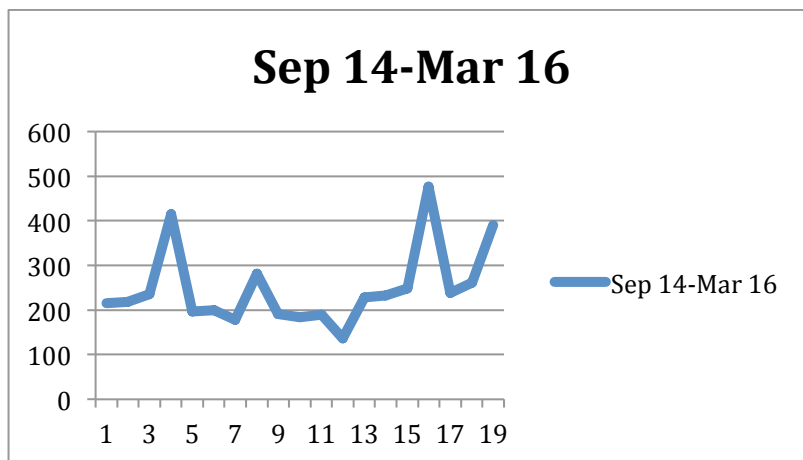
In this Report, I will focus on a few key areas for reflection:

Church Attendances

The 'success' of a church cannot be determined by attendance data only. There are times when congregation size may shrink for very good, and unavoidable, reasons. It is also the case that a church may be growing deeper in a spiritual sense rather than broader in a numerical sense. There are many factors that prevent a continual statistical increase – but this Report is not the place to outline these. Having said that, numerical growth is an important indicator that a particular church may be addressing the felt needs of the community. It is important for a church to know exactly how and why an increase is happening, as well as to be able to identify those areas in which there is decrease – and why.

At St. Andrew's, we have now been counting congregations at each service since September 2014. As a result, we are at the early stages of being able to provide some useful comparative data. Of course, as each week passes, this data will become more useful to us. In the meantime, I note with you the following aspects of what we have gathered:

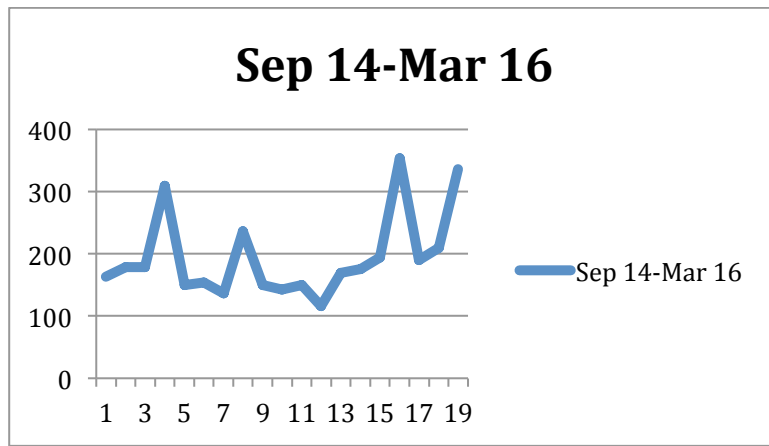
a. Monthly Total Average Attendances 2014-16



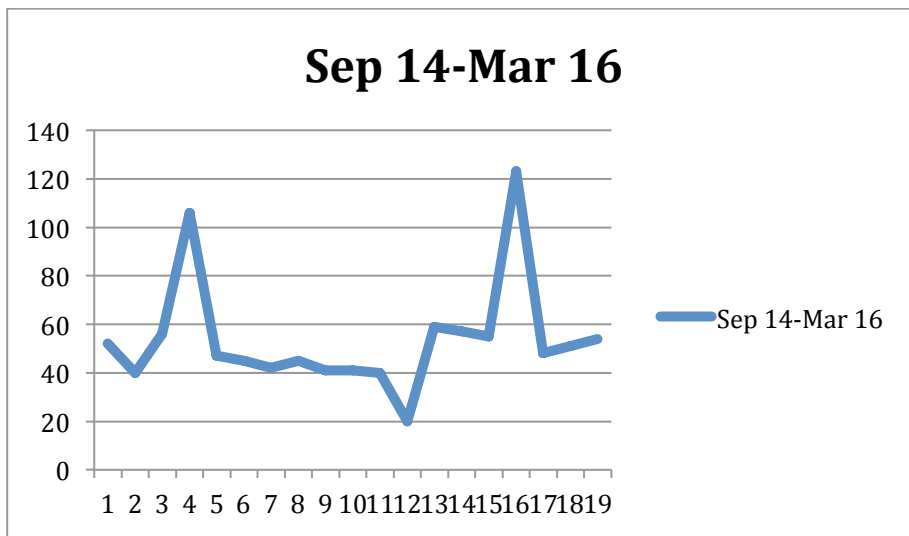
You will see a significant increase in total monthly average attendances since September 2014. As I note below, this is partly due to an increase in all of our traditional Sunday services. However, it is also the case that we are now offering more services during the week. As a result, people are enabled to worship on multiple occasions, or to choose a service day and time that suits them. By offering a suite of services, we are becoming more 'useful' to the community as a place for worship.

b. Monthly Adult Attendances 2014-2016

The main bulk of our increase has come about through a dramatic increase in adults attending worship. This is not surprising, given the availability of extra 'adult-oriented' services being held midweek. It is likely that we will launch further 'child-oriented' services later in 2016, which will no doubt give a similar graph next year for child participation. The graph on the next page shows this story most clearly.

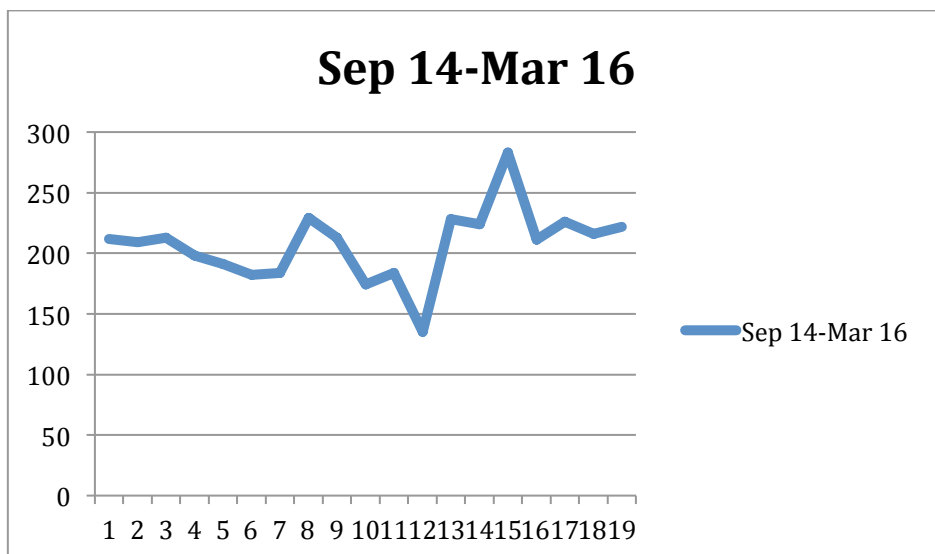


c. Monthly Child Attendances 2014-2016



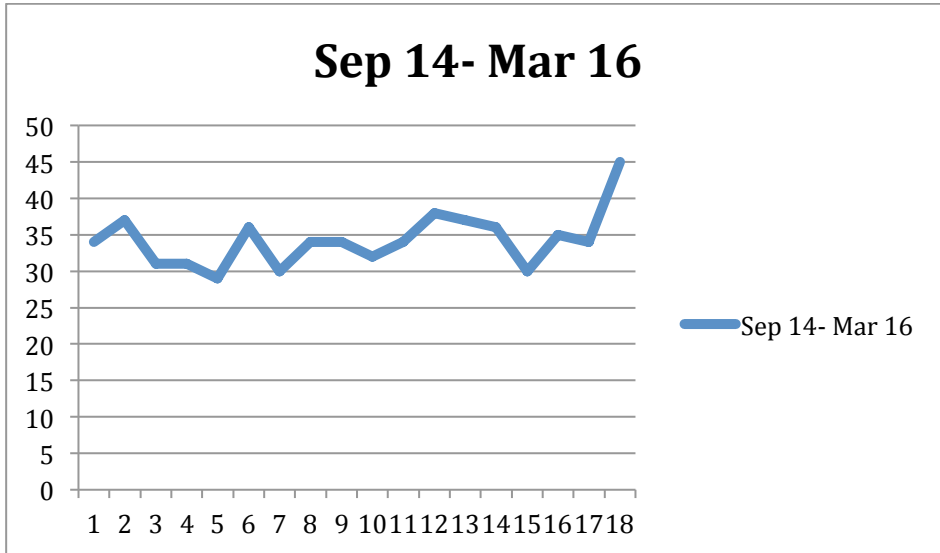
You will notice a slight increase in attendance of children at our worship services. However, most notable is the larger 'peak' compared with the 'peak' on the left. This indicates that more children were engaged with St. Andrew's at Christmas 2015 than Christmas 2014.

d. Average Sunday Attendances 2014-2016



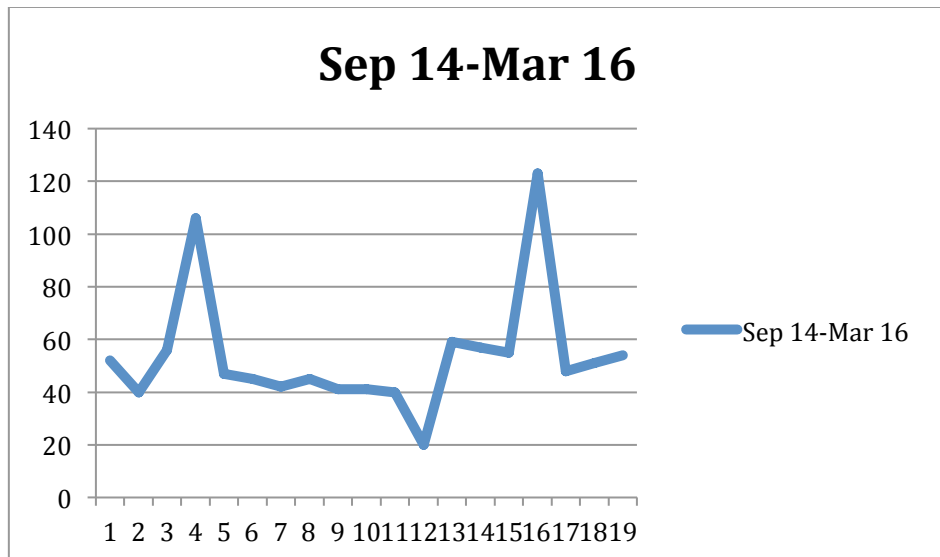
If the new midweek services are taken out of the data, we can analyse the Sunday attendance only. This gives us a 'like-for-like' comparison across the period. You will not a modest increase in Sunday attendances – approximately 5% - across the period. This is healthy growth, and very sustainable.

e. Average 8.00am Attendances 2014-2016



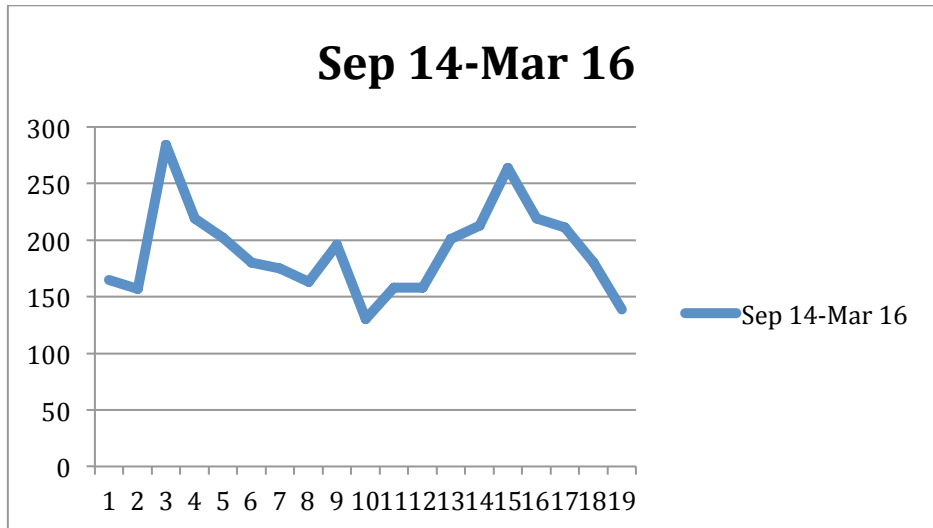
The 8.00am BCP Communion Service is certainly growing in popularity and we should be encouraged by the engagement of the community with this service that, in so many churches throughout the UK, is being closed as non-viable. St. Andrew's is certainly bucking the national trend in this regard.

f. Average 10.00 Communion Attendances 2014-2016



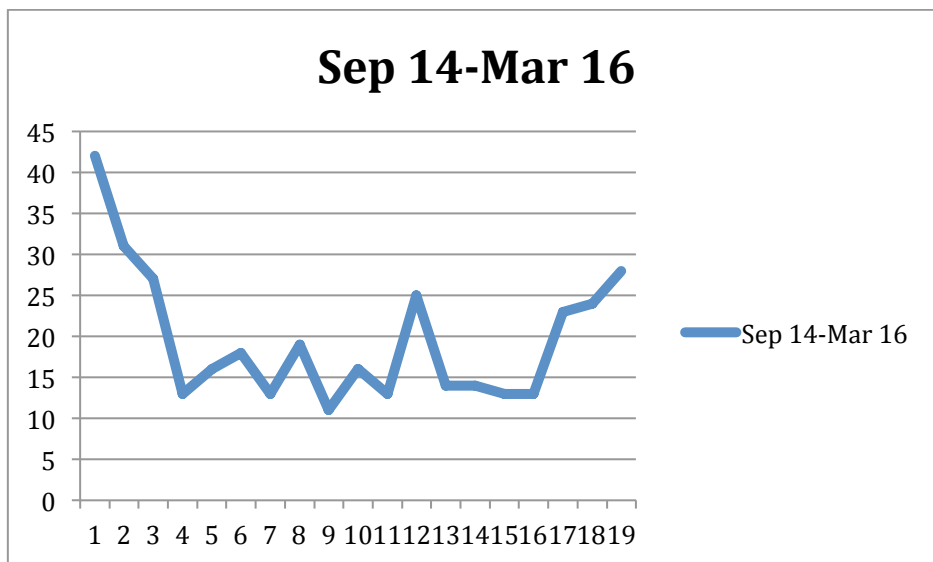
We see a modest increase in 10.00am Holy Communion services. This may not appear much growth at all. However, we have lost a fair number of people – either through death or relocation – so the increase in numbers has matched that, plus further people too. Again, we should be encouraged by this.

g. Average 10.00 Parade Attendances 2014-2016



The decrease in Parade Service attendance is of concern to me. We have worked particularly hard over the last few months to make these services more participatory and inclusive. Certainly, the feedback we are receiving from those who attend is that the services are far more accessible and thought-provoking than in recent times. However, this decline in numbers is something for us to monitor over the coming year or so. It may be an indicator to us that young people have competing activities on a Sunday and that church attendance may not be their Number One priority. We will continue to analyse the data.

h. Average 10.45 Communion Attendances 2014-2016



Likewise, I have concerns about the continuing viability of the 10.45am Holy Communion service. As you will see from the graph above, attendance at that service has dropped considerably. My source of optimism, however, is that numbers are steadily increasing again; a trend that has been the case since the beginning of 2016.

In conclusion, we should be very encouraged by the numerical data this year. We are growing at an average rate of 5% per annum 'across the board'. This bucks the national trend – and we should celebrate the manner in which St. Andrew's is clearly becoming an ever-increasingly accessible and useful church for the local community.

Spiritual Growth

I am deeply encouraged to see so much spiritual growth across the St. Andrew's community. For some adults, this has come through the Bible Study courses that have been put on across the year. For others, this has come through interaction with the Lent meditations on Facebook. For others still, there have been key moments of spiritual growth arising out of both personal joys and sorrows.

God is clearly at work in the lives of many, many people at St. Andrew's...

It has been a joy to see again so many people make a public commitment to church and God through the rite of Confirmation. In the space of 13 months, we have had 31 people confirmed at St. Andrew's – something we must surely celebrate. I trust that annual Confirmation Services will continue to feature in the worship life of our family.

Likewise, it has been a joy to see so many people engage with the midweek services. St. Andrew's is increasingly becoming a place of prayer and stillness – two spiritual qualities much needed in the face-paced society in which we live and work.

I join with the Bishop of Edmonton in celebrating the fact that the Communion Rail has been formally 'opened-up' for all baptized believers. This has been Church of England policy for a decade, of course. However, it is good that St. Andrew's has formalized its policy in this regard, making for a deeper and more intimate expression of 'family' at the Eucharist.

Pastoral Care

The ministry of MABS with regard to offering pastoral care has been absolutely exceptional. I know that both Barry and Jo are carrying out deeply effective pastoral ministry, both in the church family and in the wider community. We are grateful to them, and to their team of volunteers.

The Mark 3 Reference Group is grappling with big initiatives in order to strengthen our pastoral care as a Christian community. As a result, we have introduced Welcome Packs, we are setting in place new prayer initiatives, we hope soon to develop a Home Communion Team, and we are considering how we might better support those with Additional Needs. All this – and more – is in addition to the daily pastoral care offered to the vulnerable and those in need in the community; too many examples to mention.

I am aware that we must continually strive to develop this aspect of our ministry life. I am sure that, as 2016 unfolds, there will be much to celebrate in this area of church life. I hope to say more over the coming weeks...

2016 and beyond...

God has achieved so much in our midst over the last 12 months or so – but I am painfully aware that there is so much more to do...Here are some of the key priorities over the coming 12 months:

- a. I made a commitment in response to the Listening Exercise of 2014 that I would strengthen the Anglican heritage of St. Andrew's. We have done much already towards this: liturgical changes, Anglican teaching, a 'Saint of the week', votive candle stand, introducing new robes, new services and so on. However, there is more for us to do in this regard. I hope to have the opportunity to strengthen our Anglican identity in the coming 12 months even more.
- b. I would like us to better celebrate the history of St. Andrew's in a visible manner in the church building. This is important for us as a congregation – but it would also be a valuable ministry to the many visitors who come into our church each day for prayer and reflection.
- c. I would like to see the introduction of a monthly Messy Church service for families, outside of Sunday, on a once-per-month basis. This takes a great deal of preparation – but the national indicators are that it is an excellent way to engage children and families with the Gospel. Certainly, I have first-hand experience of its success elsewhere.
- d. There are many fabric matters that will demand our attention over the coming year. Some of these would be deemed as 'urgent'. Others are not urgent in and of themselves – but will better resource us for mission and ministry. I am grateful to the Buildings Advisory Group for their expertise and support in this area of ministry.

- e. I am committed to enhancing the pastoral care we offer as a church. I look forward to the arrival of Lizzie Baughen as Curate in July and I am sure that this will strengthen our ability to minister proactively across a range of situations in the community.

Final thanks

I am loathe to offer thanks to people – for fear of offending anyone who may feel left out. So I do want to give a general ‘thank you’ to everyone who is engaged in the mission life of St. Andrew’s: Group Members, Church Cleaners, Volunteers, PCC members and so on – to all of you: a big Thank You!

But I must specifically give thanks to my Church Wardens, who have been such a strong support for me over the last 12 months. Each one has brought different skills and gifts, and they have proved to be an effective and hard-working team. I am grateful to Rev Olive Cope for her wisdom and dedication and personal support for me. Likewise, I want to thank Vince Stokes for his friendship and support since I arrived. I will miss him a great deal when he retires.

Final thanks, as always, go to my wife Jo. Only she knows the true depth of how ministry at St. Andrew’s impacts on my life. She continues to be a wonderful support, partner and friend. I could not do this ministry in this way without her.

So, in conclusion, I say this: look back over the last year, recognize the work of God – and celebrate with a heart full of thanksgiving!! And we anticipate God’s glorious future for us, with some fear and trembling, but with a heart full of anticipation and excitement...

Rev Dr Steve Griffiths
Vicar of Enfield