  **St Mary, Saxlingham**

**GROWING IN DISCIPLESHIP**

* Following Jesus.
* Learning to see Him more clearly, love Him more dearly and follow Him more nearly.

What are the good things we are doing already?

Bible teaching happens through sermons – with greater depth through a cell group. Dawn Davidson acts as chaplain to Saxlingham Hall nursing home and has a positive role in nurturing the faith of older people at home and in care. The long-established Holy Communion services, which are held twice a month, are well attended and supplemented by a choir. Links with the Scouts are continuing to develop, with Dawn being asked to be their chaplain. The cell church continues to meet in Saxlingham.

Collective Worship/ Open the Book and other teaching sessions are led by church members weekly in Saxlingham Primary School. The school has recently started to use the church on a monthly basis for an act of worship, reflecting an increasing liaison between the school and the church. A Children’s Church activity, Finders Seekers, has evolved into Messy Church and recently moved from the Church Room to the School, due to the need for more space. There is also an All Age service, aimed at young children, which takes place on the 4th Sunday of the month. The school has developed a Distinctiveness Committee, with the members working hard to show the Christian faith reflected in all areas of the curriculum, and there is a noticeboard in the foyer of the school giving examples of Christian behaviour.

How do we feel God is calling us to grow in this area in the long term?

To deepen and develop our prayer life. To continue to deepen links with the school and Scouts.

What steps shall we take this year?

Participate in the week of prayer in Tasburgh to encourage more people to pray. Expand the Cell Church and promote its existence.

**GROWING IN SERVICE**

* Responding to human need
* Caring for God’s creation
* Transforming unjust structures in society

What are the good things we are doing already?

A Church/Village welcome pack is given to newcomers giving useful information about the church and places of help and local services. This was revamped last year and everyone in the village was given a booklet.

There are services in the Saxlingham Nursing Home which are in the forms of Songs of Praise and Holy Communion.

The “Monday Mardle” is a wonderful and very successful service for people of the village enabling them to meet weekly over tea and biscuits, with a programme including bingo, cooked lunch and trips out for coffee or lunch

The congregation is involved in community carols, and associated charitable fundraising The past year this has meant meeting at the War Memorial and singing for an hour before going into a member’s home for refreshments provided by the PCC. Our Parish magazine once a month is an integral part of village life. We take special care of our churchyard which is a comfort to the bereaved. Our ruined church lies in a conservation area and there is an annual service there. There are various community events aimed at including as many villagers as possible – the Fete, the Ceilidh, now in its second year, annual quiz, the Pet Service, the Harvest service and the lunch which follows.

 

**St Mary, Saxlingham cont…**

We are welcoming to those who seek marriage and encourage them in our Marriage prep. The Norwich Foodbank and the annual shoebox appeal are both well supported.

As part of the bells project, when all the bells were replaced and rehung, there are now free guidebooks for adults and children, written by two members of the congregation, so that the church building can be explored with more understanding. All the commitments required by receiving a Heritage Lottery Grant have been fulfilled. The booklets have been well received, as has the World War 1 project with photographs and histories of those men from this village who lost their lives.

How do we feel God is calling us to grow in this area in the long term?

Greater participation in prayer for local area. Continuing to build links with school and Scouts, to serve together, and to serve one another. Continue to hold displays of local interest to bring members of the public into the church.

What steps shall we take this year?

Encourage participation in prayer for local area. Promote the Tuesday morning prayer sessions. Have a permanent display of children’s work in the church to highlight the school’s activities.

**GROWING IN NUMBERS**

* Helping more people to find faith
* Helping people to join our congregation

What are the good things we are doing already?

There is now a monthly Hands Together craft group, who share their own crafts and widen friendship links, especially with Newton Flotman church members.

As well as marriage preparation classes, there are now opportunities for parents to prepare for baptisms. Through our links with weddings, funerals, baptisms, school and the Mardle, we are taking the good news of Christ’s love to many people who don’t come to church. Through friendly accessible services and through a friendly and welcoming congregation and choir we seek to make people feel at home and welcomed. The church reaches out to the whole village through the annual Christmas card delivery to every household.

How do we feel God is calling us to grow in this area in the long term?

Greater integration of different congregations. Make the Helpers Service an annual one, to show how valued everyone who contributes to the running of the church is.

What steps shall we take this year?

Keep building bridges. Ensure that there are one or two special services each year where we push for integrated service, e.g. Mothering Sunday. Explore new ways of integrating what we do well.