



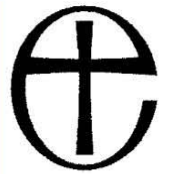
DIOCESE OF  
PORTSMOUTH

# Pompey Churches

ISSUE FIFTEEN

Parish news from Petersfield to the Isle of Wight

February 2003



THE CHURCH OF  
ENGLAND

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on environment**

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# OUR PEWS FILLING UP, FIGURES SHOW

## Blessing the community with our time and money

MANY of our parishes do a lot of fund-raising - but one Fareham congregation is virtually giving money away.

In fact, Christians at Holy Rood Church, Stubbington, have spent £1,200 on 'blessing the community' - paying for things that will benefit those who live around the church.

Each of the church's 12 home groups was given £100 to use as they wanted. Ideas varied from buying Christmas presents for children who had been baptised at the church to paying for underwear and socks for people using a local shelter for the homeless.

The 'Emmanuel' house group spent the money on painting materials and spent time decorating the hut used by local guide, brownie and rainbow groups.

Home group leader, Mark Cole, said: "The hut was in dire need of doing. It was pretty tatty, and there was no hesitation from the leaders in accepting when we offered to do it. It took six of us a day from 10am until 5.30pm."

The vicar, the Rev Stephen Girling, said: "The idea came from a seminar at the New Wine conference. The idea of blessing the community was for all the



left to right: Mark Cole, Kathy Cole, Sue Lancaster and Peggy Lawton paint the hut used by brownies, guides and rainbows

home groups to think of little ways in which they could make a difference to the community.

"One group is buying a new set of magazines for the doctors' surgery, another bought Christmas vouchers for needy families, and one

group is spending the money on an outing for young people in the Spring.

"It's all part of our new mission statement - Living It Up, Living It Out Together - which means we are seeking new ways to serve the community we live in."

## MORE people are now going to churches in our diocese than before.

The latest attendance statistics show that an average of 12,200 adults a week went to Anglican Sunday services in 2001 - up from 11,500 the previous year.

The seven per cent rise was the largest in the Church of England that year and contrasts with the national figure, which was down by one per cent. It is the second year in a row that the number of adult worshippers in Sunday services has increased within our diocese. In 1999, the figure was just 11,000.

The figures relate to the size of congregations in October 2001 - before the impetus given to mission by the bishop's 'Stepping Out' initiative in our 75th anniversary year but immediately after a mission weekend in the Portsmouth deanery.

Because the figures are being compared with the previous count in February 2000, some parish statistics were flattered by the inclusion of popular Harvest Festival services within the 2001 figures.

But among the parishes recording genuine growth in Sunday congregations were St John's, Fareham; St Wilfrid's, Cowplain; St Peter's, Petersfield; St Cuthbert's, Copnor; St Mary's, Fratton Road, Portsmouth, and St Jude's, Southsea.

Some smaller congregations also saw their numbers increase - St Peter's, Seaview; St Peter's, Hayling Island; St Mary's, Brading; and All Saints, Gurnard.

The diocese's newly-appointed director of mission, the Ven Peter Hancock, said: "This is encouraging news, especially as these figures relate to the period before most parish Stepping Out projects began.



The Ven Peter Hancock: new  
Director of Mission

"Although the number of adults worshipping in church on Sunday is only one measure of how effective we are at communicating the gospel, it is an encouraging statistic.

"I'm certainly glad it is going in the right direction as I take up my post, and it shows that not all in the Church of England is doom and gloom."

There were also 2,400 children attending Anglican Sunday worship in 2001 - bringing the average size of our weekly congregations to 14,700.

When the numbers of adults and children attending weekday acts of worship was also included, the number rose to 16,900. The total number on church electoral rolls in 2001 was 20,500 - an increase of 200 on the previous year's figure.

The number of baptisms, marriages and funerals had declined overall, but the number of services of thanksgiving for the birth of a child had increased.

And there were 24,600 people in our churches for Easter Eve and Easter Day 2001 and 41,100 for Christmas Eve and Christmas Day 2001. Both figures were lower than the previous year, although that was partly because Christmas Eve 2000 was a Sunday.