

## Parish of St Peter and the Good Shepherd

### Bearsted and Harrietsham

## Annual Report of the Justice & Peace Group 2014

The Justice & Peace group met on the first Tuesday of most months bar August at 7.30pm in St Peter's parish room. The following are current members:

St Peter's/Good Shepherd – Marie Quarman (Chairperson), Janet O'Neill, Wieslaw Kordek. Holy Cross – Helen Judges (Secretary) Methodist Church – Daphne Bower, Ann Smith

- **Membership** has remained the same throughout the year. We would encourage anyone who is interested to attend any meeting.
- **Homeless People & Poverty.** The Methodist Church donates food and runs coffee mornings to help finance a variety of charities. Food donated at Holy Cross for Harvest Festival, and also throughout the year, went to the Maidstone Day Centre. All three churches continue to support the Maidstone Churches Winter Shelter. Daphne monitors articles on housing issues in the local press and reported that a recent report had stated that there had been an eight fold increase in the number of families living rough in Maidstone. There were 243 families in 2013/14 compared to 31 in 2009/10.
- **Action for Powerless People.** Parishioners from all churches sent Christmas cards to Prisoners of Conscience. This had been organised by Helen. Daphne monitors information from Action Aid and had noted that there had been a report on FGM which stated that the practice still took place in some countries where it had been made illegal.
- **Supporting families and children in developing countries** Traidcraft continued in St Peter's to raise a steady income, especially at Christmas. A Charity stall sells a variety of goods donated by parishioners. A total of £200 supplemented St Peter's Lenten appeal. Holy Cross has now started a Traidcraft stall on the first Sunday of the month. Individuals in Holy Cross sponsor children in Uganda.
- **Christian Aid.** The Christian Aid Week collection every two years, organised by Helen with a team of volunteers from all churches raised £4457.63, including Gift Aid. Janet, Daphne and Marie attended the Advent Hope Service at Holy Cross in lieu of the December meeting.
- **Appeals at St Peter's & Good Shepherd** The Lenten appeal raised £286.73 and was sent to Missio together with a cheque for £200 from the Traidcraft stall to help train priests in Cambodia. The Lenten Fast Day raised £239.96, and the Harvest Fast Day raised £278.60, both for CAFOD. The Advent Appeal for the Maidstone Churches Winter Shelter raised £781.35. Money was also donated to this from the Christmas Card Appeal of £248.17 organised by Joyce Gibson. The total was therefore £1,029.52.
- **Parish Newsletter St Peter's** Throughout the year Janet has supplied information from J & P group for the parish newsletter including details on appeals, Fairtrade Fortnight, Christian Aid Week, CAFOD updates
- **Bearsted Parish Magazine** Helen has contributed articles on Christian Aid's Lenten scheme "Count Your Blessings", Christian Aid Week, Climate Coalition of Christian Aid, Action Aid and CAFOD weekend Hunger For Justice campaign in October, and Advent Hope Service.

### Summary

This year has been busy. All our group members have continued their commitment to working for human rights and justice and combating poverty and we thank them for their efforts. During 2015 we will be meeting on Mondays. *Marie Quarman*