

# Womens Fellowship

*Mary Geering & Vera Long*

We held our AGM on February 24<sup>th</sup>. Following opening prayers, the minutes of the AGM held on 18<sup>th</sup> February 2009 were approved.

Following the Chairman's report a motion was put to close the Fellowship due to low numbers as discussed at the last Committee Meeting the previous September. This was agreed and so this became our last meeting. Pauline Geering read a short history of the Fellowship written by Vera Long (printed below).

We had £633.73 in the bank and it was decided that we should donate 50% to the Mothers' Union and 50% to the church. After some discussion it was agreed that this would go towards the cost of a new Green Altar Cloth. Our cash in hand has been given to the Junior Church Send-a-Cow fund.

Following the reading of poems that would have been read in December the Fellowship closed at 2.56 p.m.

## 'Young Wives' to Women's Fellowship

Long ago in the 1940s my husband and I talked to Rev. Burges and his wife about our hope to adopt. Their daughter had adopted happily and they gave us advice, help and encouragement. Peter came to us in 1949, Elizabeth in 1950. In a year or two I joined the Mothers' union, but at that time some members were not happy to have young members with small children.

Mrs Burges kindled interest in a 'young wives' group and Nora Jackson, wife of Barclay Bank manager, was asked to lead. She was a keen lively member of the church, her children were adults. To our delight she accepted and we came to love her for her warmth, sense of humour and generosity of spirit. She was always ready to give useful advice about anything to do with family life, and with their encouragement we began to help

whenever we could with church activities. We met in her home; some years later her husband died and she moved to Harpenden. I think only four or five 'young wives' are still alive and living near, but when we meet we are overcome by happy memories – there may be the odd tear, but always laughter.

Canon Perowne followed Mr Burges and we were able to give him help. A few years later the Rev Reginald Haw and his wife replaced him. Mr Haw wished us to change the name to 'Women's Fellowship'. By then we were meeting in the homes of members; later the Annexe by St John's Hall became our home. The Mothers Union had ended and the new name welcomed any woman in the church. Membership increased and we had an Afternoon Group and an Evening Group – some members attended both!

The Rev. Mowbray and Diana gave us great support. When the Rev. Kemm followed he wanted us to form a Mothers' Union. Members were older and settled in their ways and wished to remain as we were. Wisely and happily Jean Kemm started a Mothers' Union for young church members and I think they are developing naturally as suits their age group and making friendships as we first did. The relationship between the two groups has always been friendly.

It has been pointed out to me by long-standing members of the Fellowship that we were the basis of financial success in bazaars. Members of the Afternoon Group, particularly, were responsible for setting up the cake stall, and a stall for articles made during the year by the knitting and sewing groups (they didn't have to compete with Matalan!) and both groups helped wherever we could.

I do not remember a moment of friction in the many years that I was connected with the Fellowship. We loved our church and our association and many deep friendships were formed.