

# Christ Church Gipsy Hill

## 2013—a year in words and pictures



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Registered Charity Number: 1133804

## Foreword to the annual report by the vicar



I always find it hard looking back on any period of time – not least because one year increasingly seems to merge into another! 2013 has though I hope been a year of growth and flourishing in many areas of our community life. Our Sunday morning congregation at Christ Church has grown in number; we have ex-

panded the home groups from two to five and we have over 25 people joining the electoral roll for the first time this year. The children's groups, Explorers and Scramblers have started using new material from Urban Saints as numbers have increased; Playpen during the week has continued to grow and has expanded its capacity to 45 to try to accommodate the numbers of people attending.

At the same time we have been planting some new things – Open Door has started providing a drop in meeting place; we are slowly making new connections with community groups in the area as we look and pray for opportunities to serve our wider community. Raise the Praise, our monthly children's service is beginning to establish itself in the church calendar; our youth socials and the youth teaching programme have drawn together a growing group of 11-15s.

In all these things, old and new, we are looking to

see Jesus, to serve Jesus and to proclaim Jesus. I am enormously grateful to all who respond to the call to serve at Christ Church in many different ways, and whose service enables the church to operate and the community to prosper.

As we look ahead we can see new challenges for us – how we deepen our discipleship; how we welcome and provide a worshipping home for newcomers; how we engage more effectively with our

***"Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles. And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith. For the joy that was set before him he endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. Consider him who endured such opposition from sinners, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart."***

*Hebrews 12: 1-3*

overseas mission partners as well as serving our community's needs here at home. As we seek to build up and encourage and equip our community of faith, so also we seek to live out that faith in our homes, schools and workplaces.

Our sermon series in Mark's gospel in the opening months of 2014 has served to remind us of the extraordinary story of Jesus of Nazareth. It's a story we are told is increasingly detached from the life of our 21<sup>st</sup> century Western World, but we discover day by day, week by week, his relevance to our daily lives, and the transforming reality of his power in our lives and in his world. I hope in 2013, in the midst of all the busy-ness, we kept our eyes firmly fixed on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of our faith, and pray that we will continue to do that in the years ahead.

Jonathan



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# Christ Church

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## Services

Our gathering and worship together on a Sunday morning is at the heart of the life of our community. At Christ Church we have continued with the pattern from last year of alternating morning worship and communion services each week between our 9am and 10.30 service.

We have been really delighted to welcome many new people over the year, both those new to the area, new to church or looking to find a new church to call home. Our numbers have steadily increased and at the beginning of 2014 we are regularly seeing over 100 adults and 40 children.

We are blessed by the many people who ensure Sunday services run smoothly – wardens, stewards, musicians and singers, readers and intercessors, flower arrangers, sound engineers, coffee makers, leaders of our crèche, junior church and youth group.

We welcomed many visitors over Easter and Christmas and introduced an Easter Vigil service on Easter Eve and a Christingle service on the last Sunday before Christmas, each of which complemented the existing full programme of services. Our new monthly afternoon service for children, Raise the Praise, has provided a new and encouraging setting for children and parents to worship together.



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## Berridge Road

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## Services



The congregation at Berridge Road, led by Dave Scroby with support from Nenetia Nelson and Richard Winborn, is a small friendly and loving worshipping community. Sermons in 2013 followed the Christ Church series

in Philippians and Exodus and also continued with an ongoing series in Isaiah.

The beginning of 2014 saw us follow the Alpha course which has proved a fruitful way to engage together in conversations around what we believe and we are most grateful to those from Christ Church who have come to provide activities and Bible teaching for the children during the adults' discussions and talks.

*"We are small in number but big in the Spirit of the Lord. So many good experiences happen here."*

Marcelle Thomas



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## Christ Church

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### Home Groups

The weekly Tuesday Bible study Group continues to meet in church, led by Eric Hamilton. The group has grown in numbers recently and members enjoy tea or coffee and home-made cake before the study as part of 'Open Door'.

We now have 5 home groups meeting fortnightly on Tuesday, Wednesday or Thursday evenings in people's homes, three of which have started in the last year. They are led by Anthony Merifield, Richard and Rhos Roberts (Pauline Simpson while they are away), Pete and Esther Moorey, Hugh and Juliet Bain, and Tim Hamilton with Paul Cochrane. Since Easter 2013 each of the groups has studied the same book of the bible, though each group very much has its own flavour. During the summer we studied the book of James, and in the autumn Hosea. We are currently studying Mark to complement the sermon series.

*"Being a member took me out of loneliness and made me more confident to face life"*

*Homegroup member*

### A Tuesday evening home group

Our Home Group is made up of 11 very different people who get together to study the bible, pray and support one another. We have been meeting for a year and in that time have studied the Letter of James, Hosea, and the Gospel of Mark, reading a passage and discussing what it means and its relevance for us.

*"The studies made me think about things that I have never thought of before"*

*Homegroup member*

We also pray together, sharing our joys, sorrows and worries and being supported in prayer at times of change.

At one meeting we watched a DVD about the life of Charles Spurgeon, the great Victorian Baptist preacher who lived locally. We have occasional meals together to get to know one another, and we are planning a trip to the theatre to watch a cabaret show by one of our group.

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## Christ Church

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### Prayer

At Christ Church, we hold a monthly prayer meeting on the first Wednesday of the month at 8pm praying for the church, local community and wider world. Attendance has grown during the year though we would welcome more people to join us for this vital area of church life. Berridge leaders normally meet for prayer at lunchtime on Tuesdays



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## Christ Church

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### Youth Group



Our Sunday Morning Youth Group is open to young people in school years 7-11 and we have again been using Urban

Saints material looking in the Autumn at the theme 'Dare to be Different' - covering numerous topical and practical sessions for our young people on current life issues, including looking at how Christian values compare to those of modern society. We tackled healthy relationships and also gender issues and sex. Most recently we have been looking at the fundamentals of our faith and apologetics, covering topics such as: How do we know the Bible is true? Did God really create the world? Why bother with church? Are all religions equally valid?

We have continued Sunday morning treats that have expanded beyond hot chocolate and biscuits to cupcakes and sweets! Social events are now scheduled twice each term and are a great way to unite the group, encour-

age friendships outside the usual Sunday morning sessions and are also an opportunity to introduce friends to Christ Church. Laser Quest and a visit to Eltham College to watch a West Side Story production (starring one of our youth group members) have been highlights, along with a couple of Big Screen film nights in the upper halls with popcorn and pizza. We have a small group of committed adults that help run the meetings at least one Sunday a month and who meet once a term to plan the youth programme and pray for our young people. New projects include the introduction of drama/sketches to our Sunday morning worship as well as reading and leading intercessions, all of which we hope to develop further over the coming year. We are also looking at ways to engage our young people aged 15yrs+ and are exploring opportunities with local churches that already have provision for this age group.



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## Berridge Road

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### Youth Group

The "Young and Determined" (YAD) Youth Group, led by Shinead Prescod is not formally linked to the church but operates from the Berridge Road premises and works in coop-

eration with the church. The work with girls on the estate has been very encouraging and the girls are highly motivated and keen to help plan their own programmes.

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# Christ Church

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## Children and young families



The Children and Young Families Team is a small team of people who meet to organize and run activities for children up to the age of 11 years old and their families. Our main areas are the Sunday Children's Groups, Special Holiday activities, Playpen and Raise the Praise - our new service for children and families.

Last year we scaled down our Christmas and Easter activities due to the timing of the School Holidays, however in the course of the year we continued to offer fun activities,

including Baking, Crafts, Puppet Shows and Services aimed at children, but open to everyone to attend, which engage with the local community.

Our Sunday Children's Groups, Scramblers and Explorers are growing and we have recruited new leaders and helpers – over 20 adults are involved in leading or helping in these groups each Sunday. We started using new material from Urban Saints, which has helped develop these groups and we have worked hard to include more fun and games in the sessions. We are grateful to our growing team of volunteers who run these groups which now have over 20 members each.

The new 'Raise the Praise' service for under 8's and their families has proved to be a hit, with stories, songs, prayers, crafts and fun followed by the all-important tea, providing a great service to invite people with children to.

***“Relay races”***

***“Getting sweets as rewards”***

***“Playing games”***

***“When we played an obstacle game and when no one was arguing”***

***“Listening to Lorraine's story”***

*Comments from the Explorer group, when asked what they liked about Sunday mornings*

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## Outreach and community

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### Baptism support team

The Baptism Support Team came of age during the 2011-12 interregnum when it took on three new members as well as the role of baptism preparation. Members of the Team now continue in a supporting role and assist in baptism preparation. The general format consists of an initial visit by Jonathan fol-

lowed by a visit of two members of the team who further an understanding of the meaning of Baptism and the promises that candidates, parents of children, godparents and the congregation will make at Baptism. As parents themselves, team members share stories of a child's sense of wonder and of how children



and adults can note God at work in their lives and in the world. Each visit is unique, as are all adults and children. Without exception, members of the Team have indicated the privilege they feel when listening and speaking with the families and individuals they visit.

A well-attended Garden Party was held in the Vicarage garden in July to which those baptised over the past two years, parents and siblings were invited. Traditional games, cakes tea and a bouncy castle added to the occasion which was followed by a service of "Raise the Praise".

Members of the Team are Jodie Lomax, Susan Dalton, Esther Moorey, Sally Crawford and Helen Williams.



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## Outreach and community

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### Playpen

Playpen is still thriving with as many as 45 children and their carers coming on a Wednesday and Thursday morning from 10-11.45am. It tends to be different children coming each day, so we have about 80 children coming through the church doors during the week!

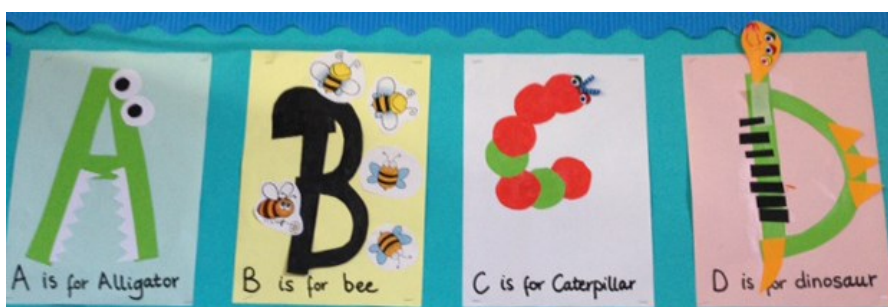
Over the past year Lavern who attends Christ Church has joined the team and does an excellent job in the kitchen, serving refreshments, and preparing the children's fruit.

We currently have a few other fantastic helpers – Caroline, Jeneane, Tim and Paula, but it would be great if we could get a few more volunteers from the congregation to help with Playpen, by setting out activities, helping to tidy up and to be a friendly and welcoming face to those coming.

At the moment Playpen's craft activity is focused around the alphabet, each week covering a new letter. Parents, carers and all children are all really enjoying this idea and I have been told by many are creating an alphabet wall at



home. You can see our work in progress in the hall or this photograph!



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## Outreach and community

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### 3rd Gipsy Hill Brownies

2013 was a year of steady growth in the pack which now includes 24 girls.

In June we joined a district outing to Morden Hall Park. After lunch we visited the City Farm and were able to feed the animals. Although it was a typical English day (sun and showers) it didn't spoil the fun! We followed the trail through the park and the girls earned their out and about badge

In the autumn we made items to sell at the Advent Fair. The girls made tree decorations from air drying clay, and novelty houses from washing



up scourers and earned the craft badge for their hard work.

The Christmas celebrations started with the district Christingle evening when

we had games and Christingle making, followed by a service at All Saints Rosendale Road and ending with our pack Christmas party.

2014 is the Brownies' 100<sup>th</sup> Birthday (our pack's 94<sup>th</sup>) and there are all sorts of exciting events happening. We started it off with a bang when 6 Brownies went with Brown Owl to join about 2,000 others for the weekend at Butlins in Bognor. There were the usual Butlins activities combined with crafts.

We are also doing the Big Birthday Challenge, which covers a wide variety of challenges under the three themes of the Brownie programme You, Community, World. As part of the birthday challenge, we held a Chinese night, learning some Chinese words and trying some Chinese food with chopsticks.

Dot, our unit helper, was given the guiding name 'Penguin' and Rachel decided to concentrate on helping the Guides, so we are short of leaders. If anyone would like to join the leadership team – you would be very welcome.

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## Outreach and community

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### Mothers' Union



In terms of activities, 2013 was a little sparse for us as a group; nevertheless, we gained momentum in the second half of the year, hosting a successful evening in which Rev. Anthony Buckley, the chaplain of Alleyn's School, spoke on the subject of "Love, Values and Fears - on Being a Teenager in 2013". A frank and searching Question and Answer period ensued.

Susan Dalton, an MU member, and husband Anthony conducted a great game of rounders in Norwood Park which was well attended by many members of the congregation. On the day, the weather was "summer special" and spirits ran high. It was a good day out for all the generations.

The annual "Wreath Making", using fresh greenery from Covent Garden, and benefiting from excellent tutelage by Jo Watson, a professional florist (among her many skills), was a popular event

as always. In addition to being together and creating, we took home or contributed to the church, some rather beautiful Christmas wreaths.

*"The Mothers' Union is a great forum for us at Christ Church. We've enjoyed talks, fellowship, and meals together. It's really good to have this supportive friendship group within the Church community."*

*Sarah Beale*

Our Notice Board is refreshed regularly with news and information relevant to the Mothers' Union Aims and Objects which, broadly stated, are to support Christian marriage, family life, and all those whose lives have met with adversity – in practical ways and through campaigning; all underpinned with prayer. If those objectives are close to your heart, will you think of joining us?



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# Outreach and community

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## Community Action Group

One of the aspirations of the congregation identified during the interregnum in 2012 was to be more engaged with and involved in the local community. In the 2001 Census the Gipsy Hill council ward parish was identified as one of the 10% poorest wards in the country. The 2011 census shows some improvement in some poverty indicators but we still have high levels of child poverty and those in receipt of key out of work benefits.

The community action group was established to look at how we as a church – both as individuals and as a community – can help provide support to our local community as part of our response to God's call. The starting point was to identify what was already being done and who was involved in that work, and then to consult more widely with our community to ask what they thought were the greatest needs and what the church might do to provide support.

Christ Church has for several years supported the work of Spires, Street Pastors and the Foodbank. Our relationship with Foodbank has developed considerably and several members of Christ Church now volunteer, both for collections up at Sainsbury and during the Foodbank sessions at St Luke's on Tuesday and Friday mornings. Others are involved in advice clinics, counselling, Citizens' Advice Bureaux and prison visiting, amongst others.

In July we asked congregation members to complete a questionnaire to say what they thought were the greatest needs in the area. Three areas came up most often; loneliness, the engagement of young people, and issues around debt and poverty. Members of the CAG then spoke to other community groups and agencies in the area to find out what else was going on and how we can support or build on other work. A group of theological students were also involved, looking particularly at issues around loneliness.

All this has been chewed over, prayed about and discussed by the group as we reflect on how we respond. In 2014 as a congregation we will need to think together on how we might take this work forward – supporting those already involved in local community work, acting as conduit for members to be engaged in existing community initiatives and projects, and working out what, together as a Christian Community, God might be calling us to.

Open Door has been an encouraging first step to opening up our building and our community to our neighbours. We hope that will provide a hub around which other initiatives might grow. We would love everyone to be involved in this work.

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## Mission

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### Christ Church's mission support

The Parish continues to provide financial and other forms of support to a number of local and international community projects, mission organisations and development agencies, as well as paying university fees for Gloria Byakatonda,. Locally, we support the Spires Centre and Spinnaker Trust, and several members of the congregation are actively involved in the Norwood Foodbank, which is regularly promoted in the church. Internationally, we support Christian Solidarity Worldwide (CSW), the Clouston and Read families working with the Church Mission Society (CMS), and Tearfund.

Christ Church and Berridge Road also continue to support Gloria (Peninnah Nalwanga's orphaned niece, who lives in Uganda and has no family to support her) by providing her university fees as she undertakes a degree course in business administration. In Febru-

ary 2014, Richard Winborn and Marcelle Thomas were able to make our relationship with Gloria much more personal by visiting her in Uganda and by meeting the university staff.



Over the course of the year we have been looking at increasing our engagement with our overseas mission partners – looking at new ways to engage interactively with the church globally in a way that will nourish and inspire us as much as the project we support. We will be launching a new strategy for that through a new relationship with Tear Fund in May 2014.

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## Mission

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### Churches Together in Upper Norwood (CTUN)



CTUN has undergone some changes through the last year, as we have welcomed a number of new clergy into the area, who are becoming

increasingly involved in organising services and events together. We have a joint gathering outside Sainsbury's Upper Norwood on Good Friday, and Carol Singing at Christmas. We were also involved last during the year in the Overground Festival, running various events, mostly centred around the Methodist Church, as this was a central venue.

Each month we have had an Ecumenical Prayer meeting at the Methodist Church, a short service led by ministers from the various Churches and a Prayer meeting at Virgo Fidelis Church. Weekly there is a Table Tennis Club run by CTUN at the Methodist Church.

All these events have given us wonderful opportunities to work, pray and play together with those of other Christian Churches in the area.

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## Mission

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### Norwood and Brixton Foodbank



As we continue to serve God as he called us to do by feeding those in our community facing food poverty, Norwood and Brixton Foodbank has fed over 7,000 people

in last year and given away more than 45,000 kilos of food. From Gipsy Hill ward we have had 215 vouchers presented and we have fed over 425 people including at least 150 children.

Through our support services we have seen people get full time employment and those returning with donations saying "thank you, your generosity helped me get through and get back on track." We have also been called to speak out about Food Poverty in Lambeth via media, at workshops and a variety of ways to help improve lives of those living around us.

A thank you to all the support given by the congregation at Christchurch Gipsy Hill including the 541 kg of food donated in this year.



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## Outreach and community

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### Open Door



Open Door was really the first fruit of the Community Action group – responding to the

need identified for a gathering place where people could talk, or listen, or pray, or find friendly faces. It has started small – we serve tea and coffee and homemade cake, a special treat for those who gather for the Tuesday bible study group and then for any who come in to join us. We have welcomed church members as well as occasional passers-by and friends of friends. We are really praying that this will grow into a place where all in the area feel able to come in and relax with others. Thank you to all who bake cakes, come and set up, serve, talk, listen and pray.



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## Buildings

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### Community use of buildings

#### Goodliffe Hall

The Goodliffe Hall continues to be used regularly by a wide range of local community and commercial organisations. Currently the hall is used on Monday and Thursdays 3.30-6.30pm and on Saturday mornings by Team Dance, to run dance classes in Tap, Ballet, Modern and Jazz for children – (they have over 100 children on their books!), on Monday evenings by Brownies, on Tuesday evenings by Crystal Palace Community Choir, Playpen Wednesday and Thursday mornings and Monkey Music - (music lessons for pre-school children) on Friday mornings. We also have language lessons in French, Spanish and German running in the hall on a Saturday morning. Christ Victory Church still uses the hall for their church services on a Sunday afternoon and during the week for Bible study and to offer prayer counselling.

Sell It Mama, the second hand and new baby goods sale, has expanded and will now be using the hall and church 6 times a year. We

also have NCT ante-natal classes going to start up during spring in the Narthex.

Aside from these regular bookings we provide meeting space for local residents' groups, and police and safer neighbourhood team meetings. The hall is regularly hired on a Saturday for children's birthday parties.

#### Berridge Road

Berridge Road is not used quite so much – the two main users, Little Starz and Kumon, sadly left us and have not yet been replaced. We have been really blessed by the offer from Lambeth Living's contractor, Keepmoat, to refurbish the kitchen in 2014 and we hope updated facilities will assist us in opening the doors to community use more often this year. Apart from ourselves, the "Pearly Gates Ministries" church meets on the premises on Sunday afternoons and the "Young and Determined" (YAD) Youth Group, led by Shinead Prescod, on Monday evenings.

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## Buildings

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### Building works and improvements

2013 turned out to be a year of significant work on the property, much of it visible but a good chunk of essential maintenance to less visible things like the electrics in all three of our buildings, Berridge Road, the Goodliffe Halls and Christ Church itself.

In the spring we focussed on securing the external fabric of the Goodliffe Hall – a new roof covering was completed in April, with some adjustments to the guttering which, with all of the rain in early 2014, proved effective in preventing some of the longstanding leaks into the lower part of the building. We fitted new windows upstairs and downstairs, and replaced both the outdated fire exit upstairs and the wired security glass in the downstairs lobby. The external redecoration at the front of

the building – and the strategic re-positioning of the bins – had a really dramatic impact on the overall appearance of the building which has drawn lots of positive feedback from hall users and the wider community. Later in the year we benefited from the hard work of a wonderful and varied group of volunteers who have re-decorated the downstairs hall and carried out some essential repairs upstairs.



The oft-rescheduled work to replace the carpet in Christ Church following some under floor leaks also came to fruition this year. The insurance claim covered not only the replacement of the carpet but some re-decoration and we took the opportunity to redecorate throughout the church and chapel, moving the organ and installing new sound system and electrical fittings. It has really brightened up the whole building.

We also repaired and redecorated the external wall above the sanctuary cross which had perished and was letting in water.

At Berridge Road we installed a new boiler and finally got the heaters working effectively! Our practical support of the Lambeth contractors working on the estate resulted in an offer to install a new kitchen for us and work on that is underway as this report goes to press. Damage to the roof caused by the theft of lead was also very generously repaired at no



cost to the church. That connection has also opened up new relationships with the council contractors, Keepmoat, who support a variety of community work in Lambeth and with whom we hope to maintain a good working relationship.

There remains work to do – roof and gutter repairs at Christ Church and some general maintenance at Berridge will keep us busy. We hope also to progress (complete?) the renovation of the Goodliffe Hall to continue to modernise and upgrade the facilities to enhance our provision and enable us to accommodate more and varied use of the building. Many, many thanks to the wardens and other volunteers for their work on these projects.



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## Resources

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### Finance

As this report goes to press we are still waiting for the final details of how our financial year turned out. The 2012 gift day was supported very generously and enabled us to settle our debt to the diocese and balance the books. In 2013, regular giving has increased and we avoided the need for a special gift day to cover our ongoing costs. In very broad terms our income was £135k from giving (including gift aid), and £20k from hall rentals. Our main outgoings were our fairer shares payment to the Diocese of Southwark of £73k, building works and repairs £65k, salary and related expenses of £20k and giving to our overseas and UK mission partners of £16k. Full details of all our income and expenditure can be found in the annual accounts.

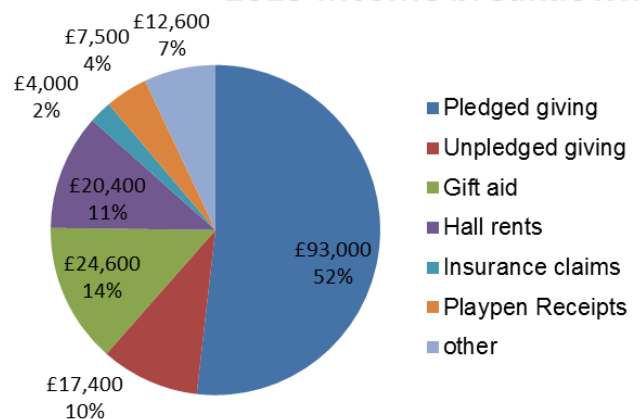
Jonathan's teaching on giving encouraged us to think both about the practical need for money – to contribute to the costs of the diocese, pay staff and keep the church and halls operational – and the theological basis – so that our giving should be a generous re-

sponse to all that we receive from God rather than a necessary evil or monthly subscription.

In 2014 our funding of the diocese is likely to increase and so we do need to continue to focus positively on this area of our church life.

Many *many* thanks to all who give generously to the life of our church. If you are not yet giving regularly and would like to do so, please speak to our treasurer Francis Howcutt or pick up a standing order and gift aid form at the back of church.

#### 2013 Income breakdown



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## People

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### Electoral roll

Christ Church and Berridge Road congregations only continue by the grace of God and with the support of all our people. Thank you to all those who week by week serve the church in many different ways – setting up, arranging flowers, operating the sound system, producing service sheets, stewarding, making tea and coffee, leading our music and sung worship, taking part in different working parties and committees, the list is endless.

We have been delighted to welcome new people in both our congregations

and hope that we will continue to see our congregations grow in faith, in service and in number. This year our Electoral Roll, the 'membership list' of those who worship with us, whether they live in the parish or elsewhere, has grown by 23 – 26 names were added and 3 removed. As at 11 April there are 146 members, 46 men and 100 women.

