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Foreword to the annual report by the vicar

As last year, it feels like there has been so much going on in the life of our church, so much to celebrate, that is difficult to know quite where to begin. This report reminds us of how much we did, but perhaps the greatest focus for the year was our asking:

- ♦ Who are we?
- ♦ Who is God calling us to be?
- ♦ And where might that take us?

A lot of work has been done in small groups reflecting on different areas of the life of our church – community action, overseas mission, youth work are just three examples. But our call by the diocese to prepare a Mission Action Plan has provided a framework within which we have engaged together as a whole congregation in these questions.

With our sermon series considering the Five Marks of Mission, we were invited together to reflect on the different elements of the vocation of God's people. That enabled us to spend time constructively considering our strengths and weaknesses as a church and our particular sense of calling to serve God in our communities, home, work and school.

"To proclaim the Good News of the Kingdom

To teach, baptise and nurture new believers

To respond to human need by loving service

To transform unjust structures of society, to challenge violence of every kind and pursue peace and reconciliation

To strive to safeguard the integrity of creation, and sustain and renew the life of the earth"

Church of England; five marks of mission

And so one of the fruits of 2014 has been a Mission Action Plan which brings together different strands of the life of the church, expresses who we are and who we hope to be, and sets out some clear plans for how we intend to move forward, the Lord being our helper.

But this year has not just been about planning. Much has happened – Open Door has taken root and the advice clinic we had been talking and praying about has come to fruition; a new youth programme has taken shape; we have started a new Sunday morning group for little ones, and

over 70 members of the congregation are now members of home groups or daytime bible study groups. A new partnership began with other Christian groups at Berridge Road which had its first expression in a joint carol service to which the entire estate was invited.

We have had many visitors, some passing through, some looking for a church home. Many speak of a vibrancy in our worship and the generosity of community life which has been, we trust, the basis of spiritual and numerical growth. And that generosity has been reflected in many ways, in time, service, and in financial giving. The increase in regular giving and the very generous response to our Gift Day for the Goodliffe Hall work, is very humbling. I am so grateful for all who offer their time, talents and money in service of God's church in this place.

There are many challenges of course. For a number of people in our community 2014 has been a difficult year – many grieve the loss of loved ones, others have continued to face the harsh consequences of difficult economic situations. In all this, we have tried to find God in our midst, and to provide support to one another. It is a great gift at Christ Church that so many people support others as brothers and sisters in Christ, and are in their own need themselves supported. We pray that our fellowship will continue to grow in that way.

2015 has started positively. Open Door is beginning to attract new people, both for its community and for the advice service. Our new youth drop in Legacy, started in January and has a committed group of weekly members. And of course the long awaited work on the Goodliffe Hall is now underway, with all its complication and additions, to ensure that our buildings can continue to serve the church and the community for the coming years.

Let us give thanks to God for all He is doing in our midst, and for all who journey with us as a community here in the parish of Gipsy Hill.

Jonathan



Our Mission Action Plan 2014-2016

Our purpose

The Mission Action Plan begins with a statement of purpose, and a vision for the future.

We are here to...

- ♦ build up a worshipping community of faith in God that is welcoming to all;
- ♦ equip and encourage one another to live our daily lives as disciples of Jesus Christ,
- ♦ serve God, in the power of the Holy Spirit, in our church, our communities and our world.



Our Mission Action Plan 2014-2016

Our vision

We want Christ Church Gipsy Hill to be a community of faith that, in its welcome and worship, is open and accessible to people of all ages and backgrounds. In the life of the church, its worship and activities, we want to share the good news of the gospel of Jesus Christ and grow together in faith and in understanding as we seek God's will in every area of life.



"I find I have been made welcome and enjoy the fellowship. Would be happy to be involved in community activities"

New member of the congregation

We are committed through accessible and relevant bible based teaching and prayerful worship to equip one another as disciples of Jesus Christ as we serve him in our diverse daily lives. We want to provide space to ask difficult questions, share our doubts and deepen our faith. Through energetic ministry with children and young people we hope to nurture new generations of believers to their own active faith.

We celebrate the love of God for all of creation and recognise our calling to respond to God's love by proclaiming the good news of Jesus Christ and by loving and serving our community and one another.

We want to engage prayerfully with the needs and challenges in our local community, our nation and the world, encouraging one another, nurtured and empowered by the Holy Spirit, to respond individually and collectively to God's call to seek justice and love mercy.

Church Life

Services at Christ Church



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. The children's activities over the Christmas period attracted a number of new people and the Nativity service was full to overflowing. The carol service was a real high point of the Christmas celebrations, with wonderful music led by a choir conducted by Suzanne Poole.

Our monthly afternoon service for children, Raise the Praise, has continued to provide a new and encouraging setting for children and parents to worship together.

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 am 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.

We are blessed by the many people who ensure

"Love the current service style, especially the mix of old and new songs sung, the inclusion of children at the start and the occasional variations of sermon presentation or topics/issues spoken about"

Member of the congregation

Church Life

Services at Berridge Road



The congregation at Berridge Road, led by Dave Scroby with support from Nenetia Nelson and Richard Winborn, has continued to develop different styles of teaching.

Following the Alpha Course, which ran January to April 2014, we had a series in Mark's Gospel, focussing on the theme of discipleship. From September to March we covered the whole of Romans with a mixture of sermons and Bible studies. The size of the congregation lends itself to a Bible study format and people appreciate the greater involvement and opportunity for discussion.

"Alpha course at Berridge was a great idea, it is leading us to consider discipleship."

A Berridge road member

Church Life

Pastoral Care Strategy

Pastoral care is provided in many different ways in the parish – through informal care of one another within the church community, through the Vicar, and through home groups.

The formal elements of pastoral care are the pastoral prayer team, the pastoral visiting team and the home groups. Richard and Rhos Roberts have kindly agreed this year to coordinate this work.

The pastoral prayer team is essential as a heart of prayer for those in need. It meets regularly and maintains a tight confidentiality around all prayer needs. Prayer requests from the new prayer cards come to the pastoral prayer team in the first instance.

We have a separate prayer ministry team who are available to pray with people after services or during our communions services with particular prayer for wholeness and healing.

This year we have established a small pastoral visiting team who meet on a monthly basis and are

available to visit those in hospital or at home who would appreciate a visit or who need particular help. We have also established a group, coordinated by Trena Dickinson, who are willing and able to prepare meals for those who might appreciate them – particularly after the birth of a baby or during a period of ill health.

Of course much pastoral care and prayer support among the church community happens through individual friendships and within home groups. That pattern of community is at the heart of the new testament church and we pray that it will continue to develop and grow as new people join our fellowship.

"Lots of individuals helping each other on an informal basis, some of which we probably don't even know about"

Member of the congregation

Church Life

Prayer



Our monthly prayer meeting continues on the first Wednesday of the month at 8 pm as we pray for the church, local community and wider world. Attendance has grown during the year though we would, as always, welcome more people to join us for this vital area of church life.

We have been

blessed by a number of special prayer events focussed on particular areas of need. We were really delighted to host an event in September focussed on the emergence of ISIS in the Middle East at which we were led by Stephen Griffith MBE, former representative of the Archbishop of

Canterbury to the Orthodox Patriarchs in Damascus and Beirut, who has been closely involved in the region since 1992, including six years living in Jordan and Syria.

In December, we also welcomed Eric and Rhena Clouston our CMS mission partners to a special prayer event for them and their family before their return to Bangalore in India.

On Good Friday we have a prayer walk around the parish which begins at Berridge Road and journeys round different streets in the parish before stopping at Christ Church and then on to the Churches Together Act of Witness up at Sainsbury's. It is a reminder of our witness and our calling to be people of prayer for our community and our world.

""We need more prayer as Christians. For a church without prayer is like a well without water. For God's blessing upon the church and Christian community as well"

Member of the congregation

Church Life

Home Groups



Home groups are a key part of the life of our church and are a significant element of our mission action plan. We now have five evening home groups, meeting on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays, and two day time home groups, meeting on Tuesdays and Saturdays. The Saturday home group started meeting in the New Year 2015 and is being trialled until Easter to see if it meets the needs of those who find it difficult to attend a weekday group. Most home groups meet fortnightly; the Tuesday daytime group meets every week and the Tuesday evening home group meets weekly, except for the first Tuesday each month.

The groups are led by Hugh & Juliet Bain, Jonathan Croucher, Eric Hamilton, Anthony Merifield, Pete & Esther Moorey and Richard & Rhos Roberts. Each has a slightly different character and focus but we have been following the same studies, which have generally followed the Sunday sermons.

If you would like to be part of a home group please speak to Richard and Rhos Roberts, or to Jonathan.

A Wednesday evening home group

Our home group meets every other Wednesday evening to study the Bible, chat, pray and consume a fair amount of tea and biscuits. Over the past year we have dipped into the Old Testament with a few weeks looking at Hosea, looked at Romans for a New Testament study, and spent a few months in the gospel of Mark. As well as our study evenings we've discovered just how much cheese eight people can eat at a shared meal (a lot)! Over the year we have built friendships with each other and been joined by new members to the group. Each one of us walks with God in our own way, but when we meet together we encourage each other, learn from each other and take a few steps on our journeys with God together.

"Home groups, prayer meetings and Sunday services are always thought-provoking and informative"

Member of the congregation

Church Life

Berridge Road youth group

"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 cooperation 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. They still lack committed male leaders, so there is currently no provision for the lads on the estate.



Church Life

Christ Church youth group

The youth work in 2014 has been an exciting time of building on our existing work and taking forward some new initiatives which have been greatly assisted by the appointment of our youth intern, Ruth Munday, from September 2014.

On a Sunday morning we have between 8 and 14 young people in school years 7-11 (so aged between 11 and 16). We use the Urban Saints material and have covered a range of topics. At the beginning of the year we took a look at the fundamentals of our faith, including some of the difficult questions -

- ◆ How do we know the Bible is true?
- ◆ Did God really create the world?
- ◆ Why bother with church?
- ◆ Are all religions equally valid?

We then spent some time on a series looking at our experience of God through the Psalms and finished the year in the sermon on the mount.

The youth group have been involved in leading prayers and reading in services and we have a budding group who are proving themselves very capable at short dramas – we look forward to more of those in the year ahead.



We had some great trips out – including seeing Morgan Beale star in his school production of West Side Story and a visit to Madame Tussauds – and a few of our regular pizza and film nights. Plans to set up a regular Friday youth café were finalised and we opened 'Legacy' at the beginning of 2015, a space for our young people to come, with friends, and 'hang out' together, with different games and activities to entertain them, alongside the legendary Legacy tuckshop!

We are blessed with a great team of volunteers who have committed a huge amount of time this year to teaching and getting to know our young

people – very many thanks to Sarah Griffiths, Tanja Krumm, Jonathan Beale, Rachel Skeath, Sally

Crawford Yvette Croucher and Ben Wolf.



Reflections from a youth intern

As the Youth and Parish Ministry Intern my role at Christ Church is a varied one. I work with the existing youth team to deliver youth group sessions on Sunday mornings. Two new youth initiatives have begun since I started my placement which I have a key role in: a 16-21s home group which meets together on Sunday evenings to study the Bible and pray (these are sessions which I regularly lead, and we are reading the book of Luke together) and Legacy, the Friday night social club for 11-16 year olds, which I help to organise alongside Yvette. Alongside these fixed commitments I am available to meet pastorally with young people for coffee, Bible study and prayer, which I do on a weekly basis with some of the 16+'s in the church.

I also assist in the church's outreach project Open Door by attending the coffee morning and being available in the afternoon for clients to chat to. My Wednesday and Thursday mornings are spent at Playpen, our ever-popular Mums and Toddlers group, at which I help in the kitchen or chat to parents most weeks. I am also available to help with other events in the church - setting up, cooking, clearing up, etc.

The majority of the rest of my time is spent working towards my MA from LST, which Christ Church is helping to financially support this year. I go to college on Fridays and really enjoy the study, although my workload is very large, preparation time for Fridays normally runs to around 16 hours a week! However, I love studying and feel that learning more about the word and our faith in an academic context is part of God's calling on my life.

Church Life

Christ Church Children and Young Families

We have had a great year this year. Our children's groups on Sunday mornings have grown so much that we have begun a new group for the younger school children; we regularly have over 10 children in each of our three groups, enjoying games, crafts, stories, quizzes and more. At Easter and Christmas the children enjoyed mornings filled with baking, crafts and planting, which filled the Church and Hall with noise, fun and the delicious smell of baking. Also at Christmas we entertained a whole host of angels, a crowd of shepherds with their flock of sheep, many Mary's, some donkeys and some royal visitors during our Join in Nativity, which was amazing fun.



In October we held our first Night Light party, providing a great alternative for those looking for a party on the 31st October. Children had their faces painted, played games, enjoyed some lovely food and evidently the best bit was grabbing donuts from strings only using their teeth.

Raise the Praise continues to be the most exciting service for our under 8's and their families.

"The children ask if it's Raise the Praise every week, they like it so much"

A parent

Church Life

Berridge Road children's work

At Berridge we have a small but committed group of children and young people who come with their parents. We have tried different ways of providing for them during the service and are grateful for support in 2014 from members of Christ Church. It has been encouraging to hear the children's voices during services and to realise that children learn in different ways.



Outreach and community

Community Action Group Strategy

The Community Action Group's remit is to pray, research and consult about how Christ Church might better serve its local community, including through our relationship with external mission partners such as Foodbank, Spinnaker and XLP.

In 2014 we launched 'Open Door', whose purpose was to provide space for those within or without the church community to come and talk, or pray, or just 'be' with tea, coffee, cakes and a warm welcome. It has provided a good space for our Tuesday bible study to welcome newcomers, and we have slowly seen others from outside the church coming in as regulars.

Our consultation during 2014 confirmed that there is much need in our community for financial advice, including debt counselling, and support for those on low incomes or who are unable to readily access support or information online or through appropriate agencies.

The group consulted widely on options for providing this kind of service and recommended working in partnership with Centre 70, an established and well-respected advice centre, based in West Norwood.

Outreach and community

Open Door

"Sometimes a call can make a huge difference for people who haven't shown up for church for a while (asking how they are doing and why they haven't been to church)"

Member of the congregation

'Open Door' has been providing tea, coffee, cakes and a welcoming space to members of our church community and those beyond it since the beginning of November 2013. Our numbers have gradually increased and we have been pleased to get to know new people who have started to come along. During that time we have also enjoyed meeting with members of the Tuesday Bible Study Group as they join us for refreshments and a chat before their group begins, and afterwards too. We do not think it is a coincidence that there has been a corresponding increase in their numbers during the period.

In the autumn of 2014 'Open Door' was extended to provide a simple, hot and nutritious meal at lunch time. This provides an opportunity for 'community hospitality', attracting some members of the congregation but with a clear purpose to support those in the wider community in financial need by making the meal free or donation only.

Alongside this we are now working in partnership with Centre 70 to provide debt advice. Centre 70 provides additional support through referrals for instance to their specialist housing advice. The service also provides assistance with completing

online forms, reviewing CVs and job applications and advising on areas for which specific accredited training has been provided.

In order to develop the social aspect of 'Open Door', we plan to develop associated activities that take place for an hour or so before or after lunch, maybe on a fortnightly or monthly basis at first, such as a knitting circle (now up and running), an occasional art class or craft activities.

Tea parties

As part of our community outreach, we decided to make better use of the garden on Gipsy Hill. On two sunny mornings in July and September, we decked our garden with bunting, set out tables and chairs and welcomed our local community to join us for tea, coffee and cakes. The garden parties were a great opportunity to meet people as they stopped to chat and enjoyed our delicious cakes. We look forward to more events like this in 2015.



Outreach and community

Playpen

Playpen is our church run 'Stay and Play' Baby and Toddler Group for 0-4 year olds and their parents / carers. Helen Williams manages Playpen with a great team of volunteers from the church and local community. It has been a real benefit to have Ruth Munday our intern as a regular helper at Playpen this year.

For parents and carers, Playpen is a place to come and meet and forge new relationships with other people. For the children, Playpen provides a fun play environment with a variety of toys and activities set out each week. We lead a group song time about 11am, which is followed by 'snack time' when we provide water and fruit. There is also a craft activity each week after snack time.

Playpen has been getting increasingly popular and we have recently had lots of new faces. We have increased our numbers to accept 50 children each morning to try and limit the numbers of people we have to turn away. This makes setting up for snack time, quite a task!



Outreach and community

3rd Gipsy Hill Brownies



We did a lot of activities up to July 2014 to celebrate the Big Brownie Birthday (our centenary) culminating in a sleepover in September at the Oval with lots of other Brownies from London SW. Games and sport-related craft were enjoyed by all.

The girls are a lively bunch of 7 to 10 year olds who enjoy a wide variety of activities. In September 'Girlguiding UK' introduced a new format to the programme and the girls now earn 'Adventure',

'Adventure On' and 'More Adventures' badges as they enjoy their time in Brownies. Activities are based round three areas:

- ◆ YOU (challenging yourself and trying new things),
- ◆ COMMUNITY (learning about the community and skills that will make us useful citizens) and
- ◆ WORLD (learning about other countries and cultures, celebrating diversity).

We enjoyed making and using side shows for the advent fair, and attended the district Christingle evening.

We have said goodbye to quite a few of our older Brownies who have moved on to Guides, and have recently welcomed quite a few new girls, so the pack remains quite full. We have also welcomed a new leader, Chantelle, who joined us at Christmas.

Outreach and community

Engaging with the Berridge Road Community



To explore how we can engage with the community on the Berridge Road Estate, we have begun to meet as a partnership group with Shinead Prescod (for the youth club), Brenda Harris (for the church that uses the premises on Sunday afternoons), Christine Banton (who is interested in setting up a drop-in for mothers on the estate) and Kandi Stewart (who has worked with Shinead and Christine). The group put on a barbecue in August and held a joint evening carol service in December.

Outreach and community

Baptism Support Team



Baptisms at Christ Church come in waves – they crest in spring /summer and ebb in winter. Our usual pattern for baptism preparation consists of a first visit by Jonathan, our vicar, and a follow-up by two members of the bap-

tism support team.

In late spring 2014, enquiries for baptism mounted, so much so that we had a “communal” baptism preparation on a Sunday afternoon in June. To this, parents and godparents were invited. For some two hours (including a coffee and cake break) we dwelt on the meaning of baptism, the significance of the symbols used in the service, a review of the service and the promises made by the parents, godparents and by the church family. The testimony by a parent whose child had been baptised a short time before was good for us all to hear.

Recognising the importance of parents supporting their children in faith, we explore ideas for doing this and encourage parents to read Bible stories to their children, establish little rituals that include prayer times, whether at night, before meals, or anytime the occasion seems right. Birthday cards sent to those baptised have proved to be an unexpected but welcome surprise.

As one of the members of our team once told me, “I feel it is a privilege to visit with parents preparing to take this step on behalf of their child”. I believe we all endorse that statement.



Outreach and community

Mothers' Union



Although the Mothers' Union notice board is regularly refreshed, the breadth of the organisations' activity is probably not readily appreciated. A summertime garden party seemed to be the ideal venue for getting out the message a bit more. We were fortunate with the weather, the numbers and age range of those who came and hope that people left a little better informed by looking at the literature and hearing a brief talk about the work of Mothers' Union in the UK and worldwide.

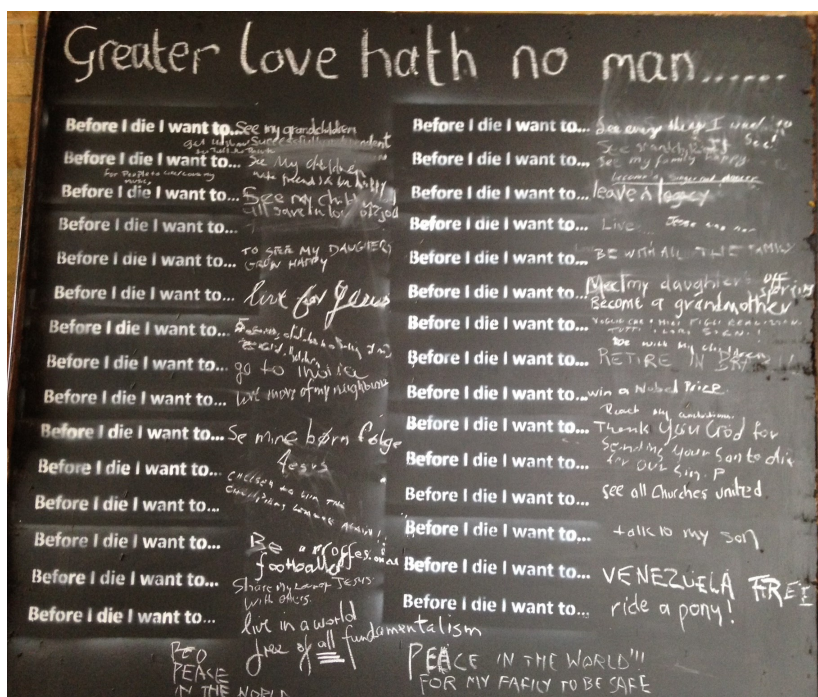
One of the aims and objects of the MU is to "Bring up children in the faith and life of the Church". Around the time that schools resumed for the autumn term, several of us (members and non-members) met at Christ Church on a Sunday evening to pray for our children. Whatever age they are, there is a need to pray for their being and their walk with the Lord. Prayer with a sincere heart makes a difference. We have probably all felt the effect of it in our own lives. The Mothers' Union promotes prayer as an underpinning to all it undertakes.

Just before Christmas once again, we met to make wreathes under the tutelage of Jo Watson (her mother in law is an active Mothers' Union member). It was a merry occasion.



Outreach and community

Churches together in Upper Norwood (CTUN)



Churches together in Upper Norwood, have enjoyed a good year of working closely together, with a joint act of witness on Good Friday, bringing together a large number of people from the churches in the area, standing together outside Sainsbury's Upper Norwood, passers-by were invited to complete the phrase, 'Before I die...' under the reminder of Jesus love for each of us 'Greater love hath no man...' We also drew together for a joint carol service, came together each month for the Ecumenical Prayer meeting held at the Methodist Church, collected donations for the Norwood and Brixton Foodbank, played Table Tennis together and much more

Outreach and community

Norwood and Brixton Foodbank



As we moved into our 3rd year of serving God through Foodbank we faced new and difficult challenges as well as seeking God's will for

the Foodbank in the year ahead.

We hosted a second successful community signposting day in which a range of services were on offer to clients including bank advice, job support, housing advice, health support and much more. It enabled clients to find a range of support in one place without appointments.

After struggling with storage space through most of 2014 and thanks to support from members from Christ Church we were able to secure space in St Margaret's Church SW2 which has enabled us to set up new shelving and provide a good stock control.

We have collected food at a number of supermarkets including Upper Norwood Sainsbury's at which a number of Christ Church team have supported us and through these collections we have collected a total of 17 tonnes food.

Christmas saw our busiest time yet and in 4 sessions across Norwood and Brixton we fed over 700 people and gave out 3.5 tonnes food. A staggering effort by all. As we started January 2015 our numbers have crept up and again we are seeing real need increasing so we look forward once again to new challenges. Then there is the key question 'What would Jesus do?' We have a number of prayer meetings throughout year when we focus on the needs of Foodbank and direction and everyone is welcome to join us.



"One client, who had previously been a city worker of some standing, came to us after being discharged from hospital with no home to go to, no money and very little in the way of clothing. We provided food and, as the conversations progressed, and we realised the extent of the situation, we provided clothes. Due to the fact that he needed to be sleeping on streets to qualify for a hostel place, the Foodbank supported him to sleep in church grounds, providing bedding and hot meals on one of the coldest weekends imaginable until he could get picked up. We have since heard he is doing really well.

Story of a Foodbank client



A number of members of Christ Church continue to support the Foodbank regularly through food donations and at the Foodbank itself.

There are a number of ways for new volunteers to get involved so please do e mail norwoodfoodbank@btinternet.com for more info.

Outreach and community

Overseas Mission Strategy

Early in the year we reviewed our links with mission organisations. The review concluded that relationships with organisations with an international focus should be overseen by the Mission Group and links with local groups through our Community Action Group.

Engagement is more proactive than in the past with dedicated link persons who update the congregation about the organisation during the year, provide prayer points and notify the church of any urgent needs or developments in the project or organisation

The Mission Group will focus on three projects with the intention of establishing a rolling three year connection with each that will give certainty for the organisation of the provision of funds for a certain period, and ensure we formally review the relationship (without pressure to continue) at the end of each period. The three organisations are:

- ♦ **CSW**, where we are committing to continue our current contributions for two years with the intention of opening up new channels of communication
- ♦ **Tearfund**, where our main focus will be on project Cambodia Hope Organisation (CHO) in North Western Cambodia, where severe poverty can lead to human trafficking and labour exploitation. The project aims to support the communities through education about the risks of trafficking, vocational training and business loans.
- ♦ **CMS**; where we will support the Cloustons in Bangalore, India for a further period of three years from December



We have begun to focus on these organisations in the Sunday morning services with short updates from those in the congregation who are responsible for communicating with each project. Information is also posted on the missions notice board and a missions prayer letter is issued twice a year to the whole congregation. Every four months the Wednesday prayer meeting will focus primarily on our mission organisations.

Locally, we continue to support Spinnaker and will develop (without financial support) our excellent relationships with the Norwood and Brixton Foodbank. We notified the Spires Centre and Ascension Trust of our intention to end our giving.

The parish continues to pay university fees for Gloria Byakatonda as she undertakes a degree course in business administration. Gloria is the orphaned niece of Peninnah Nalwanga, a member of the Berridge Road congregation, who has no family to support her.



Social Activities



Social activities are an integral part of the life of the parish and congregation. Over the years a wide ranging programme of activities has developed, aiming to cater for all tastes and ages and making the church more accessible to outsiders and newcomers. Food invariably plays a key role, ranging from a Passover supper to entertaining each other at home.

"Because there has been an influx of new people into the church we may need to have more events for people to get to know each other and this I believe will build up our caring for each other"

Social activities

Church week end



The Weekend at the end of June 2014 manifested once again that faith is beautiful and God Almighty is at work as our rock and sustainer.

Johnny Douglas, the main speaker, focused on the Missional, Relational and Incarnational (MRI) elements of the gospel during his three sessions with us.

Missional, focused on how mission-shaped life can develop through faith. The impact of that Mission on community can be significant.

Relational, relationship with God and each other can be flourished through faith. How grace can help us accept people who are different to us and love them dearly with compassion.

Incarnation, the Holy Spirit, the resident, the essence of everything can be identified and celebrated through everyday trials, challenges and its actions.

"Jesus is the DNA of the church"

"Encouraging discipleship, together in the holy spirit as community under God"

"This MRI focus will renew our focus Missional, Relational, Incarnational"

Johnny Douglas, speaker at the church week end

The children's work with the strong leadership of Spinnaker was an asset of the weekend, children learned different subjects through plays, acts, puzzles and games.



Social activities

Passover supper

Rather than the customary "Agape Supper" (a congregational meal interspersed with Holy Communion), our Maundy Thursday celebration this year took the form of a Passover meal, followed by Communion. We began, therefore, with the traditional Jewish "Seder" following the ritual that has been familiar to Jewish families for some 3000 years, since it began as a commemoration of and thanksgiving for the children of Israel's deliverance from captivity in Egypt.

So our Passover meal included roasted lamb, the reminder of the lamb sacrificed to save those Jewish households who obeyed Moses' command to paint the blood of the spotless lamb on their doorposts: unleavened bread, cooked quickly in the rapid departure from the land of the Pharaohs; bitter herbs and salty water signifying the desolation of slavery and of the journey across the wilderness; and after supper the Passover's third cup, of blessing, which Jesus took and pointed it towards Himself.



The account of deliverance by God, and His guidance of His people into the Promised Land of new opportunity, is one we can understand. But though the enactment of the Passover was informative, we experienced it without the emotional tug which must permeate the Passover experience of

the Jewish people, and the sense of nationhood, liberation and promise which the Passover celebration nurtures. For Christians, the more dramatic and compelling message is contained in the words and actions of the Communion – especially when we remember that this celebration has lasted now for nearly 2000 years in many places and across many cultures.

Special thanks went to the team of ladies who prepared our Passover meal. Perhaps the 2014 celebration will stimulate Christ Church to explore other ways of making the events of the Last Supper stand out in relief as the actions, words and significance are rehearsed in new ways.

Social activities

Creative Artistry Group

The group has continued to meet one Monday evening a month and has had a very successful year. The meetings give us a chance to get to know each other better, to share ideas and to learn new crafts. We are very grateful to Yvette and the rest of the Croucher family for their hospitality.

Highlights of the year include card making, jewellery (both beading and acrylic bracelets), cupcake decorating and learning how to make delightful sock monkeys.

In the autumn we concentrated on making items for the Advent Fair. The craft stall itself raised a fair amount and we also put together lucky dip presents and other gifts for sale.

Plans are afoot for a major group project, so we look forward to another productive and enjoyable

year. We welcome all who are interested in making things to join us. You don't have to be an expert to come and learn something new and have fun!



Buildings

Christ Church and Goodliffe Hall



donations, we held a gift day in October to ask the congregation to support the work with a further £35,000 required for essential work. We give thanks to God for the generosity of that day on which (with gift aid) nearly £60,000 was pledged and given. The work started in January 2015 and the upstairs should be completed by the end of the Easter holidays. Downstairs has been rather held up by roofing and other complications but as at Easter 2015 the kitchen is now the main remaining work.

The church buildings continue to be used as community assets by a wide range of groups and individuals.

The Goodliffe Hall in particular is fundamental to Christ Church's community outreach and we were delighted to be successful in applying to SITA Trust for funding for renovations to the hall. We were awarded the maximum grant of £60,000. With the funds left from previous



Buildings

Berridge Road



As a result of our practical support of the Lambeth contractors working on the estate they provided us free of charge with a completely refurbished kitchen; and carried out several roof repairs and a number of maintenance jobs inside the building.

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 (modernising and upgrading 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.

Resources

Finance

The church finances in 2014 are in good shape and we have much to be thankful. Full details will be available in the church's annual accounts. Giving to general church funds in-



creased by nearly 9% compared to 2013, with a similar increase in the amount of tax reclaimed through the gift aid scheme.

A wonderful £60,000 (including gift aid) was given in response to the appeal for funds for the Goodliffe Hall renovations and improvements which, with the £60,000 grant from SITA Trust will enable us to complete in 2015 almost all the refurbishment of the hall for the future.

We were reminded in our teaching of our responsibilities as stewards of all God has given us and the call to generosity. We are grateful to all who support the work of the church financially. Gift Aid and Standing Order forms are available at the back of church.

People

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.

As at 12 April, there are 153 members on the electoral roll, the 'membership list' of those who worship with us, whether they live in the parish or elsewhere. Six people came off the list and 13 were added.



