



Christ Church Gipsy Hill

Annual Report 2019



Welcome – Rev Jonathan Croucher

Welcome

Welcome to all who are reading this report on the life and ministry of Christ Church during 2019.

Our purpose in preparing a report like this is to offer members a reminder of all we have done, by the grace of God, as the community of faith in this place, and to offer newcomers and visitors a chance to get a feel for who we are and how and where we feel God has been, and is, calling us to serve him.

As we finalise the reports on 2019, we find ourselves in Easter Season 2020 - celebrating our resurrection hope in the extraordinary circumstances of the lockdown necessitated by the COVID-19 virus. It has resulted in the most stringent social distancing and isolation measures, including the closure of our church buildings, and is asking new questions of who we are as people in community and society, and how we continue as the family of God in times of separation.

Psalm 136, which we read in Morning Prayer this morning, is a reminder for the people of God that God's mercy endures for ever. Midst the repetition of that phrase is a recounting of God's character, and His creative and sovereign work through history and among the people of God. As we reflect on a year of worship, and service and ministry, we remind ourselves of all God has done, will do, and is doing in our church, our community and the world, even in the midst of this most demanding of times.

Let us 'Give thanks to the Lord, for he is gracious, for his mercy endures for ever'.

Jonathan

Mission Action Plan Development

Christ Church's mission action plan sets our vision for our church, and provides us a focus as we seek to respond to God's call on us as a community of faith.

Our Purpose

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 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.

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.

You can find more detail of the specific targets we set ourselves in June 2018 as part of a three year plan of action on our website. Two key areas of focus were to build confidence in our faith, and to build confidence in sharing our faith. They have been key elements in our teaching programme and in our plans for the first part of 2020, which sees another weekday teaching programme on 'telling our story'.

Worship, Teaching and Prayer

Ministry Team

Sam Whittington our curate left us in May 2019 to take up his new role as Vicar of St Paul's Brixton - Sam had been with us for nearly four years and was such a blessing to the ministry here. His formal role finished just before the wonderful celebration of his marriage to Nathalie Coppin which took place in the church, halls and Vicarage garden on one of the hottest weekends of the year (century even!).

We were delighted at the end of June to be joined by our new curate Emma Lowth, with barely a break between them! Emma trained for ordination at Wycliffe Hall, following a career in publishing and five years working on the ministry team at St Mark's Battersea Rise. Like Sam, she has a wonderful musical talent and plenty of experience of ministry which she is putting to good use.

Ordinand in Training – Ian Luke-Macauley

Individuals who have discerned a vocation for ordained ministry enter a long discernment process that is coordinated within the diocese by our Diocesan Director of Ordinands, and culminates in a national selection process which takes place on a three day residential assessment centre (now called a Bishops' Advisory Panel or 'BAP'). Over the past two years we have been hosting Ian Luke-Macauley, an ordinand in training who has been on placement with us. Ian writes:

The process of ordination training is the means by which candidates are equipped and formed for the particular ministry that they have been called to in the Church of England. It is another step on the journey

(usually a very long one lasting several years) after being selected for training at the BAP and the training could last 2 or 3 years, depending on whether it is full time or part -time. I went to BAP in Feb 2018 and after being selected for training, I opted to study at St Augustine's College (where Jonathan is Chair of Trustees) and as I am on the full-time pathway, I attend lectures at West Malling, in Kent.

The training involves being placed in a different Church for the full duration of your training under the supervision of an Incumbent (Vicar). In my case, I moved from St Mark's Kennington (where I was a Reader) and came over to Christ Church Gipsy Hill on placement in October 2018...how time flies! As an Ordinand you get to experience and be part of the life of the Church in various placements, but the downside is that just as you get to form relationships, it's time to move on!

My course ends in June 2020 so in effect I have just under 3 months more here before my ordination, when I will be on the move again to another Church as a Curate. In short, this is no sprint race, if anything, it is a marathon but be assured that "He who calls you will equip you..."

Note from the editor: Ian was due to be ordained at the end of June 2020 but in light of the COVID-19 restrictions it is unlikely ordinations will be able to take place. Ian will still be leaving us to join a new church at the end of June but we hope to have an opportunity to make our farewells when circumstances permit.

Sunday Morning Services – Jonathan Croucher

Our pattern of Sunday worship remains the same - with a quiet service at 9am which attracts a handful of people, and our main service at 10.30 at which we offer full provision for children and young people. We have been expanding our service teams - service leaders, readers and communion assistants - and have created a new 'welcomer' role to supplement the work the stewards do and ensure that we make it as easy as possible for those who are new to church. Many thanks to those who have stepped into that new role.

Sermon Series on Sunday Mornings – Pippa Evans

I Thessalonians

We began 2019 with a series working through the letter of I Thessalonians. This short letter allowed us to explore Christian mission, imitation, friendship, holiness, hope, expectation and community. The youth groups also studied the letter alongside the main congregation. We finished the series at the beginning of March. From Lent to Easter we followed the lectionary readings.

Faith, Hope, Love, Lament

Through the summer term we followed an ambitious teaching series on Faith, Hope, Love and Lament. The twelve weeks and twelve sermons were also divided into three, as we explored each person in the Godhead in turn. It was during this series that we said goodbye to our previous curate, Sam Whittington, but welcomed our new curate, Emma Lowth – both of whom contributed to this teaching series. It was a very moving and thought-provoking set of topics. Once we finished this series, we spent a month in the summer working through the lectionary until the end of August.

Luke's Gospel

From the beginning of September through to the end of October, we studied Luke 14-18, unpacking many of the famous parables in Luke's Gospel, including the Prodigal Son and the Lost Sheep.

Isaiah

From the beginning of November through to Christmas, we studied the book of Isaiah. One of the big challenges in preparing for this series, was to ensure that we chose passages that would help us to explore the shape of the book of Isaiah in only eight weeks and eight sermons. We worked chronologically through the book, looking at passages from across the sixty-six chapters. This allowed us to unpack the geo-political setting and history of the book. The series also led us into Christmas, which felt appropriate given the messianic prophecies seen in Isaiah that are fulfilled in the birth of Jesus, and the number of famous Christmas texts that we get from this Old Testament prophet.

Inspire – Emma Lowth

Inspire, our informal monthly evening church service, continues to be a great space in which we can do worship a little bit differently. With space to share encouragements and testimonies with one another, spend an extended time meeting with God in worship, and engage with teaching through discussion, everyone gets to contribute or receive in their own way and it is a time that is appreciated by people from across the breadth of the congregation. In the middle of 2019, a series exploring the person of the Holy Spirit set us up very nicely for an Autumn/Winter series thinking about Spiritual Gifts, with Pippa and Helen Gates playing significant and welcome roles in helping to shape the teaching and leadership of Inspire over the last few terms. In the music team, Victoria Boyce and Pete Moorey have been a great asset as regular contributors, and, since this is a space where we don't need to be shy about trying something new in prayer and worship, we hope to welcome others with a musical gift they'd like to develop to join us in the music team just as soon as we are allowed back into church.

Music Group Development – Emma Lowth

The music group has seen some changes to leadership and structure since Christmas 2019, with our Music Leader role being brought to an end and members of the team taking a stronger role in leading the rehearsal space before the service. This change has been made possible through a bit of mid-week administrative work from the staff team and the continuing faithfulness and enthusiasm of our small but talented team of singers and musicians. Before lockdown began, there were promising signs that different teams with slightly different musical flavours might be able to begin to develop and we were excited to welcome a percussionist on board the rota even if James never got to play! When we return, we will be actively looking to recruit further singers and musicians to this supportive and fun team, have opportunities to rehearse together and even to share and develop original arrangements and compositions for our times of worship

Easter and Christmas Services – Jonathan Croucher

Every year we wonder whether we should change the schedule for our well established Easter and Christmas celebrations - and almost without fail decide we have got things just as we want them. In 2019 Jonathan was determined to get his 'donkey' procession off the ground, with a walk from the triangle to Christ Church before

Christmas led by a donkey and carolling band. But sadly, despite the donkey booked, date clashes with other events in Crystal Palace meant his dreams had to be put away for another 12 months but it did lead to some creative thinking which resulted in a new external nativity display for the church courtyard on Gipsy Hill!



Many thanks to Stuart Mitchenall for his craft work on this.

Easter saw us mark Maundy Thursday with the very popular Passover Meal, and Good Friday the growing gathering for the Churches Together Act of Witness outside Sainsbury's, which Jonathan led for the last time as he steps down as coordinating minister of Churches Together in Crystal Palace. The Good Friday afternoon meditation was particularly creative, as congregation members were invited in conclusion to sprinkle petals and herbs over the cross. Easter morning was again a wonderful celebration of the resurrection which sees many visitors joining us for our all age communion.





Christmas 2019 also saw record numbers at our Christmas Eve nativity which continues to be a big event for the local community, along with the Christingle Service, and for which we are most grateful to Beth Peters and the whole Peters family. We hosted a service for St Christopher's Hospice, as part of our community partnership with

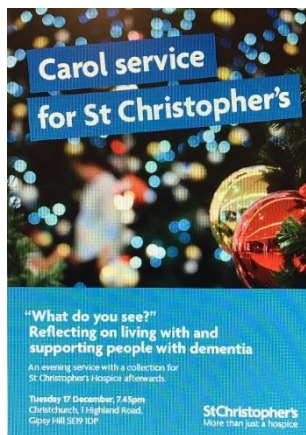
them, and which, though not attracting a huge congregation, was fabulously led musically by the band of the Croydon Citadel Salvation Army Band.



Our own

carol service was beautifully simple - with Suzanne Poole and Matthew MacGregor bringing the Christ Church choir together for its annual outing with such tantalizing effect.

An impromptu carol singing, with brass accompaniment, was organised by James Haddock down by the station, which proved very popular with passers by and will hopefully become part of our annual programme.



Weekend Away – Pippa Evans

From the evening of Friday 13th to the afternoon of Sunday 15th September, Christ Church went on a Weekend Away to Ashburnham Place in East Sussex. A number of years had passed since Christ Church last went away like this, and our previously used venue, Pilgrim's Hall, had closed in the interim so the initial task involved finding a venue that was an appropriate size, price, distance from London, and had suitable meeting spaces.



The weekend offered a great opportunity to enjoy each other's company in a context outside of church, and to wrestle with some of the big theological questions together. Our teaching was led by the Reverend Mark Thomas who, at the time of the weekend, was working with the church

planting team at Holy Trinity Brompton. Mark was also a former colleague of our curate, Emma Lowth, when he held the role of Associate Vicar at St Mark's Battersea Rise. The teaching series focussed on four key topics: science and faith, universalism and other faiths, suffering, and building confidence in sharing our faith. As part of the teaching and faith input during the course of the weekend, we also offered Morning Prayer, an informal Q&A session, Evening Prayer, and a Church service on the Sunday morning.

There were a number of different activities planned for periods of downtime, including a film evening, camp fire, lake swimming, croquet, football, and quiz night.



We had a significant number of the congregation join us for the weekend – well over one hundred! This represented a wide range of church attendees, and we had a sizeable number of children and youth (who had their own teaching provision), those in their 20-30s and adult members.

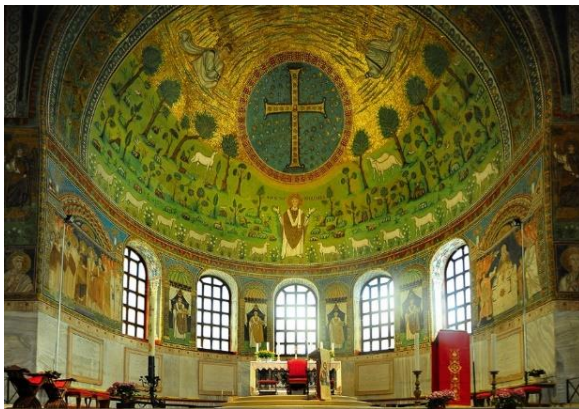


We had a few issues with food service and provision for those with allergies, but I think everyone agreed it is such a great opportunity to be away together as a church community and we were blessed with incredible weather in which to enjoy Ashburnham's beautiful grounds.



Teaching Series: Sacred Spaces – Bettina Van Hornhardt

In January we enjoyed a short series looking at how theology and beliefs influenced the design of worship spaces. We began by looking at the descriptions of the temple; the objects in it are intended to recall and represent the universe.



From there we moved on to early Christian churches, which still remember paradise and the orthodox church, where the unity of heaven and earth is at the centre of worship and saints and icons abound.

The third session was structured around the elements that make up the worship experience. It began with the journey to church which should be a time to get into

the right frame of mind. We looked at how the design of the space outside of church buildings draws the visitor in and what the entrance may tell. Next time you enter Christ Church, look out for the cross over the door, which some hadn't spotted.



The last session looked at modern examples, from the Sagrada Família in Barcelona to a millennium project in Munich, with a new take on church doors; the entire front façade opens. The sessions generated some interesting conversations and perhaps inspired one or two of us to explore some

of the examples a bit more.

Technology – Pippa Evans

In services

We have continued to use technology in our services, using Open LP to display liturgy and song lyrics on to the two TV screens on a Sunday morning. More of our preachers are including PowerPoint presentations in the service as a way to visualise points from their sermon. Occasionally too, we have video clips or pieces of music included in Open LP to demonstrate or explore a point in a sermon. We are now using the laptop, projector and screen for other regular events like Inspire and the Monthly Prayer Meeting.

For correspondence and administration

We continue to use our website to publicise upcoming events, services and news. We keep our calendar updated each week, with all the regular ministries and commitments. We also use the main page to highlight key upcoming dates for the diary or major events, such as Holiday Club.

We send out a weekly email via MailChimp to all members of the congregation who have signed up. This includes dates for the diary and

expanded notices for some of the upcoming events, an update on the monthly mission, and Safeguarding contact details.

In the last year we have registered with the online data management system, Churchsuite. In light of changes to GDPR, we thought it prudent to launch a new and more secure way to store the congregation's contact information and so during 2019 asked everyone on a Sunday morning to rerecord their details to be inputted on to this Churchsuite database. It allows us, among other things, to easily update communication permissions (such as receiving the weekly MailChimp email) and automatically emailing reminders for the Sunday rotas for Sunday mornings (which are still compiled with great care and commitment by Pauline Simpson!).

Prayer Ministry – Emma Lowth

As someone joining the church from outside in the last year, I have really noted how prayer is present across all aspects of church life in a quiet but significant way. Morning prayer takes place in chapel every Tuesday and Thursday morning, prayer ministry is always available for individuals after the services on Sunday mornings and it was good to have a time of training and encouragement together as a team in the Autumn, the pastoral prayer group intercedes constantly, confidentially and powerfully for any and every situation that arises, and homegroups regularly pray together for each other and for other needs that arise in the church and the world. Our monthly prayer meetings have continued on the first Wednesday of each month, with a specific topic becoming the key focus on each occasion. It has been particularly encouraging, over the last few months, to look back at our prayers for the climate, Brexit and for our ministries and to see how God has been answering our requests, even though in a current situation that we never predicted and in ways we couldn't have expected. It was also a welcome step that we were able to put plans in place for a Quiet Day this May, but as with so many plans for this year, we will have to look forward to this actually taking place some way down the line.

Environmental Focus – Pippa Evans

The period of Creationtide runs from September 1st to October 4th and focusses on God's earth and his creation. In 2019 we marked this period by raising awareness of environmental issues in our Sunday morning service, hearing from the Letters for Creation project. Out of this, and looking into 2020, we are aiming to launch an Environmental Working Group who will have oversight of the church's environmental footprint, and work to help us become an Eco Church. Given the Church of England's new target to cut its carbon emissions to net-zero by 2030, we hope to join in on this wave of enthusiasm! Watch this space!

Children and Youth Ministry

Children's Ministry



On Sunday Mornings we provide three groups for preschool to primary school aged children. Scramblers for the 4-5 year olds, Climbers for the 6-8 Year olds and Explorers for the 9-11 year olds. There is a creche for babies and toddlers who share the space with Scramblers, and often join in with their activities. There are

currently 22 volunteer leaders and helpers, with most serving on Sunday a month in their group.

Interview with Oscar Moorey aged 10, Part of the Explorers Group:

What kind of things do you do in Kids Church?

We play games, read the Bible, listen to the leader, we pray.

How many kids are in your group ?

About ten kids most weeks.

What is the thing you like best about Kids Church?

I like playing running games like 'My house not yours' or 'North South East West'

If you could add one thing what would it be?

I wish we could play video games.

What have you learned about Jesus from coming to Christ Church?

Jesus is the son of God, he offered his life on the cross so we could be forgiven for our sins. I know we don't have to make offerings of animals anymore because Jesus is like the offering to God.

Would you recommend Christ Church to a friend? Why?

It's fun for kids. There's a good hall to play football in after church and there are always biscuits to eat.

What is the best thing about Jonathan Croucher?

He supports Crystal Palace.



Shine – Pippa Evans

Shine, our monthly group for those aged 8-11, has continued throughout 2019, meeting on the second Sunday of the month. Each session begins at 5pm and we begin with a period of games upstairs in the Goodliffe Hall. At around 5:25pm we head along to the Youth Room (Blue Room) for a Bible study, before heading down for tea with those from Raise the Praise at 5:45pm.

We began 2019 by finishing looking at the parables of Jesus. We began the new term in September with a fresh series – looking at each line of the Lord's Prayer, focussing on one line each month.

Children and Families Worker – Jonathan Croucher

One of the significant decisions taken by the PCC in 2019 was to recruit a Children and Families worker - we have terrific work going on among children and young people at church but recognise that we are now of a size where a dedicated worker in this area will enable us to move forward and relieve some of the pressure on our wonderful team of volunteer coordinators, Beth, Esther and Rachel.

We advertised during the second half of the year but were unsuccessful and the lockdown in 2020 means the appointment is now on hold. We are praying that once things open up, we will be able to get moving on this appointment that we hope will allow us to deepen and develop the work we do, particularly with parents and families during the week.

Holiday Club – Pippa Evans



Holiday Club 2019 was a great success, as we welcomed over 40 children in the church for three action-packed days of fun! For the first time, we moved Holiday Club to the Easter holidays having previously been in the first week of the Summer holidays. We wanted to be more accessible for children who might otherwise have gone away in the summer, and to ensure that the teachers in our team of leaders were rested enough to help.



Alive and Kicking 2019 focussed on new life offered through Christ, so we studied the parable of the sower, Zacchaeus and his transformation after meeting Jesus, and the Resurrection.



We followed a tried-and-tested format each day, opening with registration and silly games on the Main Stage before we kicked off the Main Stage proper once everyone had arrived. The Main Stage sessions involved games, workouts, teaching, songs, jokes and challenges, and was generally led by Jonathan but with others taking a lead.

A huge thank you goes to all the team who made the three days such great fun for everyone, and particularly to Helen, Esther and Beth who led our three age groups superbly, each with a committed and energetic team of helpers (including church youth members)!





Youth Provision – Pippa Evans

Sunday Morning

Our two Youth Groups have continued to meet on Sunday mornings, with the 11-14s meeting upstairs in the Blue Room, and the older group, for those aged 15-18, meeting in the Vicarage. We made a change during the year so that both groups now leave the service on the second, third and fourth Sunday, remaining in the Sunday morning service for the first Sunday of the month only. Both groups are led by two leaders each week, and the sessions follow a similar teaching pattern to what is being explored in sermons during the service. Both groups generally have a chance to catch up, play games or chat, before tackling a Bible study together – the outline of which is taken from Energize. The leaders take it turns to prepare and lead these studies. We generally have all the regular older group in attendance each Sunday. We've had a slight drop in attendance from our younger youth on Sunday mornings.

Legacy and Socials

In the autumn of 2019, we made the difficult decision to stop running Legacy on Friday evenings. Attendance through 2019 had dropped significantly and once Charlotte, our youth intern, left early from her role, we struggled to find a second adult who could commit to being a regular part of the team. We decided that perhaps we needed to stop Legacy in order to reflect on this, and to put our energy into another area of youth provision. So moving forward we are planning two youth socials each term, advertising the dates at the beginning of the year so that parents can get them in to the diary early. We saw the desired effect of these changes at our first social of 2020, where we had around 10 young people come along – many of whom hadn't been to Legacy before. Unfortunately, the Coronavirus pandemic has stopped us being able to run our second social of 2020 but we are confident that this



offer of social events will be a more attractive offer for our young people and their parents. The other social events that we ran during 2019 included a pizza and film evening in the Narthex, and dinner out at Pizza at the Palace and perhaps the highlight was seeing Vic Boyce perform live at the Wimbledon Theatre in 'In the Willows' an updated musical production of Wind in the Willows which was totally fabulous!

Breakaway

We have continued to run Breakaway, our youth group for those aged 15-18, during 2019. We meet after Inspire for an hour, from 8-9pm.

Many of the older boys come to Inspire first and stick around for Breakaway. We had a number of good sessions in 2019, including playing Kubb in the Narthex, having BBQs, firepits, and dodgeball.



Youth Weekend Away

For a weekend at the end of June 2019, we took a team of our young people away to a lovely venue near Ashford, Kent. We had a number of leaders present to ensure that we could run all of the activities we

wanted – including myself, Rachel Skeath, Emily Boyce, Yvette Croucher and Pete Moorey. Yvette kindly offered to cater for us (and did a delicious job!) while the other four leaders focussed more on the activities and study sessions. The venue wasn't an outdoor activity centre, but we planned our own Wide Game, had a campfire, went for a country walk, played football rounders, did some crafts, and played in the indoor



games room. The weather was also absolutely amazing and meant that we could sit in the sun and simply enjoy each other's company too!

Church Community and Pastoral Support

Home groups - Rhos & Richard Roberts

Home groups are a key part of Christ Church's Mission Action Plan. We have six evening home groups, meeting on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays. Until the end of the year there were three day-time home groups, meeting on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Fridays. The Friday day-time group ceased meeting at the year end. Some home groups meet fortnightly, while others meet three weeks out of four each month. The Tuesday day-time group meets every week. The aims of a home group are to study the Bible together, support one another, to pray, and to explore opportunities for serving together.

The home groups are led by Hugh and Juliet Bain, Ian and Vicky Luke-Macauley, Dave Scroby (retired January 2020, succeeded by Emma Lowth), Anthony and Pam Merifield, Pete and Esther Moorey, Ali and Rob Seal, Pippa Evans, Yvette Croucher and Richard and Rhos Roberts. The groups generally all complete the same studies, and for most of the year the home groups have followed the same theme or book that has been explored on Sunday mornings. Home groups have also organised coffee mornings in the church garden and led morning services from time to time. Some groups also have regular meals together or arrange social events with the aim of encouraging friendships and support within the group. Home group leaders meet once a term to discuss the theme for the following months, to identify future leaders, and to pray about the groups as a whole.

Pastoral Care - Rhos & Richard Roberts

A small group meets every six weeks or so to pray for individuals within, or closely associated with, the church fellowship who are facing difficult personal challenges. Many of the issues involve serious or long standing ill health, including mental health problems; others can be the result of relationship breakdown, financial hardship, old age, or immigration status. The prayer group operates on a strictly confidential basis with

matters only being referred to the group with an individual's consent and not being discussed outside of the group.

The Christian message is about the whole person and a separate pastoral visiting team meets every few months to identify and address practical problems faced by church members and attendees. A small team prepares meals on request for the elderly, needy, the sick, and for families following the birth of a child. Members of the team visit housebound members, as appropriate, and arrange lifts to and from church for those unable to use public transport.

Mental Health Awareness – Pippa Evans

During 2019, Christ Church intentionally raised the profile of mental health issues and topics around wellbeing. This was seen through our preaching series on Faith, Hope, Love and Lament; with sermons on finding God in the dark times of life, specifically on mental health, and also on domestic violence. We also hosted the Honesty Over Silence event (read on for more information), which specifically aimed to address issues around anxiety, depression and being OK with admitting that you might be struggling. In 2020, we offered the Bereavement Journey – a six week course that aimed to help those who had been bereaved. It felt as though 2019 was a year where we seriously tried to open up conversations around mental health.

Regular Ministries

20s-30s Events – Pippa Evans

2019 has been an exciting year for the 20-30s Ministry at Christ Church. We have seen a number of new members in this age group join the church, having either moved into the area or having been local residents for a while and trying out our church for the first time. A number of these individuals specifically stated that they were looking for a community of Christians their age.

We have continued to organise and run social events for this age group, aiming to host an event each month. We have also been careful to arrange events that suit all budgets. The events have included Burns

Night supper, a pancake evening, a board games evening, drinks at a local brewery, and a BBQ. Although we don't get full attendance at each event, we probably on average have ten or so people come along.

Creative Artistry - Juliet Bain

We meet monthly at the vicarage on a Monday evening – usually the last in the month. After tea and cake we set to work sharing craft experiences and learning new ones.

During the year we have recycled Christmas cards to be used in Foodbank Christmas parcels, learned how to do lino printing, patchwork, made coasters from coins and beads set in resin and shared ideas for hand-made Christmas decorations.

Much of our evenings were spent chatting and catching up as well as crafting together. The Autumn focussed on making some craft activities for the Christmas craft and cake sale in support of Crisis. We raised over £500, selling handmade crafts and home-baked cakes after the service one Sunday morning which was an incredible achievement. Many generous hands helped make cakes and crafts and also manned the stalls so smiles all round!

Do come and join us, all are welcome! You don't have to be an expert and can learn new skills. Details will be on the Notice Sheets.

Football – Pippa Evans

Our fortnightly games of football have continued through 2019 and into 2020. Launched in 2018, the aim was to introduce something that the older boys in our youth group (who all love football) would enjoy doing as part of church. On average, we probably have around ten players, though this has been as few as 8 and as many as 14. We still ask for a contributing cost of £2.50 for those in education, and £5 for adults to put towards covering the cost of the pitch.

We began playing in February 2018 with an £100 kitty, which had to be topped up in March 2019. In January 2020 we needed another contribution to the kitty, so clearly the kitty money didn't last quite as long in our second year of playing. This, I think, was because we quite often had fewer players due to injuries.

Our football games attract a range of individuals – we have a number of women who play, a range of ages, a mixture of experience, but every game is played in a good spirit.

The Mothers' Union, Christ Church, Gipsy Hill (together with All Saints, West Dulwich) Jodie Lomax

With a great deal of fortunate timing (a matter out of our hands), we were able to collectively carry out our planned events :

- having a role in the Mothering Sunday service including the provision of posies with an appropriate “Bible Verse Tag” followed by a Bake Sale,
- holding our “Prayers by Candlelight” – a “gentle gathering” in which we meet at twilight at the altar of Christ Church and pray for our children and grandchildren,
- making Christmas wreaths – a rather “full on” experience starting with an early “dawn purchase” of greenery and materials from New Covent Garden Market.

Perhaps the greatest unseen consequence of our gatherings for prayer or making tags, is the sharing of our Christian experiences and learning from them. We have experienced how the Lord matures his people. For one member, we are “Home Group”.

We sponsored two families on a summer AFIA (Away From it All) holiday by the seaside. These holidays are set up by MU, Southwark Diocese and funded by contributions from all MU branches in the diocese. Pocket money for vouchers to utilize the numerous activities on site, is paid by the sponsoring MU branch.

When we learned that a member of Christ Church was to marry, we had a home cooked evening meal (complete with little favours) together with her, passing on tips for a happy, married life. It was all rather delightful.

Individually, members were active in church life including participation in Sunday School teaching, the PCC, as Bible readers and intercessors in Sunday Services, helping with the Holiday Club, the Robes Project, cooking for and organizing the CC Cooks Rota for hot meal deliveries,

compiling Food Bank Data as well, and lastly, participating in CC and St. Christopher's jointly run projects (the Magnolia Club for people with dementia and being a Compassionate Neighbour). We thank God for his blessings and for his answers to our very heartfelt prayers.

Welcoming into Church

Open Door – Cath Mitchenall and Pauline Simpson

It seems amazing that Open Door, our community drop-in has been running for well over five years now. We welcome a mixture of regular and irregular guests from the local area and from our congregation. Our committed team of volunteers ensure that everyone receives a warm welcome, friendly conversation, tea or coffee served with homemade cakes or biscuits and a nutritious lunch, cooked by Danielle Montrose-Francis.

We offer activities during the afternoon, a monthly quiz, sing around the piano, led by Jonathan and accompanied by one of our guests, Dave, as well as card or board games. Emma, our curate, has started a fortnightly Bible study group on alternate afternoons, which has proved popular.

Janet Boyce provides advice to anyone in need of help with a variety of needs, e.g. benefit applications, housing issues, debt. If she cannot help, Janet always knows an organisation that can.

Magnolia Club – Danielle Montrose Francis

Magnolia Club is our weekly drop in for people with dementia and their carers. It's a small but very welcoming and friendly group that enjoy chatting over tea, coffee and cake, with occasional activities that members are interested in. We are supported by the dementia charity Hope for Home, and partner with St Christopher's Hospice as they extend their work around dementia. Last year saw a number of special activities, including a sensory story teller when we welcomed children from Paxton School, and sessions on gardening and art.

We are very grateful to all the volunteers who support the Magnolia Club and look forward to getting back to meeting once the current lockdown is over.



Play Pen - Helen Williams

Playpen is our church-run 'Stay and Play' baby and toddler group for 0-4 year olds and their parents or carers. We open on Wednesdays and Thursdays between 10am-11.45am. Last term we put up our entrance costs for the first time in about 10 years to £3 per child. We also introduced the option of paying by card!

Helen Williams has been managing Playpen for about 9 years, along with a great team of volunteers from the local community. We are a friendly playgroup and a great place for people living in the community to make friends or to meet up for a chat and a cuppa, whilst their children can enjoy playing. We put out a wide range of toys and activities each week, trying to alternate the toys and keep it interesting for those visiting. We often receive really good feedback from parents and carers about everything we provide at Playpen and how well looked after and clean all of our toys and equipment are. Following free play, we have a singing session and then provide water and fruit for all the children before closing.

As always, massive thanks go to our regular volunteers; Christine Woolard, Sharon Robinson, Sue Chalcroft, Tracy Fuery, Jonathan Caddell, Tim Eveleigh (more commonly known as guitar man at Playpen). Playpen really wouldn't be the playgroup that it is without all the volunteers.

Together with the Community

Foodbank – Elizabeth Maytom



Norwood and Brixton Foodbank was set up in 2011 serving those in our community in crisis and seeing people from across Lambeth but especially south Lambeth and also north Croydon. In 2012, they began to receive support of an advice worker from Centre 70 and this has continued with support from Lambeth Council and more recently as a result of a grant from the Walcot Foundation. We also added Advice Workers to Brixton in April 2013.

During 2014 at Norwood, we piloted support from a Legal Team offering free legal advice, and this has proved so successful it is now part of our programme on a fortnightly basis. 2015 saw us add work support and then in 2016 we have visit from Mosaic Clubhouse, providing support and signposting to those with mental health issues.

Brixton has expanded their work with Food For Thought, a short lunchtime praise service and soup each Tuesday.

As we acknowledge that Foodbanks are 'More than Food', we are looking to what we can provide beyond the sessions. We have strong links with CAP Brixton, offering debt advice and support for those struggling to manage their money. We have also just started our Eat Well, Spend Less project, which offers cookery courses to those wishing to learn to cook, or gain confidence in cooking healthy meals, often using fresh foods as well as advice on how to cook on a budget and still produce nutritious meals.



In 2019 we received funding to establish a central warehouse facility in a church building in Streatham, with a warehouse manager, which has provided an opportunity to unite provision for foodbanks across Lambeth, Wandsworth, Southwark and Lewisham. As we write, this facility is providing a hub for supplying food parcels for delivery across those boroughs during the COVID-19 lockdown which has seen an increase of 150% in the number of food parcels being provided each week. In April 2020 Foodbank fed 3044 people, delivering 1.5 tonnes of food every day.

Note from the editor: We are so blessed to have Elizabeth Maytom, Project Lead, and Tim Boyce, Chair of Trustees, in our congregation. The relationships with Foodbank has flourished and, along with the regular volunteers, more than 60 members of the congregation served at Foodbank over Christmas 2019. Our links with Foodbank have helped us develop our ministry at Open Door and more generally in the local community. We give thanks to God for their witness and service. Jonathan

St Christopher's Hospice – Jonathan Croucher

For the past three years we have developed our relationship with St Christopher's which began when we hosted their compassionate neighbours outreach worker, Steph Turner, in the office. Steph's role ran for two years and we were delighted to host their Second Birthday party for Compassionate Neighbours here at church, which brought together the many people who had signed up to the scheme, which brought together people who were nearing end of life with other members of the community. All spoke of the deep bonds of friendship and mutual support which had grown out of those relationships.

We also hosted the second

Compassionate Neighbours Community Choir Festival, which also gathered musicians from Croydon Citadel and the London Mozart Players, in a wonderful afternoon of music coordinated by local musician Katie Rose.

St Christopher's have also been involved with our partnership with the dementia charity Hope for Home and continue to support us, providing volunteer input once a month for the Magnolia Club.

It was a pleasure for a second year to host a Christmas Service for them, which brought the band of the Croydon Citadel Salvation Army for a wonderful evening of readings, carols and stories from the Magnolia Club. A really moving evening.



Lunham Road Daycare Centre – Jonathan Croucher

It is such a privilege to lead services at the daycare centre with the small but committed team from Christ Church. The staff at the Centre have made a real effort to brighten up the physical surroundings of the centre, which now has a 1940's living room set up in what was an old cluttered physio room, and a beautifully re-decorated main 'lounge area' which has been re-ordered to create a much more homely feel.

A growing number of the clients of the centre have advanced stages of dementia, but it is an joy to see people who seem not to be cognitively engaged, beginning to sing or hum the tune of the well known hymns that we sing. Especially on Thursdays, there are a group of women who sing enthusiastically and who have particularly enjoyed Ian's preaching and singing. The Christmas carol services were a great joy and we give thanks for the very special relationships that develop there, with clients and staff.

3rd Gipsy Hill Brownies 2019

2019 was a successful year, getting used to our new programme. Several Brownies have earned theme awards.

We had a camp at Cudham in May, experiencing all types of weather except snow, including a spectacular hail shower. Fortunately Saturday evening was lovely and we enjoyed an outdoor barbeque and singsong.

In the summer Tawny Owl Louise made her adult promise in the centenary maze at Crystal Palace Park and completed her leadership qualification just before Christmas. We are waiting to be able to present the award officially.

The year finished with our district Christingle and a Christmas craft evening when the Brownies made chocolate yule logs and origami Christmas tree cards.

Universal Credit Training – Pippa Evans

On the morning of Monday 4 November 2019, Christ Church hosted a Universal Credit training for the deanery of Lambeth South. We



welcomed Nelly Misenga from Together Southwark at the Church Urban Fund to lead our training. We met upstairs in the Goodliffe Hall and provided refreshments and lunch for all those in attendance. We also welcomed a number of individuals from other parishes to the event, as they sought to learn more about the relatively new system of Universal Credit. There were roughly twenty people in attendance.

The morning helped us to understand a little about what Universal Credit is, the thinking behind its introduction, eligibility criteria, some current concerns with the system.

XLP – Pippa Evans



We said goodbye to Becky, our XLP intern, in July, as her internship ended and she took up a job in Montrose, Scotland. XLP announced that they were suspending the Gap Year programme for 2019-2020 while they gave some consideration to how they should take the initiative forward. With the arrival of our intern, Charlotte, in the autumn of 2019,

there was capacity to work with XLP in Lambeth as Charlotte was keen to partner with XLP in a local school. This initiative was launched in the autumn term but ended when Charlotte's time with us came to an end. We keep in contact with XLP as they seek to work with young people around Lambeth,



though our direct partnership with them has not continued in the same way as previous years when we've had an intern.

The Robes Night Shelter - Ian Luke Macauley



**HOMELESS
NIGHT SHELTER**

The Robes Project co-ordinates the provision of food to homeless folks during the winter months and to

facilitate this they invite churches to volunteer to serve breakfast or dinner. The invitation was put to us as homegroup leaders and I saw a wonderful opportunity for us to be engaged in this mission to the needy.

Our homegroup was equally committed to this, so we agreed to serve dinner at St Luke's Church, on Saturday 25th January. We followed the brief we were given and came up with a 2-course menu for 25 people. There were 7 of us involved on the night as this was the maximum capacity for the kitchen, but really the whole group was too, as everyone played their part in one way or another. We served pasta bolognese (meat and vegetarian) option; garlic bread and salad with fruit salad and ice-cream for desert and had brief opportunities to chat to some of the homeless folks and the volunteers on the night. I think we all came away more blessed and enriched having responded to this specific 'call'.

Churches Together in Crystal Palace- Jonathan Croucher



After seven years in the role, Jonathan stepped down as Coordinating Minister of Churches Together at the end of 2019. Engaging ecumenical partners is not always easy - leaving aside theological difference, the characters of ministers, and the particular focus of different congregations, means it's not always easy to engage everyone in

collective endeavours. We are very fortunate to have an active group of lay people from the different churches who meet monthly to pray - usually led by one of the ministers - and who coordinate a variety of social activities, including the very popular weekly table tennis club. Joyce Bright, who chairs



Churches Together, is passionate for the gospel and has inspired much of what has been good in Churches Together over these past seven years. The Act of Witness on Good Friday is the pinnacle of the Churches Together calendar which does succeed in drawing many of our congregations together across the church traditions and we are



grateful for that, and especially for the Salvation Army - for the band and for their hospitality after the service.

We would love to find someone who would represent Christ Church on the Enabling Group of

CTCP going forward - do speak to Jonathan if you are interested.

Summer Garden Party – Pippa Evans

For a number of years, on a few Saturday mornings each summer, we have held garden parties in the garden beneath the church tower. The aim of these events is to try and have positive conversations with people as they walk up and down Gipsy Hill, perhaps also offering homemade cakes. In previous years this has coincided with the Crystal Palace Festival. We held two such events in 2019, one in June and one in July, each coordinated by different homegroups. Over the last few years, there have been a number of conversations about how we can develop

these events – should we offer more, something that involves bringing people into the church building perhaps, or would this be off-putting? Do we need to specifically advertise for this event or is it OK to see who simply walks past? We did have a number of exciting ideas to trial this year, in the summer of 2020, but at the time of writing, the Coronavirus pandemic has put these ideas on hold for the time being.

Events

BBQ – Pippa Evans

The annual summer BBQ, at the beginning of July 2019, was a great success! As in previous years, we asked members of the congregation to sign up to make certain dishes so that we knew that we had enough. We also asked for a small group of committed grillers to arrive at church early, light the BBQs, and begin cooking so that food was available shortly after the end of the morning service.

We had a generous supply of dishes provided, so much in fact, that a large number of people took home supplies at the end of the meal. We also had a large team working behind the BBQs to ensure that we had plenty of cooked meats and vegetarian options. As in previous years, we had a few gazebos erected in the vicarage garden to allow people to shelter from the heat as they preferred. It wasn't quite as hot as the previous year – when we were in the middle of the 'Great British Heatwave' but we certainly had good weather for the BBQ.

Seniors Tea Party – Pippa Evans

In the summer of 2019, Jonathan arranged two tea parties at the Vicarage for the senior members of our congregation.

Handsomely baked for by Yvette, we enjoyed two wonderful tea parties. At the first, we enjoyed a fascinating conversation, each sharing something that others may not know about ourselves. This opened up some incredible stories





that included hearing how members of our congregation had emigrated to the UK from the Caribbean as young children, how others had met partners, how some had come to faith or discovered Christ Church. It

was truly fascinating and led the Ministry Team to plan an International Event to be able to hear about, and engage with, some of the different cultures represented at Christ Church.



Come Dine With Me – Yvette Croucher

An annual favourite, we again organized a CDWM event on 9 November with over 50 church members joining dinner party hosts around the area for a meal. Always much appreciated, this year was no exception and Trena and Yvette received very positive feedback from participants who not only came away very well fed, but who had also enjoyed the opportunity to meet new people and share life stories and experiences in a comfortable home setting.

Honesty Over Silence – Pippa Evans

On 24 November 2019, Christ Church hosted an event as part of the Honesty Over Silence Tour. The Tour involved a series of events run by the Christian charity, Kintsugi Hope. The term Kintsugi comes from the Japanese technique of mending broken pottery with gold – the appearance of the pottery is improved, and it becomes even more unique after this process. The scars become a feature rather than something to hide. The evening advertised itself as offering *‘live music and talks, seeking to open up conversations around difficult topics such as trusting in God when life is painful, and dealing with anxiety and depression.’* The

event was led by Diane and Patrick Regan (previously the founder of Christian youthwork charity, XLP).

Given our good relationship with Patrick Regan, and with his previous charity XLP, coupled with the fact that the church had actively been raising awareness about mental health and wellbeing, an event with this focus, led by this team, seemed like an attractive opportunity. We committed to doing a significant amount of advertising for Honesty Over Silence, including within church but also into the local community, using Facebook, by flyering, and through contacting other local churches. We had about seventy people in attendance for the evening but a significant number were not members of Christ Church so we had clearly managed to get the word out to those outside of our church.

Church Building and Hire

Church Building – Jonathan Croucher

2019 has been a year of investment at Christ Church and the Goodliffe Halls. Some roof repairs over the vestry and siderooms and a comprehensive redecoration of the halls and church toilets and kitchen have ensured we keep everything in good order and a bright and open space for the church and for other users. Stuart Mitchenall refurbished the main wooden doors that separate the narthex and main worship space, saving us a significant cost, and has continued to do general maintenance and upkeep for us, for which we are hugely grateful.

Berridge Road – Jonathan Croucher

The nursery at Berridge Road closed in the Summer of 2019, after a very difficult financial year, leaving the building empty apart from the Pearly Gates church that meets on a Sunday afternoon. We also undertook some significant works in the building, replacing the soffit boards and undertaking some urgent repairs to the roof. This investment proved to be particularly wise as the decision to find a new tenant using commercial agents at the end of 2019 proved to be very quickly successful. Early in 2020 we were able to agree terms with the New Covenant Church to take over the building on a five year lease and the lease was completed at the beginning of March, securing a Christian

presence in the building and a regular income for Christ Church which we hope will continue to help fund new ministries.

Church Hall – Helen Williams

The Goodliffe Hall and church narthex continue to be regularly used by various groups, including Slimming World, Crystal Palace Community Choir, Zumba, Pilates, and most regularly by Team Dance who use the buildings four days of the week! (Team offer dance classes in tap, ballet, jazz, street dance and more, for both adults and children). Christ Victory Church also continues to meet in the Goodliffe Hall on Sundays, as well as for prayer meetings and prayer ministry a couple of times during the week. All of these groups bring in a good source of income for the church. In addition to our more regular bookings, we also often let out the hall to members of the community for children's birthday parties, the NCT, and various local community group meetings.

Aside from the revenue that the hall brings, it also allows us to offer a space for outreach within the community through groups such as Playpen, Open Door, our Dementia group 'Magnolia Club', Compassionate Neighbours Training, Brownies and the Central Hill Estate Community gatherings.

Church Garden on Gipsy Hill



One of the elements of our property that we often overlook (physically and metaphorically!) is our courtyard garden on Gipsy Hill. The garden is located on the ground where the sanctuary of the original church was built. It enables a clear view in and out of the church on to and from Gipsy Hill and over the past few years has hosted a number

of garden tea parties when we have served tea coffee and cake to passers by from the local community. It is often used as a stopping place for those passing through and the garden is kept beautifully by Anthony Merifield, to whom we are enormously grateful. In 2019 we planted a tree in the



entrance gateway in memory of Angela Venters, a member of our congregation who died in 2018.



Financial Report Summary by Ed Hanson

We are thankful to God for continuing to meet so many of our needs and to the members of the congregation who have generously given their love, time and talents as well as money. Although we had a deficit for the year, we still have sufficient funds in the bank to be able to meet our current requirements. Full accounts for the year are available separately but the summary below provides highlights of the accounts as follows (all figures to the nearest £1,000):

Income

- Total unrestricted income was £238,000 compared to £225,000 in 2018. This includes a legacy of £20,000 received in 2019.
- There was a small drop in regular donations from the congregation.
- There was a £9,000 reduction in property income, due to the absence of Berridge Road nursery lettings income in the latter months of 2019.

Expenditure

- Total unrestricted expenditure was £245,000 compared to £242,000 in 2018.
- Charitable giving increased as we now support John and Lynne Quanrud in addition to our other mission support and more was given to local charities.
- Less was spent on building work than in 2018, and our rental costs were lower as the diocese now contributes to the rental for the curate's house.
- Other expenditure was broadly in line with 2018 with some administration and catering increases.

Position at the end of the year

- The net deficit in 2019 was therefore £7,000.
- However, in the absence of the legacy received, the deficit would have been £27,000, meaning that on average we spent over £2,000 per month more than our income.

- Our year end Barclay's balances were £62,000. In addition we hold £65,000 in short term CCLA deposits.

Restricted income and expenditure

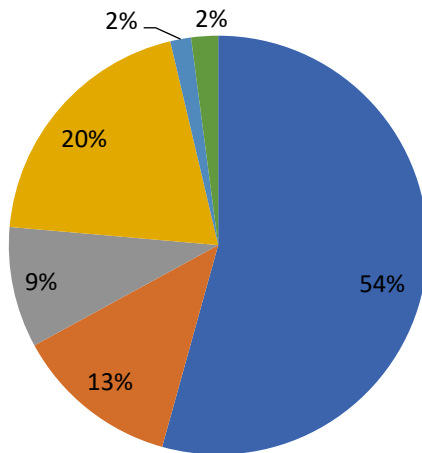
This consisted of:

- Income and expenditure relating to the Weekend Away (£8,000 and £10,000 respectively).
- Dividend income from the Endowment fund of £6,000, spent on children's work.
- £5,000 grant income for staff costs support (administrative help for Jonathan as area dean).

Balance sheet

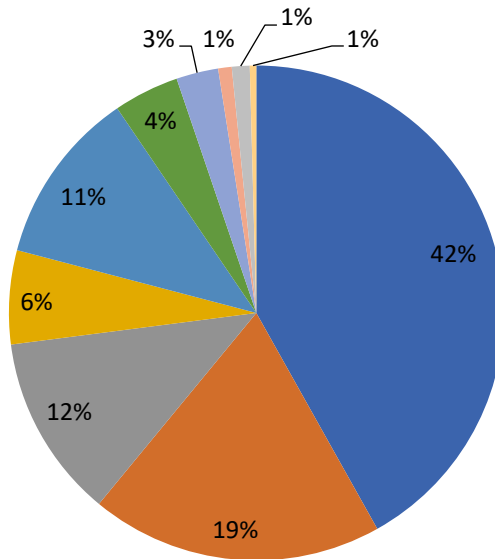
- The Goodliffe Endowment Fund increased in value to £208,000 (2018: £175,000), reflecting the value of the underlying investments. We receive approximately £6,000 of dividend income each year from these investments.
- We have cash and short term investments of £127,000.

Income (unrestricted funds)



- Income from donors
- Gift aid
- Legacy
- Rental income
- Playpen
- Other

Expenditure (unrestricted funds)



- Diocesan support
- Staff costs
- Building and maintenance costs
- Property rental
- Charitable grants
- Office costs
- Worship, music and audio
- Playpen
- Catering and entertainment
- Other

Mission Partners

Missions - Rhos Roberts

Our relationships with international organisations are overseen by the Missions Group. Individual members of the group are responsible for each of the three projects which Christ Church supports financially and with regular prayer. Engagement is proactive and each month we focus on one of our overseas or home organisations in the Sunday morning service. The relevant members of the Missions group then update the congregation about the organisation and provide matters for prayer as well as notifying the church of any urgent needs or developments in the projects. Information is also posted on the missions' notice board and every four months the Wednesday prayer meeting focuses primarily on our mission organisations.

The Missions Group works with each organisation on a rolling three-year basis. This gives certainty for each group about the provision of funds for a particular period and ensures that we formally review the relationship (without pressure to continue) at the end of each period. The three organisations are:



- Tearfund, where our main focus has been on the Cambodia Hope Organisation (CHO) based in North Western Cambodia, near the Thai border. CHO tackles human trafficking, working principally through local churches. CHO provides education about human trafficking in schools, skills training, vocational training and micro-loans to help poorer families support themselves. Tearfund has concluded

that CHO is now in a position to support itself, which is an encouraging situation. The Missions Group is, therefore, reviewing the various projects supported by Tearfund with the aim of choosing a new project by Easter 2020.

Editor's Note: Before finalising the report, the Mission Group decided we would offer our funding to Tearfund to their 'where the need is greatest' general fund, enabling them to commit it where required. We will be joining in with some of Tearfund's campaigning work, and will be supporting in prayer the Gordon family, who have recently moved to the DRC/Rwanda where Anthea will be a programme manager for Tearfund, and Martin will be working through CMS with the Anglican Bishop of Goma.

- The Church Mission Society (CMS) where we continue to support the Clouston family - Eric and Rhena and their two children Kitty and Sam (both now studying in the UK) who are based in Bangalore, India.
- Christian Solidarity Worldwide (CSW), which works for religious freedom throughout the world through advocacy and human rights



In addition we support financially and in prayer John and Lynne Quanrud, members of Christ Church who returned in 2019 to Albania, where they had previously served as missionaries. This time John is working with the Institute for Albanian & Protestant Studies, whose mission is to 'promote the discovery of Albanian and Protestant history and thought'. Lynne is teaching English to Albanian students.

Locally, we continue to support Spinnaker and we were delighted to welcome Rachel Swaby to our morning service in September to speak about the work of Spinnaker supporting religious education and Christian assemblies in schools around Lambeth and South London.

We continue (without regular financial support) our excellent relationships with the Norwood and Brixton Foodbank (see earlier in the report). Our Christmas collections totalling over £1,000 were donated to Foodbank. Our Harvest donations of food and toiletries was donated to the Spires Centre for homeless and disadvantaged people in Streatham and a number of members of the congregation

supported the Robes Project in January at St Luke's church, West Norwood, by preparing food for, and chatting with, the guests who were each given a hot meal, a bed for the night and a cooked breakfast.

Our Place in the Diocese and Deanery

The Diocese of Southwark

Christ Church is part of the Church of England's Diocese of Southwark. The diocese covers South London and East Surrey - a population of 2.9million people and 317 square miles served by 355 churches across 294 parishes. The diocese is divided into three 'episcopal areas' - Kingston, Croydon and Woolwich, each with an Area Bishop (we are in the Kingston Area with Richard Cheetham, Bishop of Kingston), and is overseen and led by our Diocesan Bishop,

Christopher Chessun, Bishop of Southwark. The 'business' of the diocese is overseen by the Diocesan Council of Trustees.



As well as funding clergy stipends and pensions, and managing clergy housing, the diocese is responsible for the vocations and training processes for clergy and lay people, for providing support

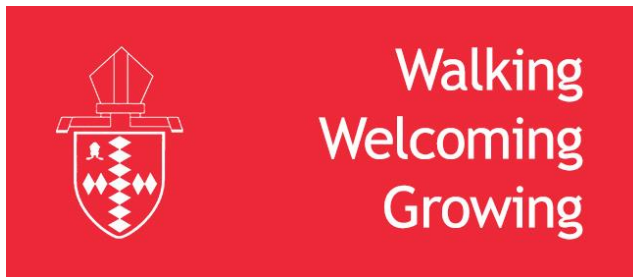
and encouragement to parishes, and for coordinating the civic role of the church across the diocese. This is delivered through four 'ministry' departments - Vocations, Ministry and Training, Pioneer Ministry & Fresh Expressions, and Mission & Evangelism (which includes the Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation team). The Southwark Diocesan Board of Education, which operates as a separate charity, oversees over 100 primary and senior schools across the diocese.

Individual parishes provide almost all the funds the diocese receives to cover its costs through the 'Parish Support Fund', on the basis of 'generous giving'. Parishes that can give more can fund parishes who could not on their own cover the cost of parish clergy. In 2019, Christ Church gave £95,000 to the diocese, so is a net contributor to the work of the diocese. Neither we nor the diocese receive government or other external funding.

The Southwark diocesan vision is called 'A fruitful future':

We share a vision for the future in which we will see:

- *growing churches, new worshipping communities and new Christians*
- *deepening discipleship: engaged, prayerful and informed Christians*
- *growth in vocations to existing and new ministries*
- *generous giving and prayer supporting all we do*
- *justice and peace built up, and violence challenged, in our local and global community*
- *a shared commitment to the integrity of creation*
- *a church for all which reflects our diverse community in membership and leadership.*



Out of that vision, specific objectives were set in 2017:

- to grow our average weekly attendance by 5% by 2025 partly through having each church develop a high-quality Mission Action Plan (MAP) which includes a course for evangelism and discipleship
- by 2025, to increase the number of worshipping communities with a primary focus on areas of population growth through investment in Fresh Expressions (fxC) in the areas where the data suggests the existing congregations are increasingly unrepresentative of the resident community and therefore unlikely to be successful in reaching them without intentional intervention
- to grow a financial resource base that allows investment in growth for the future. Key measurable include: annual financial surplus, working financial reserves equivalent to 6 months operating costs by 2020, 1% of Diocesan turnover annually dedicated to major Diocesan ministry and mission projects beginning in 2016, rising to 2% by 2020

- to grow the number of ordained and lay vocations by 50% by 2020 by enabling and discerning ordained ministers; by expanding opportunities for licensed and commissioned lay leadership; by affirming and growing other forms of lay ministry (e.g. worship leaders, family & youth leaders, spiritual directors); to offer relevant and enriching training, and create networks of support and celebration which reflect the diversity of the Diocese, our commitment to evangelism and discipleship, and delivers fully integrated and pioneering church growth and fresh expressions
- by 2025, to grow leadership and representation that reflects the rich diversity of our Diocese and especially focusing where the data suggests groups are currently underrepresented: through ethnicity, age (especially 18-40), educational opportunities, material well being, tradition.

**Diocese of Southwark → Kingston Episcopal Area
→ Lambeth Archdeaconry → Lambeth South Deanery**

Within the Kingston Area, there are two Archdeaconries - Lambeth and Wandsworth. We are in Lambeth, overseen by Archdeacon



Simon Gates, which is itself divided into three deaneries which include our deanery of Lambeth South (plus Lambeth North and Merton). Our deanery covers the area from us in Gipsy Hill heading west to Streatham Vale, north through to the boundaries of Brixton and around and down through Streatham and West Dulwich.

There are 13 parishes in the deanery, reflecting the wide diversity of churchmanship across the Church of England.

In 2018, Jonathan was invited by the Bishop to become Area Dean, with a range of responsibilities for life in the deanery and people often

ask what that means. The formal description of the responsibilities of an Area Dean runs as follows:

- To pray for the people, parishes and chaplaincies of the Deanery.
- To lead and facilitate the ownership, development and implementation of the strategic direction (mission) of the Deanery in line with Southwark Vision.
- To oversee the pastoral care and support for all those who hold the Bishop's license in the Deanery and ensure that concerns are reported to the Archdeacon, Area Bishop or Diocesan Bishop as appropriate.
- To convene the Deanery Chapter, and to encourage the full participation of all stipendiary and non-stipendiary ministers.
- To attend and participate in Diocesan Meetings of Area Deans (twice annually) and Area Meetings, according to local practice.
- To enable good communication between members of the Deanery and Diocesan offices and officers.
- To support the Parish Support Fund by example, by encouragement and by sharing information and good news stories.
- To collaborate with the Area Trio in the provision of MDR for all licensed ministers, and clergy with permission to officiate.
- To participate in the recruitment process for clergy and other staff to the deanery as appropriate, for example in the drawing up of parish profiles.
- To share in the planning and execution of licensing/collation/induction services according to local custom.
- To share in parish inspections, on behalf of the Archdeacon.
- Alongside the Lay Chair, to maintain good communication with the Deanery Development Adviser.
- To collaborate with the Anglican Ecumenical Borough Dean (in London Boroughs) or equivalent colleagues in East Surrey, in working with other churches and with civic authorities.
- To support the Deanery's work with church schools, especially in deaneries in which a Diocesan secondary school is present.

At different times, different elements of the role take more time than at others. At the end of 2019, there were five parishes in vacancy or about to become vacant in the deanery, and the role as Area Dean

includes ensuring there is clergy cover for Sunday and other services. Some churches are very well set up and prepared for an active interregnum; others less so. Jonathan is usually then also invited to be involved in recruitment and interviewing for new incumbents. He chairs the deanery leadership team, and deanery clergy chapter (which meets five teams a year, and with the deanery lay chair Winston Trotman from St Peter's is responsible for planning and chairing deanery synod meetings.

Episcopally Led, Synodically Governed

Leadership in the Church of England is ultimately exercised by our Bishops (you will have heard Archbishop Justin refer to this element of his role as like herding cats). Governance is exercised through 'synods', which operate at national, diocesan, and deanery level.

Every PCC gets to elect members to the deanery synod (we can elect up to 4), and members of deanery synod elect lay and clergy members to both Diocesan Synod, and, every five years, to General Synod. It is



at General Synod, through the Houses of Bishops, Clergy and Laity, that the 'big' decisions are made in the Church of England - most recently on Women Bishops, and on the Church's position on climate change.

At a deanery level, we have encouraged our synod in recent years to focus on mission and ministry, to encourage and share knowledge and experience in a group beyond clergy. In 2019 our deanery synod

representatives were Esther Moorey, Anthony Merifield, Richard Winborn and, until his untimely death, Colin Hart.

The last synod meeting looked at social justice projects, with speakers from Foodbank and the Children's Society, and previous meetings have focussed on Prison ministry (Brixton prison is within our deanery), Youth Work and Ministry to Children and Families.

Final Thoughts

I hope this report excites you - and reminds you how much God has done and is doing in and through Christ Church. In a sense it captures only what is going on in and around the church buildings - because our hope is that our ministry equips each and everyone of us to serve God and witness to his love and calling in our 'every day' life. And so acts of ministry take place in our homes, our schools, our workplaces and our streets every moment of every day which, we pray, honour God's calling on our lives and speak of his grace.

Thank you to **everyone** who makes Christ Church the community that it is, for every act of service, and of love, that builds up our common life.

Jonathan

Just as a body, though one, has many parts, but all its many parts form one body, so it is with Christ. For we were all baptised by one Spirit so as to form one body – whether Jews or Gentiles, slave or free – and we were all given the one Spirit to drink. And so the body is not made up of one part but of many.

1 Corinthians 12