

Annual Report 2018



# Christ Church Gipsy Hill



# Annual Report 2018

## Welcome

Welcome to our annual report for 2018.

In these few pages we hope to capture something of the life of our church over the last 12 months, the highs and the lows, the busy times, and the times of quiet prayerfulness. I hope it gives you a sense of the life of this particular family of followers of Christ in this particular place; that it will be an encouragement to all who have been part of it, and a window into our community for those who are looking in.

The year was shaped by the deaths of several committed and faithful disciples of Christ in our fellowship - some after lives of great longevity, and others leaving us with that sense that there was much, much more for them to offer in this life - to their families, in their careers and in their faithful allegiance to the Lord. We have witnessed extraordinary faith and integrity in all those who have died, in the sure and certain hope of the resurrection to eternal life, and have tried faithfully to journey alongside them, and with those closest to them. That journey continues, and reminds us that there are no easy answers, and no pain-less road. But we do believe in one who walks that journey with us and inhabits the place of pain with us. That has been our experience together over these past twelve months.

We have, over the course of the year, also been seeking God's guidance as we plan for the future, and the PCC began the year with an awayday which began to draw out a sense of where God was calling us to focus. By the summer we had developed a clear sense of the areas to focus on and you can read a little more about that later in this report.

As Vicar, I was privileged to enjoy a four-month sabbatical in the middle of the year – a time away which, as well as enabling some travel and rest

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for the Croucher family, has also reminded us as a community of the many, many people who contribute to and sustain our community life in

so many different ways. I am grateful to be serving in a church family that is so open, supportive and committed to faithful discipleship, and we journey the road of faith together.

I hope as you read this report and capture a flavour of the many elements that make up the whole, you will be encouraged by all that has been, and be inspired for all that is yet to come.

Jonathan

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## Worship, Teaching and Leadership

by Sam Whittington, Pippa Evans and Jonathan Croucher

### **Sabbatical**

Although Jonathan was greatly missed during his time away, his sabbatical provided a good opportunity for a number of members of the church to step-up to serve in various new ways. In particular, this would include our team of lay preachers who were called upon to preach more often throughout the summer, our wardens who provided great support to our Curate Sam on a number of issues, and a number of others who helped out in different ways. It was also very encouraging for the church to stage a highly successful summer holiday club while missing the Croucher family, who had played such a key role the year before.

### **Sunday morning services**

Our Sunday worship services have continued in much the same format as previous years. We have welcomed a good number of newcomers to our 10.30am service, including family and friends of members, and those passing through Gipsy Hill for one reason or another. Our aim is to provide a warm welcome to all who come in, to draw people into the presence of God, and through our worship, teaching and communion, to feed, encourage, inspire and disciple all who join with us.

Each term we hold a service of wholeness and healing, which provides space for prayer and anointing with oil at the communion rail during worship. This is always a moving time, with a powerful sense of God at work among us. We also invite one home group each term to lead a service, contributing to all aspects that morning - it's a wonderful way to give a voice to the groups that are such an important element of the life and ministry of the church. Music is an important part of our 10.30am

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service, and we have been joined this year by Jason Beckhelling-Terry, one of the Lambeth XLP team, and his wife Maddie. Jason is taking on responsibility for our music, and we look forward to this area of ministry developing in the coming months.

As always, it's important to acknowledge how many people contribute to our Sunday morning services - Ayon and Ina, our caretaker and cleaner, who keep the building in good order and set the church up for Sunday mornings, our committed wardens and deputy wardens (Cath, Cynthia and Pauline) who open up each week, Patsy and her team who provide beautiful flowers, the stewards, sound team, AV crew, readers, intercessors, service leaders and preachers, and our extraordinary team of leaders and helpers that take care of our crèche, scramblers, climbers, explorers and youth groups week by week. To all of you, and those I have missed, many thanks.

### **Study series on Sunday mornings**

On Sunday mornings, we have completed a number of teaching series', some of which have focused on specific books of the Bible, others have taken a more thematic approach. The first half of the year focused on the Gospel of Matthew, allowing plenty of space to reflect on and learn what this Gospel has to teach us about the life of Jesus. During the summer, we had a short series entitled, "What do we mean by..." which focused on particular words or phrases that we use a lot in church, allowing us to draw out the depth and richness of these words. This was followed by a four-week series on the beautiful Old Testament book of Ruth. The themes of loss, sorrow, faithfulness and redemption found in the book, seemed to resonate deeply with the congregation. Towards the end of the year, we looked at different aspects of friendship, and in particular, how our faith should influence and define the way that we live those friendships out.

As well as hearing from our clergy, the congregation has appreciated hearing from a number of lay preachers, including our Ministry Assistant,

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Pippa, who preached for the first time during the Ruth series. When studying Matthew and Ruth, we also provided our home groups with study material so that they could explore the passages that we were looking at on Sundays in greater depth. As a church, we hope that the Bible will shape and inspire us in all that we do, and that our preaching and study series will make it possible for people to apply their faith to their daily lives.

### **Inspire**

Inspire, our informal church service, has continued to meet on the first Sunday of the month in the narthex at the back of the church. The service offers a period of extended contemporary worship, alongside teaching with an opportunity for discussion. Over the last year, we have finished our series on the parables of Jesus and moved on to a new series on the names of God, exploring three different names used for each being in the Trinity. We have a small but faithful group who attend each month and a team who lead us in worship. Since the beginning of this academic year, we have also been more intentional about inviting our older youth members along and a small group of them attend each time. Sam has played a vital role at Inspire over the last few years and so we must ensure that we are ready to continue this ministry after he leaves us in May.

At the start of 2019, we spent some time working on a strategy paper for youth and 18-40s ministry at Christ Church. This process also involved considering the purpose and aims of Inspire. We should not be surprised if these worked out more cogently in the coming months.

### **Music**

Although we continue to be served by a faithful and gifted team of singers and musicians, our goal for some time has been to develop and strengthen this aspect of our worshipping life together. Towards the end of the year, we were glad to welcome Jason Beckhelling-Terry, who took

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on the role of part-time Music Leader, thus helping to coordinate the team and lead music at our Sunday morning services and Inspire.

### **Technology**

We continue to use the television screens in our main 10:30am service. They display all liturgy, as well as all lyrics in worship. We still offer printed hard-copies of the service order for all in attendance and large-print copies of the music lyrics for those who need them. Pippa continues to make the Open LP service display each week and Helen makes and prints the service sheet.

### **Remembrance Sunday**

As 2018 marked the centenary of the Armistice that ended World War I, we sought to mark the anniversary in an appropriate way at our Remembrance Service. As the church memorial for those lost in the Great War had been destroyed in 1982 when the original church building burnt down, we decided to recreate the memorial for the centenary. With the help of Jerry Green of the Norwood Society, we were able to reproduce a full list of the names of those associated with the church and parish who lost their lives. Together with a photo of the original memorial, and with some poppies stitched by our Creative Artistry group, a simple display was created to help people reflect. We also supported the 'There but Not There' campaign by purchasing two silhouettes to sit in church during the service, as a reminder of all those missing from their communities having lost their life as a result of war. As well as the traditional act of remembrance, the service featured prayers of repentance and reconciliation provided by the Church of England specifically for the centenary and, as a further sign of reconciliation, the Lord's Prayer was said in German as well as English.

### **Christmas Services**

Christingle by Beth Peters

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AMAZING! I think that one word sums up the reaction from leaders, parents and children. It was our most well-attended Christingle service, almost doubling the attendance of last year - with 94 children and 73 adults. The parents were amazed by the number of activities and how well engaged all the kids were. The children seemed to love the event, with the crafts, talk, Christingle service and tea. Making over 125 Christingles was no mean feat but paid off when you saw the look on the faces of those in attendance.

### St Christopher's Carol Service

One of the highlights of Christmas 2018 was our hosting the carol service for the Dulwich Friends of St Christopher's. This has been a longstanding event in the calendars of the hospice and the Dulwich friends, and we were delighted to host as part of our collaboration with the hospice on the Compassionate Neighbours initiative. Using the theme of compassionate neighbours, we drew on the experiences of two individuals - one a compassionate neighbour and the other a community member receiving treatment for cancer who had been partnered with a neighbour. They were moving accounts of how relationships have thrived in this programme. We had wonderful musical input from the Faithworks Gospel Choir (who nearly brought the house down!), and the always wonderful Julia Desbruslais of the London Mozart Players. We also enjoyed, amidst the carols and readings, some beautiful poetry from Joe Duggan, whose poems about his father and brother spoke powerfully into the theme of the evening. A really wonderful Christmas celebration.

### Carol Service

Our Carol Service, held on Sunday 16<sup>th</sup> December at 8pm, proved to be another popular Christmas event. Although the church was not bursting at the seams as it was for Christingle, we had a number of visitors for the evening who came to enjoy a festive service. The evening blended tradition with a modern slant, including a number of well-known carols with a mixture of readings that presented the Christmas story from a different angle - including a reading written from the point of view of a



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very heavily pregnant Mary. The choir also performed a couple of interesting arrangements. There was, as always, mulled wine and mince pies to be enjoyed after the service.

### Nativity by Beth Peters

Our Nativity service on Christmas Eve saw the usual collection of wonderful costumes on display (with the addition of one Peter Rabbit!), as the children and families thoroughly enjoyed dressing up, walking through the nativity story, and eating tea together. This year we had a massive increase of proud grandparents and dads in attendance, adding to our regular group of mums (making 75 children and 106 adults). This really is an amazing event where we see many families (mostly visitors) attend year after year as part of their Christmas tradition. I would like to thank everyone who has helped - I am grateful to you all, without you we could not hold these events.

### Autumn Series

At the start of 2018, the PCC Away Day identified a shared desire for the church to focus on evangelism, coupled with a need to build up people's confidence in talking about their faith. As the Ministry Team reflected on this, it was decided that we would run a series of evenings in November to address this need. The vision of the Autumn Series was to offer an opportunity to receive teaching, reflect on key areas of the Christian faith, before considering how we might approach sharing our faith in the world today.

In order to maximise involvement, we ran the series on Wednesday and Thursday evenings (repeated each week) for five weeks, and encouraged as many to attend as possible, including a particular drive to get home groups along. The sessions looked at Speaking of God, Speaking of the Cross, Speaking of the Kingdom, Speaking of the World, Speaking our Story. The aim was to encourage the congregation to feel more confident about key concepts in the Christian narrative, and as a result be more

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willing to share their faith with others. Each evening included time for worship as well as teaching and discussion, with dessert and drinks served by each home group in turn. The series was well received, and we averaged around twenty-five attendees on Wednesday evenings and thirty-five on Thursdays. This was an encouraging turn-out, as was the willingness of people to engage in thoughtful and challenging conversations.

### **My Curacy** by Sam Whittington

As might be expected, a curacy that has lasted almost four years has brought more than its fair share of encouragements and joys, as well as challenges and frustrations. It is very difficult to imagine a better place to have served as a curate: I am deeply grateful to have had Jonathan as my training incumbent, and I have often been encouraged by the faithful ministry of many at Christ Church and the support that I have received during my time here. My highlights would have to include helping with two Foundations courses, the Bible in a Year project, other events during the 150th Anniversary, working with our singers and musicians on Sunday mornings and at Inspire, and getting to join in outreach work at Open Door and Foodbank.

As a curate, you often find yourself in situations where you are being stretched and challenged, and faith in God needs to be exercised. I have often needed to remind myself that it is much better to have a life where that kind of trust in God is required, rather than live in a way where the need for God is not so apparent. In my time here, I have definitely seen some remarkable examples of faith shown by members of the congregation, as well as examples of on-going faithfulness in ministry. As I prepare to leave, my encouragement to the church would be to seek to be a place of active faith, where trust in God is required, even when it does not feel particularly comfortable.

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There are a few areas where I could have achieved more or brought more encouragement to the church, but I have greatly enjoyed my time here and am very thankful for my curacy. That would be true even before having the opportunity to meet my fiancée Nathalie, who I got to know at Christ Church. And so taking into account this season of personal joy that my final year of curacy has brought, means that I will always be very grateful to God for bringing me to Gipsy Hill, and will deeply treasure the four years that I spent here.

### **Children and Youth Ministry**

**Children's Ministry** – Sunday Morning by Esther Moorey

Our children and young people are vital to the life of our church. We want them to grow in their own faith and explore what being a follower of Jesus looks like, in fun and engaging ways. Recent research, commissioned by the House of Bishops, found that over 70% of people who come to faith do so before the age of 18, so our provision for our kids and youth really matters.

In both Creche and Scramblers, our pre-schoolers have fun through play, craft and music as they learn stories from the Bible – recently focussing on the parables of Jesus. Upstairs our primary school aged groups, Climbers and Explorers, go a bit deeper, thinking about what they can learn from the Bible and how this can help them in their daily lives. They also have a lot of fun with games and challenges – the messier the better.

Altogether we have about forty children under the age of 11 who attend regularly. We have a large team of twenty-seven volunteer leaders who each teach or help once a month. This year has seen some leaders stand down and new leaders and helpers recruited. Without their time and dedication, we would not be able to offer such a rich and relevant experience to our kids – so we are very thankful for them.

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### Raise the Praise by Jonathan Croucher

It's fair to say that now I have hit 50 I ought to find someone younger and more agile to lead Raise the Praise, but since Juliet is still leading the craft sessions at 80, I feel like I can permit myself a little longer at the Raise the Praise wheel. Each month, on the second Sunday, we meet at 5pm and have half an hour of fun - sharing news, hearing Bible stories, jumping around, singing action songs, and praying together. All of it is intended to help us learn more about God. We then do some craft together, making something which reminds us of what we have learned, and finally, but very importantly, we have a fab party tea. What's not to like?! You just have to be 8 or under. Or 50 if you are the Vicar...

### Shine by Becky Read

Shine is our relatively new monthly event for our 8-11 year olds, which takes place at the same time as Raise the Praise. There is a time for games, Bible stories and discussion. We have had a really great crowd of the older children as part of the Shine crew this year, and we have been discussing some of the parables of Jesus. And of course, afterwards we join the younger group for a delicious tea.

### Light Night by Beth Peters

In 2018 we had our best attended Light Night Party, with over 42 children and 30 adults. The evening included a mixture of crafts and games, all linked to light in some way, and no-one will ever forget the longest game of pass-the-parcel ever seen! We then sang some songs and listened to a talk all about how Jesus is the light in our lives. The evening ended with a gift bag and a booklet to take home, to remind the children to be a light in their community.

### **Holiday Club** by Pippa Evans

Holiday Club 2018 was a great success. For three mornings in mid-July we ran Mission Rescue for about 45 children, focussing on biblical stories with rescue as the theme (Moses and the parting of the Red Sea, David

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and Goliath, Jesus calming the storm). As in previous years, we had three groups split by age; 4-5 year olds led by Helen Williams, 6-8 year olds led by Esther Moorey, and 9-11 year olds led by Beth Peters. The club offered the children the chance to jump on a bouncy castle, do sports outside, complete arts and crafts, as well as enjoy singing, dancing, workouts and messy games in the Main Stage slot. We had about thirty helpers from Christ Church who all worked tirelessly to help run this event and we heard from a huge number of parents, thanking us for running an event that their children enjoyed so much.

### **Youth Group** - by Pippa Evans

All youth stay in church for the entirety of the service on the first Sunday of the month. Our leaders and speakers will try to keep this in mind as they prepare the service. In these services we often have the youth lead readings or prayers, and occasionally they help to actually lead the congregation through the service. They are also in the service on the fifth Sunday of the month (if there is one) as this is an All Age Service. The 11-14 age group meet on the 2nd, 3rd, and 4th Sunday of the month in the Blue Room, except in half-term or end of term holidays. The 15+ age group will meet in the Vicarage on the 2nd and 4th Sunday of the month. In these sessions the youth group generally follow and study what the congregation is studying.

There is a small but committed team of leaders who lead these sessions, using material that has been found and edited slightly from the Energize (Urban Saints) website. Often the Sunday meeting involves games or thought experiments, then Bible study and a short period of prayer at the end.

### **Legacy**

Legacy, our Friday fortnightly youth group, meets upstairs in the Goodliffe Hall from 7-9pm, except in half-term or end of term holidays. Legacy is generally aimed at our younger youth members (aged 11-14)

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though some of the older boys do still attend and seem to enjoy it. We devise an activity for the session to revolve around each fortnight and then let the youth know in advance via WhatsApp. They can also expect the tuck shop and to play games each time. Our XLP interns in 2018-2019, Grace and then Becky, have regularly led at Legacy alongside another adult.

### Breakaway

Breakaway is our youth meeting for those 15+ that launched in 2018. It has become a much more regular fixture in the calendar and attendance has also been more consistent. Breakaway meets after Inspire from 8-9pm on the first Sunday of the month. The timing choice intended to encourage the youth members to attend Inspire before Breakaway, which some of them do. We generally have a small group attend – roughly five or six, and mostly boys. We have been meeting at Ben and Reesa Wolf's house – a fun and relaxed venue not too far from church. They have generously lit a fire pit each month through winter so that we can toast sausages or marshmallows. Like Legacy, Breakaway is focussed on being a social event and so a fun activity or game, usually around food, is the focus of the evening.

### Ignite

Ignite was launched through the youth programme at St Thomas with St Stephen's in Balham. It began a few years ago but continues to run on a termly basis. Ignite is a youth service, aimed at 10-18 year olds, that includes music, activities (e.g. football or crafts), a talk, and café style hangout. We aim to take our youth group to Ignite each term, though this partly depends on interest and availability on the particular day.

### Hot Chocolates and Coffee Shops

Starting in the autumn of 2018, Pippa and Becky slowly began to take smaller groups within our youth group out for hot chocolate. The thought process behind this, was really to give our youth group an opportunity to

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get to know each other and the leaders better, whilst doing something fun outside of church. Initially there was a focus on trying to offer something for the older girls in our youth group: it was felt that there were already a few things that catered (or at least appealed) to the older boys, but that our older girls didn't seem to want to attend. Positive feedback confirmed that this was a way for our older teenage girls to spend some time together in a church context. After a few successful trips out, we also began to offer this for the younger girls in our youth group, who also seemed to really enjoy the experience. The aim currently, is to try to offer this once a month for each age group.

### **Football**

In February 2018 we launched a ministry to regularly play football. We realised that we had a number of older youths who would really enjoy this sort of church activity and so began to rent a pitch at the Crystal Palace Sports Centre. At first we played once a month, though it became apparent that everyone would be able to meet more regularly and so in September 2018, we shifted to playing every fortnight. We have consistently had five of our older youth members along, plus another three to six adults on average – both men and women. Our most well attended game was on the morning of Christmas Eve, where we had fourteen players for two hours. Although on occasion we have to cancel due to a lack of player availability, this has generally been a really well received church activity, particularly among our youth group. The players also aim to cover the cost of each game, with those in full time education paying £2.50 each time and adults paying £5. The church gave us an £100 kitty back in February 2018 to launch this properly, and we do often have to dip in to the kitty to cover the cost of the pitch. It is expected that the kitty may be empty by the end of March 2019.

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## **Church Community and Support**

### **Home groups** by Rhos and 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, and three day-time home groups, meeting on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Fridays. Some home groups meet fortnightly, while others meet three weeks out of four each month. The Tuesday and Friday daytime groups meet 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 (since January 2019; previously this group was led by Liz Maytom and Jodie Lomax), Dave Scroby, Anthony and Pam Merifield, Pete and Esther Moorey, Ali and Rob Seal, Pippa Evans, Yvette Croucher,



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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** by Rhos and 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.

### **Prayer Ministry** by Pippa Evans

Prayer continues to play a central role in the life of the church. As well as before and during the weekly services, in homegroups, before and during meetings, in youth events, we also make space to meet and pray more formally. Twice weekly (on Tuesday and Thursday), we run morning

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prayer, following the liturgy of Common Worship in the Church of England. Tuesday mornings, with its slightly later start and lead into Open Door, are generally more well attended than Thursday mornings.

We also continue to run a monthly prayer meeting on the first Wednesday of the month. This is held in church and is open to all to attend. We often have one person leading, with a particularly relevant theme or focus as we spend time in prayer together.

### **Regular Ministries**

#### **20-30s** by Pippa Evans

Each term, we arrange a series of social events for those in our congregation in their 20-30s. We aim for these to be a varied mixture of pastime, including more physical activities like walks in the countryside or trampolining, having food together, going to the cinema or watching films. Additionally, we aim for these events to cater to a variety of budgets and interests. We regularly have ten or so young adults attend, and they give a great opportunity to get to know enough better. Just some of the recent socials include: a film night, trip to the outdoor cinema, a games evening at the pub, country walk, brunch, Burns Night supper, wine and cheese evening.

#### **Playpen** by Helen Williams

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Playpen is our church-run 'Stay and Play' baby and toddler group for 0-4 year olds and their parents or carers. We see between 30-50 toddlers come through the doors every Wednesday and Thursday morning during term-time. Helen Williams has been managing Playpen for about 8 years, along with a great team of volunteers from the local community.

We are a friendly playgroup and a great place for adults living in the community to meet old friends or make new ones, 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, particularly 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.

In December 2018 we put on two Christmas parties and Helen managed to rope in more of the volunteers to wear fancy dress! Stuart Mitchenall kindly agreed to sit in the hall lobby (Santa's grotto) for both mornings and put on another super performance. A massive thank you goes to our regular volunteers; Christine Woolard, Sharon Robinson, Sue Chalcraft, Tracy Fuery and Jon Caddell (and our little playgroup mascot – Leah), Sarah Milner, Tim Eveleigh (more commonly known as guitar man at Playpen) and Beth Peters. Playpen really wouldn't be the playgroup that it is without them. And lastly to Ayon for coming to set up the slide, tables, large equipment and toys on a Wednesday morning, and returning on a Thursday to put them all away again!

### **Creative Artistry** by Juliet Bain

Since the last APCM we have been involved with numerous projects. In the summer term we made things for the Crouchers to take to Tanzania – baby blankets, jumpers, dresses for small children, and Bible finger puppets. In the autumn term we concentrated on poppy making. As it

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was the special WWI anniversary in November 2018, we knitted poppies to sell, and made big ones for a special display on November 11 in church. After this, we made things for the craft stall at the Advent Fair – Christmas decorations, toys, hats, paperweights, lavender bags and anything else people could think of. At Christmas time the Nativity service was such a success at attracting children that we ran out of nativity clothes for them to wear, so the next project was making nativity clothes – crowns and cloaks for wise men, shepherd costumes and angel costumes for next year.

We meet on the last Monday of most months at 7:30pm in the Vicarage, and after a chat over some tea, we make things until 9pm. All are welcome, you don't have to be skilled as there are a variety of jobs to do.

### **Mothers' Union** by Jodie Lomax

Sometimes, one can think 'What have we done over the past year?' for we only carried out the traditional three Mothers' Union events – Wreath Making, Prayers by Candlelight (for our children and young people), and having involvement with the Mothering Sunday service (providing flowers and posies, and a fundraising bake sale on the day). But we also added a biblical message of hope and love on mounted recycled Christmas cards (gratefully received from Juliet Bain), which were put into Foodbank parcels at Christmas. Together with members from the All Saints MU, we once again celebrated the 'Wave of Prayer' in September at the All Saints Lady Chapel, after which we enjoyed a meal together.

All five Christ Church MU members are deeply involved in the life of our church in other ways - whether as a Sunday school teacher, as a member of the Prayer Team, in offering baptism support, as intercessors and readers, in helping with the holiday club, co-leading a home group, as a Compassionate Neighbour, undertaking important paperwork for the Foodbank, organizing meals for members of the congregation, providing

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meals for the homeless through The Robes Project over the Christmas period, and helping with the Magnolia Club.

This year, we were delighted to welcome Trena Dickinson as a new Mothers' Union member. We hope that our membership will grow in the coming year and welcome all who may wish to join us in service to our Lord – taking seriously His bidding and the line from our founder's, (Mary Sumner) personal prayer, "All this day O Lord, let me touch as many lives as possible for thee .....whether through the word I speak, the prayer I breathe, or the life I live."

### **Churches Together in Crystal Palace** by Jonathan Croucher

Churches Together in Crystal Palace (CTCP) continues to be an active group, drawing people from 18 churches based around Crystal Palace. Each month, a group of 20 or so members meet for ecumenical prayers at the Methodist Church (first Wednesday at 10.30am). These prayers are led in turn by ministers from the different churches, as well as by guest speakers from charities that CTCP support. The Act of Witness outside Sainsbury's on Good Friday is a key date in the Churches Together calendar, and again this year we saw over 100 people gather for this time of reflection and worship in the public square, led by the band of the Salvation Army. The Salvation Army hosted the CTCP Songs of Praise in the summer which was also a great success – wonderfully narrated by the Salvation Army team and led not only by the band but the 'timbrels'. Long live the tambourine! Jonathan our Vicar, continues to be the coordinating minister, drawing together a very diverse group of churches from across the Orthodox, Roman Catholic, Protestant and Pentecostal traditions. We look forward to the first ever CTCP Day of Prayer at Spurgeon's College in March 2019.

### **Lunham Road Daycare Centre** by Jonathan Croucher

2018 was a year of change at Lunham Road daycare centre, the Council-run centre around the corner from church. After a lot of staff changes,

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and the closure of the only other centre of its kind in Lambeth, Lunham Road became focussed on those with more advanced dementia. As such, some of our longstanding friends who were not affected by dementia had to find other provision, and we were joined by a cohort from Clapham, many of whom were less able to participate actively in worship. It has, however, been a wonderful time of learning for the team who visit, and incredibly humbling as we see how old hymns and liturgy can deeply touch those who struggle to communicate verbally otherwise. We visit twice a month, singing three or four old hymns with a short Bible reading and talk, and then we share communion together. The staff team at the centre are incredible, and passionate about ensuring that there is an act of worship - many of the individuals have spent a lifetime attending church but are now unable to get to their local churches. Many thanks to the team who have supported Sam and me this year. It is a real blessing to minister together in this place.

### Events

#### **Come Dine with Me** by Yvette Croucher

Something that we have been running over the past four years or more, is our whole church family 'Come Dine with Me' event. Members of the congregation sign up to be a host or a guest, and all the dinner parties take place on the same night (at approximately the same time), beginning with the same prayer and welcome. We had about sixty adults involved in the event in June 2018, and with careful coordination behind the scenes, many people were entertained by hosts and dined alongside

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church members that they may not have managed to spend much time with previously. It was a great opportunity to meet new people or get to know others better, and to enjoy great food and fellowship together. The feedback was overwhelmingly positive as always, and absent any score cards or ratings to embarrass the hosts (or guests!), the event is likely to be a feature in the church calendar again for 2019!

### **Evening with Health and Hope** by Janet Boyce

On a warm June evening, over fifty people gathered at Christ Church to hear from Dr Sasa about the work of Health and Hope, a Myanmar charity working in western Chin State on the border with India. The evening got off to a great start with amazing curries provided by Nathalie Coppin and Tim Boyce.

Dr Sasa first told us something of his own incredible story. Born and brought up in this remote region of Myanmar, where monsoon rains mean that the area is cut off from the rest of the country for six months of the year, where only 2% of children pass their school exams at age 16, where getting sick can mean a trek of six days to see a doctor and where subsistence farming and lack of food are a daily reality, Dr Sasa was used to personal challenges and hardship. However, despite all this, we heard how he had managed to gain an education in India, and then in Armenia, where he qualified as a medical doctor. We also heard how God had provided for him and his people through many years of hardship and war.

We also heard how Health and Hope Myanmar was formed in 2008 as a direct response to a wide scale famine in Chin State. By God's amazing provision, and through connections that Dr Sasa had made with Baroness Caroline Cox when he was in Armenia, Dr Sasa was able to arrange for food to be brought into Chin state over the India border. This critical intervention led to thousands of lives being saved and the birth of the charity that continues to save lives now - by training community health workers and traditional birth attendants, educating farmers in different

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techniques and in planting different crops, and by financing the education of gifted local children so that they can serve their community in the future. We heard that since the charity started, nearly nine hundred people have been trained in basic preventative healthcare - information that they pass on to their villages; that one hundred and fifty women have been trained to be more effective when attending women in labour; fifteen young people are training as, or have completed their training as doctors, and another 60 completing other degrees.

In writing this I confess to having some self interest in the charity's promotion as I have the dubious pleasure of being 'madam chair' of Health and Hope UK. However, being part of the support network for Dr Sasa and his team has taught me so much about God's faithfulness and his love for all people. One of the things that I find so amazing is that this group of people, living at 8,000 feet above sea level in the jungles of Myanmar, heard about Jesus and turned to him because in 1906 a man and his wife took the risk to travel from Penge, south London, to a head hunting tribe in what was then called, 'farthest India', to take them the Gospel. This gives me great hope that God's Will will be done, the only question is will we be part of it?

### **Summer Events** by Pippa Evans

Every year we host a number of summer garden parties, run by different home groups. These are set up at the front of the church so as to appeal to people as they make their way up Gipsy Hill. We often have a flower or plant stand and cake stall, offering different ways for members of the public to stop for a conversation. We had two garden parties in the summer of 2018 which led to a few conversations with passers-by, but there was agreed to be a re-evaluation in 2019 of what the aim of these garden parties is and whether we need to re-shape them in any way.

We also had our annual BBQ, held in July during the heatwave, in the church garden. A great team ran the show, with Elizabeth Maytom and



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Glenys Lawrence catering, and Jerry Peters and Jon Maytom running the BBQ. Many members of the congregation also contributed to the feast. We had a great turn out, with people enjoying the good food and super weather.

### **Lambeth Country Show** by Ali Seal

In July, for the second year in a row, we partnered with other Anglican churches from the two Lambeth Deaneries to be a visible sign of the Church of England at the Lambeth Country Show. We expanded our provision to include the 'Taste and See Cafe', which was run by Foodbank volunteers on Saturday and the West Norwood L'Arche community on Sunday. The cafe was very popular, with delicious cakes and cold water on a very hot weekend! It was a great opportunity to share the word and raise money for these wonderful community initiatives, which many local churches support. Helpers offered prayer, hand massage, free bags (with the 'God  Lambeth' logo), New Testaments and information on how to pray. We had communion both days and had other events such as Messy Church and Ginger Beer and Hymns. Members of Christ Church were part of the outreach team at the stall and helped with the organisation. It was an exciting way to work with other churches in our area and reach out to the local community. If you would like to be involved with the plans for the 2019 church involvement at the Lambeth Show do talk to Jonathan!

### **Tearfund Big Quiz** by Pippa Evans

On Saturday 17 November, Christ Church joined with over five hundred other churches and 22,495 other people around the UK, to host a Tearfund Big Quiz Night. Nearly £146,000 was raised across the UK for the work of Tearfund, as this event aimed to be the biggest simultaneous quiz night ever. We had around forty-five people attend that evening, with eight teams competing for the title. Jonathan Croucher acted as quiz master, and guests enjoyed drinks and pudding during the course of the evening.

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### **Advent Fair** by Yvette Croucher

Having briefly broken from the annual Advent Fair tradition over the past two years, and responding to popular request, we ran our fair for Advent on 1 December, welcoming our church family as well as friends, neighbours and residents from the local community. We served teas, coffees and cakes to visitors looking to keep warm, as they browsed the usual array of homemade crafts (donated by our Creative Artistry Group), vintage and pre-loved jewellery, toys and games, and bric-a-brac, on our plentiful stalls. The tombola was a big hit, as ever, particularly amongst our younger people, although several church regulars fought it out to try and win the bottle of port designed to attract attention from a more diverse crowd! Face-painting, freshly made popcorn and the delicious cake stall guaranteed a pleasant afternoon for all. We managed to raise around £1,400 towards the church general funds, so we dismantled the narthex and rearranged the church space afterwards with a warm glow in our hearts and a strong sense of unity, having drawn on so many talents and volunteers to get the event organised and off the ground. What a great team!

### **Social Media and Advertising** by Pippa Evans and Becky Read

The website is maintained mainly by Rob Seal and Matthew McGregor, and occasionally Pippa, and remains a modern and appealing site. We aim not to post information to the website that needs to be constantly updated and avoid any private congregational information. It has been helpful for advertising events where we do want members of the public to attend, like the Advent Fair, and the online calendar is updated accordingly each week. There have, in recent months, been conversations about the strategy that we have in place for our social media presence, including the website, and so it may well be that in the coming months a more streamlined approach is adopted.

Recently, Becky Read, our XLP intern, has been tasked with updating the Facebook page. The agreed aim of this page is for the church to have a

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presence on social media reaching beyond our congregation. There have been a variety of different postings over the last few weeks, ranging from what's happening this Sunday to announcing the holiday club. Becky is still identifying how best to use this platform to promote the church and its events.

### **Church Building and Hire**

**Church Building** by Jonathan Croucher

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Although there has been less visible work done this year, we have actually continued to invest heavily in our buildings to ensure that they remain fit for purpose and secure for the long-term future. Repairs were carried out on the roof over the vestry, replacing some very rotten timber frames along in the external windows. Work has also continued at Berridge Road as we catch up with some important long-term upgrades - rotten roof fascias around the building were replaced with uPVC, guttering was repaired and many broken roof tiles, which had been the cause of various small leaks were replaced. We have been upgrading the toilet facilities and improving the garden space to ensure that the nursery, and other users, have safe and attractive surroundings. In all this, we aim to be good stewards of our premises both for our current ministries and for the future. You can find more detail in the property committee's report in the statutory section of the report!

### **Church Hall** by Helen Williams

The hall and Narthex continue to be used regularly by various groups including Slimming World, Crystal Palace Community Choir, Zumba, language lessons for children, and most regularly by Team Dance who are now using the hall five days of the week (offering dance classes in tap, ballet, jazz, street dance and more, for both adults and children). Christ Victory Church also continue to meet at Christ Church on a Sunday, as well as for prayer meetings and counselling a few times during the week. All of these groups bring in a good source of income.

In addition to our regular bookings, we also 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 Hub 'Magnolia Club', Compassionate Neighbours Training, and Brownies.

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### **Brownies** by Chris Woolley

The Brownies had a very full year, with the usual craft, games and badges attainment. We enjoyed a trip to Drusillas in June, and in October five Brownies and Brown Owl joined a county organized trip to Paris. We spent a day touring Paris, including climbing the Eiffel Tower and a boat trip on the river, and the second day was spent at Disneyland.

In September Girlguiding launched an exciting new programme, with different badges and activities. The baking badge has been very popular, and so have the bakes the girls have brought in for the pack to taste!

The year finished with the district Christingle service in early December and a performance of the 'Time Travellers' Christmas play for parents, in which two children go back in time to Bethlehem and find out about the first Christmas.

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### **Community and Social Action**

#### **Open Door** by Cath Mitchenall

Our weekly community drop in continues to offer a friendly place to meet, with tea, coffee and home cakes served during the morning and a hot, nutritious meal at lunch time. During the afternoon, Janet Boyce is available to give advice and support on financial matters, including benefit claims and appeals, housing and various other areas of need. We feed around twenty-five to thirty people each week, though numbers fluctuate so there are sometimes more or less than that. As in previous years, our Christmas meal proved to be very popular.

Last July we were sad to say 'goodbye' to Sepi Black who was our cook for several years, but delighted to recruit Danielle Montrose-Francis to our team. Danielle now cooks delicious meals each week, which are enjoyed by all our guests.

We are very grateful to our team of volunteers who give their time to bake cakes and biscuits, help serve drinks, clear away after lunch and chat to all who come. We would welcome any members of the congregation who would like to join us, whether to help or just to come and enjoy good food and company.

#### **Foodbank** by Elizabeth Maytom

Foodbank has had another busy year, supporting in excess of 9,000 people, rising by over 700 people. We gave out 68,885kg of food, and for the first time, had a very similar amount of food donated – 68,998kg. This ensured that we fed everyone but it could prove a challenging in the coming year.

Universal Credit is now fully operational in Lambeth. Delays in benefits being received coupled with people often receiving smaller amounts than previously, has made budgeting a real battle.

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We have received a grant to fund our advice workers, ensuring that for the next three years, we will have one-to-one support on offer - a vital link for nearly everyone we see. Towards the end of 2018, we introduced an adviser supporting those on low income with money management tools, helping people to manage on daily basis.

As we move in 2019, we hope to move into a much larger warehouse space which will be shared by a number of local South London foodbanks and will enable us to better manage our stock, accept some of the larger donations offered, and cope better in busier periods. We will continue to build on the service that we offer, ensuring that we provide a safe and high-quality support to those in crisis.

We thank the congregation at Christ Church, many of whom helped throughout the year and large numbers who joined us at Christmas, as well as those who constantly remember us in prayer and through donations.

### **XLP** by Becky Read

I started my year with XLP and Christ Church Gipsy Hill in September 2018. XLP is a youth charity, aiming to create positive futures for young people growing up on deprived inner-city estates, struggling daily with issues.

It's been an exciting year for XLP in Lambeth. With the starting of both a new Senior Youth Worker and Bus Manager it has also been a time of settling in, learning, and change. My work at XLP in Lambeth has included running mentoring and lunch clubs at St Martins in the Field school, working on the XLP Tulse Hill bus project, and delivering English and numeracy support in Evelyn Grace school. I have been doing this alongside being involved in the youth work and various other tasks here at Christ Church.

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## St Christopher's Hospice and Compassionate Neighbours by Steph Turner



Compassionate Neighbours has grown, with 88 Compassionate Neighbours trained since the launch in October 2017. We've now matched 45 people to others living with life-limiting illness, including dementia, and those caring for them, to build

genuine friendships and social and emotional support through weekly visits. Wonderful stories are emerging of strong connections.

In the words of Christ Church congregation member and Compassionate Neighbour, Ivy: "Being a Compassionate Neighbour gives me the opportunity to meet new friends, attend meetings, discuss difficulties or any problems, enjoy coffee and sometimes lunch. More importantly I gain the priceless satisfaction in adding a little happiness to meet the basic need of another person. I learnt a rhyme when I was little which I think is applicable to Compassionate Neighbours: 'Time to be happy is now; Place to be happy is here; The way to be happy is to make others happy and we will have a Heaven down here.'" Anna, who has been connected to Compassionate Neighbour, Judy, for over a year, says, "I think that Compassionate Neighbours is a very good idea. If someone is scared or not well enough to go out, it's good for them to talk about their problems. They might have hearing problems, speaking problems or



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other health problems and might be worried about sharing their problems or talking about their illness. Things can look like they are impossible, but when you share your problems it really helps.”

If you know anyone who would make a great Compassionate Neighbour, if you'd like to join our growing network, or if you know of someone who might like to be connected with a Compassionate Neighbour, please contact Steph Turner, Compassionate Neighbours Project Lead on [CN@stchristophers.org.uk](mailto:CN@stchristophers.org.uk) or call 0208 768 4619.

St Christopher's Hospice is humbled by the incredible contributions made by all at Christ Church towards Compassionate Neighbours and wider work of the hospice. A huge thank you for everything you do.



### Hope for Home

The Hope for Home objectives in 2018/2019 are: to increase the awareness of people living with dementia in our communities, to improve their well-being and promote living well, and to offer help and support to those with dementia and their carers.

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We have set up a group for people living with dementia called Magnolia Club. This is a weekly drop-in and it provides a safe and welcoming environment for carers and people living with dementia, through conversation, activities and advice.

Recently, we have looked at ways to expand the group. This has led to connecting with local care homes and listing our group on councils' dictionaries.

We have also extended the group to include older individuals, whilst still sticking to the key principal of the group, to make it accessible for those with dementia. To build connections for the Hope for Home service, we work with St Christopher's Hospice to promote Compassionate Neighbour's through talks at churches and other groups. We have also promoted Compassionate Neighbours on volunteer sites and have gained over 10 volunteers.



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We are also working on projects to connect Magnolia Club with local schools and nurseries, as a way to promote compassion and community!

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## Mission by 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 the relevant members of the group update the congregation about the organisation regularly during the year, providing matters for prayer and notifying the church of any urgent needs or developments in the projects.

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 is 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.
- 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.

We focus on these organisations in the Sunday morning services with short updates from those who are responsible for liaising with each project. Information is also posted on the missions' notice board and every four months the Wednesday prayer meeting focuses primarily on our mission organisations.

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Locally, we continue to support Spinnaker and will continue (without regular financial support) our excellent relationships with the Norwood and Brixton Foodbank. Indeed, our Christmas collection in 2018 was donated to Foodbank. Our Harvest donations of food and toiletries was donated to the Spires Centre for homeless and disadvantaged people. 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.

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## News

### Ordinations

The process of ordination into the Church of England is often shrouded in mystery - with the frequent question: how come people get ordained twice? The answer lies in the three orders of ordination that are observed in the Church of England - deacons, priests (or presbyter as the real protestants would prefer to call it) and bishops.

After completing ordination training, and subject to the final sign off by the Bishop of the diocese an individual is ordained as a deacon. Rather like the original deacons appointed in the book of Acts, a deacon's primary (and lifelong) responsibility is to serve the church. Very occasionally, someone is ordained with the intention of remaining a deacon for life - but the vast majority of people expect to be ordained as a priest one year later. Only as a priest can certain formal roles be carried out - notably presiding at Holy Communion.

So it was that in 2018 we were able to celebrate again with Heather Peters, who after being ordained deacon in 2017, leaving Christ Church to serve as curate at St Paul's Brixton, was ordained priest in the Summer of 2018. This coincided with her Vicar, Ben, leaving Brixton for Herne Hill and Heather went with him to share in ministry there.

In a rather lovely coincidence of Christ Church provision for the wider church, St Paul's Brixton is the parish where Sam will leave to serve as Vicar in June 2019.

**In Memoriam** by Jonathan Croucher  
Eric Hamilton

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Eric Hamilton was one of Christ Church's most longstanding members. He was 'Vicar's Warden' for over 20 years, and in that and other roles over his 60 years as a member here, he made a huge contribution to the life of the church. His reflections on the life of Christ Church for the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebrations in 2017 included personal memories of six incumbents, and many more curates. Each of the previous incumbents who provided their own reflections for the anniversary mentioned Eric by name as someone who provided wisdom, support, and encouragement. He and his wife Clare supported many mission initiatives and delighted in opening their home to the church for garden parties, men's groups and the occasional swim in the lovely outdoor pool. He was a man of immense faith, who had led a life of very high achievement, not least in the medical profession where he was a consultant at King's hospital for many years, and to which he contributed specialist advice for many years after his retirement. His death in February felt very much like the end of an era for our church.

### Iris Hutchings

Iris was another Christ Church legend. She was a committed member at Christ Church for over 50 years, bringing her son Norman up as a choir boy, and being involved in different elements of the life of the church at different times. She was best known to many at church for faithfully looking after our flower displays, in the old church as in the new for 30 years and more. Iris lived to celebrate her 90<sup>th</sup> birthday with a wonderful crowd of current and former friends from church and her steadfastness, her ability to laugh in the face of adversity, and her extraordinary resilience at the end, have made a deep impression on all who knew her. In common with many others of her generation, she never wanted a fuss, but was equally willing to speak up when she felt she needed to. Her sense of humour, and wonderful recollections, were captured for posterity in the video made

### Maude Sutherland

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Maude was in fact older than Eric and Iris but had spent much of her church life at St Margaret's, the church on the other side of Central Hill that was closed in the 1990s, after which Maude joined Christ Church. There was a constancy and faithfulness in Maude that was reflected in the story of her life - her long term residence in and around Gipsy Hill (either on, just at the bottom, or just over the top) and her working life, spending 35 years with the Post Office, or her extraordinary correspondence with the pen friend in America which has continued since the age of 12. That constancy and faithfulness was reflected in her life of faith, even in her earliest days. A book by her namesake Maude Forsey, 'Mollie Hazeldene's Schooldays', was awarded in 1932 to Maude with the citation: 'To Maude for excellent conduct and success in scripture.' She was a private person, but one with incredible strength of character and perseverance, and of deep and committed faith in Christ. This was reflected throughout her life, and not least in her final years when, as she would say, her body began to fail her. She would never complain and continued to commute regularly to stay with her sister in Torquay, where she was equally well loved in her sister's home congregation.

### Henry Evans

Henry and Pippa joined Christ Church in 2014, part of a gentle wave of young people who began to worship with us over that time. He was noticeable immediately on account of his great height – but as he and Pippa became part of our fellowship, was more notable for his faith, his humble wisdom, and his extraordinary musical capability. He helped us get Inspire off the ground in 2015 and, though he was keen never to push himself to the front, was an awesome guitarist and singer, making him an extraordinarily capable and impactful worship leader. In 2017, as Pippa joined the staff team as Ministry assistant, Henry learned that the cancer he had received treatment for in the past, had returned. It was an aggressive disease that did not respond to treatment, and his death in April 2018 came as a huge blow. His deep faith in Christ was an incredible



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witness to all who knew him, even as he coped in his final months with the painful impact of his illness. His funeral spoke to the love that he was held in by so many dear friends and of course most of all by Pippa and Henry's parents, sister and brother. He will not be forgotten.

### Angela Venters

Angela, Will and Hannah Venters joined us at Christ Church in 2013. Hannah, then five, was the most vocal of the family, with her bubbling confidence in church, but Angela and Will quickly connected with Christ Church and particularly with other young families. Angela was then, and had been for some time, living with a secondary cancer diagnosis with a high level of uncertainty about whether treatment would be successful. She was a highly talented scientist, then working with the Department for the Environment with a particular focus on the European Approach to climate change policy. Faced with the possibility of Brexit after the referendum, Angela was responsible for writing the government's policy on climate change post-Brexit. For several years, Angela's oncologist marvelled at how well she had responded to the treatment she was receiving, though we can never underestimate how she kept strong despite the pain and discomfort that the illness still caused. Facing up to the likelihood of death meant Will and Angela made the most of every month - travelling with Hannah as much as possible and building up a store of memories for Hannah to keep of her mother. She was a remarkable woman - as a daughter, wife, mother, scientist and public servant.

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## **Safeguarding** by Helen Williams

As a church in Southwark Diocese we follow the Diocesan policies, which can be found in the manual '**A Safe Church**', which includes all procedures and guidelines for safeguarding children, safeguarding adults who may be vulnerable, and responding to domestic abuse.

Significant amendments have been made in 2018 in line with a number of new and revised policies from the House of Bishops and the National Safeguarding Team and to reflect changes in wider safeguarding procedure and legislation. The PCC approved the new documents 'Safeguarding Policy Promoting a Safer Church' and 'Policy for Responding to Domestic Abuse' at their meeting in January 2019.

We held a Safeguarding meeting earlier this year with those leading various groups within Christ Church, to ensure that we were all aware of the latest procedures and legislation, and to discuss any areas where we could improve and run a 'safer church'. Following this meeting, we reviewed and updated risk assessments for many church activities, and asked home group leaders to carry out risk assessments of their homes. We also installed new First Aid kits which are sealed, to ensure that we always have fully stocked kits available. We have also installed easy access plaster dispensers, to avoid the full kits being opened other than for a more serious emergency.

The church requires all those working with children and/or vulnerable adults to complete a DBS check. In recent years the procedure to carry

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out these checks has become more reliable, simpler and faster, having moved to an online system. Workers and volunteers need to complete an online application form, and then show various forms of identification to one of the Safeguarding Officers, both of whom have attended various courses in Safeguarding, and are trained in carrying out these checks in accordance with the guidelines. Currently we have 56 people who work in different fields who have a cleared DBS. We also have 17 volunteers needing a DBS check; 5 of those are checks that are due for renewal; 3 of those have completed the form but need to bring ID for us to check, and 9 of those need to start the application process by completing the online form.

We have a Safeguarding display at the back of church, which has various information – do take a look!

If you have any Safeguarding concerns please speak to Parish Safeguarding Officers Ali Seal or Helen Williams or our vicar, Jonathan Croucher.

The Diocesan Safeguarding Advisor - Kate Singleton, can be contacted as follows:

Kate Singleton  
Diocese of Southwark  
Trinity House  
4 Chapel Court  
London  
SE1 1HW  
020 7939 9423

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## **Deanery Synod Report** – Esther Moorey

The word synod originates from the word from Greek sunodos ‘meeting’, from sun - ‘together’ and hodos ‘way’. A group of people journeying together, finding a way through situations.

Our parish of Gipsy Hill is in Lambeth South Deanery, a cluster of parishes covering parts of Clapham, Streatham and Dulwich. Each church in the deanery elects representatives to meet three times during the year to work collaboratively to support each other’s churches in our collective mission to build God’s kingdom in our part of South London. Deanery Synod is an important part of the decision-making structure of the Church of England, as it feeds into Diocesan Synod and then General Synod.

In the past year Lambeth South Deanery said goodbye to one Area Dean, David Stephenson, former vicar of All Saints West Dulwich, and hello to a new Area Dean, Jonathan Croucher. In the past year synod has focussed on different themes. The November meeting was held jointly with North Lambeth Deanery synod and focussed on a presentation from Citizens UK. A number of churches spoke about ways they work in their communities, alongside Citizens UK, with groups such as refugees and secondary school parents. The February 2019 meeting focussed on prison ministry in South London, with presentations by the Chaplain of Brixton Prison, the Nehemiah Trust which supports ex-offenders and

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national charity, Women in Prison. South Lambeth Deanery Synod also supported the deanery in its presence at the Lambeth Country Show last summer. Synod meetings are open to visitors who want to listen to these presentations, so do come along some time.

For me the value of a group like Deanery Synod is that it is a reminder that Christ Church is not only a church, but it is part of the church, and that together we walk God's way, encouraging others to join us as we serve our communities, bringing Jesus to the people we encounter along the journey.

Christ Church members during the last year have been Colin Hart, Anthony Merifield and Esther Moorey, as well as the clergy.

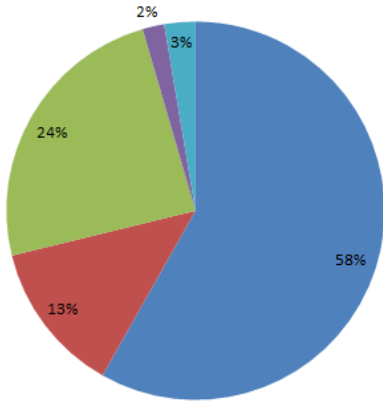
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## **Financial Report Summary** by Ed Hanson

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. Full accounts for the year are available separately but the summary below provides highlights of the accounts as follows:

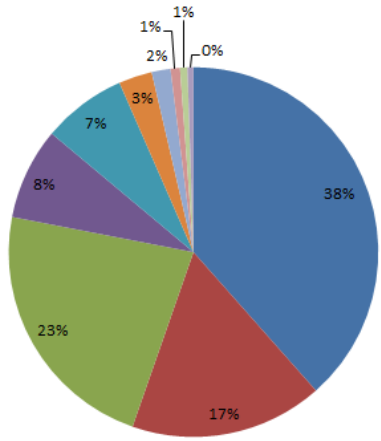
# Annual Report 2018

## Income (unrestricted funds)



■ Income from Donors  
■ Gift Aid  
■ Rental income  
■ Playpen  
■ Other

## Expenditure (unrestricted funds)



■ Diocesan support  
■ Staff costs  
■ Building and maintenance costs  
■ Property rental  
■ Charitable Grants  
■ Office costs  
■ Worship, Music & Audio  
■ Playpen  
■ Catering & entertainment  
■ Other

## Income

- Total income reduced by £9,593 to £239,153
- The majority of this reduction (approximately £8,000) is due to a fall in regular giving, which makes up £163,100 of our total income (including Gift Aid):
  - There has been a fall in regular standing orders from church members. This does not reflect a general decline but is due to a small number of significant donors who have ceased or reduced their giving

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- Related to this, it should be noted that we are reliant on a relatively small number of individuals providing a significant proportion of our income: Of the total standing order income in the year, approximately 65% comes from just 25 church members
- There has also been a fall in Sunday collections. This will, in part, reflect the fact that people carry less cash than they used to
- Our other main source of income is Hall Lettings, which remained stable at £54,649. We are operating close to full capacity so do not anticipate any significant increase going forward
- Included in our total income is £14,238 of Restricted Income. This relates to grants received, dividends from our Goodliffe Endowment Fund and Special Collections, mostly offset by related expenditure

### Expenditure

- Total expenditure increased by £9,781 to £248,478
- Buildings expenditure increased by £20,940 to £54,858, reflecting the significant works at Berridge Road and Christ Church
- Our contribution to Southwark Diocese increased by £4,000 to £93,000
- Ministry Costs reduced by £14,248 to £95,793:
  - Partly due to the audio visual equipment we purchased in 2017, which was not repeated in 2018
  - Reduction in Open Door expenditure, which included Centre 70 fees in 2017 (funded by a grant we received)
  - There was also a reduction in the amounts we were required to donate to XLP

### Balance sheet



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- Goodliffe Endowment Fund valued at £174,912. This compares to £177,562 at 31 December 2017. The reduction reflects the decline in value of the underlying investments. Note that we received approximately £6,000 of dividend income each year from these investments, which are reserved for Youth Work
- Barclays cash balance of £80,802 (2017: £96,957). The reduction reflects the overall loss in the year and net movements in debtors/ liabilities
- CCLA short term deposits of £64,547, consistent with the previous year
- Other items on the balance sheet are short term debtors and creditors

### Funds

- At 31 December 2018, our total funds were £324,644 (2017: £336,619)
- General Fund makes up £121,105 of the total
- £174,912 is the Goodliffe Endowment Fund
- £28,627 are Restricted Funds, which includes £17,003 reserved for Youth Work