



Christ
Church
Orpington

Annual Report 2022-2023

THE ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHURCH MEETING

will take place at Christ Church on Sunday 30th April 2023
immediately after the morning service

Annual Meeting of Parishioners

1. Election of Churchwardens
2. Appointment of Deputy Wardens

Annual Parochial Church Meeting

- 1. Election of:**
 - (i) PCC representatives
 - (ii) Deanery Synod representatives
2. Annual report for the year 2022-23 (already circulated), incorporating:
Secretary's report on the work of the PCC;
Report of the proceedings of the Deanery Synod;
Treasurer's report;
Church Warden's report
3. Electoral Roll report.
4. Safeguarding
- 5. Treasurer's report and appointment of Auditor**
- 6. Any other business**

PCC Secretary's report to the APCM 2022-23

The PCC held six meetings during the year.

The PCC closely monitored the church's finances throughout the year and was amazed by the turnaround during the year, with an expected large deficit being transformed into a healthy surplus by the arrival of four legacies.

Unfortunately the PCC was also amazed by the damage caused by a lightning strike during the summer. The PCC is very grateful to the Fabric Committee chaired by Alan Goddard, the maintenance team of Jim Callaghan and Mike Bailey, and the PCC's insurance expert Paul Skinner for all their efforts to put right the damage.

The PCC continues to regard the safeguarding of children, young people and vulnerable adults as a top priority. The PCC has complied with its duty under section 5 of the Safeguarding and Clergy Discipline Measure 2016 to have regard to the House of Bishops' guidance, and has received regular reports from the Parish Safeguarding Officer, Keith Miller.

In addition, the Vicar has updated the PCC on church activities, Andy Goddard has given regular reports on the meetings of the Deanery Synod and Diocesan Synod, and the PCC has received reports on Human Resource issues, including the appointments of Naomi White and Pip Allen as joint children's ministers.

Don Bower
PCC Secretary

Electoral Roll

Roger Wilkinson, Electoral Roll Officer, reported that since last year the number on the roll had risen from 168 to 170.

4 people had been added and two people had died: our dear friends Joy Holt and Mavis Grimwade had gone to be with the Lord..

Of the 170 , 98 (or 57.65%) were female, and 72 (or 42.255%) were male. 78 (or 45.58%) lived in the parish and 92 (or 54.12% were non-resident.

Hall Bookings

This year has been steady with regular events now back to pre-covid levels. Some of our regular hirers have reported a drop in attendance as their clients face having to cut expenditure. This is mainly affecting the groups that hire for young people's activities, but this has not led to a decrease in their hall bookings. We have increased prices for all hirers to mitigate increased energy costs, but have kept those costs to a minimum for our regulars, raising prices more significantly for our one-off hirers. There continues to be a high demand for our halls on Saturdays for a variety of events. We are looking forward to welcoming a new regular Street Dance group soon.

The halls are well received by all who use them and are benefitting from new LED lighting, which Jim and Mike have almost completed.

Give thanks:

- For all those working together to keep the facilities functioning well for the benefit of all.
- For the opportunity that our halls provide to engage with those that use them.
- For the expertise of Jim and Mike, especially their willingness and ability in tackling day to day issues with the fabric of the halls.

Pray for:

- For Jim and Mike as they work to maintain the building and manage repairs and improvements, particularly with sourcing reliable contractors.
- For the correct balance of Church activities and outside events who wish to use the halls.
- For good communication between those who use our halls.

Jennie Mapp
Hall bookings Administrator

Deanery and Diocesan Synods report

Deanery Synod

Our **May meeting** was held at St Barnabas. Rev Michael Gentry (from Green St Green, Chelsfield and Pratts Bottom) spoke about new venture they are setting up - a Repair Café. The idea is that people will bring small items to the Repair Cafe and the volunteers will be able to repair them, rather than items being thrown into landfill. Churches spoke about the events they will be holding to celebrate the Queen's Platinum Jubilee. The main item on the agenda was an enthusiastic and challenging talk by Lord Deben (John Selwyn Gummer, now Chairman of the UK's independent committee for the climate change) on Climate Change.

The **November meeting** was held jointly with the Deaneries of Bromley and Beckenham to meet our new Bishop, the Right Rev Dr Jonathan Gibbs and it was good to see all 3 Area Deans and Lay Chairs taking part in the evening.

The evening started with Bishop Jonathan giving some background to his life. He was born in a village in Cheshire to Welsh parents and although he attended the local Methodist chapel and a youth group in an Anglican church, he said he was an atheist when he started university. This all changed in his second term after a Billy Graham team spoke in his common room and a friend took him to church the following Sunday. He had a place at teacher training college but was shown an advert for a job in Paris to work with young people. He applied and got the job and met his wife there the following year. They have 3 children. After training at Ridley College, he served his curacy at Staleybridge and then as a vicar for 6 years in Basel, Switzerland, 17 years in the Wirral and was made Bishop of Huddersfield in 2014. There followed a time of questions and answers

Diocesan Synod

Much is discussed at Diocesan Synod – space doesn't allow me to give more than mainly bullet points of what we covered.

- The Parish Giving Scheme
- Safeguarding
- The environment and sustainability
- Annual report and accounts for 2021. The common fund (day to day income and expenditure of the diocese) however, reported a £1.6m deficit (budget had been £1.8m). This is not sustainable in the long-term. There was a 6% drop in money from parish offers in 2021 compared to 2020 as many churches continued to struggle during COVID. The 2022 budget shows a £1.54m deficit with indicative parish offers not increasing as much as needed due to COVID and inflation. At a later meeting, it was reported that, looking at the forecast for 2022, a deficit of £1.64m was anticipated, compared with the budgeted deficit of £1.54m, mainly due to a higher increase in clergy stipends and staff salaries than had been budgeted for. Parish Offers for 2022 were forecast to total £7.75m, £500,000 lower than budgeted. The 2023 budget showed a £1.49m deficit. The Diocese's plans to work towards a financially sustainable model of mission still hold, but realised that the pandemic and cost-of-living crisis meant that we are not on that trajectory at the moment.
- Anna Chaplaincy
- Healthcare Chaplaincy
- Lay Representation to Deanery Synod: With elections taking place in 2023, Synod considered the formula used to calculate how many representatives each parish could elect to their deanery synod. They decided not to change the current formula, so CCO can elect 3 representatives. I would love not to be the only one!
- The General Synod report, which concentrated on the debate following the publication of the 'Living in Love and Faith Report'
- News from the cathedral: The Dean suggested visiting the cathedral to see the new 'Peace Doves' artwork, on display until 18th April. Bringing a message of unity, peace and hope, the artwork has been created from around fifteen thousand individually hand-made paper doves. He then spoke about the 'Fenland Black Oak Table' which will be on display in the cathedral for the next year.

Give thanks:

- For being able to meet with the Bromley and Beckenham Deaneries to meet our new Bishop,
- For the many people who work for our Diocese in Rochester – ranging from Bishops to admin staff

Pray for:

- Our new Archdeacon, the Rev'd Allie Kerr,
- The National Church as they take action following the recent motion passed at General Synod in February following the 'Living in Love and Faith Report',
- Other people from Christ Church to come forward to serve as Deanery representatives (the meetings really are very interesting).

Andy Goddard

Lay Chair of Synod and member of Rochester Diocesan Synod

Church Warden's Report

We thank God for another year in which He has blessed us as a church and as a team of wardens. Pieter and Dave receive wonderful help, encouragement and support from Don Munro and Andi Smith. There is always further help available more widely from others, should anything be needed spontaneously. We want to note how genuinely we have all enjoyed each other's company and service over the past year. Please do join us in a thank you prayer for this and a further prayer that our unity and joyfulness continue this coming year.

A look back at the past 12 months gives us much to be grateful for. Covid restrictions have been lifted and we are seeing some old friends return to worship with us once again. New faces are appearing too, which we value as a sign of God working amongst us. Equally, we have said goodbye and thank you to some treasured saints who have lived wonderful lives of Christian service. We thank God for them and honour them for the people they have been.

Ministries in the church and for the local community have been building up again after Covid restrictions. Youth and Children's Ministry is blessed by excellent leadership, with an added sense of excitement for the Children's Ministry with new leaders sharing the role. Please pray for growth and for these leaders - Andi for our Youth and Pip and Naomi for our Children. The Open Kitchen, Warm Space, Cafe and Community Club have been providing service to our community at a time of clear need. Cost of living worries, fuel and power prices and a need for human contact have been rife in our local community. It is great to be associated with these excellent Ministries. They put Christ Church in a good light, serving people so effectively.

Other Ministries are less obvious and carry on behind the scenes. One significant example of this has been the fallout from a lightning strike which hit the church on 18 June last year. Even now, the repairs, the negotiations and the physical practicalities continue. Our Fabric Committee and our caretakers do fantastic work, usually unseen. Of special mention is also Paul Skinner, who retired from his job in insurance just in time to lead on our insurance claim after the lightning strike! He has done an unbelievable amount of voluntary work on our claim and secured some fantastic outcomes for us. Thank you, Paul.

Similarly, the Finance Committee, our Safeguarding Officer, Keith Miller, our GDPR Officer, Meina Belsham, and the HR Committee operate largely unnoticed, delivering effective outcomes to enable Christ Church to be the place of worship and service that it is.

Finally, we are so blessed to have Sharon leading us and drawing these great efforts together. Over the past year and beyond, Sharon has given, given and given yet more of herself. She is a remarkable person and our biggest prayer this year has been to thank God for her and all that she is to us.

Please do join us as we thank God for all of the above and pray for each Ministry to flourish in His service.

Pieter and Dave

Treasurers Report Annual Accounts 2022 Summary

The average weekly attendance during October (when the count is done for the Diocese) was 102 adults aged 16 or over and 25 young people aged under 16 (2021: 82 & 11)

Due to Covid-19 and the lockdown the previous figures were artificially low.

Income.

Total receipts for the General Fund were £303,509 (2021 £240,052) up £63,457 (This was mainly due to the following, Rental income £31,835 (2021 £16,206) up £16,629. Legacies £45,075 (2021 £0) Fees for weddings and other services £3,092 (2021 £1068) up £2,024. Investments £1,286 (2021 £125) up £1,161. Donations & Gifts £153,220 (2021 £153,251) down £31) Other Church Activities, Grants and other income ,Donations to Open Kitchen total £ 35,371 (2021 £36,772) down £1,401.

Expenditure.

Expenditure from the General Fund was £278,743 (2021 £267,852) an increase of £10,891 . It has been another year of keeping a tight grip on expenditure.

Financial Review.

Christ Church depends on the continuing generosity of the congregation to meet its financial needs. The results of the year are set out in the Statement of Financial Activities.

It is the policy of the Parochial Church Council to maintain unrestricted funds, which are free reserves of the church, at a level that equates to approximately six months unrestricted expenditure. This will ensure that the church is able to cover management, administration and support costs and respond to any emergency issues that could arise. Six months unrestricted fund expenditure amounts to approximately £139,371. unrestricted funds in cash at the bank were above this and available throughout the year.

I am pleased to report that this year our income exceeded our expenditure by £21,520 which is due to the very generous legacies received of £45,075 during the year.

It has been a difficult year, but despite this you have given of your time and money to support your spiritual home and allow your church to reach out locally and beyond and I detail at the end of my report a breakdown of our mission giving which extends Gods love from this place. It is truly humbling to be aware of the sacrificial giving and to be a member of the finance team that is able to serve such a generous church.

If you would like clarification on any item in the accounts, please speak with me or any member of the finance team who will be more than happy to answer any questions you may have.

Thank you for your continued generosity.

Derek A Foxen
Treasurer

**STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES
INCLUDING INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2022**

		Unrestricted funds 2022 £	Restricted funds 2022 £	Total 2022 £	Unrestricted funds 2021 £	Restricted funds 2021 £	Total 2021 £
<u>Income and endowments from:</u>							
Donations and legacies	3	244,934	13,159	258,093	200,509	8,848	209,357
Charitable activities	4	57,216	-	57,216	31,084	-	31,084
Investments	5	1,286	-	1,286	125	-	125
Other income	6	73	-	73	8,334	-	8,334
Total income		<u>303,509</u>	<u>13,159</u>	<u>316,668</u>	<u>240,052</u>	<u>8,848</u>	<u>248,900</u>
<u>Expenditure on:</u>							
<u>Charitable activities</u>							
Church activities	7	278,743	16,405	295,148	267,852	4,127	271,979
Total charitable expenditure		<u>278,743</u>	<u>16,405</u>	<u>295,148</u>	<u>267,852</u>	<u>4,127</u>	<u>271,979</u>
Net income/(expenditure) for the year/							
Net movement in funds		24,766	(3,246)	21,520	(27,800)	4,721	(23,079)
Fund balances at 1 January 2022							
		<u>170,391</u>	<u>15,262</u>	<u>185,653</u>	<u>198,191</u>	<u>10,541</u>	<u>208,732</u>
Fund balances at 31 December 2022							
		<u><u>195,157</u></u>	<u><u>12,016</u></u>	<u><u>207,173</u></u>	<u><u>170,391</u></u>	<u><u>15,262</u></u>	<u><u>185,653</u></u>

The statement of financial activities includes all gains and losses recognised in the year.

All income and expenditure derive from continuing activities.

BALANCE SHEET

AS AT 31 DECEMBER 2022

	Notes	2022 £	£	2021 £	£
Fixed assets					
Tangible assets	12		15,224		22,142
Current assets					
Debtors	13	35,347		18,753	
Cash at bank and in hand		171,980		154,902	
		<u>207,327</u>		<u>173,655</u>	
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	14	<u>(15,378)</u>		<u>(10,144)</u>	
Net current assets			191,949		163,511
Total assets less current liabilities			<u>207,173</u>		<u>185,653</u>
Income funds					
Restricted funds	16		12,016		15,262
<u>Unrestricted funds</u>					
Designated funds	17	17,804		24,630	
General unrestricted funds		<u>177,353</u>		<u>145,761</u>	
			195,157		170,391
			<u>207,173</u>		<u>185,653</u>

The financial statements were approved by the Parochial Church Council on 28 March 2023

Missionary Expenditure – Restricted Funds

	2022	2021
	£	£
Grants to institutions:		
CPAS	1,593	750
London City Mission	1,704	900
Church Missionary Society	1,575	600
Tear Fund	1,869	1,500
Spinnaker Trust	2,326	2,100
Release International	1,500	1,500
Missionary Aviation Fellowship	1,500	1,298
Rochester Diocese for Kondea Churches, Tanzania	7,952	1,500
Bromley Foodbank	1,085	-
Crosslinks	2,043	-
The Bible Society	1,579	1,500
European Christian Mission Winterburn	1,000	1,028
Barnabus Fund	1,725	-
Other	1,569	1,611
	<hr/>	<hr/>
	29,020	14,287
Grants to individuals	19,386	14,351
	<hr/>	<hr/>
	<u>48,406</u>	<u>28,638</u>

Unity Church

2022 saw the tenth anniversary of the relaunch of Unity church, and we have enjoyed an amazing year. God has blessed us richly in many ways. Last year, we asked you to pray for continued growth in our mission and in our links with the community resulting in more people coming to faith. We have seen more people coming into our outreach ministries, such as Community Fridge, Life Skills, Job Club and Warm Space. We have run several Alpha courses, and seen two people give their lives to the Lord. Several more people are showing interest in our faith. God has prompted a few people from other churches to bring their gifts into our ministries. Our desire is to see people from the Ramsden Estate come to faith, and we are aware that what we can do is constrained by the number of workers. Every extra person makes a difference. In the last few weeks, we have seen increasing numbers at our Sunday services, culminating in a packed church to celebrate Easter.

CAP Life Skills and Job Club have seen good numbers. Both are clearly much appreciated by the people who have come. Poverty is a problem for many local people. Community fridge helps them out in the short term, but these courses can help them develop the skills needed in these difficult times. Get Active has been popular at times, although numbers are a little lower than we would like. Our Community Garden has not seen as many people, and we are considering how we can develop this ministry.

2022 saw a return to our Celebrate services. These have been well attended by a number of people outside our usual congregation. The service is run in a café style using round tables, with drinks served before we start, helping people to feel settled and accepted. After the service, we serve a meal. The atmosphere is very relaxed, allowing people to get to know each other and ensure that people new to the church feel welcomed. Many people come back, showing that we are meeting a need.

Last year, we reported our concerns on our work with children and teenagers. Since then, we have appointed a part time youth worker, enabling us to relaunch our midweek youth group for secondary school students. This has proved very popular, and sessions have gone well, although we are challenged by the behaviour of a minority. On Sundays, we have few younger children, and would love to see more. We also have an enthusiastic group of teenagers, who commented that they come because they want to and not because their parents send them.

Instead of home groups, we are now meeting as a church in what we call “Going Deeper” on Wednesday evenings. These times are led from the front, with discussions around tables, similar to what would happen in a

home group. We believe that this works better for some of our congregation, especially those for whom transport is a problem.

We have also been blessed in material ways. With ambitious plans for the year, we were budgeting for a substantial deficit. Due to the amazing generosity of our congregation, the final deficit was just £315. Various improvements to the church were made, including far better lighting and the fitting out of our small lounge, which is used for Alpha and our teenagers' group, as well as small meetings and for informal conversation. The building is almost unrecognisable from the one we started with ten years ago.

We expect to see God continue to work in our church and our community next year. A visitor had a picture of the church being covered by a tarpaulin which God was removing so that people on the estate can see us clearly. We have hopes for our buildings, such as a better kitchen and signs to point people to us, but our biggest hope is that more people from the area come into our community and join us in our faith.

Our love to you all

Dave and Kate Bell, Peter and Lynn Price

We thank God for:

- The growth of the church in the last year.
- For God's amazing provision for our needs, financial and people.
- More people coming into His Kingdom.

Please pray for:

- Growth in our work with children and young people.
- Continued growth in our congregation, as those on the fringe are welcomed into God's kingdom and grow in their faith.
- For God's continued guidance and provision to enable us to be His servants and show His glory on the Ramsden Estate.

Open Kitchen

Open Kitchen is continuing to flourish as we approach our third anniversary in May. We still have three sessions per week but the number attending has steadily been rising. We now regularly see 50+ people each time. To support this gradual increase, I have been seeking out new food supplies, and we have started collecting from Getir, KFC, Lidl Foots Cray, Lidl St Mary Cray, Waitrose Bromley South and Aldi. In total we are doing 52 food pickups per week.

This ministry would of course not be possible without the amazing support of all the volunteers. Special thanks go to Katrina Beesley and Andy Goddard who run sessions, local resident Roy who joins us for every session, and to all those who give their time and energy in pickups, sessions, distribution and much more. 44 volunteers are now involved, a collaboration between the church and the local community. Open Kitchen is also grateful for the support of Sharon and the PCC. This has enabled us to use the Undercroft and the Pathfinders Room for our sessions, and the sponsorship of our energy costs enables us to use all our financial donations to support recipients directly.

A highlight of the past year was the arrival of a new free freezer donated from the King. This was funded by donations given in memory of the late Queen, and has provided us with much needed storage space for frozen items.

Everyone has been affected by the cost of living crisis, but those who were already struggling financially are now having to make difficult decisions between paying bills and eating. We are still pursuing our goal of tackling the causes of the issues around food poverty. Some of these are global issues of course, but we are now working in partnership with CAP (Christians Against Poverty), and signposting recipients to other groups such as Unity Church's Job Club and Life Skills course, or to Bromley Foodbank.

We are thrilled that a similar venture will open in the next few weeks in St Paul's Cray. This will be located at St Barnabas through a collaboration with Christ Apostolic Church (Dove House). This community fridge will support those in St Paul's Cray far more effectively.

Thank you for all your prayers and your practical support. If you feel that you would like to be involved in our food pickups, please do come and have a chat with me.

Liesel Stanbridge

Liesel@ccorpington.org

We thank God for:

- This ministry continuing to flourish and able to support those in food poverty.
- Every single volunteer that helps with collecting food, running sessions and delivering food parcels.
- New opportunities for food pickups.
- New community fridge starting very soon in St Paul's Cray.

We pray for:

- Wisdom in tackling the root causes of food poverty through CAP and other initiatives.
- New volunteers to help with food pickups so that these are sustainable in the longer term.
- All the relationships formed with recipients, an understanding of the pressures they face, and a commitment to support them in the best way possible.

Children's Ministry

Children's Ministry Vision:

The vision for the Children's Ministry is **Sowing seeds, growing together and changing lives**. We have the wonderful pleasure of helping children get to know Jesus and to grow together in faith.

Christ Church's children's ministry this year has seen a massive change very recently - after many years of faithful service Jo Gavin felt called to join Southwark, leading to the recruitment of two new ministers to split her work between them from March 2023.

We are very grateful for the warm welcome into the roles we have received, especially the support from the current team, and we look forward to seeing what else God has in store!

We are currently meeting teams, organising rotas, reviewing the resources & sorting cupboards, and refreshing the children's group logos and website information.

Messy Church

Pip organised her first Messy Easter event on 1st April, with massive thanks to a smaller but fantastic team, especially Sharon, Maureen and Mike! The number of "tickets" & no shows has stayed consistent, & 35 guests (21 children with their 14 adults) enjoyed 5 craft activities, a meal and teaching about Easter week with 10 volunteers!

We now have **13th May** and the other 2 Summer Term Saturday afternoons on our website, and the dates till Christmas booked in the Halls, so Pip now wants to encourage new volunteers to help spread the load by sharing their gifts!

Holiday Club

Pip is currently investigating themes for our usual annual 'primary age' Holiday Club after the school year ends, i.e. three mornings on **Tuesday, Wednesday & Thursday 25th, 26th & 27th July 2023**. Another email will be now be sent to invite any previous helpers to come & chat with potential volunteers for a joint Holiday Club & Messy Church training workshop over the next few weeks. These events cannot happen without workers, any more than it can without God's Spirit leading!

Schools Work:

Caroline Rous has continued visiting the Highway school to do assemblies. She mentioned that in the past the children use to visit the church, and that this may

be something we could look at offering in the future. Naomi and Pip both hope to be able to support and join Caroline in building connections with local schools.

Tea and Toys:

This work continues on Wednesday afternoons, thanks to Paula and the amazing volunteers. Pip has joined in with the team occasionally this term, including supporting the story time. Naomi will look to help out with this in September, and is very grateful to those who continue to run it.

Sunday Groups:

Over the past couple of weeks, Naomi has had the pleasure of meeting many of the dedicated children's work volunteers, and is very grateful for their help in settling her in to the role, and their willingness to continue to lead and support the children's work.

Explorers and Climbers remain combined with ages ranging from 3 to 11 years old. We will continue to stay together until the numbers of children and volunteers increase.

Give thanks:

- Praise God for His faithfulness in giving us Jo Gavin's service for so long, and ask his blessing for Jo in her new ministry.
- Let's thank God for the volunteers and for the children and families who already attend church regularly.

Prayer Points:

- Please pray for Pip and Naomi as they develop in their roles and seek God's guidance on how the children's work is to develop in the future.
- We thank you for the continuing schools work and pray for strengthened connections.
- Please pray about some recent conversations with parents who have children with additional needs. Help us as a team, and as church to think about how we can be inclusive of all children and young people, and help them all to develop in their faith and become rooted in a relationship with God.
- Please pray for Jesus to stir the hearts of new helpers to join us to use their gifts before during and after the Children's work events how & whenever they can! Fill them and us with the joy and excitement of God's love!

Pip Allen and Naomi White, Children's Ministers

Youth Ministry

The Youth Ministry has continued to have an exciting year.

Pathfinders, (school years 7 – 9) meet on a Sunday morning. Apart from Communion services, the group begins in the church service (to give the group an experience of the church service/church life) and then after the first two songs of worship, head over to the Vicarage for the session. When the weather is good, the group can enjoy the trampoline, basketball net, badminton, and Frisbee outside. And if not, enjoy games indoors. This is a safe space to enjoy learning about Jesus and themselves. An additional way of learning comes from acting out Bible passages, which the group enjoys.

Juice, which are school years 10-13+, meet weekly on Saturday nights, also in the Vicarage. We have been enjoying varied Biblical teaching, discussions on a whole range of topics, from theological to life's challenges. We have also looked at some of the Youth Alpha videos and resources to help explore big life questions. We have enjoyed looking at some J/John material, along with some scenes from 'The Chosen' series being made about Jesus' life, and the calling of the Disciples.

WINE! served as a new group for the 18 years and over range, consisting of meeting on Wednesday nights via Zoom. The group enabled all those who are able in their different universities to join together, even though they are geographically scattered. This was a very relaxed group, and the experiences of those who were further through their university courses were opportunities to help those in the first and/or second years. The group were fledged successfully, and thus will be re-started when the next group go to university, or sooner.

BASE is a Youth Group for Pathfinders and Juice members together, and also for their friends. BASE is once a month on a Saturday night, and has been running well. BASE is a purely social session, and currently comes in either the youth-friendly format of Pizza and Games, or Pizza and film. This will open up once the summer comes to incorporate other experiences, such as football on the field, and other outdoor games.

Our current café manager Jeanette, is also a Youth worker at Green Street Green Baptist, and I invited them and their youth group to BASE which produced a large, lively and much enjoyed session, which we both plan to continue to do.

After offering some free starter drum and guitar lessons with youth who are interested in having a go, there have been a good number of up-takers. One has also gone on to have professional drum lessons. If you know of any other of our young people who might be interested in either drums or guitar, please ask them to contact me.

My working relationship with Bishop Justus is continuing to grow. I have spoken at a number of Year Group Worship services, and was invited to attend 2x Year group Eucharist services in March. The Chaplain and I work well together, and some of the students have already started to recognise me.

In the summer those aged 12-18 were offered the opportunity to go to the Christian Youth Festival DTI (Dreaming The Impossible) at Stafford showground where we joined with another Youth Group from Falkirk led by our daughter and son-in law. Great fun was had by all, faith was increased, knowledge of God was deepened, and the rapper Guvna B went down a storm!

I am looking forward to see what God will do with our young people this year!

Give Thanks:

- A big thanks to all my volunteers - they are a great team and I really appreciate their help and support.
- A big thanks to the young people for being such a great bunch.
- A big thanks to God for His faithfulness to us.

THANK-YOU VERY MUCH!

Pray For:

- Please pray for the young people in their universities, schools and new classes.
- Please pray that we will all go deeper in our knowledge and love of God.
- Please pray that more young people will want to come and find out about Jesus.

Amen.

Vicar's Report

I have now been here over four years, and remember strongly my first year when I felt the Lord calling us to be a “Beacon of Light” to our community, and wondered how we could manage that...little knowing what was around the corner as the world went into Covid chaos. Just to recap for those who weren't here last year – I felt that just as beacons are situated on hills, so CCO is situated on a hill. This was no accident and was prophetic for what we were called to be. In these ever-changing seas we were to work out our vision from Matthew 5:14-16: *You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.*

This time last year, I felt the Lord was calling us to bring the light of **“Hope”** to a sad and hurting world. Hope where many had lost hope through bereavement, illness, loneliness, loss, circumstances, or either never known God or had drifted away from Him who is our ultimate Hope – that there really was more to life than this!

In this year, as well as continuing with our outreaches of Open Kitchen, Community Club, Tea & Toys, Messy Church, Holiday Club, Men's Ministry, Women's Ministry and an Invitation Sunday which brought many new friends through our doors, we also ran two Alpha Courses bringing hope of salvation; a Freedom in Christ course giving the hope of freedom from emotional and spiritual issues; a Lent Course giving hope from failure, and many church members reached out sacrificially bringing hope in ways we will never know, and I feel God is saying to us all “Well done, good and faithful servant”.

As we continue to fulfil our calling to be a Beacon of Light, I feel the Lord is calling us deeper to be **wholehearted disciples**, stepping out to take **full possession of the Promised Land** He won for us on the cross, calling us, prepared to follow Him wherever He leads, giving Him our whole lives and trusting Him even when we don't understand the “how” or the “why”. So as a start to help us fulfil this calling, for all who would like to come we have begun by running the discipleship course “The Big Picture”, and more courses are planned for later in the year as well.

We have a world that is increasingly lost and hurting, forever pushing moral and ethical boundaries and on a collision course with itself. But we have a

relationship through Jesus with the Creator of everything, the Living God, who is still holding out His arms to welcome any and all who want to come to Him and live as His children. And as we commit our lives ever more fully to Him, and walk ever more fully in all the Promises He has given us – our spiritual Promised Land – His light will radiate ever more fully out of us into the darkness through our lives, our words and our works.

Thank you to everyone for a blessed year and all you have so faithfully done, even when it has been time-consuming and sacrificial. It is a privilege to serve in such a wonderful church. And now, with the Lord's help, we are looking forward to an even better year!

With much love,
Sharon