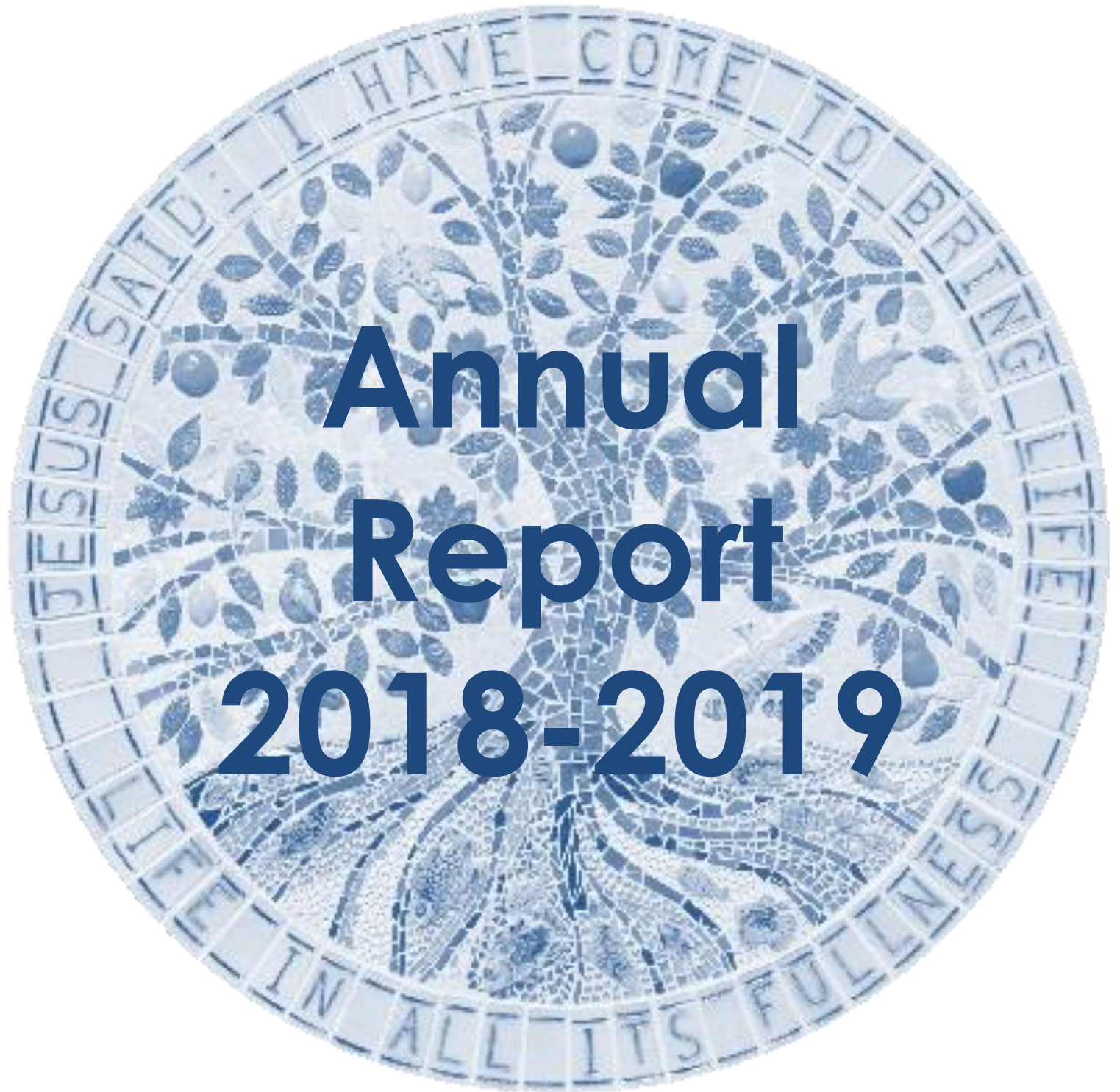




Christ
Church
Orpington



Annual Report 2018-2019

THE ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHURCH MEETING

will take place on Sunday 28th April 2019 after lunch in the church hall

Annual Meeting of Parishioners

1. Apologies for absence
2. Minutes and matters arising
3. Election of Churchwardens
4. Appointment of Deputy Wardens

Annual Parochial Church Meeting

1. Minutes and matters arising
2. Electoral Roll report
3. Secretary's report on the work of the PCC
4. Annual report 2018-19
5. Elections
 - PCC representatives
 - Sidespeople
6. Appointment of Welcomers
7. Treasurer's report and appointment of Auditor
8. Report on Unity Church
9. Any other business
10. Closing Prayer.

PCC Secretary's report to the APCM 2018-19

The PCC has kept in close touch throughout the year with the procedure for appointing a new vicar and was delighted to welcome Sharon to its meeting on 4 February 2019. The PCC is grateful to Caroline Bailey and Alan Goddard, who represented the parish in this procedure, and to everyone in the congregation who took on extra work during the interregnum.

The PCC held six meetings during the year, four of them chaired by a churchwarden.

Finance has as usual appeared on every agenda, and the PCC received regular reports from the Finance Committee, chaired by Derek Foxen. The budget for 2019 is for income of nearly £207,000 and expenditure of nearly £204,000. However, transfers to provide for future repairs and for expenditure from the Mission Support Fund will leave a deficit of some £18,000, which the PCC will look to cover from Gift Days and any legacies which are received.

Fabric matters are now discussed by a new Fabric Committee, chaired by Pieter van Rooyen. A major effort was made during the year to prepare the vicarage for the new vicar. The diocese arranged for the refurbishment of the kitchen and bathroom, and a team from the congregation, led by Alan Goddard, re-decorated the whole house.

Several fabric matters were brought to the PCC for decision. The PCC set aside money to pay for repairs to the hall floors; for new CCTV cameras; for a new fence alongside the alleyway; and for new light fittings in the hall corridors. The church gate accidentally damaged by a car driver has been repaired and will be put back in place shortly.

Safeguarding of children, young people and vulnerable adults continues to be a top priority. The PCC thanked Anne Springer, who resigned as Parish Safeguarding Officer on moving away, and welcomed as her replacement Kate Munro, to whom all safeguarding concerns must be reported so that they can be properly investigated. The PCC has adopted the Church of England's safeguarding policy statement "Promoting a

Safer Church” and will be participating in a safeguarding audit recently launched by the diocese.

Other matters which arose during the year included the adoption of a Data Retention Policy and a Security Policy in line with the new General Data Protection Regulation, and discussion of recommendations from Christ Church’s Human Resources Committee.

Don Bower

Hall Bookings

There has been a great deal of continuity this year with regards to the hall bookings. Our long term hirers have continued with very little change and we have been very grateful for far less issues with the heating and hot water system. We have also expanded our team with regards to opening and closing our facilities which has been very successful.

As to the regular hirer bookings: these have been maintained and there have been some additions and expansions with the art classes and language classes increasing their sessions. For most of the activities their classes have been very popular with many people visiting the church to take part.

Of course the halls are not just used for outside hirers. We have been the venue for church house groups and meetings both regular and when required. The Diocese used our halls for various training meetings such as lay ministry training, continuing ministerial development and the Mothers Union AGM.

The halls have continued to be regularly used by the local community for their various celebrations, remembrances and charitable fund raising events. Indeed there has been, as ever, a constant stream of general enquiries. We have had a number of funerals that have taken place at the church including long standing members of the church and those that have regularly attended both café mosaic and community club.

GIVE THANKS!

- for the opportunity that the church has to be able to provide an outreach service to the local community through the hiring of the facilities and to be a part of their celebrations and remembrances,
- for the fellowship that all working with the various groups and the organisation of these groups have as they work together,
- for the expansion that we now have in our team and that working relationship together.

PRAY FOR:

- Jim in his work maintaining the building and managing the various repairs and improvements as they are required especially with regard to any repairs which require the use of ladders,
- the correct balance of the use of our premises by both the church and the local community.

Jacqui Ko

Deanery Synod Report

Owing to many current clergy vacancies in the Deanery, each church was asked to create a Parish Profile to submit to the Bishop's Council. It was to include a map of the parish, a brief description of the church and its activities, a vision statement of the future, challenges facing the parish, leadership and staffing issues, and an outline of the worship and Sunday attendance.

The Parish levy of £400 is in abeyance in 2018 and possibly in 2019 as there is sufficient money in the kitty.

The Orpington Deanery has filled all the positions in the Synod (House of Laity.)

In July, a social evening and buffet for Deanery Synod members, Readers, Lay Ministers and Churchwardens was held in the Chelsfield Rectory garden.

In September, Rev. John Tranter stepped down as Area Dean and was replaced by Rev. John Musson (United Benefice of Cudham and Downe.) After his short Commissioning Service, Rev. Richard Williams (Finance Director of the Diocese) gave a presentation on Diocesan Finances and Indicative Offers.

80% of Diocesan Income comes from our parishes and total costs amount to £11 million. In 2017 there was a £0.43 million deficit. Each parish incumbent costs £40,000, including housing support, and some poorer parishes can't pay their way, especially in the Medway towns.

Indicative Offers:- Each parish is to indicate what finance it can offer, and the challenge for us all, collectively and individually, is to give more to the Diocese in a fair way.

On 6th November, at All Saints Church, Orpington, a Eucharist Service was held to remember the end of WW1 and also the Canadian soldiers, buried in the churchyard.

GIVE THANKS!

- for Anne Springer's nine year term as Deanery Synod representative from Christ Church and the wisdom she brought to the role.

PRAY FOR:

- the finances of the Diocese and the results of the Indicative Offer consultation,
- and for Bishop James, who has undergone surgery and for his convalescence.

Muriel Spooner

Church Warden's Report

The past year at Christ Church has been an encouraging one from the wardens' perspective. Clearly interregnum was a significant context throughout this time, yet the numerous ministries at Christ Church continued to flourish. We were simply amazed at how well so many different people stepped up to fill any breaches.

More noticeable were the visiting clergy who enabled us to continue with Holy Communion and other more formal services. Also, people at Christ Church stepped up to bring us God's word in a wonderful way and to develop themselves in this gifting.

Less noticeable were the many people behind the scenes who took on more responsibility in various acts of serving. These are too numerous to mention, and in any case these people with clear servant hearts, probably do not want to be named. But we know who they are and we are grateful!

Then there was the extensive recruitment process for the appointment of our new vicar, Reverend Dr. Sharon Smith. Again we are grateful both to some members of the clergy and to people within Christ Church who put in considerable effort, time and God's wisdom over a lengthy period. It took this wisdom and some courage to not appoint during the first two rounds of the recruitment. They had a conviction that someone else is the right person for Christ Church and this person is Sharon. We are so grateful for the role they played in this.

So, we have plenty of thank you prayers, but we want to focus on two in particular.

When we entered interregnum, we felt that we had unity in our fellowship and our leadership and we prayed for protection of this. We believe that this important prayer was answered and we want to say thank you to God for this.

Secondly, we prayed for God's guiding and support for Christ Church during interregnum and with all that we have just noted here, again we believe that a thank you prayer is appropriate.

Looking forward, we pray for Sharon's leadership, confident that it is God Himself who has a plan for this. And we pray that all at Christ Church and in the wider community will embrace this with a sense of excitement and be receptive to wherever God takes us next.

With our best wishes and with one last special thanks to our two deputy wardens, Derrick and Coral,

Pieter and Dave

Annual Accounts 2018

Summary Version

All are welcome to attend our services. The electoral roll is updated annually and comprises 222 members, a decrease of 10 since last year. The breakdown is:

Male = 85, Female = 137;
Resident in parish = 110, Resident outside parish = 112.

The average weekly attendance during October (when the annual count is done for the Diocese) was 135 adults aged 16 or over and 20 young people aged under 16 (2017: 156 & 50).

Income

Total receipts for the General Fund were £247,572 (2017 £271,210) £23,638 down on the previous year mainly due to legacies received of £1,000 (2017 £20,625) £19,625 down on the previous year.

Rental income rose to £35,566 (2017 £32,948) an increase of £2,616.

Expenditure

The church has tried to keep expenditure to a minimum. Exceptional items this year of £3,000 spent towards vicarage refurbishment and £6,300 for the replacement of the church fence.

Financial Review

Christ Church depends on the generosity of the congregation to meet its financial needs. The results for the year are set out in the Statement of Financial Activities. A deficit on unrestricted funds of £18,593 arose in the year (2017- £58,032).

It is the policy of the Parochial Church Council to maintain unrestricted funds, which are the free reserves of the church, at a level that equates to approximately six months unrestricted expenditure. This provides sufficient funds to cover management, administration and support costs and to respond to emergency issues that arise from time to time. Six months unrestricted fund expenditure amounts to approximately £124,000 and unrestricted funds in cash at bank were at or above this level throughout the year.

Statement of Financial Activities
including income & expenditure account

	Unrestricted funds 2018	Restricted funds 2018	Total 2018	Total 2017
	£	£	£	£
<u>Income from:</u>				
Donations and legacies	175,033	19,936	194,969	210,274
Charitable activities	71,609	-	71,609	75,557
Investments	930	-	930	870
Total income	247,572	19,936	267,508	286,701
<u>Expenditure on:</u>				
Raising funds	141	-	141	195
<u>Charitable activities</u>				
Church activities	247,109	39,620	286,729	343,263
Total charitable expenditure	247,109	39,620	286,729	343,263
Total resources expended	247,250	39,620	286,870	343,458
Net incoming/(outgoing) resources before transfers	322	(19,684)	(19,362)	
Gross transfers between funds	(18,915)	18,915	-	-
Net expenditure for the year/ Net movement in funds	(18,593)	(769)	(19,362)	
Fund balances at 1 January 2018	221,602	9,540	231,142	287,899
Fund balances at 31 December 2018	203,009	8,771	211,780	231,142

Balance Sheet as at 31st December 2018

	2018		2017	
	£	£	£	£
Fixed assets				
Tangible assets		-		774
Current assets				
Debtors	8,015		7,440	
Cash at bank and in hand	209,347		227,339	
	217,362		234,779	
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	(5,582)		(4,411)	
Net current assets		211,780		230,368
Total assets less current liabilities		211,780		231,142
Income funds				
Restricted funds		8,771		9,540
<u>Unrestricted funds</u>				
Designated funds	42,600		42,600	
General unrestricted funds	160,409		179,002	
		203,009		221,602
		211,780		231,142

The financial statements were approved by the Parochial Church Council on 11 March 2019.

Missionary Expenditure – Restricted Funds

	2018	2017
	£	£
Grants to institutions:		
CPAS	2,577	1,852
London City Mission	2,454	1,820
Church Missionary Society	1,772	1,653
Tear Fund	2,414	1,961
Spinnaker Trust	2,586	1,500
Release International	1,500	1,993
Missionary Aviation Fellowship	1,500	1,500
Rochester Diocese for Kondoa Churches, Tanzania	3,500	11,095
Orpington Foodbank	600	1,100
Latvia Bible College	9,986	-
Other	3,264	2,652
	32,153	27,126
Grants to individuals	6,967	8,279
	39,120	35,405

We hope this summary version of the 2018 annual accounts is helpful. A full version will be available at the APCM.

Unity Church

It has been a mixed year at Unity Church, with a number of exciting new ventures and contacts made in the community, but also with a slight fall in numbers and some projects closing down.

We have continued to prioritise our work with the local community, and were delighted to welcome as many as 90 people to our Connect community events. These have included a fun afternoon and BBQ, a Film Night, a Quiz Night, a Car Treasure Hunt and a Bonfire. During the summer holidays, we launched a weekly café with hot drinks, cakes and children's activities. This was extremely successful with many coming along who we had not been in contact with before. On October 31st, we held a Glow Party for primary aged children. Under UV light, we ran a range of fun activities with 30 children and about 15 adults from the local estate attending.

One important development was the relaunch of our Youth Work. We closed down our after-school club and relaunched with an evening club which has proved successful in attracting more youth from the estate. Through a grant from the Diocese of Rochester, we were able to purchase new equipment for youth work, which has enabled us to offer a much more diverse range of activities.

In partnership with other Orpington churches (including Christ Church) we launched a Christians Against Poverty Job Club. Each Job Club runs for eight 3 hour sessions and aims to provide those out of work with the confidence and skills required for an effective job search. Each session includes a free lunch, one hour presentation with group discussions and an hour for one-to-one mentoring and use of online computers. We are grateful to those who donated old laptops, but always need more, as the failure rate, due to their age, is quite high.

In May, 20 adults and 7 Children enjoyed the second Regions Beyond Fusion weekend. Along with good times of worship and fellowship, it was inspiring to hear what God is doing in Regions Beyond and we were challenged to think about our own involvement in God's church.

We have changed the way we organise our Sunday worship. We now have three separate bands, each led by an instrumentalist and another worship leader. This enables us to rota worship leading more effectively, to improve the quality of our music and to create space for developing new musicians and singers. We are already seeing more young people involved in leading worship.

Sadly, we took the difficult decision to discontinue our ToddleTots and Knit and Natter groups, as the demand did not justify the resources needed to run them. One of our biggest challenges remains the difficulty in recruiting the many volunteers needed for our regular church and outreach activities.

Our Sunday morning young people's group is still thriving. However, we have seen a sharp drop in numbers in our Sunday Club for up to Year 5, partly due to children moving into the older group and partly due to people leaving the church. This presents a challenge for those leading when there are only two children there.

Our church building is showing signs of age, and some significant maintenance has been needed. With a grant, we were able to replace the rotting windows along the side of the church, and we have used our own resources to replace our out of date heating system. These will help us keep the church warm in winter and cool in summer, and should reduce our heating bills. We have also applied for another grant to replace the windows at the rear of the building.

In conclusion, though there have been some ups and downs this past year, there continues to be a real need for us to be God's presence on the Ramsden Estate and God is providing us with many new opportunities to reach out. We are very excited about what God is going to do this year and value your support and prayers as we seek His will for us as a church.

GIVE THANKS!

- for the increasing contacts we are making in the local community and our ability to make a real difference in people's lives.
- for God's faithfulness and provision through the grants we have received to fund major purchases.

- our partnership with other churches in the CAP Job Club.

PRAY FOR:

- a greater sense of community in our congregation, with people wanting to be at our services on a weekly basis.
- that we would be successful in our application of the additional grant for the rear windows.
- the resources to be able to staff every ministry God wants to see at Unity.
- that we will be the church that is needed on the Ramsden Estate, touching the lives of those in need and leading people to faith in Christ.

Our love to you all
Peter and Lynn Price

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 to know Jesus and to grow together in faith. We can change and enrich their lives by encouraging them to have a loving relationship with God. Jesus said "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these."

I am pleased to report that the Children's Ministry has had a good, and busy year, we have had several events this year which have been well received and attended. However, attendance on a Sunday has sadly dropped as children have grown up through the groups and moved on to Youth. The lack of young families joining the church has meant fewer younger children are replacing them. Tea & Toys however proves to be always popular with lots of new families joining.

Some volunteers have stepped down this year but others have joined the team. We do have a need for more volunteers in a number of our Ministries especially if we are to reach out more and serve our community.

Schools Work: We are continuing to visit five local primary schools fortnightly taking assemblies and occasional lessons through Spinnaker. Last year I also did the harvest talk for the children and parents at the Highway and gave the address at their Christmas Nativity. I spoke at the Charterhouse pre-school nativity and had the opportunity to invite families to our Christmas services. We had a wonderful visit to CCO from Years 1 & 4 at the Highway where the children learnt that the church is all about the people and the parable of the Two Builders.

In addition, following a personal concern regarding bullying and the impact of this on the mental health of our teenagers, I developed and delivered with Andrena, the COMPASSion Worship series. Based upon loving God and loving others, this series tries to raise awareness of bullying to help young people respond and prevent it. It consists of a whole year group assembly and five sessions. To date this has been

rolled out to Year 7 & 8 at Bishop Justus and will be rolled out to Years 9 & 10 shortly.

To reach out to those families who are busy on a Sunday morning Lyall Wade with the support of myself and Andrena has set up Seekers on a Sunday afternoon which runs once a month for School Years 3-8. This is still in its infancy, but we are hoping this will grow.

Tea and Toys: has enjoyed another busy year and since Christmas, has regularly seen up to 40 families attending. It continues to be led by a faithful group of helpers, including Jo Gavin, Maureen Grandini, Pauline Dugard, Steph Fargie and Paula Lynch. We are also thankful to Jim Callaghan who helps us with setting up/clearing away. This group is a wonderful outreach opportunity, as well as providing a warm welcome to those who come. Please pray for us that the children will learn more about Jesus through the Bible stories and that we would show his love in all that we do.

Tea and Toys gives us a massive opportunity to reach out to the families in our community and it would be wonderful if people from Christ Church could support us in this by praying or coming along to help and getting to know the Mums, Dads and Carers that come, sharing God's love.

Sunday Groups: We currently have 39 children on our Sunday groups register (this is a drop of over 20% in comparison to last year), also only a few attend every Sunday and now we only see 15-20 children each Sunday. Society has changed more and more; shopping; sports and activities are taking place on a Sunday morning. Going forward we need to consider ways we can respond to this and reach out to families who maybe in their second and now third generations who have never attended church. As a result the Leadership team have agreed to allow me to reach out to those families who do not currently attend church to send their children to a group without attending themselves – they will of course be invited and I will need to think of a way in which we can involve them in the life of the church.

Crèche: continues to flourish. Veronica writes “Another wonderful year has passed, and we have had the pleasure of watching the youngest

members of our congregation develop at a tremendous rate. We have six regular children turning up most weeks plus some others just starting to find their feet. They are a happy bunch and have settled down very well and enjoy the toys that are available to them. They are also very energetic and love playing on the soft play slide and trampoline as well as climbing over anything and everything! The crèche volunteers make time each week to have a story-bag with the children – letting them choose which biblical story is to be read. This not only encourages them to sit and listen but allows them the opportunity to interact with the story props which, hopefully, aids their memory of the bible stories. During our Christmas party, the children made Christmas cards with paint and sponges to take home to their parents. We will be sad to see our older children move up to Climbers at Easter but we know that they are ready for the next stage in their church life. Thanks and blessings also go to our crèche volunteers who make all this possible.”

Climbers: The team led by Caroline Rous continues to provide quality teaching and fun activities for our children.

Caroline writes: We continue to have fun and find out about God and Jesus in Climbers. Thank you to all our volunteers for their hard work and care. We have been very low on numbers this year so pray for some new families to join us.

Explorers: Are blessed to have a fantastic team of dedicated teachers, craft leaders and helpers I am incredibly grateful to them all. We regularly see about 8- 12 children a week however this is likely to drop when we send six children to Pathfinders at Easter, as we have only had one joining us from Climbers.

Sunday Serving: We really want the children and young people to feel they belong as part of the wider church family and give them an opportunity to explore their God given gifts and talents and find their calling serving others. On the third Sunday of the month we have been running Sunday Serving This is when Explorers and Pathfinders join the main worship and they are involved in leading and serving alongside the adults as part of the service or supporting the children’s groups. They can be involved in worship (singing or playing in the band), prayers, reading, drama, welcoming, teas and coffees and tech. Climbers and

Creche continue to run on those weeks to ensure our youngest continue to receive age appropriate teaching. So far this has been really well received and a number of our children and young people have been involved. Please pray that this continues. Also please pray that through this service we can bring the generations together through worship and prayerful activities.

Events: In order to be more accessible to families that don't come to church on a Sunday morning we have run events throughout the year. Holiday Club; Holiday Club Reunion; Light Party and, as always, our Christingle. We are also blessed with a team of regular volunteers who help make these events possible and I am truly grateful for their support.

Over the summer we had a fabulous time at our **TeamBuilders Holiday Club** and the fun continued with our **Holiday Club Reunion** afternoon, with crafts, service and food. The focus was all about being on Jesus' team where everyone is valued and has a contribution to make using their unique gifts and talents! During the Holiday Club Caroline Bailey and her team alongside the children, leaders and young people, all made a FAITH mosaic, which is currently hanging in Café Mosaic, symbolizing that we may all, be individual but together as a team we can make something beautiful.

This was followed up by a fantastic **Light Party** at the end of October to continue with our Light theme, we looked at Jesus Light of the world. This provided an alternative to Halloween, as well as a short service we had crafts, treasure hunt in the dark, sparklers and Smores and Jacket potatoes. Those that attended also participated in creating the HOPE mosaic symbolizing that Jesus is our Hope. The event was well attended, and I had lots of positive comments from parents which was fantastic.

Christingle & Families Together at Christmas: We are really blessed to have a dedicated team of volunteers working with and supporting the children in a wonderful Christingle presentation. This year the theme was God's Gift of Love based of John 3:16. The children and young people shared the good news of Jesus' birth and ultimate sacrifice to save us all and how that is the ultimate Christmas gift. We raised money for the Children's Society through the collection; helping those children in difficult and tragic circumstances. On the morning of our rehearsal we

had a lovely time with families having breakfast and making our final mosaic LOVE and assembling Christingle bags.

It is so important that we have these opportunities today as so many children are growing up in families that do not attend church and this is their only chance to learn about Jesus.

Springs Dance Apprentices We have continued to partner with Springs Dance Company - Europe's foremost professional Christian dance company - in providing a community placement for their yearly teams of Apprentices. The students, often young women from a variety of countries, have supported our children's Sunday groups, R.E.D youth group and Charterhouse Preschool in our local community by using dance and movement.

Highlights this year have included their input for our Harvest and Christingle services in the Autumn Term, and we thank God for their enthusiasm, energy and Christian faith which shines out and provides such a great role model for our children and young people. This year, Springs are reevaluating their Apprenticeship Course structure, and we will be in discussion with them about how our existing partnership may evolve.

Please continue to pray for us throughout the year ahead as your prayers are an invaluable support to our work. Pray for the schools we visit and pray that the children will learn more about God and His word and be curious about him.

GIVE THANKS!

- for the wonderful opportunity we have to meet with the children and share your love,
- for all those who serve in this ministry giving up time and resources to do so. Please bless the children and the volunteers.

PRAY FOR:

- that new pathways will open, that will continue to bless and encourage both the Springs Apprentice dance students and our church and community here,
- for volunteers, that people are willing to continue to work with our

children and step up to do new things. Please pray for new volunteers to join this important ministry bringing the next generation to God,

- for growth, and that we will meet more young families, either in schools, through events, Holiday Club or from Tea and Toys; and that they come regularly to CCO and grow in relationship with God,
- for our children and young people that they seek and find God's love for them, that they grow in relationship with Him and continue on their journey of faith throughout their whole lives.

Jo Gavin, Children's Minister

Youth Ministry

Pathfinders – meet in the Undercroft on Sunday morning's for those in school years 7-9. We build relationships with these young people whilst our focus is on teaching the Bible and developing a foundation of Biblical knowledge and attitudes – and we have often have great fun whilst doing this! We are currently using ROOTS material and completed a successful Youth Alpha course last year including a day dedicated to the Holy Spirit spent at Downe Scout Activity Centre! The number of young people who attend Pathfinders can vary each week; we have 19 young people on the register, but we regularly attract around 8 young people. We join with children's ministry at 'Sunday Serving' once per month; serving the church and helping with crèche or children's ministry, music, welcome, tech and refreshments.

Juice – meet on a Sunday evening bi-weekly, and our group overlaps the evening service. Juice is more focussed on discipling young people and encouraging them as they grow in their faith. In Juice, we are currently doing the Youth Alpha course which is going really well. We currently have 6 young people on the register, and often welcome most of those each week. I was due to travel with 3 young people from the Juice group on a mission trip to Romania this summer, but it is with regret that this trip will no longer be going ahead. We also have 1 POD group, ATSOC, which meet at Costa inside Tesco, and we enjoy bible study together. Last term we studied Job, and this term we are looking at the Christmas story.

ReD. – is our Friday after-school youth discipleship group. This group has a very mixed age group; Year 7 to Year 11, so ideally I like to split this group via age group. We usually welcome between 15-25 young people each week and it's a wonderful community outreach opportunity; approximately 25% of those in attendance attend church on a Sunday. I find it extremely difficult to run this group with few helpers and if we have less than 3 volunteers then I have to cancel the group, which I have had to do this term. We also have a volunteer in the kitchen who prepares a delicious meal for us and clears away, usually the highlight of the session!!

This year we have continued to run **Base** as a monthly social activity which has included our ever popular Movie Nights with pizza and popcorn.

FN@TB – is a small, special youth group for young people who find large or noisy group activities difficult to cope with. We accept a maximum of 12 young to this group and we currently have 9 young people on the register and one new person this term! The group BaseBook (for young adults 18+ who have previously attended FN@TB) meet up for trips and events.

Community work – Jo Gavin wrote an Assembly and worship pack called “COMPASSion” which is about anti-bullying, and we have delivered this to Year 7 and 8 students at Bishop Justus School, and we will be taking this to Year 9 and 10 before Easter. We are also leading morning worship in form groups and working with the Director of Chaplaincy and Community for the Aquinas Church of England Education Trust. I am looking forward to meeting their new chaplain and seeing what support we can offer them in the future.

College Pastors has ceased, so I have stopped attending Orpington and Bromley Colleges for the time being, although I have recently seen a student from the college who said that she missed us – so this gives me affirmation that our service was well received.

I continue to meet Danny from OBC to consider joined up youth work activities and pray for young people in our churches and communities. We have our third annual prayer space planned at Bishop Justus School in April (the date has been changed because of building work and exams). I also liaise with other local youth and children’s ministers, and the Chaplain from St Olave’s school.

I remain the church ambassador for a charity called FareShare, although Mel Ketchin now collects most of the food parcels which we use to supplement the meals for Community Club and to help those in the community.

JWJ and Drama – the band is still going strong under the leadership of Sharon Russo. We are hoping to do some joined up work with the

Gospel choir and led worship on all-age services, Mothering Sunday and Palm Sunday.

Personal development – I am meeting with the Diocesan Director of Ordinands (DDO) a person appointed by the Bishop to oversee, on his behalf, the process of selecting, training, choosing an appropriate curacy and ordaining of new ministers into the Church of England. As part of this process I have completed and successfully passed a module ‘Exploring Theology’ at St Augustine’s in West Malling, and Jo and I have completed the ‘Speaking God’s word’ course. I shall attend a mental health first aid course later this year and I worked with Andy Goddard to deliver safeguarding training to the congregation. I am working closely with Sharon and she is encouraging me and I hope she will continue to nurture my gifts, and advise on what additional training I should do.

GIVE THANKS!

- for amazing volunteers who come each week to support the young people,
- for the facilities we have at Christ Church,
- for the relationships I have with colleagues and friends at Christ Church.

PRAY FOR:

- more volunteers so that we can disciple the young people in smaller groups,
- a new mission opportunity to arise.

Andrena Palmer

Vicar's Report

How lovely to be given the honour to be your new vicar here at Christ Church! Thank you for welcoming me and Andi so lovingly.

2018-2019 has indeed been a year of changes. Christ Church entered 2018 happily with their much-loved vicar of 15 years. Then, with Jay being awarded a well-deserved promotion to Canon Missioner at Southwark Cathedral, there began an interregnum in February with hopes of a fairly quick appointment of a new vicar. The wait turned out to be a little longer than expected but the church seems to have done amazingly well during what was to be nearly a year's interregnum, maintaining everything just as it should be. This is a glowing testimony to the staff and volunteers onto whose shoulders fell the mantle of responsibility, and the church's sense of family and community rallying around in times of difficulty. This is a true inspiration to churches everywhere.

This does mean though, that as I only began ministering here in mid-January, there is little I can reflect back over to write, other than to say please do read all the other reports of the excellent work done throughout last year. However, I can look forwards with hope and excitement to what I believe the next year will bring, and I would like to share my thoughts with you.

Looking back at Jay's vision in the 2015-2016 Annual Report, he said that he felt the church was entering a new season of life, in which the church would become "An above and beyond church – worshipping Christ above all things and going beyond the four walls in mission." And as I have been praying, seeking God's will and speaking with people, I think that the year we are entering is a new season in that very vision.

I too feel God is calling us into worshipping Him above all things - to be a people dedicated to Him, reliant on Him, trusting Him, worshipping Him and following Him in obedience with all of our lives. This may involve going beyond wherever we might have settled, being prepared to risk whatever it takes to go deeper with Him, and being prepared to drop whatever doesn't sharpen our hunger for Him.

Sometimes that could involve looking at where or how we might have settled in our worship, seeing how we can help people to draw into His Presence more easily, and look at what it means to worship Him in Spirit and in truth more deeply. Water is often described in scripture as life giving, for example the stream of life in Revelation 22. It is an interesting thing that the water of scripture is always depicted as flowing, it never stands still. We have a God who is both unchanging and delights in creating and making things new. He is calling us deeper into the stream of life – He doesn't want us to be content with paddling in the shallows, but wants us to dive into all He has for us. This is enormously exciting and you may notice the odd change in our worship as we work together to try to accomplish this.

To worship Christ above all things we must also believe His word. He says that He will work powerfully through us, and that “whoever believes in me will do the works I have been doing, and they will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father” [John 14:12]. It would be wonderful to see His mighty power at work more and more in our lives and our worship, and to this end we are making more space and time in our services for this to grow. I believe He wants us to be known in a mighty way as a church where His power dwells, and people can come to find a God who is alive and well and ready to meet with and heal His people.

The natural overflow of this I believe will be “going beyond the four walls” with an increased desire and energy to bring Christ to our broken and hurting world. Psalm 37:4 exhorts us to “delight ourselves in the Lord and He will give us the desires of our heart.” As we worship Him above all things, He will call us and give us the desire and giftings to fulfil that calling. I think it will also result in an increased desire for the people who are beyond the four walls to come in and see what we are about. I have a feeling that God wants to bring about a Heavenly “population explosion” where people will be saved and healed, and He will be glorified.

We live in a world that is changing faster than it ever has done before. Society therefore is changing faster than it ever has done before. Our children and youth are under more pressure from more sides than they have ever been under before. Our senior citizens are lonelier than they

ever have been before. Families are working longer and harder than they ever have before. Our young adults, mainly twenty-somethings, are facing very particular needs with faster paced working lives, more competition, more financial pressures, faster rises in house prices that strip them of affording their own homes, increased risk of loneliness and increased risk of debt. In churches in general, it seems that they are an age group that is often under-represented, and I believe God wants us to look at this in Christ Church. As such, I am hoping after Easter to create a worship space attractive for the young adult twenty-something age-group; where they can be invited to come and find we have a God who gives them the worth and value they deserve, and offers something more than all the world offers. This will also be intergenerational though, as all who want to come will be very welcome.

There is so much going on in this wonderful church. We have children's work, youth work, Community Club, Tea and Toys, Mosaic Cafe, bible studies, small groups, Mission work, a Pastoral Team, a Prayer Team, church administration teams, and many more. These activities are either run or supported by our fantastic volunteers, but we could do even more if we had more volunteers! Please can I ask you to prayerfully consider where God might be asking you to help. At several points in my life I have tried to give God gifts of service in gratitude for all He has done for me, but in His incredible Grace, He has always given me back more than I could ever have given Him. It really is good for the soul to volunteer.

To finish, I am praying this coming year is a season of Springtime, where God renews and restores His church and us as individuals, and we can all say loudly together with energy and joy "Maranatha!" Come Lord! Amen.

With love,
Sharon