



Christ
Church
Orpington

A large, circular mosaic background in shades of blue and white. The mosaic depicts a central figure, possibly a saint or a religious figure, surrounded by intricate patterns and text. The text around the perimeter of the mosaic reads: "JESUS SAID I HAVE COME TO BRING LIFE IN ALL ITS FULLNESS".

Annual Report 2020-2021

THE ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHURCH MEETING

will take place at Christ Church on Sunday 16th May 2021
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
2. Annual report for the year 2020-21 (already circulated), incorporating:
Secretary's report on the work of the PCC;
Report of the proceedings of the Deanery Synod;
3. Electoral Roll report.
- 4. Treasurer's report and appointment of Auditor**
- 5. Any other business**

PCC Secretary's report to the APCM 2020-21

Since the delayed APCM on 11 October 2020, the PCC has held three meetings, on 22 October, 7 December and on ZOOM on 22 March 2021.

Finance has as usual been a major item in the PCC's work, and the PCC has approved the accounts for 2020 and agreed a budget for 2021. Because of the pandemic, 2020 was a difficult year. In order to continue payments such as parish share, the church had drawn on its reserves in 2020 and would do the same in 2021. However, thanks to the generosity of the congregation over many years, the church's reserves were still large and, while there was a need for prudence, there was no need for immediate remedial action. The PCC will continue to keep the finances under review.

Other matters discussed included safeguarding issues, including new guidance on safer recruitment; the distribution of money in the Mission Support Fund; various matters handled by the HR Committee; and discussions at the Deanery Synod.

Don Bower
PCC Secretary

Electoral Roll

Roger Wilkinson, Electoral Roll Officer, reported that since last year, the number on the roll had fallen from 177 to 175. 2 people had been added two people had moved away and two had died: our dear friends Doreen Turvey and Grace Dane had gone to be with the Lord.

Of the 175, 103 (or 58.86%) were female, and 72 (or 41.14%) were male. 84 (or 48%) lived in the parish and 91 (or 52%) were non-resident.

Hall Bookings

(written before lockdown when facilities were operating)

For the most part of this year there has been little change with those that regularly hire out our facilities. This has therefore provided a steady regular income stream for the Church. There has been some expansion for our long-standing hirers including the Pilates class and some additions with Counselling sessions and Study classes.

Our team expansion with opening and closing the halls has continued to work well and has provided a degree of flexibility for all those involved as we work together. Our main caretaking team has again been an excellent asset to the Church, and we are looking at how we can keep on top of the regular maintenance for the ease of running for everyone and to look to general improvements.

We hope to free a lot more storage space with our review of all storage areas and are also looking to see how we can greatly improve our waste production and our recycling of all waste. With this in mind, we have contacted all those who use our facilities (regular and otherwise) and asked for their support in this initiative. Included in this is a reminder that all waste generated must be removed by the hirer and a reminder of the rules when hiring out the kitchen facilities.

Here at Christ Church we have continued to be the venue for fund raising activities both in-house and from various charitable organisations. The Diocese has been a consistent hirer for their training courses, workshops and conferences. Both the Men's Ministry and Women's Ministry are continuing and expanding, and we now run Messy Church on a monthly basis which has proven to be extremely successful drawing in many people from the local community. Indeed, we continue to provide a service to the general public as they hire us for their celebrations, gatherings and remembrances.

GIVE THANKS!

- for all those working together, especially caretaking team, to keep the facilities functioning well for the benefit of all,
- for the opportunity that our facilities provide us with to engage with all those who enter our premises whether they are part of a group or look to our facilities for support,
- for the expertise of the caretaking team and their ability to tackle the various issues that we have with the internal fabric and utilities of the buildings.

PRAY FOR:

- Our continued efforts to achieve the correct balance for the use of our facilities both for the church members and church activities and local community,
- Jim in his recovery and a speedy return to activities he chooses to do.
- Jim and Mike in their work to maintain the building and manage various repairs and improvements as they are required.

Jacqui Ko

Deanery Synod Report

As with many things in 2020-21, COVID-19 had an impact on meetings of Deanery Synod. Waiting for things to improve over the summer, our meeting of June 2020, which was to have been based around worship and a picnic to say farewell to Rev John Tranter was cancelled. And indeed, John didn't retire then – he agreed to stay until 2021.

Our first meeting of 2020-21 was held in November via Zoom. We had two presentations:

1. Archdeacon Julie Conalty spoke about the recently released 'Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse in the Church of England. After reading the report she had wondered how can our culture have been rotten for so long and how can we have failed for so long? The church had set themselves up as a moral compass for right and wrong but at the same time had overlooked people who were being abused within the institution. There is to be a report to Bishops' Council and then changes will be introduced – better training, the right policies in place and ensuring churches know what they should do, talking openly about sexuality, being accountable, etc
2. Abi Hiscock, our archdeaconry diocesan growth enabler gave an update on 'Called to Grow', talking about how churches can be helped during and after the pandemic. Churches can't be asked to set targets to grow during a pandemic, but there is still a need for her role, to come alongside churches and help them. So 'Called to Grow' could be renamed 'Called to Renew, or Refresh, or Reset or... Abi had done an online search and was pleased to see many churches were adapting well to providing services and other events virtually

Deanery finances are in good order (we didn't spend any money last year) and so parishes will probably not be asked to pay a levy in 2021.

The standing committee of Deanery Synod met in February 2021, but we decided not to hold another Zoom Synod meeting as there was no pressing business to discuss.

Give thanks:

- For the way technology has enabled many churches to hold virtual services and other events during Lockdown,
- For Rev John Tranter and Bishop James as they retire this year.

Pray for:

- The Vacancy in See Committee as they met – an appointment of a new Bishop is not likely until 2022. Pray for Bishop Simon who will take up the load during the vacancy,
- Churches as they reopen after restrictions are lifted. Several in the deanery have suffered financially by being closed for so long and many are wondering what attendance will be like once they reopen,
- Other people from Christ Church to come forward and serve as Deanery representatives.

Andy Goddard
Lay Chair of Synod

Church Warden's Report

This year's review from the church wardens is set in the context that we have had some form of lockdown for all of it. For most of the year the church has been closed. Well yes, the church premises have been closed, but the church has been highly active. We have been mindful of Paul's bold assertion in Philippians 1:

12 Now I want you to know, brothers and sisters, that what has happened to me has actually served to advance the gospel. 13 As a result, it has become clear throughout the whole palace guard and to everyone else that I am in chains for Christ.

Paul was in prison, chained up and on the face of things unable to complete his calling of preaching the gospel. Yet the gospel message was not chained and Paul goes further to say that because of his chains that his gospel preaching mission was actually better served. This defies what most of us would expect; chains and imprisonment are not generally associated with helping to spread a message.

Lockdown has brought back memories of the interregnum, which was a significant period between Jay Colwill moving on and Sharon Smith arriving as our vicar. During the interregnum there may have been a temptation to simply mothball the church and to keep things ticking over, waiting for a new vicar to arrive, before doing very much for God's Kingdom. Yet so many people used this time to develop ministries which thrived and we all learned so much. Lockdown has had a similar feel.

It is most definitely true that we have missed seeing so many of our friends at Christ Church, including the third pillar in our warden team, Derrick. Derrick we miss you and thankfully it looks as though we will be able to see you again soon!

It is equally true that there have been much of our physical gatherings and collective worship that we have missed too. Yet, there is plenty to report which is positive and for which we give thanks to God. There are people at Christ Church who have stepped up heroically and helped us to adapt the way that we do church, during a time when we have not been able to come together. The online services have involved many such people, some in front of the cameras and laptops and some behind the scenes, doing the vital working of piecing everything together and making everything work properly.

These online services have enabled us to worship and to learn together in a different way. Significantly, they have been viewed by many more people than those who attended physically when our premises were open, including to visitors. Many people have watched our online services during the week, at a time which best suits them. They have been able to view our services from the safety of their own surroundings. This is perhaps an important reminder to us that entering a church as a visitor can be intimidating for visitors who do not know what to expect. Yes, we give people a great and friendly welcome at Christ Church, but visitors do not know this until they arrive and many never get as far as finding out. The online services have provided an accessible way to see what we get up

to, without needing to cross our threshold. Our message has not been in chains either, thank you, Paul!

Please pray specifically for God's guidance in how far we develop the online ministries, when the restrictions on our physical gatherings are lifted fully.

Please also give thanks for the unity we feel as a warden team and pray protection, so that this continues.

Finally, we cannot complete the review of 2020/2021 without a mention of how brilliant it has been to have had Sharon and Andi at Christ Church Orpington; they are such special people.

Pieter and Dave

Annual Accounts 2020

Summary Version

All are welcome to attend our services. The electoral roll is updated annually and comprises 176 members, a decrease of 10 since last year, with 6 having moved away and 4 having died. The breakdown is:

Male = 72, Female = 104

Resident in the parish = 86 Resident outside the parish = 90

The average weekly attendance during October (when the count is done for the Diocese) was 79 adults aged 16 or over and 5 young people aged under 16 (2019: 144 & 31)

Due to Covid-19 and the lockdown these figures are artificially low.

Income.

Total receipts for the General Fund were £205,937 (2019 £219,510) down £13,573 on the previous year. This was mainly due to a drop in charitable activities of £41,697 (£26,359 this year and £68,056 for 2019) This is made up of the following, Rental income down £23,166 (£14,292 this year and £37,458 for 2019) Church Activities and events down £19,131 (£10,564 this year and £29,695 2019) Fees for weddings and other services were up £600 (£1,503 this year and £903 for 2019)

It was decided that due to the large decrease in income for the general fund, the Gift Day collection for 2020 would go to the general fund and helped see donations for the year increase by £17,435 (£167,982 this year and £150,547 for 2019) The general fund was also helped by a claim received from HMRC under the furlough scheme for £10,650.

Expenditure.

Expenditure from the General Fund was £221,139 (£227,750 for 2019) a decrease of £6,611 as the church felt that it was prudent to keep expenditure to a minimum for a further year and therefore no exceptional items were expended and need to be reported.

£29,993 was moved from the restricted fund to meet the cost of the new media equipment and the fund was closed.

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. An increase in unrestricted funds of £7,781 arose in the year (2019 – deficit £12,599)

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 £111,000. unrestricted funds in cash at the bank were above this and available throughout the year.

It has been a difficult year, but despite this you have given of your time and money to support the church to reach out locally and beyond. 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 & expenditure account

	Unrestricted funds 2020 £	Restricted funds 2020 £	Total 2020 £	Total 2019 £
<u>Income from:</u>				
Donations and legacies	167,982	7,389	175,371	195,393
Charitable activities	26,359	-	26,359	68,056
Investments	946	-	1,128	1,128
Total income	205,937	7,389	213,326	264,577
<u>Expenditure on:</u>				
Raising funds	-	-	-	217
<u>Charitable activities</u>				
Church activities	221,139	4,537	225,676	255,058
Total charitable expenditure	221,139	4,537	225,676	255,058
Total resources expended	221,139	4,537	255,676	255,275
Net incoming/(outgoing) resources before transfers	(15,202)	2,852	(12,350)	9,302
Gross transfers between funds	22,983	(22,983)	-	-
Net expenditure for the year/				
Net movement in funds	7,781	(20,131)	(12,350)	9,302
Fund balances at 1 January 2020	190,410	30,672	211,082	211,780
Fund balances at 31 December 2020	198,191	10,541	208,732	221,082

Balance Sheet as at 31st December 2020

	2020		2019	
	£	£	£	£
Current assets				
Debtors	10,826		12,250	
Cash at bank and in hand	179,288		214,715	
	190,114		226,965	
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year				
	(5,996)		(5,883)	
Net current assets		184,118		221,082
Income funds				
Restricted funds		10,541		30,672
<u>Unrestricted funds</u>				
Designated funds	42,600		42,600	
General unrestricted funds	155,591		147,810	
		198,191		190,410
		208,732		221,082

The financial statements were approved by the Parochial Church Council on 22 March 2021.

Missionary Expenditure – Restricted Funds

	2020	2019
	£	£
Grants to institutions:		
CPAS	1,119	1,738
London City Mission	1,496	1,472
Church Missionary Society	1,594	1,523
Tear Fund	1,935	4,571
Spinnaker Trust	2,059	2,003
Release International	1,310	1,300
Missionary Aviation Fellowship	1,310	1,750
Rochester Diocese for Kondo Church, Tanzania	3,220	5,800
Bromley Foodbank	1,681	-
The Bible Society	1,500	1,300
Other	1,605	3,339
	18,829	24,796
Grants to individuals	2,155	3,098

Unity Church

Even in the short time since our last report, and despite the challenges presented by Covid, God has still been at work in Unity Church and the Ramsden Estate, and we have a lot to thank Him for. The Church was relaunched to be His hands in the estate, so it seems right to start with our outreach work. Sadly, the pre-school and the Guide and Brownie groups have stopped using the hall, but this gives us the opportunity to host other things. There are three new ministries planned and developments in older ones.

We now have a new leader for the CAP Job Club, and intend to restart as soon as practicable. When this will be possible it is hard to say, but with the increase in unemployment due to Covid, it has become an even more vital work. We have linked up with the Bromley CAP Partnership, who plan to start another club in the centre of Bromley. We now have leadership for the CAP Life Skills course, which teaches practical skills that are often missing, especially in families trying to live on a tight budget.

We have two other new church-based projects for the future. A member of our congregation is a personal trainer, who is already going to be renting our small hall for his work when it is legal to do so. He will lead a community fitness group called Get Active, to encourage healthier living. In a similar vein, a lady who lives near the church is helping us set up a community garden, to give people a chance to work together growing food and take that food home with them.

Our Community Fridge continues to serve many people on the estate. As well as a large range of food, we now have supplies of toiletries.

All of these projects bring new people into the church premises, creating opportunities for building relationships and evangelism. We have held an online Alpha course, and one person has committed his life to Christ. We hope that he will be the first of many.

Our aging building has really benefitted from the work done to it. The main area is already a much nicer place following the various improvements made over the last few years. We are now moving on to the small hall, with new decoration and lighting. What has been amazing is how God has provided us with the funds needed, through the generosity of people in the church and grants from various organisations.

One area of concern is our work amongst children and young people. We hope that our Sunday and midweek groups will be able to resume safely in the not too distant future, and that they will grow because of the increased number of contacts we now have.

Our love to you all

Peter and Lynn Price, Dave and Kate Bell

Give thanks:

- The growth of our existing work and the exciting new projects.
- For God's amazing provision for our needs.
- Our partnership with other churches in the CAP Job Club and the Community Fridge.

Pray for:

- Continued growth in our mission and in our links with the community resulting in more people coming to faith.
- The resumption of our work amongst children and young people, that those who were involved before will return and that new people will join.
- 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 our free foodbank, laying out food donations for local people to collect as they have need. It has three aims: to reduce food poverty, reduce food waste and provide a safe environment to engage with our local community. It was started in May 2020 and has gone from strength to strength, running three times a week. We now have 31 volunteers on the team, either collecting food from supermarkets, running the sessions, delivering food parcels, taking any waste to Foal Farm or running the clothing bank. Many on the team had no connection with Christ Church beforehand and it's been great to see how everyone works so well together and has a real passion for this ministry. Although it's rather sobering to see the increase in numbers of those who come to collect the food, we thank God for the ability to show his love and care in this way. We estimate that currently (March 2021) we serve about 90 families per week offering them a mixture of ambient, chilled and frozen food. The recipients are from the local community and many have lost jobs or are struggling financially, while others come a little later in the session to prevent food waste.

Each week our volunteers make 20 collections from supermarkets and other food outlets. Half of these were arranged through the Fareshare network - the majority of the food would otherwise be thrown away. The exception is our collection of about 300kg of groceries and fresh food per week from the Food Hub at Hope Church, which is specifically designed for those in food poverty. This was set up in partnership with Transform Bromley Borough and is distributed to 12 foodbanks/community fridges in Bromley. The food is supplied through the Felix Project.

Over the last 10 months, we have got to know many of the recipients well and have good conversations with them as they wait in the queue. From time to time we have been asked about deeper spiritual issues and for prayer. We received a large number of duvet covers just before Christmas, and were able to make up gift bags for each person. On Mothering Sunday it was a delight to give out daffodil posies, an Easter card and a small gift to each lady. Several team members have cooked some amazing meals each week in the church kitchen, and we're grateful for the sponsorship of Community Club members in providing some of these for Open Kitchen. During lockdown, we benefited greatly from these meals, with ingredients paid for by a grant from Asda as well as by generous donations from church members. Our clothing bank has helped many with good quality clothes, toys, bedding or homeware; we are able to pass on clothes that are not needed by our recipients to the Latch Project in Bromley. We have just joined the Hygiene Bank which provides toiletries and sanitary products for those in hygiene poverty. Thank you for all your support of Open Kitchen, in terms of prayer, donations, time, energy and preventing food waste. We are so grateful to Sharon and the PCC for allowing us to use the Undercroft and Pathfinders Room for this. I am incredibly grateful to all those who are part of the team who have shown such

commitment and creativity to this ministry. It's been a privilege to show God's love in action in this way.

Liesel Stanbridge

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 year, this has however been very much disrupted by the COVID-19 pandemic first and second lockdowns, which brought groups and face to face activities to a standstill for the majority of the year. We have however been on-line throughout only missing one week 27th Dec and whilst we have lost the face to face contact, we have seen an increase in the numbers viewing our on-line sessions, that are run by myself and Caroline Rous, with music from Liesel and technical support from James Dunkerley – a huge thank you to everyone involved. Over the last year we have attempted some socially distant face to face groups/activities where allowed this has had varying reactions/attendance due to pandemic.

Messy Church

Prior to lockdown Autumn 2019-Spring 2020 we established a very successful monthly Messy Church with between 70-100plus people attending and enjoying, craft, drama, singing, bible stories and food. Since lockdown I have been sending '**Messy Church at Home**' sheets to our members with activities and fun things to do around a bible theme. They have also been invited to join our on-line sessions and to Open Table. We also ran a very successful socially distant **Messy Light Party in Autumn 2020**, this could only be attended by 14 families who booked in advance to ensure socially distanced household tables were possible in the halls. This involved all food, craft and materials for each family table being provided and prepared in advance. The session was led upfront and run by a small team as a number of our team were shielding. **A Messy Christingle** was also planned and booked out within 20 minutes of going live on the booking service but sadly had to be pulled at the last minute due to infection levels rising and was then recorded and put online, we had over 200 views. Following the latest lockdown we have been sending monthly activities and recently had a **Messy Easter Online**, so far we have had 110 views, this involved puppets, songs, the Easter story, a **Messy Easter Garden**. This also linked into '**Seriously Surprising Adventure Trail**' which was held on Church grounds during Easter week and the following week, we had over 30 children take part, receiving Cadbury Crème eggs, a Christian book and a cuddly toy.

Schools Work: Prior to lockdown Caroline Rous and I were thankful that we were welcomed fortnightly into Warren Road, Chelsfield, Harris Primary Academy Orpington, Blenheim and the Highway Primary Schools, all local to Christ Church. Following lockdown video assemblies and other resources have been made available to schools via the Spinnaker website. During the last year we have focused on Amazing Places, Bodies and Colours for collective worship themes. Each collective worship includes a bible story or passage, and how it relates to the children's lives, and a time of reflection and prayer. I am incredibly grateful that I was welcomed back into The Highway in September and worked with different class bubble assemblies weekly throughout the Autumn term. I also recorded a special harvest video for the whole school. Sadly following second lockdown I was unable to attend for the Spring Term but now plan to go back in the Summer Term. Caroline has also just started with Year group assemblies in Warren Road.

Tea and Toys: prior to lockdown, was very busy with 152 families on our register, with about 40 plus different families attending on a weekly basis, also a number of these families attended Messy Church which was wonderful, as previously had not attended church.

The group has been led by a faithful group of helpers, including myself, Maureen Grandini, Pauline Dugard, Lesa Paton, Steph Fargie and Paula Lynch. We are also thankful to Jim Callaghan and Mike Bailey who have helped us with setting up/clearing away. This group is a wonderful outreach opportunity, as well as providing a warm welcome to those who come, it also shares a bible story and songs.

Sadly we have been unable to run this group since the first lockdown started in March, whilst we hope restrictions will ease, a number of the volunteers also work in playschool settings which will mean they are unable to mix groups currently. I am hoping to restart Mini Movers after 17th May and Tea and Toys after 21st June in line with the government's planned reopening and reduction of restrictions, this is however subject to us having sufficient volunteers.

Sunday Groups: We currently have 25 children on our Sunday groups registers for Creche, Climbers and Explorers this is a drop of over in comparison to last year, we have however seen high weekly viewing numbers for our Explorers and Climbers Online (60-80 plus viewings) and regularly interact with some children when we are live on FB on a Sunday morning. I have given out certificates and prizes for attendance and we sent out gifts for Christmas.

During the Autumn term when schools re-opened and it was safe to do so we ran a joint **Explorers and Climbers** on a Sunday starting 6th October for up to 15

(including 2 leaders) socially distanced, sadly parents and children felt it was not the right time to return and eventually after a few weeks we stopped due to low/no attendance. We continued on-line throughout as we were aware not everyone could attend due to restrictions.

The current plan is to restart a **Explorer and Climber** group at church on 25th April. We will continue on-line for those that cannot make it in person. **Creche** is sadly unable to return as yet and little ones are to remain in their family group in the main worship, we do however hope to restart after 17th May in line with the planned government reopening steps.

In addition to our regular weekly slots at Christmas time I did a daily slot decorating the Jesse Tree and telling the Bible stories and we had our daily Easter Egg Experience again

Prayer Points

- Pray for volunteers especially as we start to return to church, give thanks as life is getting busier and pray for protection people are fearful due to the virus. Please pray 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
- Pray for Messy Church as we look at socially distant ways we can meet face to face and for Creche & Tea and Toys that we are able to restart these groups safely.
- Pray for growth, and that we will meet more young families, and that they come regularly to CCO or view us on-line and grow in relationship with God
- Pray 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

I said in my last APCM report that it had been a challenging time setting up the youth groups online, but lots of fun too as Christ Church has the most amazing young people. This has continued to be challenging as tiers and lockdowns meant different restrictions had to be put in place to keep everyone safe.

Pathfinders, which are school years 7 – 9 have a Sunday morning teaching video which often incorporates the Church of England Roots course, but sometimes is tailored to fit in with the main service sermon. This is put up on our CCO Facebook site after the main service, and also on our CCO Website. Although the live watching numbers are relatively small, over the week the videos average a good number of views, suggesting it remains a useful medium for reaching those who may have other activities on Sunday mornings. From the beginning of October, Pathfinders met face-to-face in the small hall, with a Zoom link for those who couldn't attend or didn't want to attend physically.

This then had to go back to online only during lockdown, and as I write, I am looking forward to restarting face-to-face meetings after Easter. To enable Pathfinders to adequately socially distance, and have fun, they will move into the Vicarage for their sessions. Where when the weather is good, they can enjoy the trampoline, the basketball net, badminton, and a safe space to enjoy learning about Jesus.

Juice, which are school years 10-13+, meet weekly on Zoom for either their choice of topics for discussions (including omniscience, omnipotence, infinity, suffering, Jesus in the Corona Virus, and the Transfiguration), or topics focusing on themes in the Bible (including Pentecost, Covenant and Presence). We have also looked at topics of; Heresy, 'Pilgrim's Progress', and Encouragement, and also; Advent, Palm Sunday, and Sin.

From the beginning of September Juice began to meet face-to-face in the small hall, with those who couldn't meet up physically joining us via Zoom on the big screen. This had to go back online over lockdown, and we are hopefully, as you read this, enjoying meeting face-to-face again.

ATSOC, the youth bible study group meet fortnightly on Zoom, and continue to meet on Zoom for the time being. This will be reviewed when it is deemed safe/acceptable for groups of more than 6 to meet again in coffee shops such as COSTA. In ATSOC, we have been going through Genesis together.

ReD and ReD ReuniteD, are the youth groups run by CCO to serve the local community. With the influx of school year 6's to ReD, the older age groups needed something more specific for them, so ReD ReuniteD was created for just

that. The local youth were not so keen to meet on Zoom, and as yet we are debating how best to take this group forwards. We are looking forward to opening up again though as soon as will be good, possibly September.

FN@TB, the youth group for those who appreciate a quieter setting, again will be meeting up once the restrictions allow.

I have also been joined in playing worship with some of our very musically talented young people, and I am hoping to develop this area going forwards.

Give Thanks:

- Big thanks to Juice - they are a great team of young people to work with.
- Big thanks to Pathfinders – as we come, learn, and have fun together.
- Thanks to Sarah Gardiner and all the volunteers, both current and new, for all the young people.

THANK-YOU VERY MUCH!

Pray For:

- Please pray for the young people as they settle into universities, new schools and new classes.
- Please pray that we will all go deeper in our knowledge and love of God, and find new ways of being close to Him and knowing Him better.
- Please pray that we will follow the Lord's guidance in all that we do, looking to Him, and learning from Him.

Amen.

Vicar's Report

It is only six months since our 2020 APCM meeting and since then we have been in and out of Tiers and lockdowns that have felt a bit like being on a rollercoaster. But thank the Lord, it appears that an ending of some sort is on the horizon.

In my last report I shared how I felt the Lord was giving us 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.

I felt that the Lord was calling us to be a beacon of light to our community. And 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. I was aware that this might involve the laying down of some things if He asked us to, and the starting up of some things if He called us to. But we were to be a beacon of light on the hill, to our community.

I believe Christ Church has really fulfilled this vision this year in so many ways. Please do read the individual reports of what has been happening and you will find out how this has been done in just a few of the areas. I would also like to say that wonderfully, it has been done with enormous grace, love and humility, with Jesus' words from Matthew 6:3 "*But when you give to the needy, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing*" humbly embraced.

A sample of the things that our wonderful Christ Church volunteers have done as the need began to arise was addressed in our October report, so here are just some updates (with apologies that I don't have space to include everything that is being done):

The **Pastoral Care** Team led by Greta continued to take people to hospital and doctor's appointments, make doorstep visits, leave shopping or goods on people's doorsteps, sorting prescriptions, make phone calls, send cards, celebrate birthdays, as well as making Mother's Day flowers and Easter gifts.

The **Community Club** team led by Mel Ketchin provided doorstep hot dinners with puddings every week to its 90 or so members who would normally have come to the club if it was able to run. During the second lockdown, all of these meals were offered to Open Kitchen instead, but home deliveries to club members resumed after the Community Service team returned. As well as that, they have provided shopping, sorting prescriptions, taking things to the Post Office, doorstep chats and laughter to so many elderly and lonely people. A

regular newsletter continues to be given to everyone for enjoyment and to keep them in touch, as well as birthdays still being celebrated. A Christmas gift bag and Christmas dinner was given to each member

The mission of **Open Kitchen** led by Liesel Stanbridge continues three times a week providing up to 90 families each week with much needed food, clothing, toys and household goods. This has expanded to also give out hot dinners in half-terms to schoolchildren who would normally get hot dinners in school, but were now going without. Its evangelistic effect has also mushroomed as it now has 31 volunteers to help it run, both from Christ Church and the community.

Meals for NHS frontline workers (led by Liesel Stanbridge, cooking led by Colin Beesley) continued to be made and delivered until the need subsided.

The **Church Flower** team, led temporarily by Mel Ketchin, Denise Coombes and Judith Motto, have kept our church beautiful and did beautiful posies for all the ladies on Mothering Sunday.

Services (with IT led by Mike Bailey & James Dunkerley) have continued online and in person when allowed. We were able to meet until Christmas when we enjoyed an online Messy Christingle, a crib service, a carol service, two Christmas eve services and a Christmas day service – but all sadly without being able to sing. On January 10th we closed for services again as Covid numbers rose dramatically, but reopened for 9am Holy Communion on February 14th when the Covid numbers fell meaningfully. The 10:30am service reopened for Mothering Sunday on March 14th. We continue to have upwards of 200 hits on our services streamed to Facebook each Sunday, and we cannot tell how many times they have also been watched on our website.

On June 7th CCO celebrated its 80th birthday online and since this has been up on Facebook, it has been watched an amazing 589 times!

Digital/online church is probably with us to stay, and we are looking at how we continue to resource an online community as well as a gathered community.

Children's work led by Jo Gavin and Caroline Rous has continued online, although they did manage to put on a socially distanced Messy Light Party on Halloween with fish and chips, cakes and goodie bags, which was thoroughly enjoyed by all, in our hall at social-distanced capacity.

Youth Work led by Andi Smith has also continued online, with the older Youth Group choosing to meet in person when restrictions allowed, with zoom links via the big screen for those unable to attend in person. This included a Christmas teaching session that included a Nando's delivery, doughnuts and Dr Pepper.

Both Children's and Young People's groups started back face to face after Easter on April 26th, and are continuing online as well, in order to reach as many children and young people as possible.

Men's Ministry led by Pieter Van Rooyen has continued to look after the men in the church, having regular online meetings together, and keeping the laughter going in their WhatsApp group.

Prayer Ministry has continued online with Wednesday prayers on Zoom led by Liesel Stanbridge, and Saturday Prayer Day led by Pieter Von Rooyen.

Home Groups led by Nelson Pallister have continued to support the congregation through Zoom where possible.

What a marathon effort by all involved, for which I and a multitude of others, are extremely grateful!

I feel that we really have begun to step into God's vision of being a beacon on the hill, and I feel we can be justly proud of the way CCO has risen to the challenge of this strange and difficult time and reached out to both the church and the parish communities, as well as reaching out to the NHS frontline workers in their fight against this terrible disease.

But we have a God who is always on the move. He is both never changing in His character, and always moving as He draws us ever forwards to go deeper into Him and out into His world.

And this year, I believe He is giving us a little more of His vision for being that beacon on the hill. I have recently been feeling the Lord asking us to step out further in "Evangelism" and reminding us of Luke 10: 27 "*Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind*"; and, "*Love your neighbour as yourself.*"

The Lord wants us to be that Beacon of Light on the Hill for Him, showing the world how much He loves them. I also felt Him give us the song "Love is a many splendored thing". God's love is indeed many splendored - "The golden crown that makes a man a king" - and loving our neighbour involves caring for people's needs, and also caring for their souls. As Jesus says on Mark 8: 36 "What good is it for someone to gain the whole world, yet forfeit their soul?"

We have cared for those in need through passing on 10% of all the finances we receive to a carefully chosen set of mission partners. And through God's guidance this year, we've reached out in new and powerful ways by opening up the church to feed and clothe those in need and by reaching out to so many in the community for whom this year has been a long, difficult, lonely, painful time.

Now I believe He is asking us to love our neighbours by shining brightly as that light, and drawing people to Him through evangelism. Whilst this word can conjure up fear in even the longest serving Christian, I believe He wants to remind us that it isn't up to us to touch people hearts, that is His job. Our job is just to make ourselves available, with whatever gifts He has given us, for Him to do it through.

There are praying, prophetic people in our church feeling that revival is going happen. Revival just means a powerful move of God that brings a harvest of souls to Himself. I feel this too, and there are prophetic people in Churches Together Across Orpington feeling this too.

I feel God is asking us to be ready for it. So, I have been asking those who, for example run Alpha, to have a plan to be ready to run at any point this year. I would like to go out and do "Healing on the Streets". Maybe we can start to invite our neighbours to church. There are myriads of ways we can all join together to do a small (or big) something to show people that God is alive and wants to bring love, joy, peace and life to His world. Nothing can run without volunteers to cook, welcome (even if you need to do that from a chair), deliver, make coffee, lead, write, design, create or co-ordinate. These are just a few examples - nothing is too big or too small to be part an important part of God's work.

I'm saying this in faith. If God doesn't show up, and I have to say in my APCM report next year that I heard wrongly, then I'd rather apologise and do that, than not trust God enough to do it, and keep quiet.

I feel it's going to be a wonderful adventure with God, so please join in and don't miss it!

Bless you all, it is wonderful to be here with you.

With much love,
Sharon