

CHRIST CHURCH  
PURLEY

# ANNUAL REPORT 2023-2024



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Reg Charity No. 1133205

A Celebration and review of 2023 as we report back, look forward and give Glory to God.

The Annual Church Meeting will start at 10.15am. and will be followed by a ministries market place in the church rooms

Close of meeting at c. 12.00pm.

## **AGENDA 2024**

Opening Worship

*God is on the move.*

Vicar review and talk

**Vestry Meeting** – elect wardens

2 nominations for 2 vacancies;

### **APCM**

Apologies

Minutes

Matters Arising – no matters arising not covered in report elsewhere

PCC elections – Nominations for 4 PCC

Electoral Roll report – 264

Accounts – presented and questions welcomed (see Financial stall in church)

Appoint auditor for 2024

Appoint stewards

Worship

Brief Questions & Answers

Closing worship

**#ministrymarketplace24 – Explore all the different ministry areas at Christ Church.**

# MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL VESTRY AND ANNUAL CHURCH MEETINGS

**OF CHRIST CHURCH, PURLEY HELD ON SUNDAY 23 April 2023 in church**

Present 118 adults and 25 children present in the church.

## **Vestry Meeting**

Wardens are elected every year and Bob and Alison have presented as wardens, so no election is needed.

Doug thanked Bob and Alison for their service thus far.

Alison asked everyone to sign up to church suite to enable Jean Loh to update and distribute a paper directory.

## **Opening and prayer**

Intercessions led by Lisa Fairman-Brown

## **Welcome,**

Apologies received from: Anne Scoones, Karen Speed, Jill Lindsey

**Minutes of 2022** meeting approved and accepted.

Doug gave his thanks to everyone involved in the running of church.

## **Matters Arising**

No matters arising not covered in report elsewhere.

## **PCC elections**

Nominations for 5 Deanery and 4 PCC.

Deanery:

Tom Griffiths proposed by Nick Whitley, Seconded by Kim Watts

Martin Ryan proposed by Graham Duncan, Seconded by Frank Coburn

Nick Whitley proposed by Tom Griffiths, Seconded by Indrani Balachandran

Indrani Balachandran proposed by Nick Whitley, Seconded by Ruth Laws

Richard Slade proposed by Graham Duncan, Seconded by Nigel Brown

PCC:

Dan Burrows proposed by Rebecca Oaks, Seconded by Alex Oaks

Amy Daniels proposed by Karen Speed, Seconded by Frank Coburn

Cathy Kalanzi proposed by Alison Frost, Seconded by Jean Loh

No election is needed.

## **Electoral Roll Report**

Closed at 259.

### **Accounts Presented and questions welcome.**

Doug thanked Rob Keeler for stepping into this role and for his contribution.

Rob gave an overview of the spending, assets, income, and expenditure this year. The independent examiner has no concerns regarding the official report. Donations and legacies have dropped by c12%, expenses have increased by c15%. We have a current deficit of c31% Doug highlighted the creating of ministry role which has been funded.

Everything that is spent by PCC is spent to make passionate disciples of Christ.

Congregation Question (Trevor Jones): There was a tough decision made by the PCC to reduce our contribution by £26k for the Parish Support Fund, will this be increased in future?

Doug's response: A decision will be made for next year at PCC meeting. We have increased our giving by 5% as our deficit was less than anticipated.

### **Appoint Examiners for 2023**

Appointed Harmer Slater Ltd as examiners.

### **Appoint Stewards**

Doug thanked everyone for their contribution and warm welcome for visitors. If you are interested in becoming a steward, please speak to Doug.

**Worship** The band led us in a time of worship.

### **Brief report – CYT Team**

Jude Barber gave us a highlight of children's work this year; we had two residentials to Carroty Wood, 350 people attended the Good Friday Easter celebration, 200 – 300 people attended the live nativity, 24 families came to mini holiday club, with 48 people on team, we have 58 children on average each Sunday.

270 pupils came to the Easter service at Christ Church School, Friday night sessions are continuing to run, prayer spaces in schools where the children can come and pray in their own time, weekly collective worship at school, 50 children attend every Thursday for T4, weekly prayers with parents are held in school, half termly cake and coffee to thank staff, and many activities and outreach programmes. Things are growing and developing, praise God for what we are seeing. Jude thanked Charlotte and Ken and all members on team. We continue to pray for our children and families. Charlotte gave an update on Carousel; Carousel is attended by many families who do not attend church regularly and live further afield. We regularly have 20 – 25 children and parents attend each week. Things are growing and it is amazing!

### **Brief Reports – Other Initiatives**

**Pastoral training, Alpha pathways**

Jenny Hird – SPA training now able to run our own course. Doug has written an excellent course, six people are currently attending. The training includes pastoral care and better understanding of situations.

God is doing so much!

Lisa Fairman-Brown – pathways are so important! Lisa thanked the Alpha team; we had 6 sessions run back-to-back. 48 guests attended over that time with 18 on team and a background team of cooks. We have been so blessed to get to know one another over Alpha, this leads on to other courses to allow us to come closer to God and build our faith. If you haven't done an Alpha course, please get in touch!

### **Brief Reports – Curate**

Handing over the baton. Doug is going on sabbatical, Lisa Fairman-Brown is deputising in Doug's absence. We pray for Lisa during this time. We prayed for Doug and family as they head off on sabbatical.

### **Closing Q&A**

Doug closed the meeting, the band led us in worship.

Signed: .....

Date:.....

Traditionally the Vicars report will look back over the highlights of the year just gone, thank a few people, or even all the people who have contributed, and look forward to the following year. But not this year....

*"We have heard of all the stories of how You healed the deaf and blind. You did miracles and wonders; would You repeat them in our time? Lord we thank You for Your presence, how You promised not to leave. Come and clothe us with Your power, come and set the captives free.*

*Hear Your people crying out, Holy Spirit would You come*

*We still believe that You're moving and You are with us here today. Help us see what You are doing,  
we don't want to get in Your way.*

*Hear Your people crying out, Holy Spirit would You come*

*We've prayed our prayers, we've made our plans but if You're not in it we don't want it, Oh God would You move. Only You can heal our land. Holy Spirit come and fill us, Oh God would You move"\**

### **We are on the verge.**

"Let my people go" Moses had demanded. Pharaoh, ten plagues later, had relented and eventually said yes. God had led them the longer, safer route, *'If they face war, they might change their minds and return to Egypt.'* After a long desert journey, they found themselves at the Red Sea. They were ready for battle.

### **What can feel like a desert might be boot camp, getting ready for the battle to come.**

By day the Lord went ahead of them in a pillar of cloud to guide them on their way and by night in a pillar of fire to give them light, so that they could travel by day or night. <sup>22</sup> Neither the pillar of cloud by day nor the pillar of fire by night left its place in front of the people.

### **God never leaves his people, but do we see his signs?**

God's instructions to Moses made little sense. God's plan was that *"the Egyptians will know that I am the Lord."* So, the Israelites did this.

### **God's ways are not always rational, are we ready for that?**

Pharaoh changed his mind and sent a mighty army in pursuit. When they saw them the Israelites were terrified and cried out to the Lord and complained to Moses *"What have you done to us by bringing us out of Egypt? <sup>12</sup> Didn't we say to you in Egypt, 'Leave us alone; let us serve the Egyptians'? It would have been better for us to serve the Egyptians than to die in the desert!"*

### **How quickly can resolve to follow God change to fear and criticism? And looking back....**

Moses replied, *"Do not be afraid. Stand firm and you will see the deliverance the Lord will bring you today. The Egyptians you see today you will never see again.*

*<sup>14</sup> The Lord will fight for you; you need only to be still."*

**Stand firm, you will see deliverance. Be still, the Lord will fight for you. It is not about your plans or actions – cry out, listen, follow and wait.**

The Lord told Moses to reach out to the sea to divide it. By this the Egyptians would see the glory of the Lord. An angel had been travelling with them, as had the cloud. They both went behind the Israelites, protecting them. Moses stretched out his hand as instructed, the water divided, revealing dry land across the divide. As the Israelites crossed, the Egyptians followed. Safely on the other side, Moses stretched out his hand again and all the Egyptians were lost in the sea.

And when the Israelites saw the mighty hand of the Lord displayed against the Egyptians, the people feared the Lord and put their trust in him and in Moses his servant.

**We are on the verge.**

**The Lord is calling us forward. The dark forces and opponents that surround us will be shown the glory of the Lord. He protects us with angels and shows us signs of where he leads us. He calls us to have eyes forward, not back. What was before is not where he is leading us and it was not in reality as we see it in now in our fear of the future. We are not called back to Egypt, but forward to a promised land.**

Forty years later, Moses was dead. Joshua was now leader of the people and they stood on the verge of the Jordan, on the verge of the land promised so many years before. The Lord spoke to Joshua, *"I will never leave you nor forsake you. Be strong and courageous, because you will lead these people to inherit the land I swore to their ancestors to give them. Be strong and very courageous. Be careful to obey all the law my servant Moses gave you; do not turn from it to the right or to the left, that you may be successful wherever you go. Keep this Book of the Law always on your lips; meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful. Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the LORD your God will be with you wherever you go."*

**The Lord is encouraging us to be strong, courageous and led by his Word.**

The people made preparations. Joshua sent spies into the land to see what lay ahead whom he protected. They reported back, *'The LORD has surely given the whole land into our hands; all the people are melting in fear because of us.'*

**The Lord wants some to go out into the world, and see the hunger for him that exists, and report this back.**



Moving to the edge of the Jordan and following the ark of the covenant, containing the law of Moses, Joshua instructed the people *"Consecrate yourselves, for tomorrow the LORD will do amazing things among you."*

**The Lord is calling us to consecration, to holiness, that he may use us for his purposes.**

As the ark was carried into the water it stopped flowing mid-flood. All Israel passed by until the whole nation had completed the crossing on dry ground.

**What God has done elsewhere, he will do again, but in a different way to before.**

**Joshua got the people to mark the place with twelve stones and explained** *"Israel crossed the Jordan on dry ground."<sup>23</sup> For the Lord your God dried up the Jordan before you until you had crossed over. The Lord your God did to the Jordan what he had done to the Red Sea<sup>1</sup> when he dried it up before us until we had crossed over. <sup>24</sup> He did this so that all the peoples of the earth might know that the hand of the Lord is powerful and so that you might always fear the Lord your God.'*

**God does miracles so that others will know he is God. He draws others to know him and love him and commissions his believers to bring them to himself.**

**Top tips when on the verge with God:**

- Look forward not back
- Cry out to God
- Consecrate ourselves, be holy
- Cry "Come Holy Spirit" (not just service leaders, but all of us!)
- Only make plans we know God is in!
- Be still, let God be God
- Be expectant, be ready

**We are on the verge.**

**Bring it on....**

**Doug**

**\* O, God would you move (KXC - [https://youtu.be/DXu\\_Os9-jbk](https://youtu.be/DXu_Os9-jbk) )**

**PS Thank you to everybody for everything – looking forward to so much more!!**

In the Church Warden's report last year, we were very hopeful that the welcome Christ Church extends to all newcomers would be something for which we could become well known. We have actively worked on this over the year with our Front of House team and each of us is becoming increasingly more aware of how important it is to make every single person who enters our church feel welcome and a valued member of our community. This is an ongoing process, one that we are committed to and one that we hope each member of the congregation will join us in as we endeavour to live up to our mission statement which includes in what matters most to us the wish to be 'welcoming and open to new comers' and 'compassionate, caring and overflowing with God's love' towards everyone.

Last year, we also wrote that we were conscious of the duty of care we have for our Vicar and his family, and that we were delighted that he was going to be able to take a very well-deserved sabbatical with his family. We added that we looked forward to him coming back to us in the summer suitably refreshed which we believe he did, having read many books and with the appetite to share what he had learnt.

Having stood at the doors to the church many Sundays during 2023, we were delighted to see more new faces and it has been a pleasure to meet them and hear what has brought them to Christ Church. Listening to their stories, it has become apparent to us that the activities held at the church during the week are significant factors in bringing them to Christ Church on a Sunday morning and some of these have had no church background. The Foyer Coffee shop is becoming increasingly more busy with those attending classes and groups regularly turning up for coffee before or after these activities. For those serving coffee this has given excellent opportunity to tell more of the life of Christ Church and of the services on a Sunday morning.

As Church Wardens we are expected to fulfil a number of roles. Some of them are very apparent, some of them not so. We are a visible presence on a Sunday morning with the job of unlocking and locking the church complex at the beginning and end of the morning, we attend various church meetings, we are the guardians of many keys, we can be called upon at any time, we keep an eye on the welfare of our clergy, we are expected to keep the peace, we complete the annual Statistics for Mission return which collects the attendance and participation information for the church and we complete the Articles of Enquiry form and attend the visit of the Rural Dean when she comes to check that we are completing registers, that the silver is still in place and that we are happy with the welfare of our clergy. This might seem plenty but we are both aware that our job is made significantly easier by members of the congregation who have various expertise that we can make use of and who are prepared to give much of their precious time to help us make Christ Church sound in every respect. We would like to thank you on behalf of all of us who enjoy being part of the Christ Church family.

We look forward to the coming year and to being part of that welcoming church that we desire Christ Church to be. We would ask for your prayers as we move further forward with this.

**Bob Benn Alison Frost**

## Stewards

We would like to thank all those who provide a friendly welcome and help our services run smoothly. Our welcome team members are:

|                  |               |                 |
|------------------|---------------|-----------------|
| Alison Frost     | Diana Mitrea  | Paul Riches     |
| Amanda Shortland | John Curror   | Paula Reed      |
| Andy Hird        | Lola Bejide   | Peter Wrench    |
| Rob Keeler       | Marion Keys   | Richard Parris  |
| Bob Benn         | Mike O'Connor | Rowayda Mukhtar |
| Cynthia Smith    | Nicola Hawes  | Steve Gilbert   |

Our current Electoral Roll shows that we have 264 people signed up. However, this is not an accurate reflection of the congregation numbers, as not all our members are on the current Electoral Roll. If you are not on the Electoral Roll, your vote at the 2024 APCM will not be counted. Please check with me if you are unsure.

If you are not already on the Electoral Roll, do think about joining– you are eligible if you have worshipped with us for at least 6 months (young people can join when they turn 16). It is not just a means of being able to vote at the Annual Church Meeting, or to stand for PCC or Deanery Synod; it is a way of showing belonging to the church. Forms can be found in the Church, in the church office or can be sent to you by email.

***Jean Loh Electoral roll officer***

The PCC has complied with the duty under section 5 of the Safeguarding and Clergy Discipline Measure 2016 (duty to have due regard to House of Bishops' guidance on safeguarding children and vulnerable adults) and has safeguarding on the agenda at every meeting.

All PCC members are required to hold a current a Christ Church DBS certificate and are asked to complete 3 online safeguarding courses. We continue to receive monthly feedback from the Finance Committee, whose expertise is invaluable in helping us, as we seek to make wise decisions about expenditure.

The PCC has met throughout the year and on two Saturdays where there were discussions about LLF. Standing items for each meeting include Anti-racism, safeguarding, GDPR, School, Deanery and health and safety.

Please do not forget the PCC is elected by you and wishes to be representative of your views, so please do not hesitate to talk to anyone on the PCC anytime you have a concern or wish to just express a thought or an opinion or email

[christchurchpurleypcc@gmail.com](mailto:christchurchpurleypcc@gmail.com)

***Louise Benn***

## **Pastoral: Care for the Fellowship**

Pastoral care is indeed a privilege. God has called us to exhibit His love to all people. Just now there seem to be more and more vulnerable, "forgotten" people on our radar. Whilst we cannot be social workers, we can minister God's love and peace in all situations. Often this means practical, emotional and spiritual care. Now, a rundown on all activities related to pastoral care at Christ Church.

### **Ministry to Elders**

**Visiting** Engaging with members of the fellowship, who can no longer attend church continues to be a real joy. Most times Home Communion is offered, other times it may be a chat, or support in other ways-such as practical advice, signposting and of course, spiritual support. This also includes "ex" Drop Ladies. I feel this is an essential ministry otherwise "ex-members" could feel forgotten and isolated.

**Mid-Week Fellowship** (monthly) We have increasingly seen more people come to the meeting who are not church members. This is a great opportunity for outreach and inviting members to church events. We usually have about 30-40 attending and have enjoyed a variety of talks including "The History of Purley", the RSPB, "Unexplained Mysteries and Cover Ups", "The Best of British" plus a wonderful 3 course Christmas Lunch ably cooked by Alison and a wonderful team of volunteers. Information share continues to be valued – scams, phone numbers etc. I am so grateful for the support given by Alison, Nicola, Christine, Monica, Gill, and Katie.

**Jenny Hird**

**Holiday at Home:** This event enjoyed a patriotic tea party in May last year to celebrate King Charles' coronation and a festive Christmas party with a magician and afternoon tea. In the summer, at our usual 3 day H at H, we were entertained with bell ringing, dancing and an informative and interactive talk about different teas. In addition to these events, we have also had a couple of trips to the Everyman cinema in Crystal Palace, a meal at O'Farols in Purley and an overnight stay in Eastbourne. We look forward to more of the same this coming year and maybe some events we haven't thought of yet! It is always an absolute pleasure to organise these events and share the happiness they bring.

**Alison Frost**

**Mid-Week Communion (monthly)** is followed by a delicious lunch cooked by Lynn and other volunteers. Our numbers have dropped a little, partly due to transport difficulties and mobility issues but this is a special time, especially for those who live on their own. It is a chance to socially engage with others and of course to participate in a church service. Many thanks to Lynn, Trish and Simon, Ruth and Rowayda.

**Jenny Hird**

**Prayer Network** We received 97 requests for urgent prayer during the year and we give grateful thanks for the blessings received from our Lord and for the 49 pray-ers who continue to give their time and commitment to this ministry. With the emphasis on prayer in Christ Church planned for Spring 2024 we are considering completely re-vamping the network so watch this space for exciting developments.

***Pauline Chapman***

**Bereavement Support Group** Numbers have ranged between 10 and 22 every month and we have consequently had to recruit extra help. We are so grateful to Debbie, Caroline, Lucy and also Jill and Jenny who have had to come to the rescue during times of illness. I also give thanks to our Lord for our dear curate, Lisa who has been an inspiration in developing innovative ways to present material in our sessions. In September, we celebrated 15 years of the bereavement support group (which started life as a 6 month pilot scheme!) The next steps will be to write some terms of reference to help us ascertain how God wishes this group to develop.

**The Bereavement Journey Course** A very successful pilot course was run in the Spring of 2023 with another course using updated material planned for Spring 2024. We aim to hold this course twice a year as there has been a high demand for places necessitating the need to create a waiting list. Our grateful thanks to Alison for heading up this project and injecting so much love and enthusiasm into it.

We are always willing to meet with anyone who would like to talk about their grief journey and for whom a one-to-one chat would be more appropriate than a formal group. Above all we give thanks to our Lord who alone can transform lives.

***Pauline Chapman***

**Learning Disabled Adults** It is a joy to welcome to Christ Church several members from our Special Educational Needs and Disabilities local communities. They enjoy having conversations with a diverse range of the congregation whilst enjoying coffee and biscuits during the morning. The audio-visual elements of many services generate and enable many comments and opinions to be voiced and expressed. Worship is a particular favourite part of the service which is enjoyed enthusiastically.

***Margaret Hall***

**Meals Ministry** Pastoral meals are provided as a blessing to those who might have recently had an operation, are recuperating from illness or just for those times when life is difficult for a host of reasons. Over the past year we have gifted around 30 meals to individuals and families. The freezer is usually well stocked with a good selection of savoury and sweet meals, including some made for special diets too. Thank you so much to Lynn, Kim, Rowayda, Sue, Debbie and Amanda for responding so willingly to the call for meals. It is much appreciated. We don't always hear where the needs are so if you know of someone who could benefit from this ministry, please let Lisa, Jenny or Amanda know.

***Amanda Shortland***

**Peaced Together(PT)** is a 10 week course based on the belief that good can come from negative and difficult experiences. Using five themed craft projects, together with discussion based on stories, poems and quotations participants are encouraged to reflect on their lives and set out on a personal journey from brokenness to hope for the future. The Christian based craft and discussion themes cover, amongst others, love, hope, peace, thankfulness and courage.

The 2023 course demonstrated how PT fits into both Outreach and Pastoral Care. We welcomed four of the five participants to CCP and provided information about the many activities it offers. In addition, Jenny spoke about Pastoral Care during the last session when she presented the PT certificates.

We are delighted that Marion Keys will be helping on the PT course starting 17<sup>th</sup> April 2024. If you are interested in joining us in April we would be very happy to welcome you, so please do contact us either directly or through the CCP office.

***Fran King and Anne Scoones***

**Challenges** As I said last year there will always be challenges with pastoral care. We live in a society which is increasingly ageist. The vulnerable can so easily be sidelined and with the severe pressure on the NHS, including social care, this is highlighted. As far as Christ Church is concerned we need volunteers who would be willing to give lifts to Mid-Week Communion and to other appointments. If you are willing to do this, please call Jenny!

**Looking Forward** SPA training has changed somewhat in the Diocese, so Doug has written his own training course on pastoral care. We are nearing the end of this course now and the training has been superb covering case studies, mental health, Listening Skills, Prayer and so on. We have had a core of about 10 people doing this and we anticipate that those who have completed the course will be recognised officially as Affirmed Lay Ministers. Doug is aiming at running another course in September. We will offer this to other neighbouring churches. So, if you feel called to pastoral ministry please speak to him or Jenny. It is great that we are becoming a more intergenerational church and we look forward to the quiz for all ages!

**Lastly** Thank you to all those in the fellowship who quietly get alongside others. It may be a listening ear, practical support and spiritual care. Doug and Lisa have been an enormous encouragement in all areas of pastoral care. Our God is a faithful God and we have seen many answers to prayer. Please continue to pray for His wisdom and discernment in all that we do.

***Jenny Hird (Pastoral Leader and SPA)***

## **Safeguarding Report APCM April 2023**

The parish of Christ Church Purley takes the safeguarding and care of children and vulnerable adults very seriously. The church complies with the Church of England and the Diocese of Southwark's 'A Safer Church Policy' regarding the safeguarding of children, young people and vulnerable adults and the PCC has complied with their duty to have due regard to the House of Bishops guidance in relation to safeguarding.

All children and adults who may be vulnerable (regardless of age, disability, gender, racial heritage, religious belief, sexual identity) have the right to equal protection from all types of harm or abuse and safeguarding is everyone's responsibility.

Our church's safeguarding policy may be viewed by anyone and is on the home page of the Church website as well as posters displayed around the church complex.

Southwark Diocese provide safeguarding training for anyone needing it and the Diocesan Safeguarding Officers are always available for advice.

### **What were the highlights and joys to celebrate?**

The number of people completing their safeguarding training in 2023.

16 have completed C0 basic safeguarding training

15 have completed C1 foundation safeguarding training

5 Have completed C2 leadership safeguarding

0 Safer recruitment and people management training

12 Raising Awareness of Domestic Abuse

22 DBS completed

### **What were the challenges and struggles?**

It is a requirement that all volunteers who work with children and/or vulnerable adults, PCC members, Foyer and pastoral team to have an enhanced DBS, complete level 0, Level 1 safeguarding training and have two references for their ministry. One of the main obstacles is getting volunteers to respond to safeguarding emails and training request in a timely manner!

### **What are your hopes for 2024?**

If you have any concerns or queries regarding Child Protection, Vulnerable Adults, Disclosure and Barring (DB) forms please email [safeguarding@christchurchpurley.org.uk](mailto:safeguarding@christchurchpurley.org.uk) or if you have an urgent concern please phone Doug, Alison or Jean or contact the Diocese Safeguarding Advisor.

***Alison Flexman and Jean Loh Parish Safeguarding Officers***



**Overview:** Our aim is to equip and enable children and parents to go deeper in their faith journey. Whether they have never stepped foot inside a church before or they are deeply rooted in Christ, our heart is to reach out and build relationships with children and their household, serve the families in the

community with the love and welcome of God and make Jesus known.



**Sundays CCPre-school:** Under 5's is a joy and continues to go well with 28 children who attend regularly of which 7 were new.

Adults get so much out of helping their child engage with the themed activities based on a one-year rotating foundation programme while getting time to build relationships with each other. Coffee, tea and biscuits are available and families are encouraged to make the space their home. Themed activities encourage parents to talk around the topic of the day with their child as they decorate shaped biscuits, pop bubbles, sit

and chat with God in a tent, draw in sand, shape play-dough, read a children's bible or just run off energy in a ride-on toy and eat biscuits! We present a 15 minute story with puppet, multimedia and specially written songs throughout, followed by a themed craft to take-away reminding them through the week of the biblical message.

**Sundays CCKids 1&2:** Christ Church Kids aims to equip and enable Children to be 'God connected' not just 'God smart.' From January through to July we all embarked upon a series including the fundamentals of Christianity through re-writing the Alpha series for kids! Through activities, games, teaching and creative ministry, children learn key spiritual practices alongside each session so as to develop strong roots and firm foundation as to a life of faith.

**Where we see God on the move:** Everywhere! We are so blessed and thank God for the ways in which we have been able to reach out to families; whether it be our Easter Family event, Summer funday or Live nativity! So many new families learnt all about the gospel story, birth of Jesus or simply enjoyed an incredible time of being together with donkey rides and ice-creams! Trips





as church family to watch Wintershall - the Life of Christ was a joy as well as supporting others through our shoebox appeal, pop-up Christmas choir, Parenting for faith course, worship workshops, Altogether services and other outreach events.



**Thanks:** None of this could happen without the amazing support of an absolutely incredible team! There are too many to name here, but we are so grateful to each and every person who has helped make all this possible and we praise God for you and all his abundant blessing!

**Need:** We would love more team to help serve on Sundays in order to maintain our provision (CCP, Set-up, welcome, leaders and assistants). If God is calling you to serve please get in touch!



**Sundays: CCYouth:** We have had the joy and privilege of coming alongside our young people as they explore what it is to be a person of faith through asking: Who is Jesus? What is the gospel? What about the bible? How can we live our lives in step with the Holy Spirit? Through fun interaction, teaching and discussion, our young people have undertaken 'Youth Alpha' in spring and summer term and then

delved in Matthew and all the riches to be found there! Worship nights and visits to IMPRINT church have been wonderful opportunities to go deeper with God with other Young adults!

**Tuesdays: Youth Group:** Our young people aged 11-18 are invited to meet every Tuesday night term time for an evening split between games and a thought-for-the-week style look at the bible. It is interestingly the most consistently attended group in 0-18's with 20 regulars, most never missing a week. We delight in making sure every young person is welcomed, seen and valued by the team and each other and saw the new Year 7's very much made to feel quickly at home by the existing young people.

We've been running Youth Group for a year since taking it on in February 2023 with some very successful changes. Instead of the hall, we use the Foyer for a much warmer welcome, Toast Station, food, music, table tennis, pool, air hockey,

table football, Jenga/cards and a mindful colouring space. This leaves the hall space for football and The Freezer of Plenty (ice-lollies/ice creams)!

The second half of the evening takes everyone to The Swamp and begins with a topic-themed all-together game followed by a video using Youth for Christ's resources. Two groups divide, one for those who want to read/discuss the bible and the other for those who prefer a more interactive style look at the bible theme for the evening.

Tuesday has a super strong team. Bej Pal however is stepping back from volunteering Tuesday nights to be able to focus on his increasingly demanding day-job but remains with us Sundays so friendship and support for the young people will be maintained. A huge thank you for all he has given to Youth for years!

The Youth team is truly amazing and our sincere thanks goes to them all for their joyful consistent every-week serving. Thank you all for all your support, leadership and enthusiasm!

Where we need God to move:

- young people to desire to invite friends
- on-going successful transition from Kids Ministry to Youth
- envisioning in ways to support parents of youth
- the enablement of a new Parenting Teens for Faith Course
- discipleship of the young people bible study and a worship service
- collaborating with neighbouring church youth
- successful transition to adult church and post-uni provision

***Jude Barber Lead pastor – Children's, Youth and Families team***

***Welcome – What did you set out to achieve in 2023?***

Christ Church has a reputation for being a welcoming church and many people stay for that reason. Therefore, each year we set out to continue that and to enhance it as best we can.

***What was new in 2023?***

As we continue with the concept of two of the teams on a Sunday morning being Front of House – from car park to seat – and Back of House – in the service itself – it is hoped that these teams will see themselves as working together for any visitor. I am delighted that Cynthia Smith has recently agreed to take an oversight view of the Front of House welcome and I am sure that she will bring some extra cohesion to what we do. We also held our first Welcome Event since 2019 which was a joy.

***What were the highlights and joys to celebrate (including appropriate thanks)?***

The Welcome Tea was a bit different to what we had laid on before. In the afternoon with tea and cake it was an opportunity for a number of regulars to welcome and get to know some newcomers. All agreed it was a successful format and more are planned, termly, for this year. We have had a steady stream of new faces and it has been a joy to get to know them and especially those who have stayed with us and integrate into the family of Christ Church.

***What were the challenges and struggles?***

As with anything new the idea of Front of House, as opposed to separate roles of welcome, host and steward, is still bedding in. We have a welcome team meeting planned very soon which will be another opportunity to review, pray and improve what we do. Consistently following up people we meet continues to be a challenge.

***Opportunities for worship, discipleship and evangelism for 2024?***

There are huge opportunities in this area and PCC have agreed a project to review and continuously improve our welcome for all. I described our welcome as being excellent for many but also can be hit and miss. The aim is to never miss! Therefore, a small team is looking at how we can review the needs of a wide range of groups with differing needs so that over time we can continuously and intentionally raise our game even higher. This will mean going beyond a team of welcomers, and all the great work that they do, and towards a whole church culture of welcome.

***Please pray for...*** Cynthia as she oversees the team. Team members as they welcome week in week out. The welcome project and for continuous improvement for all. An increasing sense that we are a "priesthood of welcomers" – every member of Christ Church has their part to play!

### ***Worship: Word and prayer***

#### ***What did you set out to achieve in 2023?***

We aim to be a Word and Spirit church and so these two feature strongly in the focus of worship throughout 2023. We always seek to be led by God's word and that all can engage with it and be challenged by it.

#### ***What was new in 2023?***

We opened the year with the tail end of our mini-series on the letters to Timothy and Titus and then onto a six week series covering the content of Living in Love and Faith. Lent saw a series on "Approaching the Cross" and afterwards we started a long series on "The Kingdom in Matthew's Gospel" with a summer interlude looking at selected Psalms. So quite a variety!

The Third service continued with its "led by the Spirit" series of reflections which while apparently random in the sense that the readings used were quite eclectic, there was a consistent sense that it is a place of the prophetic as we make space to listen to the Lord.

We trained some Prayer Ministers near the end of the year. Intercessors have faithfully led us in prayer through the year and leaders have held it all together for which we are very grateful.

#### ***What were the highlights and joys to celebrate?***

My thanks go to all who preached over this past year, especially over my time away on sabbatical, without whose support I would not have been able to take such an extended time away. All aspects have pointed up key messages for us all as individuals, as a church and for the wider church too. The year was dominated in a way by the Matthew series which has allowed us to drill down into some key themes of that important Gospel perspective.

#### ***What were the challenges and struggles?***

I would love to offer the chance to preach to a wider range of people, to hear different voices and perspectives. This applies to service leading too. I am responsible as incumbent for the teaching ministry here so be assured that if you think that might be you then I will both support you and guide you to help you stay within the boundaries of church teaching while bringing the Spirit led insights that only you can bring! Prayer Ministry guidelines have proved tricky to finalise in an even more heavily boundaried safeguarding environment but we have done so and it will be starting very soon.

### ***Opportunities for worship, discipleship and evangelism for 2024?***

The opportunities for worship and discipleship and evangelism for 2024 are that the Word dwells so richly in peoples hearts and minds that it spills over into everyday life and in an increase in small (discipleship) groups outside of Sunday. We would love to see more of Christ Church meeting through the week, even if in 3's or 4's, for friendship, bible study and prayer. And through deepening and increased confidence, giving away the good News we have received and inviting those we meet to find out more and ultimately to a living faith! Amen!!

### ***Please pray for...***

Discernment for all preachers, leaders and prayers and that the Word of God will be preached convicting more and more of their need for Jesus!

## **WORSHIP: MUSIC**

### ***What did you set out to achieve in 2023?***

Our aim was to increase the diversity of the musical worship team further (particularly, greater diversity of age and ethnicity); give new band leaders an opportunity; and be more intentional in getting equipped to play our role in services.

### ***What was new in 2023?***

We started holding an open worship time (with a particular focus on children and young people participating) after the 11.45 service once a term. We also ran or attended a number of training courses for the team: for vocalists; for instrumentalists; to learn new songs; a New Wine worship event; a diocesan session for worship leaders; and a sound-desk teach-in. Building on a summer service where Bishop Lucy and her husband sang us a worship song from Kenya, we are at the very start of a journey to include songs from countries and cultures around the world in our services. And we are pleased to have encouraged people from a wider range of ethnic backgrounds and younger people to join the bands.

### ***What were the highlights and joys to celebrate?***

In August, we gave the regular band leaders a break and invited others to lead the band. It was a great success and a blessing to all. As a result, when Laura Hickin moved away, others stepped in and are now leading regularly.

We had chances to bless the wider church, by leading worship at the service to welcome the new Archdeacon, at a Purley Worship Night in the autumn with Purley Baptist Church and Grace Vineyard and (earlier this year) at Deanery Synod.

As always, the Christmas services were a great joy. I would like especially to highlight the faithful service of Richard Slade, our organist and choirmaster, who not only leads the choir for Christmas and Good Friday services but also plays the organ almost every Sunday!

### ***What were the challenges?***

We are blessed to have some very faithful instrumentalists – but we are always on the lookout for more. And we are always looking for more people (especially men) for our Christmas and Easter choirs.

### ***Opportunities for worship, discipleship and evangelism for 2024***

We are keen to explore new ways of involving our young people. We want to continue sharing songs of worship from different cultures and parts of the world, to celebrate our unity in Christ. In conjunction with Jean, the AV team and others, we are exploring whether to change the software which we use to

project words onto the screen. It sounds tech-y but could make some people's lives a bit less stressful!

***Please pray that ....***

... each of us in the team would grow in the love of the Lord and faith; and learn more and more how to lead others in worshipping in Spirit and in Truth. Also, that each church member would grow in our desire to worship the Lord whole-heartedly.

## ***Discipleship: Equipping***

### ***What did you set out to achieve in 2023?***

It has been a plan to offer a range of courses and events to help build confidence and equip members of Christ Church for mission and ministry.

### ***What was new in 2023?***

The Pastoral Training that was started in 2022 has continued with new sessions developed and guest speakers covering topics as varied as bereavement, mental health and life, death and suffering. The course comes to an end in April and we look forward to running it again with a new cohort in September. It has been a joy to share the course materials with other interested churches. A small group has been meeting throughout the year and trialling off the shelf courses including one on the Holy Spirit and the Bible course. These have energised the participants, some of whom have gained new insights even after decades of being followers of Jesus. We managed at last to offer Prayer Ministry training near the end of the year.

### ***What were the highlights and joys to celebrate?***

The innovation to run new courses that, being a success, can be rolled out to other groups has been a joy. In particular we hope to be able to offer a coordinated programme after the Alpha courses to participants that want to keep meeting having completed that course. The pastoral training has been both challenging and a great encouragement.

### ***What were the challenges and struggles?***

We struggled to run the Witness Course this year which aligns with our renewed focus on witness and evangelism. Prayer Ministry training pointed up a couple of difficulties aligning the guidelines with the requirements of safeguarding, leading to delays in installing Prayer Ministers in our services.

### ***Opportunities for worship, discipleship and evangelism for 2024?***

This year we will be offering the witness course for all to be able to share stories of faith as well as newly commissioned evangelism training. There is a will to do joint training with local churches so that we can be part of kingdom building together. Discipleship (house) groups will be encouraged to take up training resources and to go out in mission and evangelism more over coming years.

### ***Please pray for...***

The development of materials and take up of courses that more and more feel enabled and equipped for mission.



***"What kind of man is this?" asked the disciples in Matthew 8:27*** and several of our groups have been discovering, with joy, all that Jesus is, as we have read and discussed the gospel of Matthew during the past year.

Over the last 15 months two groups have, sadly, disbanded and we give great thanks to Mel Watts-Read and Ben & Emily Winkley for their love, prayer and commitment to their little flocks during challenging times.

However, we are delighted that, through Lisa's encouragement, two new groups formed last year as follow-ons from Alpha. (The number of groups, therefore, remains at 10.) These groups have explored the Sermon On The Mount, Philippians and are currently delving into prayer (The HTB course led by Pete Greg), and the whole Bible in The Bible Society Course! Thankyou Josh, Harriet, Mel and John, and Chris for facilitating these. There are now more groups meeting in person than on Zoom.

By the time you read this we will have held our first house group leaders meeting since March 2020. This will be a small step for CCP but a giant step for house group leaders!

We are looking forward to starting the Romans Course (The Bible Society) during the Summer Term, and praying this excellent series would encourage new members to join us.

Finding times to meet together can be quite challenging in these pressurised times. Please pray for perseverance for our leaders and members; deeper discipleship and fellowship and an increasing boldness to share and live out what we have learned and experienced in our walk with the Lord.

***"Therefore, everyone who hears these words of Mine and puts them into practice is like a wise person who built their house on the rock."***  
***Matthew 7: 24.***

***Martin and Sara Ryan***

2023 brought my ongoing theological studies to completion and I said 'goodbye' to the cohort of curates with whom I was ordained back in 2020. In the autumn, with all seven assignments completed, annual reports written I was signed off and received this letter from our Bishop:

Sent by email to [curate@christchurchpurley.org.uk](mailto:curate@christchurchpurley.org.uk)

17 October 2023

Dear Lisa

I am writing to confirm that you have completed the requirements for assessment of curacy and fully demonstrated that you are ready for a post of incumbent status.

I realise that completing the portfolio requires a lot of work on your part but it is evidence for all who need it that you have given evidence of the formation in all criteria for the completion of curacy required by the House of Bishops. I am delighted to confirm that this is the case.

Under the new data protection measures, electronic copies of material in your portfolio will be held in the Department of Discipleship and Ministry only until such time as you are appointed to a new post. Therefore, you should ensure that you keep your own copy of any material you may want for future reference.

With my thanks for our partnership in the Lord's service and all good wishes,



The Rt Revd Christopher Chessum  
Bishop of Southwark

The highlight of my year was the opportunity to go on pilgrimage to the Holy Land in May, 'to walk in the footsteps of Jesus' and at points my breath was taken away. Imagine journaling on the Mount while sitting alone reading Jesus' sermon; embodying the pivot by turning back from the rock face with its multiplicity of deities to face Jerusalem up at Caesaria Philippi or hearing the gospel read out on the Sea of Galilee.



I was profoundly moved at the baptism site on the River Jordan. After re-affirming my baptism vows I was compelled to go under the waters as a recollection that I had promised to go anywhere in total submission to Jesus.

Sunday worship with Fr Niall at Christ Church Nazareth, the Arabic/English speaking Christian community there.



Please pray for me, in the words of our baptism service, that I will fight valiantly as a disciple of Christ against sin the world and the devil and remain faithful to Christ to the end of my days.



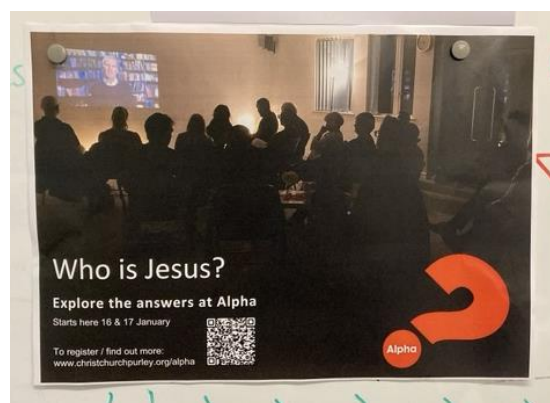
Everyone, everywhere, everyday. Faith-sharing is what passionate disciples can't help doing. How does that sound? ... I agree - impossible, but with God all things are possible and he doesn't tell us to do it alone, but He asks us to pray to the Lord of the harvest for opportunities to join in his mission and to give us the words and the way to speak life to each person.

Alpha ran in Spring and Autumn both evening and daytime in 2023 and our wonderful teams welcomed 28 guests across all courses. The highlight both times being the Away Day where we had time to consider the Holy Spirit, what the Spirit does and how we can be filled with the Holy Spirit. We enjoyed a relaxed day with one another in beautiful surroundings.

Huge thanks to our amazing team of Alpha cooks who provided a delicious meal for us each week, our dedicated hosting team who set up, welcomed and hosted our guests and our faithful prayer team who bathed all the guests, helpers and course in prayer.

Did you know that one in three of your friends, neighbours or colleagues would like to know more about Jesus and would be glad to have a conversation with a Christian friend, if only they knew one! (Talking Jesus Report 2022)

In 2024 there is such a huge opportunity to invite those you know to the Alpha Course. Why not plan to come along yourself and invite friends to come along with you? Start praying now for opportunities to ask, and for conversations to happen. A great place to begin to open up conversation is to ask your friend how you might pray for them.



Everyone is welcome at Alpha, especially you! Whether you would like to come and simply listen, join in the conversation or ask questions.

It will take all of us to reach our community, please be praying and asking God how you might be able to join in and serve on team. Would you be willing to be a helper daytime/evening, cook a group meal, commit to praying for our everyday evangelism and Alpha Courses?

**Lisa Fairman- Brown**

**Overview:** Our aim is to reach out to local schools with the gospel, enriching pupil education, spiritual development and pastoral care for staff, children and their families. We also strive to uphold Christ Church school community with love, support and encouragement.

**Collective worship:** We have had the joy and privilege of sharing God's word with Christ Church School every week as well as supporting two other local schools each half term. This enables us to regularly reach over 1000 pupils with the message of God's love. We're delighted to work alongside Spinnaker who have produced a fantastic resource 'It's Jesus,' that enables the whole gospel to be shared over the course of each year.

### **Schools outreach projects: CSI:Easter and Christmas unwrapped**

2023 saw the return of 'CSI:Easter- the case of the missing body!' It was met with great enthusiasm and joy! Through hands-on workshops and interactive experience, nearly 250 pupils discovered the true story of Easter by drawing on evidence investigated during the session.

Christmas unwrapped welcomed over 450 pupils from local schools, all super-excited to discover Jesus birth and what Christmas is really about!

This year, All Saints Sanderstead kindly piloted the workshop in their church and have been a wonderful advocate for the project! We hope to have Christmas unwrapped published soon to go alongside CSI:Easter which is already available online.

**Junior Peaced Together:** We are honoured that we have been repeatedly invited to run Junior Peaced together with Yr6 pupils from Christ Church School. It is such a blessing for the pupils as well as the team. We seek to help children know that there is hope in difficult times and that God is with them. Through artistic responses, discussions, teaching and support, each pupil is able to recognise their own feelings and tools to help them to flourish.

**C4 (Christ Church Christian Club):** C4 is a wonderful club that takes place every week in school. Over the course of 2023, an average of 12 KS2 pupils and 36 KS1 pupils joined us for games, bible story, prayer and craft. It is hugely popular and when it doesn't run (alternates with Peaced together), then children stop me in the street to complain!

**And more...** 'Cake Wednesdays' blesses staff at Christ Church school and Purley Nurse every half term. 'Coffee and a cuddle' supports new parents each September, School visits to church help educate children on why Believers gather to worship, Christmas windows celebrated the pupils' artwork and School prayers take place every Monday morning!

**Thanks:** Thank you to absolutely everyone who helps make this vital mission work possible! It really couldn't happen without the commitment, dedication and sheer joy of each of you – thank you, thank you, thank you!

**Future:** We are excited to be presenting 'Operation Forgiveness' in school from April 2024. This is a school-based initiative to target Serious youth violence and the transformational power of forgiveness. Please pray for this new venture and get in touch if you wish to be involved!

***Jude Barber Lead pastor – Children's, Youth and Families team***

***Across 2023-24, the church has continued to build up, invest in and support the school in many ways including:***

- Support for the Leadership team especially in prayer
- Supporting RE and Christian ethos of the school
- Making arrangements to pioneer a new course for the children called Operation Forgiveness
- Appointing Foundation Governors to the school Board
- Regular services in church including harvest, Christmas, Easter and Year 6 leavers who are sent out with a bible and ongoing prayer support from Christ Church
- Christ Church Christian Club (C4) at lunchtimes
- 'Peaced together - supporting children who have suffered loss and to support wellbeing
- CSI Easter and Christmas Unwrapped to help schools bring RE and the Easter and Christmas stories to life
- Leading a weekly prayer meeting in school for the school.
- Supporting the development of Christian distinctiveness through membership of the School Faith Group.
- Meeting new parents on the KS1 playground and supporting them at the church cafe

(coffee and a cuddle)

- Providing a space for the parents to build community at the church café after drop off time.
- Observing and monitoring collective worship
- Leading collective worship times each week
- Our children have also enjoyed having their art work displayed at the church, both inside and on display in the outside windows.

Having helped to develop the theological underpinning of our School vision and values in 2023, Doug supported the school by leading a series of collective worship times that explored the meaning behind the underpinning. This has helped all members of the school community to become more aware of the Christian values behind

Peaced together continues to be such a blessing to our school community, supporting children with low self esteem or trauma. We have found this to be a really effective and sensitive way of developing self-esteem in the children.

***Mrs Jo Richardson***



Our Mission Partners continue to be supported by a small but enthusiastic Mission Partner Group. Our aim is to have a portfolio of partners that cover the 5 marks of mission and to support them both financially and prayerfully.

Having had a busy 2022 with a Mission Partner representative speak each month, 2023 has been a quieter year. However we have continued to raise awareness through intercessions and publishing reports in the weekly news as they become available. It is our intention to have a speaker every quarter in 2024.

An urgent appeal for financial support was made by the Spinnaker Trust in the summer of 2023. A decision was made to include them as a Mission Partner and a donation of £500 was given.

We are grateful for an increase in the Mission Partner grant to £21,000. The funds were allocated as follows:

|                             | £             |
|-----------------------------|---------------|
| Chris Elston (Moldova)      | 3,650         |
| Boyds (Oasis Centre)        | 5,150         |
| Emmanuel International      | 5,100         |
| Ascension Trust             | 3,600         |
| London City Mission         | 1,100         |
| Release International       | 1,050         |
| Mission Aviation Fellowship | 175           |
| Faith in Later Life         | 175           |
| Spinnaker Trust             | 500           |
| Croydon-Zimbabwe Link       | 500           |
|                             | <u>21,000</u> |

We are in the process of establishing a link with a parish in Central Zimbabwe and hope to have it finalised by the summer of 2024. We look forward to forging closer links with the parish.

As we add new partners we have had to make the difficult decision to withdraw our financial support to two of our partners - The Mission Aviation Fellowship and Faith in Later Life.

My thanks to all our advocates at Christ Church for all they do to raise the profile of each of our Mission Partners. A full list of our Mission Partners can be found on the Christ Church website. Please do pray for our Mission Partners often working under difficult and dangerous conditions.

***Indrani Balachandran***

Christ Church continues to work towards Silver Award with Eco Church as a way to reduce the environmental impact of what we do and raising the awareness of the environment.

Anne Scoones (Eco Church rep) emailed a report to the refurbishment of the church project with eco-friendly suggestions to work towards the Silver Award.

It was recognised that some alternatives which reduce the environmental impact cost more and a fund was requested at the end of the Summer 2023 to be used if this was the case.

Thanks should be given to the church office staff who introduced paper and cardboard recycling for the office.

Thank you to Foyer Cafe volunteers and other church users who take home paper, cardboard and plastic items to recycle with their own household refuse and who dispose of organic materials in the church's compost heaps.

Special thanks to Matthew Benn who improved upon the existing compost heap which was originally built by Tom Griffiths.

Thank you to office staff who arranged for notices to be placed by exit doors reminding users to turn off the lights when leaving.

It is challenging to generate interest in progressing to the Silver Award, although individuals show great commitment to ensuring their lifestyle does reduce their impact on the environment. The conversations between members of the congregation present an opportunity to spread awareness.

However, in the next few years, the refurbishment project presents an ideal opportunity to progress to the Silver Award of the Eco Church scheme incorporating modern understanding and technology to a late nineteenth century building which has had limited improvements since that date.

Please pray for...discernment and the finance necessary for a proactive approach to make the best use of the church building for future generations in the most environmentally friendly ways.



It has been another year full of activity. We continue to offer something to a wide section of our community in need of our care and support. The reports below are a snapshot of what our wonderful volunteers at Christ Church offer in the name of Jesus.

**Sandwiches for Nightwatch:** We have been unable to run the floating night shelter since 2021. Instead, we've been making and donating sandwiches and other items to Croydon Nightwatch, the nightly soup run service which operates in central Croydon and this has been a huge help to them whilst numbers of rough sleepers and those vulnerably housed and unable to prepare meals for themselves is still high.

Around 100 loaves of sandwiches, drinks, fruit, and sweet treats were provided by our 22 Christ Church Purley volunteers this year. One night was also covered by our 7th Purley (Christ Church) Guides who earned their Mission Managed Skills Builder badge by making 12 loaves of sandwiches and in the process learnt important team skills around sharing out roles and communicating effectively!

Bishop Rosemary is keen to look at how we can bring back the floating shelter another year. At present the position from the council is that the shelter would not fit in with their overall strategic objectives for rough sleepers as well as with their Public Health objectives. This may change if the financial climate doesn't improve.

Whilst we're unable to host a shelter at Christ Church and for as long as Croydon Nightwatch finds this offering useful each year, we will continue to support them. God bless our homeless community, and the volunteers who continue to care for our marginalised in the borough.

**Amanda Shortland**

**Tea and talk – a Christ Church Mothers' Union initiative supporting refugees and asylum seekers:** Thursdays school term times – 2pm – 3.30pm in August we met in the local park.

**Our purpose** – to share the unconditional love of Jesus through fellowship, support and learning English.

**What was new** – we have constant change with families leaving and others joining.

**Highlights** – we joined in our guests joy when they had permission to stay and kept in touch with many as they settle in other parts of our country. We celebrated Christmas with fun and games and gave Tesco gift vouchers and other gifts for each family.

**Struggles** - many of our guests have anxiety and even depression because of the uncertainty of their lives and the length of time waiting. We also listened to their complaints when fresh milk was not made available. We wrote letters to our MP and our Bishop Rosemary and spoke to Hotel management and fresh milk was soon available again. The use of milk is controlled which is totally understandable as some families would take more than their share. We always provide

refreshments. Also, toward the end of the year, our Venue St Augustine's Church Halls became less available and after many discussions with all those involved it was felt that we should hold our sessions in the Haysthorpe Hotel where our guests stay. Since the start of 2024 we meet in the Hotel on a Thursday morning 10.30am - 12noon. We are made very welcome.

We had 8 helpers and one left at the end of the year. We work well together and care for each other and we give thanks to God for the privilege to serve in this way. We would also say that we learn and are blessed by all our guests who become our friends and we hold them in our prayers. **Cynthia Smith – group leader**

### **Purley Food Hub**

**What did you set out to achieve in 2023?** We at the Purley Food Hub are continuing to provide emergency food parcels for those referred to us by our ticket partners. We are also continuing to support and work with our local food stops and other charities in Croydon.

**What was new in 2023?** There was nothing particularly new for the Food Hub in 2023 except for steady increase in the numbers of clients. In December we delivered close to **6,000 meals** for Food Hub clients and their families. This was our busiest month on record which reflects the growing economic pressures on those on who are referred to us by our ticket partners. These high numbers also being seen at Purley Food Stop where they can have 60- 80 clients when they open on a Friday morning.

**What were the highlights and joys to celebrate?** Marking the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary in June was a great time of thanks giving for all that God has provided and knowing we have been able to bless our community, but sad that the need has not gone away and only increasing.

Thanks to all our wonderful Management Committee, volunteers, supporters and generous donors.

**What were the challenges and struggles?** More volunteers are always welcome particularly for delivering food parcels and also to train as a Client support volunteer. Please get in touch at [pfhchairoftrustees@pfoodhub.uk](mailto:pfhchairoftrustees@pfoodhub.uk) or [purleyfoodhub@gmail.com](mailto:purleyfoodhub@gmail.com) if you would like to know more.

**Opportunities for worship, discipleship and evangelism in 2024** At Purley Food Hub we encourage Christian volunteers who have contact with the clients to pray with them if both are comfortable with praying. We also have a number of non-Christians in our pool of volunteers with the opportunity build relationships. Team leaders are encouraged to pray at the start of our delivery sessions and a member of the management committee has created simple prayer that all can use. **Trevor Jones**

## **Outreach at Purley Christmas Market & Community Festival:**

**'From us to you because Jesus loves you'.** What a wonderful opportunity we had to bless shoppers in Purley High Street last Christmas at the Christmas Market. We offered to pray for people and gave out around 200 tealights gift wrapped by the Mothers' Union as well as invitations to all our Christmas services.



We were so pleased to support this Purley BID event and join with our Town Chaplain friends from Purley Baptist Church, just as we had done at the Purley Community Festival on the Rotary Field in September.



Please pray for God's favour on our town's business development and community events and that we continue to have opportunities to join in and extend the welcome.



**Lisa Fairman-Brown**



My thanks to Amanda, Cynthia, Lisa and Trevor for their contributions to this report and to the many cheerful and willing volunteers who make these initiatives possible. If you feel you could help with any of the community engagement projects please do get in touch. No special skills required - just a willing heart and a desire to share the Good News.

***Indrani Balachandran***

## CROYDON SOUTH DEANERY SYNOD 2023

I am indebted to Chris Babbs, the Secretary of our Deanery Synod, for the following report of the year. I do not think I could improve on it, therefore I reproduce it in full, with a small addition about the last meeting, at Christ Church.

The first meeting of 2023, and the last of the 2020-23 triennium, was held at All Saints', Kenley on 9<sup>th</sup> February. Jack Swan, Community Organizer for Croydon Citizens, and Alex Enaharo (St Luke's, Woodside) gave us a very challenging and thought-provoking presentation on moving on from the "charity of mercy" (ie dealing with the symptoms of problems) to the "charity of justice" (tackling their root causes). This is the distinctive theme of Citizens UK, of which Croydon Citizens is the local association. Examples were given of work in Croydon North Deanery and in mental health.

Also, in February we marked Rev Paul Roberts' last Synod as Area Dean, with a reception kindly organized by Rev Justine Middlemiss and the All Saints' team. Paul stood down as Area Dean at Easter, prior to retirement from full-time ministry in September. Our Lay Chair, Indrani Balachandran, also stood down at the end of the triennium. We are very grateful to Paul and Indrani for their leadership, particularly in the last few, very difficult, years.

At the first meeting of the 2023-26 triennium on 7<sup>th</sup> June at All Saints' Sanderstead, we welcomed our newly appointed Area Dean, Rev Sue Thomas (St John's, Old Coulsdon), and members of the House of Laity for the new triennium, particularly those joining Synod for the first time.

The first meeting of the triennium is inevitably taken up to some extent by administrative and financial matters. We elected our new Lay Chair, Nicola Howe (All Saints', Kenley) and the other members of the Deanery Leadership Team (DLT). The DLT now comprises, besides Sue & Nicola, Rev Fiona Weaver (St Mark's & St Swithun's), Linda Etheridge, Kevin Wright, Treasurer (both All Saints', Sanderstead, & St Antony's) and Chris Babbs, Secretary (St Mary's).

We then spent a profitable time reflecting on the previous triennium and identifying the themes on which Synod wished to concentrate over the next three years. Four themes were identified:

- Justice Issues: whilst we did not think the specific "Citizens" approach really fitted our circumstances, the basic point about adding the "charity of justice" to the "charity of mercy" was valid and needed to be pursued.
- Evangelism: how to talk to those we meet at an individual level.

- Children & Family Work (different timing/format given the pressure on family time on Sundays).
- Welcoming Church – for dementia sufferers and all other types of diversity.

We shall be following these up over the next three years.

At an open meeting on 10<sup>th</sup> October at St Mary's we continued with the Justice theme, specifically freedom of religion & belief. We welcomed Mervyn Thomas CMG who gave an inspiring talk about his work with Christian Solidarity Worldwide (CSW), which he and two MPs had founded in 1979, and the UK Freedom of Religion or belief Forum. In many parts of the world the freedom of conscience which we took for granted did not exist and Christians were subject to discrimination or persecution. There were four things we could do in this country to support our fellow Christians:

- Pray.
- Protest.
- Provide support (by, for example, connecting with and encouraging those under persecution).
- Proclaim – telling other people about the issue,

Within the theme of Welcoming Church on 20<sup>th</sup> February 2024 at Christ Church, we tackled the issue of Unconscious Bias. We welcomed Rt Rev Dr Rosemarie Mallett, Bishop of Croydon, who gave a very thought-provoking presentation, based on the diocesan training course. Unconscious Bias was something we all suffered from, so no judgement was involved. The issue was how to recognize it in ourselves and tackle it. Bishop Rosemarie shared practical strategies for doing this.

As Christ Church was hosting the most recent Synod meeting, Doug asked part of the Music Team to introduce the session with a couple of worship songs, after which he led a time of prayer. I, for one, found this a much improved way of starting the meeting. I felt that the quality of the meeting was enhanced and it is to be hoped that we shall open all future meetings with a brief time of worship.

The remaining meetings in 2024 will be devoted to Children & Family, Work & Evangelism.

***Nick Whitley***

**Beavers:** The Beavers have had so much fun over the last year! Our numbers have been steadily increasing and we have 22 Beavers and two Young Leaders in our colony. Our highlights this year have included a Beaver Sleepover and trip on the Bluebell Railway, visits to Pets at Home, Frylands Wood and Purley Beeches, and litter picking in Sanderstead Rec.

Badgework has included Builder, Communicator, Disability Awareness, Experiment, Cook, Faith, Gardiner, Health & Fitness and a whole load more besides!

We have enjoyed visits from a Paramedic to show us first aid skills, the Police with their sniffer dogs, a member of the Croydon Beekeeping Society came to teach us all about bees and helped us to make our own beeswax candles, and Gooey Stuey from Fizz Pop came to show us some amazing experiments!

Heartfelt thanks go to my fellow leaders across all sections, parents who support every step of the way, and lastly to our wonderful Beavers who never fail to put a smile on my face. I am immensely proud of them all. **Louise Benn**

**Scouts:** The Scout section have had another busy year. We are very pleased to report that Scout numbers have continued to rise this year and the troop is now over 30 Scouts. The number of girls in the Scout troop has also been increasing.

We have enjoyed a full programme this year with highlights including the Summer Camp, County Night Exercise, Checkpoint Challenge and Night Hikes. Troop nights have included tie dye, rafts, ice hockey and curling (scout style), orienteering, night navigation, Skaterham, first aid, fires, cooking, teamwork and badgework.

Thank you to all the leaders and parents who give their support throughout the year. **Nicky Short**

**Guides:** We have had a great year enjoying adventures and learning new skills while developing teamwork and leadership. Last summer we did CPR training, rounders, knotting and lashing, tent pitching, made giant catapults, collected litter, lit fires, cooked "camp doughnuts", archery, teambuilding, played human Hungry Hippos, bird watching, alongside the Network badge. We went to Oxygen trampoline park and 'Liquid Leisure' – inflatables on a lake at Shepperton and camping in May. At camp we built a rope bridge and rope ladder, did backwoods cooking (without utensils), "Gladiator Challenge", swimming as well as campfires, washing up stands and all our usual fun.

In the autumn we did car maintenance, a session on homelessness, Night Hike, clay modelling, crafts and a variety of other activities. We sorted tins for Nightwatch (for the homeless) and sang carols at Abbeyfield. This term we have done parachute games, a skipping workshop, gone to the Pantomime, made sandwiches for Nightwatch, done gymnastics, games from round the world, intergalactic snacks, drawn a picture while trampolining and made sweets alongside the Lead Badge. We enjoyed a sleepover on HMS Belfast and are now planning for camp. Five girls have received Jack Petchey awards this year.



After 35 years, and 24 years respectively as Guide leaders both Olivia Griffiths and Kate Buckley are retiring from Guides at the end of the summer term. None of our other leaders can take over as leader-in-charge at this time so we are urgently looking for a new leader for the Unit. Girlguiding provide excellent training and support for new leaders. Please get in touch if you are interested in this role.

### **Olivia Griffiths**

**Rainbows:** Rainbows are the youngest members of GirlGuiding UK. We currently have 15 Rainbows. We have two leaders, one unit helper and two young leaders running Rainbows and our succession plan is to seek an additional adult, all information is on [www.girlguiding.org.uk](http://www.girlguiding.org.uk).

We have continued offering a varied programme of activities for the Rainbows; ranging from crafts, games and over the coming months, lots of outdoor activities. We have a joint sleepover planned with the Brownies in the summer and a further sleepover planned for the Autumn. We work towards various challenge badges with the Rainbows which gives us our themes for each term.

I would like to thank all our families for supporting us. Thank you to Julie and to Rachel and to our two young leaders, Megan and Zoe; and most importantly the Rainbows – who we come each week for! ***Francesca Taylor***

***Rainbow Guide Leader***

Over the last few months, I have participated in the venue booking section expand its horizons and become, once more, an integral part of Purley and way beyond - having had enquiries from locations away from London boroughs.

I have said this before, and I say this now that my work would be less fun without my aide, Mark, who makes sure that everyone feels welcome and attended to. His email address is [caretaker@christchurchpurley.org.uk](mailto:caretaker@christchurchpurley.org.uk) and if you need anything ranging from an issue with the car park, getting things mended or setting up furniture for your meeting – he's your guy.

We have been very lucky to have had fair number of diverse hirers over the years, and we've taken on even more community-based and paying groups since the last report.

To illustrate my point, let me tell you that we've had 26 regular weekly / bi-monthly / monthly hirers, 10 counsellors, 10 church groups and 4 uniformed groups, along with 59 one-off private Saturday events/parties between April '23 and the present.

I would like to share some of the feedback they've left as we're pretty thrilled:

*"Thanks so much for use of the hall. It was great and the kids had a brilliant time, and you were so easy to book and deal with."*

*"We all love the hall and facilities, and you make things so easy. Thank you so much for everything."*

*"Our family & friends had a lovely time & the kitchen and its facilities were amazing!"*

With the successful stories, however, come challenges, and ours have involved individuals being secretive about the actual nature of their bookings (i.e.: not compliant with the CoE teachings) or staying beyond their agreed time. We have managed to recognize and address these difficulties by careful, advance planning and reviewing bookings regularly by way of a brainstorm.

Please pop into the office for a chat with Magda if you are interested in hiring a hall for your event or if you would like to find out more about the activities we host.

Magda can be contacted on 8763 8791 or via [bookings@christchurchpuley.org.uk](mailto:bookings@christchurchpuley.org.uk).

Thank you and hope to see you soon.

***Magda Faltynowicz Church Lettings Administrator***



In our second year of leading the Mothers' Union branch we continued to bear in mind the MU continuing theme of Transformation – Now! which started in 2022. Our particular focus was on raising funds to transform lives through MU projects both 'at home' and overseas. Serving and the gift of hospitality ran through all our activities as expressions of the Christian faith.

Fundraising events included:

- Kate Buckley's Artwork and Craft sale in Rachel Parsons' Open Garden (National Gardens Scheme);
- MU making crowns, colouring bunting, holding a raffle, running a 'royal' quiz and serving refreshments at the Big Help Out initiative together with Purley in Bloom;
- an upcycling Frame It Workshop run by Art for Life and led by Kate.

Together with smaller donations we were able to donate £850.00 to the MU Relief Fund and the Away From It All holiday project.

We were delighted to celebrate the publication of Yewande Sobanowo's book *Mothers in the Bible: Mothers operating under God's Grace in Parenting their Children*, with a talk by Yewande who is one of our MU branch members. This event was open to all church members and there was the opportunity to buy a copy of her book.

A new initiative called Craft and Talk Table was started by Anne in December. It runs on a Friday morning 9.30-11.30am and everyone is welcome to bring their own craft, help with Church craft projects, do some mindfulness colouring, or just enjoy a time of fellowship with a coffee.

During 2023 there were a number of opportunities to serve within CCP and the community. Margaret Polyvieu and family delivered prayers on Mothering Sunday; Anne and Sue read stories of how the MU supports families in the UK and overseas; and other members prepared and distributed bags of soap based on the scripture verse John 12:3 used in the talk. MU members served refreshments at the Live Nativity and the Easter Funday Outreach. We also prepared tealights with Bible verses to be distributed at the Business Improvement District (BID) Christmas Market. Another act of service in the community was collecting socks for prisoners at HMP Wandsworth.

As part of the 16 Days of Activism to raise awareness of Gender Based Violence (GBV) the MU dressed a Red Chair with a cardigan and cloth together with information about GBV which was placed in the Foyer for the 16 days. We also held a small service in the Lebanon room.

In 2023 the branch had 27 members. We continue to seek opportunities to inform everyone of MU's aims and work both at home and overseas, and to warmly welcome new members to the CCP branch. We will also be looking to replace the current leadership at the end of 2024.

Our thanks to all our members for their particular contributions in helping to serve our branch, providing hospitality, donating their talents, time, gifts, and also for their prayers.

***Fran and Anne***

**Overview:** Carousel thrives in its mission to grow relationships and in 2023 our primary focus has been to see families draw nearer to God through Bible Story Time and invitation to Alpha. Families comment on the warm loving welcome, fabulous song-time, great craft and hospitality, Scruffy the puppet dog and bible story time.



**Who's attending:** Around 100 people fill the hall each week and we easily maintain a full group with an average 46 children together with their parents, grandparents or carers. Since September 2023, 208 different families have visited.



**What's new:** The strong engagement with 'optional bible story time'. Children are keen and ready at the door and we now have no weeks off due to their lament if it is not presented! The room off the hall is tiny but there are regularly 25-30 children bringing their adults in. The peace and attentiveness is truly remarkable for this age group. A highlight is Holy Spirit time, when we say shhh and they all lie down and close their eyes as we gently sing and pray God's love over them while praying for them to encounter the Holy Spirit.

We maintained opening through the Summer Holiday hearing that families are at a loss for Under 5's provision during the long break and it was very well attended. Invitation is extended to the families to visit Sunday's Christ Church Kids Under-5's Group which mirrors many aspects of Carousel in order to make it familiar for someone coming for the first time.



**Team:** Carousel has a stunning team of volunteers who each bring their gifting to Carousel every week and huge thanks for all their hard work go to Mary Sharpe, Gabby Welch, Mags Polyviou, Yvonne Brown, Sheri Brown, Gill Bell, Cynthia Smith, Frank Coburn and Mandy James. The church could not be more grateful.

**Where we are asking God to move:**

- For adults to feel drawn to the Alpha Course and for a team to meet childcare needs.
- A Carousel 'New-Baby Group' remains an idea and collaboration with The Foyer has potential but needs leading.
- For families to desire more encounters with Holy Spirit and seek to come along on a Sunday to belong and become disciples alongside church family.

**Charlotte Hunn**

***Life events – Doug (baptisms, weddings, funerals)******What did you set out to achieve in 2023?***

To serve our community by offering services of celebration of significant life stages.

***What was new in 2023?***

It has been a quiet year for weddings and a few funerals shared between the clergy and we closed the year with two large church funerals as we mourned the loss of treasured members. There were no weddings during the year and a few banns of marriage read for those being married elsewhere. Lisa continued to support St Margaret's Chipstead in their marriage ministry until their new incumbent was in place. We have had a number of baptisms and thanksgivings through the year.

***What were the highlights and joys to celebrate?***

The growth in initiations, baptism and thanksgivings, and a conformation service were certainly causes for celebration. Church family thanksgivings in the Third service, where they could be the centre of the event more than is possible in a 10.15 service that is already quite busy, have been a delight. Several have come forward for baptism through relationships built through the work of both Carousel (parents and babies/toddlers' group) and Alpha.

***What were the challenges and struggles?***

Fewer people naturally come to the parish church for "hatch, match and despatch" and so numbers of events have declined. The exception being baptisms and thanksgivings.

***Opportunities for worship, discipleship and evangelism for 2024?***

As we engage more with people through our activities here and going out in evangelism (eg prayer walking and Ask me why? etc) we hope to build relationships which will encourage more to engage with these services of worship and pastoral care. Those who come to us (eg for funerals) have the opportunity to engage with the evangelism and events that we have available.

***Please pray for...***

Good conversations and enquiring minds for those we come into contact with through these occasional services.

***What did you set out to achieve in 2023?***

This year was marked by the sabbatical that I took in April to July. This meant rest and refreshment (and quite a bit of prayer and thinking time) for the Vicar but also the opportunity to lead the church, alongside the wardens, for our Curate, Lisa.

***What was new in 2023?***

Many of the structures of governance and leadership were the same in 2023. It was a delight to hand over to Lisa and the wardens to look after Christ Church while I was away on sabbatical. I hope that this was a helpful time of growth for all concerned. After the sabbatical I came back with a more focused message. The **primary** purpose of the church is worship, discipleship and prayer on the one hand and evangelism on the other. Worshipping and growing in the Good News and “giving it away” to others. The other things we do flow from those primary things.

***What were the highlights and joys to celebrate?***

We continued to engage gracefully with the Living in Love and Faith process and the machinations in the wider Church of England and have recently come to an expressed and settled response to the changes introduced in December. From this a renewed focus on evangelism, eco-church, Racial Justice and welcome as well as corporate prayer are all positives that will propel our mission forward as we seek to see his Kingdom built here.

***What were the challenges and struggles?***

Leadership continues to be a scarce resource in many areas including house (discipleship) groups, ministry teams and service leading and preaching. This will be exacerbated as people move on elsewhere, not least Lisa, our Curate who is in her final year and seeking her first incumbency.

***Opportunities for worship, discipleship and evangelism for 2024?***

As the vibrancy of our mission increases, especially in the areas of evangelism, service leading, discipleship (house) groups, racial justice and prayer, there are opportunities to raise up more leaders in these areas. There are also opportunities to more intentionally equip, train and mentor leaders – both those already here and newcomers who bring fresh insights and energy.

***Please pray for...***

The Lord to convict people in Christ Church that he is calling them into various leadership roles and that we can equip and mentor well those whom he is calling into a more diverse and stronger leadership core for a future of Kingdom building mission.

The Office continues to be a busy place.

Spot the difference 😊

**Online production:** we now livestream the Sunday 10.15am and 11.45am services on YouTube and share the link on the website. If you do not want to appear on screen please check with the Welcome team where you should sit.

**Church Suite:** Did you know it is now 4 years since we started using Church Suite during the first Covid lockdown – we started small and have grown our number of uses. It continues as the primary source of information about church activities for members and through the website for those looking at featured events and for signing up to events.



We are going to be reviewing everybody's content and details starting in April 2024, including that of all children. Watch out for your email! Please, review whether you are displaying the personal information that you want to share because Church Suite default is "hide" so as to meet GDPR requirements! If you would like any help in using Church Suite please let Jean know.

The **Website** is regularly being updated weekly to reflect what is happening at Christ Church. The Advent calendar on the website has proved to be very popular with one day reaching 591 views! – others were not far below that. Speak to me if you would like to be involved in this year's calendar – plans are already underway...

**Newslink has been rebranded as Christ Church News:** Read it each week online or on the board in the Foyer so you do not miss out on what is happening at Christ Church Purley. Find it in your inbox on Friday lunchtimes.

**Social Media:** making use of Facebook, YouTube, Instagram and Podcasts continues to be an area of development with a growing number of followers. Have you liked any posts? Are you following us on Facebook and Instagram – there are at least 2 posts every week?

**Looking forward to 2024:** #askmewhy campaign is currently active on social media, podcasts, YouTube and the website. Would you like to be involved in the continuing campaign?



**Ask me why ?**

**Jean Loh**



Our team has two aims: to keep the Church and Halls in good condition, and to make sure the various missions and activities of Christ Church are fully enabled and supported.

Routine maintenance has been carried out, repairing things as they go wrong. The following major maintenance contracts were carried out:

- Boilers, heating and control systems for the halls complex.
  - The hot air heaters for the Church
  - "PAT" checks of mains cables, extensions, and portable equipment.
  - Annual check of security systems and fire alarms/ extinguishers.
  - Multiple minor repair works and repainting.
- 
- Roof repairs at the junction between the Parish Hall roof and the entrance doors 'dormer' roof, which ought to cure the leak visible in the roof outside the office reception.
  - Replacement of significant amounts of valve work has returned the underfloor heating to Lebanon/Nazareth to working condition.
  - The mixer tap in the Hebron Hall kitchen has been replaced.
  - The urinals and associated drainage pipework in the main Gents toilets have been replaced.

The lightning conductors, roller shutters, meeting room dividing door and bell-cote have been visually checked by us.

Work planned for the spring/ summer:

- Inspecting and cleaning high level church gutters.
- Scoping for possible stonework repairs.

The work of keeping our gardens and grounds clean and looking good continues, organised currently by Cynthia Smith. The area where the wheelie bins are kept has been concreted.

The PCC has given its approval for a significant refurbishment of the church interior. A questionnaire has been made available to church members, and a small number of responses received. The next step will be to start a series of project team meetings, working towards a set of cost estimates and an outline design for consultation.

***TG Church Fabric Team***