



# Annual Report 2016-17



*The end of the Good Friday Walk through Oxted*

## ***Covenant 2016***

We, the Churches of Oxted and District:

- recognise that Christ wills the unity of his Church;
- acknowledge the sincerity of each tradition of faith;
- rejoice in our common Christian faith and heritage;
- give thanks to the Holy Spirit for leading us into closer friendship and unity of purpose.

So we covenant with each other to:

- continue our pilgrimage towards a visible unity, praying that God will lead us to the form that it will eventually take;
- share our Christian life together as fully as we can, in love and service to God and to God's world.

To do this we will:

- worship, pray and study together so that we may understand, know and value each other;
- wherever possible, carry out our mission to our local community and the wider world as Churches Together;
- commit ourselves, as individual churches and together, to find ways to promote unity;
- every year, review our progress towards these objectives.

We commend each other to the love of God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, and pray for God's wisdom and strength to fulfil this Covenant.

### ***2016-17 CTOD Executive Committee***

Chair	John Tolley	St Peter's Limpsfield
Deputy Chair	Katherine Saunders	St John's
Hon. Treasurer	Margaret Cox	Hurst Green Evangelical
Hon. Secretary	Bob and Carole Evans	Methodist Hurst Green
	Miles Corbett	King's Church
	Diana Jones	URC
	Rebecca Littleford	All Saints
	Gerald South	Limpsfield/Tatsfield Team

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## ***Chair's Comments***

*John Tolley*

In my first year as Chair of CTOD we looked back to the marvellous 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary service and then forward to the future. In our churches we were also subject to ongoing change and challenges and these continue to this day. We also needed to look at our role in the community and how this can be improved.

No less than four of our churches face change. The URC church spent the whole year without a resident minister but Revd Graham Dadd is about to be inducted. All Saints lost Fr Simon unexpectedly but Fr Stephen Hardaker has been appointed to carry on his good work. St Mary's Tatsfield and the Limpsfield and Tatsfield Team Ministry welcomed the Revd Vince Short who has almost from the beginning been a great blessing to CTOD as someone who can play worship songs on the run (see below). On the other hand Revd Gerald South, of the same church was appointed to a post in the Cotswolds. He has been a tremendous asset to CTOD as a former chair, our publicity officer and a person generous with his time and his ideas. Hurst Green Methodists now have Kathy Flynn as their resident minister.

The effect on CTOD is going to be important. One of the most important changes in recent years has been the conversion of the organisation into a largely lay led one. This is because the number of clergy has reduced and as a result many clergy in the Free Churches and the Roman Catholics are covering churches in neighbouring areas and even the Anglicans now run teams of churches with less clergy. The idea of having a minister as chair in alternate biennial sessions has now had to be abandoned and CTOD itself has a staffing problem. We need a new Deputy Chair to take over from me in October 2018, a new Secretary and a new Publicity Officer. In addition we realised that we need to work on new ideas from our greatest success areas such as our multi-denominational Lent Groups which lost 20% of their members in 2017. Yet the need for a Churches Together organisation was emphasized by the fact that people from Bletchingley felt bereft by its absence in their area and that Caterham has re-introduced one chaired by Revd Helen Burnett.

As Chair I have many thanks to make. We have a marvellous Executive and all of them deserve thanks for their hard work. Bob Evans who takes our minutes, except when Carole his wife does so, is a great blessing and our second blessing

is Pastor Margaret Cox our treasurer for many years and as of the time this is written, our only Clergy on the Executive. Diana Jones of the URC, Miles Corbett of Kings Church and Rebecca Littleford of All Saints have done sterling work throughout the year. I must also mention the contribution of the retiring Deputy Chair, Katherine Saunders, without whom I would have undoubtedly been even more lost than I have been. Lastly I do thank the Revd Gerald South whose ideas and work will be helping us for many years after his departure westwards. Thanks to all of you.

So the conclusion is that we will need to do things better. New ideas have been proposed and I shall be following up on these. In particular we will be planning for an exciting new home made Lent course. And I need more ideas and more people. If you can help with either please let me know.

## **SOME CTOD EVENTS – in chronological order**

### ***Carol Singing in Oxted***

*Margaret Cox*

The group of singers who gathered to sing carols outside Boots on 17<sup>th</sup> December was made up of folk from many churches in our district. As we sang many folk stopped to listen, give a request or even to join in! We will be gathering again on the 16<sup>th</sup> December 2017 from 11-11.30. Take a break from shopping and join us. All Welcome!



## ***The 2016 Lent Course***

*John Tolley*



Less people attended Lent Groups this year but this was OK because we had less people offering to lead and host them. There were 10 groups catering for about 98 people. This compares with about 120 people last year and about 130 two years ago.

It is clear that we need more leaders and hosts and to improve the training of the leaders. It was also unfortunate that many people had holidays or other absences during Lent which meant that they could not attend the whole course.

Most people said that the book was surprisingly interesting but that leaders were often tempted not to miss out questions etc., which caused sessions to overrun.

No-one criticised the system for recruiting the leaders, hosts or members.

I have looked at books available for Lent this year, which we can use for 2018. I have as yet not seen any which look completely suitable. York Courses have maintained their traditional format which many see as complex and difficult to lead. There are various Anglican Dioceses which have devised courses but these are not necessarily suitable. There is a BCCI course which is also not suitable.

As a result the Executive are proposing a course of our own based on religious art. We hope this will increase the numbers that attend but this will in turn require more leaders and more hosts. We certainly wish to hear from those who are prepared to help us next year.



## ***Good Friday Walk through Oxted***

*Gerald South*

This year our walking worship was led by Revd Anna Eltringham as nearly a hundred of us started from the Council Offices, up the High Street, past Morrisons and finished at Master Park. A very welcome addition this year was the guitar of Revd Vince Short, the new Vicar at Tatsfield.

Hymns, readings and prayers took place at strategic points on the journey as well as the distribution of hot cross buns to the shoppers along the way, many of whom seemed very surprised to be offered a freebie – surely one of the symbols of Christian hospitality.

This relaxed but significant event brings together so many local Christians from a wide variety of churches and traditions – do join in next year.



## ***Week of Prayer for Christian Unity***

*Margaret Cox*



This year the theme was Crossing Barriers. The text from 2 Corinthians announces that God has, in Christ, reconciled the world to himself. The love of Christ compels us to be ambassadors of this reconciliation, which is enacted by dismantling the walls. The material explored the barriers which hinder unity which we must seek to destroy and led us to pray. Unfortunately this year fell at half term. This affected our numbers and also required us to use different venues. We had planned to hold some evening meetings but unfortunately these did not materialise. However those who attended enjoyed exploring the thought provoking material and having fellowship together. We need to think how we take this event forward.

## ***Fifth Sunday Service***

*Margaret Cox*

On 30<sup>th</sup> October we were invited by URC to join in their “Sing and Praise Today” celebration. It was a very uplifting evening.

On January 29<sup>th</sup> we met at the Methodist Church. As this service was planned we felt a real call to pray for Refugees and to seek God as to what our response should be as churches and individual. We were really blessed by hearing from Josie and Izzy with us who had just returned from volunteering in Lesbos. The prayer time which followed was incredibly special.



On the 30<sup>th</sup> April we gathered at All Saints Church. The service was led by Father Simon and the speaker spoke of his work with Aid to the Church in Need which works with refugees throughout the Middle East. Once again we were prompted to pray for refugees and our response as churches and individuals.

On 30<sup>th</sup> of July groups of walkers set out from URC and St Marys Tatsfield for tea at Titsey Place before joining the annual service at St James’s Church Titsey. The choral Evensong was beautifully led by a wonderful choir.

## ***Pilgrimage to St James Titsey***

*Gerald South*



Our annual walk this year took us to St James’ Church for the annual service of Evensong sung by the augmented choir of St Peter’s Limpsfield. This church is no longer in regular use but it springs into life for the festival of St James, celebrated this year by a full church including our walkers.

One group had set off from Tatsfield and another from Oxted, numbering some 20 in all. Somehow the two groups passed in opposite directions during their itineraries, but they all managed to reach the Titsey tea room in time for some refreshment before the service and we are most grateful to their staff for staying open late for us.

## **SOME CTOD REGULAR ACTIVITIES**

### ***Christian Men's Prayer Breakfast***

*John Roberts*

We gather regularly at 7.00 am on the second Monday of each month (except August) at The Gospel Hall, Old Oxted. After a breakfast of coffee, rolls and croissants we are led in prayer by one of our number and there follows a time of free prayer expressing our concerns of the moment.

We continue to be most grateful to Alistair Scott for his hospitality and his cheerful welcome.

All men are welcome to join us - no previous experience required!

### ***Supporting Our Chosen Charities***

*Margaret Cox*

This year we are supporting two local charities.

“Orbit Shed” run performing arts workshops for children aged 4-17 of all abilities including those with a physical or learning disability. [www.orbitshed.org](http://www.orbitshed.org)

Bloomin Arts, a charity dedicated to the promotion of performing arts for and by people who have learning disabilities. They provide leisure, training and work opportunities. [www.bloominarts.org.uk](http://www.bloominarts.org.uk)

We take a collection at as at many CTOD events as possible to support our charities.

## ***Foodbank Support Project***

*John Roberts*

The demand for food parcels through the Oxted Citizens Advise Bureau has steadied at around 70 parcels per year. The total number of boxes delivered since the project's inception have been:

April 2013 – March 2014	.....	78 boxes
April 2014 – March 2015	.....	128 boxes
April 2015 – March 2016	.....	67 boxes
April 2016 – March 2017	.....	72 boxes
April 2017 – Sept 2017	.....	34 boxes

The generosity of donations to the Caterham Foodbank via the supermarket donation points has continued, such that the Foodbank has seldom had the need to call upon individual churches to organise additional collections. In the run-up to Christmas though, the following dry goods are being sought:

- tinned sponge puddings,
- UHT/dried milk,
- bags for life,
- Christmas puddings,
- biscuits,
- tinned ham,
- breadsticks,
- chocolate
- toiletries.

Financial donations are also always welcomed - please refer to their website at <https://caterham.foodbank.org.uk/give-help/donate-food/>.

St Peter's Limpsfield have, for several years, been collecting for the Brixton foodbank. If your church would like to supplement their collection, the demands at Brixton are much higher than at Caterham, so your donations would always be most welcome there.

## **GROUPS**

### ***Christmas Cards to Prisoners of Conscience.***

*Sue Mallinson*

We will be at the Oxted Community Hall on Saturday 18th November from about 9.30am - there will be excellent coffee, cake and conversation and cards to write for people who do not have the freedom to stroll by, to watch the world and people, and to express how much they value all that by writing cards to prisoners of conscience.

There will also be Traidcraft goods on sale.

We could provide cards and addressees to anyone who cannot come on the day, or who want to get other people in their churches to write a card. For further information contact Sue Mallinson 01883 714775

### ***Housing and Homeless Action Group***

*Stuart Paterson*

During the past year, the Group has met twice and has paid a £50 affiliation fee to Housing Justice, the national Churches housing umbrella organisation. We have also paid £30 to Tandridge DC to top up its Transport Fund. This pays for homeless people to travel to accommodation found by TDC. Additionally we donated £50 to the Renewed Hope Trust, which provided a speaker at last year's CTOD AGM.

Our Group was represented at Tandridge DC's Homelessness Strategy Meeting held in June, where we were updated on the Council's 'hands-on' approach to homelessness prevention. Two money Advice Officers help people to sustain tenancies with expert advice on entitlement to benefits in an adverse climate of benefit cap reductions and with problems arising from the introduction of Universal Credit.

We have recently received a generous donation of £170 towards the work of our Group from St. Peter's Church, Limpsfield, collected from the sale of coffee and biscuits after Sunday morning services and at the monthly Community Coffee Morning at St. Peter's. Our balance is currently £358-68 and we are due to meet on 9 November when we will discuss projects to be supported this year.

***TicToc***  
***Together in Christ Toddlers of Oxted Churches***

*Sarah Darby*

While many groups shrink we are again so pleased to report three new members in the group- two 'returners' and one new. Our Monday morning program continues to be varied and enriching: speakers, TV documentaries on a Christian theme, meditations, worship sessions and Bible studies.

One dull wet Monday in November Revd. Andrew Rumsey came to lead us in a creative writing session. He likened writing prayers to writing poetry and following guidance inspired us to write our own poems. It was a fun and creative time. Here are some examples:

A church known to me

"Tourist buses arrive en masse.  
 A sanctuary from rain but not of faith.  
 Void and empty yet crowded and full.  
 This church has suffered a lingering death. "

*Sarah Paxton*

Living in the shadow of the M25 with its constant noise something strange happened on Millennium night when we went into the garden to light our fireworks.

The Millennium

The M25 flows, a river with a purpose.  
 Vehicles like ants in constant motion.  
 Impatient, noisy, passing through post codes like flicking through a directory.  
 Until 11.59 on the Millennium night , it becomes silent, with an air of fear and anticipation.

*Jane Tozer*

Late October 2016 we lost our 36 year old nephew to cancer. He left a widow and six month old daughter called Poppy.

To Poppy

It is Monday  
 My mother would say it is a' soft day'  
 It is a grey day, a dull day  
 It is an Autumn day, not yet a Winter's day  
 Tom died on All Souls Day.  
 We wear a Poppy on Remembrance Day  
 Next Sunday will be Tom's funeral day  
 .....a different kind of " Poppy Day"

In early 2017 we all read the book 'Fathomless Riches' by Northamptonshire vicar and TV presenter, Richard Coles a few enjoyed it but many did not! The purpose was to discuss the very sensitive subject of homosexuality and Christianity. This discussion gave many the opportunity to express their deep feelings and many misunderstandings. The concluding discussion point was: "How is God using Richard Coles today?" .....

Our Lent group numbers studying 'Balance' were much reduced this year and we found the book disappointing.....but not as controversial as Fathomless Riches!

Speakers have included Dr Eleanor Stoneham giving an illustrated talk about her visit to churches in Iran. Rev. David Skitt talked about his call to retirement and Anne Thompson, better known to many as Mrs Todd from Limpsfield School talked about her new career as a Christian novelist. We plan to read her latest book 'Joanna' and discuss it next term.

Sadly no new toddlers have joined us this year ...but they are still welcome should any reader of this article care to join us. We are quite a big group to meet in domestic sitting rooms, but several members are always away for different reasons, so we still welcome new members with their ideas and experiences.

## ***CTOD Singers***

*Molly Holman*

We have changed the original name of 'CTOD Choir' to CTOD SINGERS. We are not really a choir in the true meaning of the word. As there are many choir groups in and around Oxted, we are different and best described as a 'singing together group' purely for our own enjoyment and with like-minded people.

We are very informal and we enjoy singing in praise and worship, singing our favourite or familiar hymns and songs as well as learning new ones which may be familiar to others but unknown to us.

Everyone can sing. So many of our hymns and songs are filled with prayerful and beautiful words. It's about bringing people together to worship in song. Bring Spring into your voice, joy into your hearts, happiness into your soul.

Come and join us and enjoy singing. Make yourself feel amazing.

## REPORTS FROM CTOD CHURCHES

### *All Saints' Church in the Parish of Oxted & Warlingham*

*John Roberts*

What a shock it was to learn in May this year that Fr Simon was having to leave us to be with his father who had become very unwell. Fr Simon had been our Parish Priest since September 2015 and had made a great impact upon us all. He has a very deep spirituality and we have benefited greatly from his ministry – he will be sorely missed and our prayers remain with him and his father at this difficult time.

We were very fortunate to learn, almost within the same sentence as the announcement of Fr Simon's departure, that Fr Stephen Hardaker had been appointed to be our new Parish Priest. Fr Stephen arrived at the end of June following a period as Parish Priest in Bexhill and, prior to that, in Uckfield and Heron's Ghyll. Fr Stephen is a Yorkshireman by birth and consequently has a great love of cricket – but he is also happy to be with friends supporting Surrey at the Oval from time to time! He has been a Catholic priest for 18 years and an Anglican minister for six years before that.

On 30<sup>th</sup> September, Fr Stephen was inducted as our Parish Priest by the Bishop of Arundel & Brighton, Rt. Rev. Richard Moth at a lovely mass at All Saints' to which we were privileged to welcome many from our sister churches in both Oxted and Warlingham as well as parishioners from several of Fr Stephen's previous parishes. We were also delighted to be able to use the wonderful facilities of the United Reformed Church for the reception afterwards. A great night had by all.

One of the initiatives that Fr Simon encouraged was the course on Christian Meditation on Wednesday evenings, listening to tapes and, latterly, watching DVD's produced by Fr Laurence Freeman, a Benedictine monk and an international speaker in the ways of contemplation, silence and prayer. These sessions continue and are open to all. Last May, we were privileged to welcome Fr Laurence himself to All Saints' to talk about Christian Meditation and the role of the contemplative Christian life, balancing our call to witness through being with those most in need. Fr Laurence led well over 100 people from the parish and beyond to experience meditation – many for the first time – drawing on

Christ's teaching and that of St Paul. Somewhat surprisingly, Fr Laurence explained that meditation is very much an active not passive experience and about community, not solitude. All are invited to come along to the continuing Wednesday evening sessions at 8.00pm.

The CTOD 5<sup>th</sup> Sunday service in April was hosted by All Saints' and was led by Dr John Newton of Aid to the Church in Need. Using the theme of one in baptism with our suffering brothers and sisters persecuted for their faith, the liturgy drew on forms that would be familiar to many Christians in the Middle East, including material from the Eastern Orthodox, Methodist and Reformed traditions. The talk focused on the plight of many Christians in the Middle East and northern Africa and why so many have become internally displaced persons or refugees. A truly moving and informative occasion.

The occasional Sunday afternoon "tea and singalongs" continue in the Parish Room, giving people with special needs and their carers the opportunity to sing, dance and accompany some of their favourite songs, and enjoy a sumptuous tea. The CTOD singers also continue to meet monthly at the Methodist Church and will soon be practising the carols to lead the Johnsdale Oxted ADVENTure evening on 10<sup>th</sup> December. Do please come and join in.

Between now and next Spring our Bishop is leading a Diocesan wide consultation and reflection to consider how we might improve our "Mission-effectiveness".

## ***Evangelical Church, Hurst Green***

*Steven and Margaret Cox*

Isaiah 43 18-19 *"Forget the former things, do not dwell on the past. See I am doing a new thing. Now it springs up; do you not perceive it?"*

It is easy to look back and feel that many things are just the same as last year but as I read last year's report and reflect I realise God has indeed done a new thing!

During Sunday school three children have shared at different times how they have prayed about something and God has answered and so they have let Jesus into their heart. What a joy that is. We pray that as we continue to teach and nurture the children God has put in our care we will see all of them come to an understanding of just how much God loves them.

We have also felt a new call to pray that those on the fringes of our fellowship would come to accept Jesus as Lord of their lives and for their believing partners and spouses. We seek to invite them to church lunches, Passover, and our bonfire party. We recently had a Day Out at Cowey Sale, Walton on Thames: a large green area, cycle paths and boat trips!

As the Church grows we have a new call to catch God's vision for the church fellowship and its future since both Sunday and mid-week activities will have to change. Have you noticed that it is usually when we are happily settled that God calls us to get out of the boat!

Over the year we have come back time and again to think about the command to love our neighbour. God's love is unconditional. Do we have the same love as the father for those he brings across our path day by day?

We have continued working together with the other Hurst Green Churches. We take turns to run services in Windmill Manor. We have opportunities to take assemblies in local schools and get involved in their celebrations at Harvest, Christmas and Easter. Together we have run Christmas craft and Easter fun mornings and we joined together to sing carols at the Diamond.

A number of our fellowship have been blessed by taking part in Lent Groups, 5<sup>th</sup> Sunday services and other churches events. These united events build the fellowship in Oxted and district in ways that are often unseen but means that the work involved in them is worthwhile

Some of our children had a great time at Criss Cross , the holiday club run by Kings in the summer. We are truly blessed by our fellowship with our brothers and sisters in Oxted and District



## ***King's Church***

*Miles Corbett*

This has been another year of growth for Kings Church; in every aspect of the Church's mission, increasingly our purpose of Sharing the Gospel is fulfilled through mission to Serve the local and wider Community with many of us being led into new ways for us to serve others and share the Gospel on a daily basis.

Our work with young people has extended in many ways, through The Hub at Oxted school where we have been privileged to see the most encouraging fruit of our mission; new life and hope through healing and salvation. The Oxted Baby Cafe is well established and very popular and in the Summer holidays of 2017 we launched Criss Cross and children's summer club, this and our plans to work with Tandridge District Council have been a focus of cooperation with the CTOD churches.

You may recall the impassioned presentation which Jayne Gould-Smith gave to CTOD Council about Clean Sheet a Christian charity which aims to help ex prisoners into work and a life free from a cycle of re-offending ([www.cleansheet.org.uk](http://www.cleansheet.org.uk)), this has been both a challenging and rewarding year with weekly stories of new placements, new employers and new prisons being reached which Jane has handled without the support of a chief executive, who moved on to pastures new.

Finally as this report is submitted it is only right to mention our delight as Simon Quincey our youth pastor (and TicToc alumni) and Sophie as they entered into married life together, Simon also leads our evangelical outreach, such as Alpha and 'Just looking' courses for adults wanting to explore the Christian faith..

## ***Methodist Church, Hurst Green***

*Bob Evans*

The most significant event for Hurst Green Methodist Church was that our Minister Rev Karen Bell moved from this area to Essex. We are most grateful to Karen for her service over the years and her legacy of moving the Church forward with projects such as Café Church and Messy Church. We are fortunate that the Methodist Connexion has been able to allocate another Minister to the Purley Circuit. We welcome Rev Kathy Flynn who will live in

The Manse in Hurst Green and serve mainly Hurst Green and Caterham Methodist Churches.

Like most churches, we have lost members such as long-serving Kathleen Fisher who has moved away closer to her family; and have had losses through bereavement and illness. We are pleased however that we have welcomed occasional and regular new worshippers to our Church. We have had some especially memorable services such as the Baptism of Vienna Ford, daughter of our music leaders Josh and Hannah Ford. We had a series of Bible Study sessions and a number of our services were conducted by Church members under the 'local arrangement' scheme. Our Wednesday Fellowship continues to provide interest and companionship for members and others in the community. Our Church also contributes to the management and running of the community café Aggies-on-the-Green.

We continue to support virtually all CTOD matters and are pleased to host events such as the Palm Sunday service marking the completion of Lent Groups. We also provide the base for the re-branded CTOD Singers. Our premises are well-used by the local community which we regard as an important form of outreach.

We look forward to the next year with our new Minister Kathy. As well as supporting all Christian activity in our area, we also look forward to considering how we can make the most of our assets to ensure continuity of worship at this site.



## ***Oxted United Reformed Church***

*Diana Jones*

The congregation at Oxted URC has remained in good heart during a fairly long period without a minister, facing challenges and opportunities with commitment and hope. In partnership with our sister church, St John's Marsh Green, we have engaged actively and enthusiastically in the processes of seeking a new minister and are delighted that the Rev Graham Dadd has accepted the call to be minister of our joint pastorate. Graham's Induction is Saturday 11 November at Oxted URC.

Worship is at the heart of all our activities. It has been a great pleasure and source of spiritual growth, to welcome, week by week, a variety of worship leaders from across a wide spectrum of theological and denominational traditions. This, together with opportunities for members of our own congregation to lead and participate in worship, has enriched the life of our church.

Autumn 2016 saw the 6<sup>th</sup> biennial Bluehouse Festival, sponsored by the Snelling Legacy Fund. An eclectic mix of events were much appreciated and well attended, the highlight being *The Snelling Lecture*, when the Rev Richard Coles spoke of opportunities and risks of ministry and media under the title *Servant of two masters*. Other events included a recital by renowned clarinettist, Emma Johnson; a talk by Toyah Willcox, entitled *Nine Lives in the Spotlight*; The Len Phillips Big Band experience; The David Gordon [Jazz] Trio; a Tea Dance and much, much more.

Sharing reflectively in study continues to be an important facet of church life. This has included participating in CTOD Lent groups; house groups, in which the debate between science and religion was explored using an excellent booklet '*Look well on these skies' Amazed by Science, Illumined by Religion*'; two summer evening events provided an opportunity to commemorate 500 years since the Reformation in Europe "*1517 and all that . . .*", during which significant aspects of the Reformation, in Europe and in Britain, were considered and the important question posed: 'What does it mean for us today?'

OURC was pleased to host the Women's World Day of Prayer evening service, written by women from the Philippines and, at the beginning of the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, the CTOD Covenant Renewal Service, marking 70 years of ecumenical activity in the Oxted area.



Prayer & Share and Wednesday Fellowship are important regular events in the URC calendar. Other activities included two all-day Traidcraft events; a MacMillan coffee afternoon; the popular Quiz evening and an outing to Wintershall to see *The Life of Christ*, skilfully and movingly enacted in the grounds of the estate.

In November we welcome Baroness Joan Bakewell, who will deliver the Snelling Lecture '*We need to talk about death*', with a book signing session following the talk. We look forward to sharing this event with many friends.

## ***St Andrew's, Limpsfield Chart***

*Sue Compton*

Our Team ministry includes St Peter's Limpsfield and St Mary's Tatsfield so St Andrew's has benefitted from the appointment of Rev. Vincent Short as Team Vicar at St Mary's, who has joined our rota of clergy presiding at our services. As well as this gain, we are sad to be losing Revd Gerald South, who was our Priest-in-Charge during the gap between the Revd Alison Cooper leaving and the appointment of the Revd Wendy Harvey. During that interregnum, Gerald introduced changes with a lasting effect on welcoming strangers to St Andrew's, whether they attend a service or simply visit the building while walking on the Chart. In his role in Churches Together, Gerald also master-minded several annual walks from Oxted to the Chart, coinciding with our 'August Teas'.



Even without a CTOD walk, August Teas this year proved our best outreach to a wider community – in the four Sundays we served over three hundred customers! Our church garden proved a lovely place to settle down for a chat on a fine afternoon with homemade scones and cakes, and indoor space in our Hall remained

popular. An ongoing outreach is St Andrew's Coffee Morning on the first Tuesday of the month from 10.30 -midday, held in the extension for morning coffee at The Carpenter's Arms, where all are welcome. This summer our Village Fair spilled over onto the Common land across the road with a well-attended 'Dog Show'. Other social events included a Bridge afternoon, a Quiz night, and Children's Parties. Our special services drew in outsiders, including the annual Pet Service in the Church Garden, where pets were blessed – mainly dogs! At our All-Souls-Tide Service we remembered those who had died, and at our Christmas Carol Service members of the local community were again invited to read the lessons. As usual, the largest congregation was for our Christingle service on Christmas Eve, where regular attenders at our monthly Children's Church acted a short play.

We have an important link with several students of performing arts from The Orpheus Centre in Godstone who attend our Sunday services in term time. Although partially handicapped, they provide a joyful addition to our congregation and we expect them to be contributing to a Service in October. In addition, some of us are attending Hearing Champions training so will be able to offer hearing aid maintenance at some stage.

## ***St George's Crowhurst***

*Carol Din*

A lot of changes have happened at St George's over the 800 plus years since its beginning as the Lord of the Manor's place of worship. Recent changes and reorganisation mean the United Benefice of the parish of Lingfield and Crowhurst of the last 30 years is just a distant memory except for our joint worship at the Edenbridge Show. We are now part of the Oxted Team of Churches and are members of CTOD - enjoying our first attendance at the Renewal of the Covenant last year.

Our congregation is no longer made up of farmers and people working on the land or making bricks from the local clay but our rural heritage seems



entrenched in the very fabric of the Church and rural services such as Plough Sunday, Rogation and Harvest are still shared and welcomed with enthusiasm by the local community.

During January Plough Sunday was celebrated with a farmer asking for the plough and milk churn to be blessed as a symbol of the start to the farming year. Our customary May Rogation Service is usually held on a Crowhurst Farm. This year we invited the three other Churches in the Oxted Team to attend this informal service starting in

a barn and including beating the bounds on the adjoining field. This year was the first time our Team Rector joined us, leading a walk between the four Team churches and arriving in Crowhurst just in time for the service and St George's renowned BBQ!

Reaching out to the community to join our worship on Remembrance Sunday sees our congregation increase four-fold when we meet by the little war memorial at the churchyard steps to observe The Silence and hear a teenager bugler play the Last Post. The service continues inside the church. This year, a young serviceman long associated with our church returned to Crowhurst and, with a young person from our congregation, lit the Peace Candle. Organising

the Village Fete gives St George's an opportunity to raise money for the Church and another chance to engage with parishioners and neighbouring areas. Stormtroopers and other characters from Star Wars were this year's star attraction!

## ***St John's, Hurst Green***

*June Reed*

As mentioned in last year's Report the item selected for focus from our Mission Plan in 2016/17 was Children and Youth. One new venture was a weekly Group set up for babies, toddlers and their parent(s) or carers in the area called Yo-Yos (York Room Youngsters). Attendance at Café Church continued to grow with more instrumentalists making it possible to add a widening range of music. Also "Sunday Munch" held once a month for older children in the Sunday School Group which entails a discussion accompanied by hot chocolate and toast is proving popular. The Easter Craft morning held in conjunction with the Methodist church and the Evangelical church at St Agatha's Hall was as ever fully attended and much enjoyed by both children and adults.

Focus in 2017/18 now moves on to the Welcome section of the Mission Plan. A network "Community of St Johns" has been set up to improve contact with existing members of the church and to provide information and invitations for others within the Hurst Green area. Also a Diocesan Mission Grant has made it possible for a part-time Communications Officer to be appointed. The refurbishment of St John's Room now makes a comfortable meeting place for the fortnightly coffee mornings held on alternative Thursdays which are open to all to come and relax and chat. This year marked the 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Coffee Shop, a joint venture between the Methodist Church and St. Johns, which is held on a Wednesday at St Agatha's Hall. Helpers and those who provide the delicious home-cooked dishes celebrated with a Buffet meal and a special cake to mark the occasion.

As Anna was quoted saying in an article published recently in the Southwark Diocese newspaper The Bridge "our aim is not just to strengthen community links but to help people connect and know we are available and easy to approach whenever they need us" or as she earlier said "simply bringing God's love to those around". A message echoed in the aims of C.T.O.D.

## ***St Mary's, Oxted and St. Peter's, Tandridge***

*Andrew Rumsey*

Life in the Oxted Team Ministry has continued apace since last year's Churches Together AGM. We appreciate our growing sense of union with St John's, Hurst Green and St George's, Crowhurst, which was celebrated in May this year with our first shared Rogationtide walk. 'Beating the parish bounds' is an ancient custom enjoying a revival in many places: a shared walk through our parishes, calling at each church and with lunch together in Crowhurst made for a lovely day and one of the highlights of our year.

The other was doubtless the arrival of our new curate, Rev Mark Anderson, together with his wife Mille and daughters Evie and Zoe. The Andersons have come to us from West London and Mark was ordained deacon at Southwark Cathedral in July. He has fitted in swiftly and well and we are already appreciating his committed and careful ministry.

Capital projects at both St Peter's and St Mary's are getting underway – the first phase of the St Mary's project is the repair of our crumbling exterior stonework and the installation of an accessible ramp and additional glass porch door. We anticipate that these works will begin during 2018. Our churches appreciate our fellowship with Church Together in Oxted and District and look forward to another year of growth.

## ***St. Mary's, Tatsfield***

*Jennifer Evans and Barbara Hester*

This year has been one of hellos and goodbyes. We were delighted to welcome the Revd Vince Short as Team Rector together with his wife Veronica at the end of November 2016 and extremely sad to say goodbye to the Revd Dr Gerald South at the end of September 2017 – we are so grateful for Gerald's years of care and service to this Parish particularly during our recent period of interregnum and wish him every blessing as he takes up his role as Priest in Charge of the Parishes of Avening and Cherington in Gloucester. Gerald's call means that we have also had to say farewell to his wife, Jennie. Over the years Jennie has held many roles within the church, most latterly as our Southwark Pastoral Auxillary. She will be missed enormously.

Revd Vince Short's licensing on 29<sup>th</sup> November was a very joyous and busy affair with a live video relay being necessary to the Millennium Hall.

We welcomed around 600 visitors to our Flower Festival over the Whitsun bank holiday weekend. The theme, Tatsfield Village Life, translated into a magnificent array of displays and was launched on the Friday with a splendid evening of music.



St Mary's organised well attended Hustings on behalf of CTOD for both the Local and General Elections.

Following a number of successful Dementia Awareness Sessions, the beginning of May saw the start of a Dementia Café trial on a Friday morning in Ye Old Ship pub. The 'Forget-me-not Café' proved so popular that the initial five week trial was extended and after a break for the month of August now continues every Friday morning in the Parish Rooms. The once a month, 'Hear Hear' hearing aid clinic in partnership with the NHS has been running since March 2016 and continues to be very well frequented.

In June three members of our congregation benefited enormously from joining the Diocesan retreat to Iona.

Sunday afternoon Church Teas continue to be a very popular fixture of the summer months and as 2017 sees St Mary's celebrating 10 years as a Fairtrade Church visitors are met by a display celebrating the fact in the entrance of the Millennium Hall. Likewise our 'Holiday at Home' was as popular as ever with regulars and some newcomers enjoying companionship and entertainment over four days in August.

We continue to support the Foodbank at Christchurch Brixton and much of the produce donated at our Harvest Service will be delivered there.

The church is usually open daily during daylight hours and has many visitors. For seven weeks starting in early October 2016 the opportunity to engage in

the Lord's Prayer in a dynamic and multisensory way was on offer at a prayer station which changed weekly. Parish Prayers continue once a month and in seeking to develop the prayer life of the Church there is now also the opportunity to meet for prayer on a weekly basis. We also hope to run an Alpha Course in 2018.

## ***St Peter's Limpsfield***

*Sarah Darby*

For many years John Tolley has represented St Peter's at CTOD and in recognition of his long term commitment he is now chairman. Even John can't do two jobs at the same time so I am supporting him as representative for St Peter's.

Rev James Percival has studied and interpreted our Mission Action Plan with great energy and inspiration. We are all called to tell the 'Good News', but communicating any news in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century has become a science all of its own. To this end a new Communications Officer has been appointed to work with the Limpsfield and Tatsfield Team of churches for ten hours per week. Caroline Campbell comes from a media and marketing background. She has reviewed all our methods of communication both traditional and social media.

She has questioned whether our non-verbal communication through our previous logo conveyed the correct message. It was felt the crossed keys of St Peter were actually locking heaven's doors, rather than showing us the entrance. For this reason we have now changed our logo to a more modern, warmer and more open logo. She has reviewed our notice board usage and ensures all our website, Face book and Twitter information is up to date, correct and illustrative of the life of our church.

Earlier this year our SPA Paul Budgen led an Alpha Lite course in the Millennium Room. Initially numbers were low but it soon gathered momentum and participants enjoyed a light supper, study and discussion. The group gelled well together and the course was extended for a few weeks in order to answer questions and enjoy more companionship together. A second course is scheduled for this Autumn. Participants are welcome from other churches.

Following disappointing attendance at Messy Church last summer James decided to add Messy Church Sports club to the activities this winter. James and

Dominic Campbell took many under 7s to the Glebe Meadow to play foot ball. This has been a delight to busy boys who do not enjoy craft activities. Dominic and Lewis Taylor also offered their bodies to be burned (sun-burned) to run a full afternoon's football at the Limpsfield Fete.

At the end of July Revd. Gerald South organised a CTOD service and walk from URC and Tatsfield Churches to meet at Titsey Place for tea. Following tea there was Evensong performed by St Peter's choir in Titsey Church. The weather was good, the church was full for its annual service. A very fitting tribute to Gerald, and his organisation of such an event, and so many other CTOD events and ideas. He will be sorely missed.

We warmly welcome all CTOD members to St Peter's Advent Carol Service at 6.30pm on Sunday 3rd December.

*CTOD is a part of a much wider network of "Together" churches. There are umbrella organisations of Churches Together in Surrey, Churches Together in England and Churches Together in Britain and Ireland.*

