This year we devised a Lent Course “Experiencing the Easter Story through Art”. Our final service was greatly blessed with artworks like this devised by groups at St John’s Hurst Green (this one by residents at Windmill Manor care home).
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.

2017-18 CTOD Executive Committee

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Email: ctod.oxted@gmail.com

Website: http://together.ourchurchweb.org.uk/oxted/
Chairman’s Report

John Tolley

This is my second report as Chair of CTOD. And there is good news and less good news. CTOD remains an important organisation in Surrey Churches Together and many of the things we have been doing have really worked. In particular we had an excellent home-made Lent course “Exploring the Easter Story through Art”, which we are hoping will be the catalyst for a second course based on poetry in 2019. Thanks to Diana Jones and Margaret Cox for all their hard work on this. We have also been supported by the presence of people from St Mary’s Betchingley, who have provided a house for Syrian refugees – a project which was very much supported by our own Kings Church.

As a general process we have been trying to utilise events in our constituent churches though this does depend on our being told of events which are open to CTOD people. There have also been other good things which have been reported on in other articles in this report. I am very grateful to the members of the Executive (excellently strengthened by the addition of Gwen Hand, Wendy Hewitt and Barbara Hester) and the Council for their support and help.

I had expected also to report on “less good” news mainly involving our failure to fill two important posts in CTOD. However, you will be very pleased to hear that I shall be able at the AGM (if the Council agrees) to hand over the Chairmanship of CTOD to Revd Mark Anderson, the curate at St Mary’s Oxted and St Peter’s Tandridge. I will become his deputy. The second is that of Secretary. I am very grateful for all the help that people have given in taking Executive and Council minutes but it is all rather precarious and I remain really worried that we may find that there is no-one to record the decisions at some future meeting. And we really need a Secretary.

We remain very blessed in our Treasurer (Margaret Cox), who has again made sure that we remain solvent. Gerald South was our Publicity Officer until he left us. We do not now have this post filled but we have had a superb “Communications Officer” in Barbara Hester, who has handled all the communications that I and others have thrown at her. Can I once again implore people to volunteer for our unfilled posts or part of them (I am happy for there to be job-sharing) otherwise this important ecumenical organisation is simply going to grind to a halt despite our many unfinished tasks.

For the future we are again going to try to use all the resources of our churches to fulfil the requirements of our covenant. We will again be suggesting that the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity will use the services provided by our churches and encouraging Christians to visit in that week churches other than their
own. Our 5th Sunday services will be held at various churches including St George’s Crowhurst, the most recent Church to join CTOD. We shall be suggesting alternatives to our Covenant Renewal service. We look forward to a new Good Friday Walk programme. We will be supporting the CTOD singers, the men’s prayer breakfast and events held in our churches. And we will be praying that God shows us what we should do together and how we can tell others about the delights of our Christian faith.

CTOD EVENTS

Lent Course

_Diana Jones_

**EXPLORING THE EASTER STORY through ART**

The Lent course 2018, was a departure from previous years in that the course was devised locally by members of CTOD churches: Chris Bruce-Jones (Oxted URC); Sue Compton (St Andrew’s, Limpsfield Chart); Margaret Cox (Evangelical Church, Hurst Green); Jennifer Evans (St Mary’s, Tatsfield); Diana Jones (Oxted URC); Rebecca Littleford (All Saints); John Roberts (All Saints). The imaginative and flexible approach of the course, with opportunities to embrace new technology, used the work of old masters and modern artists (as they have portrayed their ideas of Passiontide and Easter), to reflect on the momentous events of _The Last Supper; Gethsemane; Crucifixion; Resurrection; the Emmaus Road_. Through the medium of art, with background notes, relevant Bible readings and prayers, this non-prescriptive course enabled some 90 participants to explore afresh the story of Christ’s Passion. With opportunities for reflection and non-directive discussion, the course sought to further inform and deepen understanding of those epoch changing events, at the very heart of our Christian faith.

The concluding act of worship on Palm Sunday, at St John’s, Hurst Green - Experiencing the Easter story through Art, the Word, Singing and Prayer - combined artwork, readings and prayers from the course, together with artwork and prayers created by a number of local groups on aspects of the Easter story and displayed in St John’s during the weeks leading up to Easter.

Group comments included:

♦ enriching, remarkable;
♦ looked forward each week to the course;
♦ appreciated a less structured approach;
♦ worked best when the group looked together at the art work on a screen;
♦ liked the way in which the course encouraged discussion without directing the way the conversation went;
♦ enjoyed having the image displayed on the screen . . . could concentrate on the image rather than continually referring to text in a book;
♦ gave more continuity and contribution;
♦ time to think and ponder;
♦ the use of images an exciting way to learn more about our faith.

These remarkable artworks depicting stations of the cross enhanced our final service for this course, held at St John’s Hurst Green (see elsewhere in this report).

Week of Prayer for Christian Unity.

John Tolley

This year we decided to revert to the traditional January time for the WoCPU because of the dearth of people able to attend the Ascension Day to Pentecost alternative dates. Rather than put on special sessions based on the Churches Together in Britain and Ireland course, we decided to advertise the weekday events in our churches and suggest we all attended at least one of them. I must
admit that although I was often the only person there from outside the church concerned I really enjoyed the lovely services and other events I went to. These included prayer and share at the URC, a Tic-Toc event (see picture), morning prayer at St John’s, meditation at All Saints and the Café Church at St Mary’s Oxted (this was a Sunday service but not at the normal morning time). I also ran a small service to conclude the week and this was based on the CTBI material but was not well attended. I think that using existing services would have brought the existence of the WoPCU to a wider audience since local church congregations would become aware of it but we need to make it easier for local CTOD people to attend them. Wednesdays is a very popular day for weekday services and Thursdays is not. The proposal for 2019 is to do something similar but nominate particular services in each church as a main service to be attended by people observing the WoPCU.

Good Friday Walk through Oxted

Rvd Anna Eltringham

100 or so turned out again for the Walk of Witness, but this year in pouring rain! Nonetheless there was a resilient, faithful and joyful spirit as the singing spurred us on, led by Rvd Vince Short on the guitar and loud speaker which was kept dry in a black bin bag! We followed the same format as last year based on 'One Friday' stations of the cross paintings by Jenny Hawke and associated bible readings, some read as a crowd, others by local church representatives. The final stop at the War Memorial next to Master Park was filled with grateful praise to God as we sang with all the heart, soul and gusto we could muster 'Amazing love, O what sacrifice; the Son of God given for me; my debt he pays, and my death he dies; that I might live, that I might live!'

Carol Singing with Rotary

John Tolley

Only two of us turned up last year for the carol singing with Rotary – David Cotton and myself. So we sang for ½ hour with the help of various people who were passing by. I hope we get more this year – we don’t seem to have advertised it enough.
5th Sunday Services

John Tolley

We have continued with our 5th Sunday services and they have been surprisingly well attended. The October service did not take place as it fell on All Souls’ Day when several churches have their own evening services. In December an excellent Watchnight service was held at the Methodist Church which was extremely well attended. We also held an excellent Covenant Renewal service at St Mary’s Tatsfield and the usual St James’ Day service at Titsey. We are going to need help with future 5th Sunday services in 2019. I am very grateful for those who devised the services and helped with the arrangements.

CTOD Foodbank Support Project

John Roberts

The demand for food parcels through the Oxted Citizens Advise Bureau remains 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 – March 2018 ............ 70 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. Currently the following dry goods are being sought:

• Tinned sponge puddings,
• Powdered milk,
• Small packets of tea
• Long life fruit

Financial donations are also always welcomed - please refer to their website at https://caterham.foodbank.org.uk/give-help/donate-food/. More volunteers are also needed - please refer to the Volunteer tab on the website.

St Peter's Limpsfield and St Mary's Tatsfield 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.

The primary referral causes in 2017-2018 to Trussell Trust foodbanks in the UK are reported to be:

1. Low income (28.5%)
2. Benefit delays (23.7%)
3. Benefit changes (17.7%)
4. Debt (8.5%)
5. Other (7.5%)
6. Homelessness (5.0%)
7. Sickness / ill health (2.7%)

Ministers Together

Margaret Cox

Father Steven arranged for Ministers across CTOD to get together in September, “Thank you”. It can be difficult for everyone to get to a large gathering but there are groups of ministers meeting together to share and encourage one another and pray together in Oxted and Hurst Green and within the team ministries and further afield.

Ministers were also invited to welcome Kevin Rose as he joined the ministerial team at Kings Church at the URC on the evening of 16th September.

CTOD Singers

Molly Holman

Despite the fact that there are at least forty people on my mailing list, fifty per cent have never attended. Twenty-two responded positively to GDPR. I wrote to the silent few stating that I assume they wished to remain on the mailing list unless I heard to the contrary. Only one person asked to be removed from the list. Attendance numbers have fluctuated from three to ten. At least ten people are very keen but unfortunately other commitments get in the way on the night which then sometimes result in poor attendance. I have continued with the publicity drive with the help of Barbara Hester for churches to display a poster and place takeaway leaflets at the back of the church.

On the 19th of August, CTOD Singers were invited to St Andrew's Church to join in their service of 'Summertime Songs of Praise'. It was a lovely sunny afternoon
and those who wished to lubricate their voices beforehand with afternoon tea and cakes could do so in the garden. We were all given slips of paper to jot down our favourite hymn which went into a hat. Throughout the service a hymn was drawn and the accompanying musicians did well to play the large number of requests that could be accommodated in the time limit of the service! I was very encouraged by the number of CTOD Singers who attended with friends and family in support. I am sure they would all agree that it was a wonderful and uplifting service led by Revd Wendy Harvey … and wow, did we sing our hearts out!

**Affiliated Groups etc**

**Housing and Homelessness Action Group**

*Stuart Pattereson*

During the past year, the Group has met twice and has paid £30 to Tandridge DC to top up its Transport Fund to enable homeless people to travel to accommodation found by TDC. In the run-up to last Christmas we donated £50 each to the Renewed Hope Trust, Leatherhead Start and the Tandridge Rent Deposit Scheme.

Our Group was represented at TDC’s Homelessness Strategy meeting held on 19th September where local organisations looked at the TDC vision and strategic priorities for the coming years. Feedback was offered and will be considered and incorporated into the Strategy. Anyone wishing to view and add their own thoughts is invited to participate by visiting the TDC website: [https://www.tandridge.gov.uk/Housing/Strategies-and-policies/Draft-Housing-Strategy-Consultation](https://www.tandridge.gov.uk/Housing/Strategies-and-policies/Draft-Housing-Strategy-Consultation): this runs until 26 October.

We have recently received a generous donation of £90 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 £268-68 and we will decide which projects to support this year at our meeting scheduled for 6 November.

**Tic-Toc**

*Sarah Darby*

This September 2018 will mark 30 years since Tic Toc was established by Christine Freeland the wife of the Methodist minister Revd. David Freeland. There was an existing fellowship at St John’s Hurst Green. Several members of this group and several new members met at the Manse to create a bible based group which welcomed preschool children. Many of those original members
have returned to Tic Toc having had families, returned to careers, retired from careers and now have grand children!

This year we have welcomed two new members, one who attends St Mary’s Westerham and one from St Mary’s Tatsfield, thus demonstrating the wide ecumenical appeal of the group. Sadly we still have no new young mothers or toddlers.

In the Autumn we all read ‘The Return’ by J.John. Some loved it and others struggled with it but a lively discussion was had about modern day issues of inclusion and legacy.

We had a moving talk by Carolyn Thom about the Christian charity “Their Voice” which helps Albanian women trafficked into UK for prostitution. Many become pregnant and give birth in UK but need help with money and toiletries to be repatriated after giving birth. Tic Toc donated items from a recommended list.

During Advent we enjoyed a relaxing craft session making small wreaths as Christmas decorations. See attached photo.

2018 program brought ‘Week of Prayer for Christian Unity’. Mary Cook led an interesting session based on ‘Walls’ which had been the theme of the CTOD covenant service in 2017. See attached photo.

Prior to the Lent Studies we watched a pre-recorded documentary ‘Art’s Scarlet Woman’ about how Artists ancient and modern have depicted Mary Magdalene. This was a useful taster for the CTOD created Lent studies about how Artists had painted scenes from the Easter Story. Thanks to the wonderful media facilities at Helen Kemp’s house we were able to appreciate the huge effort put in to creating these studies, with reflections and prayers on the theme. We realised how much of our understanding of Holy Week is based on painter’s interpretation rather than genuine biblical study. We enjoyed discussing the paintings shown on a wall-mounted screen, rather than having our noses buried in a book with too many questions! We look forward to next years CTOD inspired Lent Studies.
Mark Anderson curate of St Mary’s Oxted has visited us twice as a speaker. He
left us guidance on how to compose our own psalms, which we found incredibly
difficult. A first draft of a psalm was created and may be set to music by Mary
Cook.

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 warmly welcome new members with their ideas and experi-
ences.

**St Mary`s Bletchingley**

_Marian Buck_

_**St Mary’s has been contributing to our Council Meetings during the year. And their news about the Syrian refugee family was welcomed by all churches**_

**Christmas**

♦ Nine Lessons and Carols Dec 17th
♦ Candlelit Carol Service Dec 20th
♦ Christingle Children’s Service 3 o’clock 23 Dec

**WoPCU**

Sat Jan 20th 9:00 am  Morning Prayer followed at 9:30  Prayer and Praise with
refreshments In Church House.

**Lent Groups**

♦ Exploring the Easter Message through Art. Wednesday evenings during Lent
♦ Stations of the Cross Every Saturday in Lent 12:00 noon
♦ Good Friday Tenabreae Service

**Welcoming a refugee family in conjunction with Surrey County Council**

We were prompted to investigate the possibility of housing a refugee family from
discussions at CTOD meetings.

A large house was found to be available so due to its size a three-generation
family on the waiting list was selected. A very happy and excited Muslim family
started to arrive in July. They are being housed under the S E Surrey Syrian
Vulnerable Persons Relocation Scheme so most of the initial costs are funded. However the team of volunteers in Bletchingley have been kept busy assembling furniture, hanging curtains and shopping etc.

Now following the initial welcoming the important follow up work begins as we find interpreters, teachers of English and other experts and friends that will all play their part in enabling the family to become happily integrated.

**Reports from CTOD Churches**

**St. Andrew’s Limpsfield Chart**

*Susan Compton*

St Andrew’s continues to be enhanced by being part of the Limpsfield and Tatsfield Team, sharing our Clergy and Reader. An annual Team Barbecue with congregations from all three churches gathering in the garden at St Andrew’s was held in September.

During Holy Week some of the evening services were organised by each Church and on Maundy Thursday, St Andrew’s held a Passover Meal (on a Bring and Share basis) finishing in our Lady Chapel where we heard the moving Gospel sequel, ending, “All of them ran away”.

It was a cold and wet morning for the Women’s World Day of Prayer service, hosted by St Andrew’s – which involved participants wearing tropical clothes, including a beautiful Sari (worn over a very warm jersey!) We were delighted by the good number of people from other Churches braving the weather to form our congregation.

A proposal from Southwark Diocese for Nine Days of Prayer with the theme ‘Thy Kingdom Come’ between Ascension Day and Pentecost, led us to create Prayer Stations on ‘Our Father’ at St Andrew’s, open to all on five days – curtailed only by a Saturday Wedding.

On Sunday 1st July the annual 3-way Chart cricket match was held at the Limpsfield Chart Cricket ground. LC Cricket Club and the Titsey Estate battled it out against the CHUBS (church & pub). The Church side was supported to good effect by St Peter’s Rector, James, his son and his brother who helped the CHUBS win.

Further events this Summer included this year’s Chart Fair organised jointly by
The Chart and the Church. Stalls extended round the roads from The Carpenter’s Arms to St Andrew’s Church. The Fair included a Dog Show, the weather was fine, and lots of people enjoyed a good day out.

We hosted ‘Summer Songs of Praise’ in August, inspired by Molly Holman’s CTOD Singers who all joined us, as well as members of CTOD. Pews were filled and singing rose to the rafters accompanied by our organist Tony, Father James’s saxophone and Revd Vince’s guitar. Well-chosen readings and prayers made it an inspiring service, benefitting from a social time beforehand provided by our August Sunday Teas. The event will be repeated next year!

Wendy and Ruth now hold a much-appreciated Hearing Aid Clinic in our Hall on the second Monday of the month.

Perhaps our closest connection with CTOD was attendance and leading the exceptionally enjoyable Lent Groups on ‘Exploring the Easter Theme through Art’, devised locally.

On a more practical level our Church responded each time to emergency requests from the Caterham Food Bank, with Michael Rainbird promptly taking the goods there.

St Mary’s Tatsfield.

Jennifer Evans

St Mary’s has continued to enjoy the prayerful ministry of Vince Short and his gracious wife Veronica. This has encouraged a stable core team to continue with church life, despite our sad loss of Gerald and Jennie South who moved to a new parish. As always when people move on, other talents are discovered so life moves on slightly differently. Our link missionaries from Argentina (David and Shelley Stokes) came home for leave and visited us again. They reminded us that the Mothers’ Union functions all over the world, supporting family life and bringing people to Christ. They asked for prayer so the way forward for training ministers in that part of the world may become clearer.

Our church supports a food bank at Christ Church Brixton, which continues to serve those who are vulnerable. Another food bank in Westerham also gratefully received donations. Feedback has suggested these gifts are lifelines to poorer people who might otherwise be invisible on our doorstep. People from the church have raised awareness of homelessness charities by taking part in a Big Sleepover at Southwark Cathedral and helping at a Night Shelter held in the local area. We also received an update on safeguarding children and vulnerable adults.

St Mary’s Church continues to offer afternoon tea on Sundays from May to
September, serving Fairtrade as much as possible. Tatsfield is a Fairtrade Village and the church is pleased to support this work. We undertook a period of Mission Action Planning supported by the diocese to review our work within and outside the church community. The whole span of ages was included in this process, from Sunday School up to 90+ years old, so all voices were heard. One thing the congregation was particularly proud of was that the church continues to be unlocked during daylight hours, welcoming all who need a quiet place.

St Mary’s Tatsfield has taken an active part in Churches Together in Oxted and District, offering two to three representatives to council meetings. The Lent groups, Good Friday Walk of Witness and Week of Prayer for Christian Unity contributed to worship in Tatsfield. St Mary’s was very pleased to host the Ascension Day service followed by breakfast.

This report gives a brief flavour of a busy church in a small parish.

**St Mary’s Oxted and St Peter’s Tandridge**

*Rev’d Mark Anderson*

This year we have developed our strong relationships within the Oxted Team Ministry. With our two churches and St John's Hurst Green and St George's Crowhurst we enjoyed another Rogation-tide Walk between the four churches, we celebrated the start of a monthly youth club and competed in the annual cricket match between St John's and St Mary's, as part of the latter's Patronal Festival.

St Mary's building (see picture) is looking beautiful again with re-rendered walls and the successful completion of repairs to the stonework and accessible access.

St Peter's hosted several musical events including folk singer Kathryn Williams (next is Emily Barker on 12 October 2018) and a performance of Haydn's *Seven Last Words Of Our Saviour On The Cross, on Good Friday*. St Mary® hosted Handel's *Messiah* by the Merry Opera Company and also a Youth and Music concert. St Mary's welcomed many people to different events throughout the year including the Oxted Churches Trivia Quiz, a Drugs Information Workshop, Brides and Blooms Flower Festival, the annual Open Day and the magnificent angelic culmination of the Oxted Adventure, the daily progression around Oxted each season of Advent.
St Peter's and St Mary's hosted special services including the St Catherine's Hospice Tree of Light Memorial Service, the Women's World Day of Prayer Service, a Service of Healing and Wholeness and a Confirmation and Baptism Service with the Bishop of Croydon.

St Peter's was pleased to help organize the Tandridge Village Fete, an annual highlight in the life of the village. St Mary's Meeting Place launched 'Hear Here' which supports those with hearing aids every month. Our annual Baptism Families Party was enjoyed by many, despite the rain and more due to the sense of community and not least the bouncy castle in the Rectory garden.

Our churches continue to serve the community by organizing events popular with all sections of the community: Messy Church; Good Friday Craft Morning; All Stars Football Match, the Christmas Market and the Christmas Day lunch.

We value our partnership with other churches in the area and appreciate the opportunities there are to join with them and the wider community in these and other events hosted by the churches in Oxted and district.

**King’s Church**

*Miles Corbett*

This year King's Church has built on the foundations laid in 2017; through continued growth in many areas of serving our local and wider Community and a deepening relationship with Jesus facilitated through several personal discipleship initiatives, such as the Grace Course, Freedom in Christ, The Bible Course, Sozo ministry etc.

The Hub and our wider work within Oxted school continues to develop, The Oxted Baby Cafe is very well supported and attended Criss Cross a children’s summer club grew substantially in it’s second year and has proven to be a great opportunity for all the local churches to collaborate in supporting children and families in our community in a very practical way. Whilst our collaboration Tandridge District Council remains strong our efforts to help settle refugees, which have been a focus of cooperation with the CTOD churches have sadly not led to us locating a suitable property and settling our first family.

Last year we brought to CTOD’s attention *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 last year has seen significant growth and success in its mission. We participated in the East Surrey Winter Night Shelter initiative for the first time, turning our Church offices in Amy Road into overnight accommodation for the homeless,. This was very successful and we will be continuing
the project in 2018.

One fruit of all these activities was that our Just Looking and Alpha courses were very well attended and encourage many to explore faith in Jesus for the first time, which for many these days is their first encounter with God or Church and the hope which Jesus brings to this very sad and pressured world.

Our desire is to continue to innovate and participate in community initiatives, and encourage our partners in CTOD to engage in practical ways as volunteers wherever possible.

St Peter’s Limpsfield.

Sarah Darby

Last Autumn Revd James Percival was on three month Sabbatical and Revd Gerald South left the Limpsfield and Tatsfield Team Ministry. It was like a short interregnum. We enjoyed visiting clergy and two previous curates returned to lead our worship. In November a Mission Action Plan session was facilitated by our Churchwarden and SPA, Paul Budgen, and Deanery Mission Enabler, James Ashton. We had been lacking our own specific mission statement. Following a poem written and read by one of the congregation an idea was developed: St Peter’s Vision 2018-2023 “to be a beacon shining as a light”, as demonstrated by this diagram.

We were pleased to welcome Revd James Percival back from Sabbatical just before Christmas. He continues to bring new ideas to our church life and worship.

Giving during St Peter’s Christmas 2017 services was donated to a different charity. Clean Sheet is a local charity based in Lingfield that supports recently released prisoners. It helps them find accommodation, write a job application and CV and support them back into non-institutionalised living. This ethos reflected the Christian message of rebirth, a second chance in life. This change of charity proved to be a popular choice. Few people carry cash to put in a collection bag so St Peters now has a web address for donating on line https://mydonate.bt.com/charities/stpeterschurchlimpsfield.

In April, a change of Church Warden was required as Thelma Cooper had done a brilliant 5 years in post. We are delighted to welcome Jane Tozer to this role; she brings much experience and leadership.

In July, Sarah Paxton was selected by Southwark Diocese to study to become a
lay reader. Caroline Campbell our Parish Co-ordinator plans to study to become a SPA.

This Autumn and new school year will bring two changes at St Peter’s. Following protracted negotiations by Tony Stoughton -Harris with Southwark Diocese, St Peter’s now has a eleven year lease on The Glebe Meadow behind the new rectory. Panda Nursery which has long resided in St Peter’s Church Hall will move to their own premises in The Glebe Meadow. This will mean all nursery equipment, craft, paintings etc can be left out overnight and enjoyed for longer. It also means the hall will be available for new uses and tenants from 09.00-16.00. Applications welcome

Junior football teams enjoy teaching sessions, holiday clubs and matches on the Glebe Meadow. The pavilion should soon be refurbished to make even better use of the valuable green space between Oxted and Limpsfield.

Messy Church has enjoyed improved participation during 2018, so will now be provided monthly from September to next July 2019. It is hoped that a regular monthly session will nurture families to come more often and become involved in other church activities.

**St George’s, Crowhurst.**

*Carol Din*

Two days of filming for ten minutes of fame! On a very cold day in the spring of 2017 following a blizzard of emails, St George's was privileged to host a TV production team and a well known personality with a love of trees. We were sworn to secrecy until after the programme was broadcast by the BBC in December 2017 – hence this note delayed from our 2017 report! *Judi Dench: My Passion for Trees* was the documentary in question which, if you missed it can still be viewed on the BBC website - google *BBC One - Judi Dench: My Passion for Trees, The Crowhurst Yew* to hear what Dame Judi said while at St George's.

In stark contrast St George's Churchyard was bathed in sunshine and above average temperatures for the early May Rogation celebration when our Rector Andrew Rumsey led a walk between our Team churches. The walkers stopped at St George’s for prayers.
and ploughman's lunches overlooking the fields.

Some of the St George's congregation have enjoyed attending services and events at other Churches in CTOD this year and look forward to more in 2019.

**Hurst Green Methodist Church**

_Gwen Hand_

This year we welcomed Rev. Kathy Flynn to our church and manse.

This year is very much a year for change, not just for us, but for the whole Purley Circuit. We lose a minister from the circuit next July who may not be replaced as there is a shortage of minsters. This means we may have two ministers taking care of seven churches. All churches in the circuit are now leading Local Arrangement services several times each quarter. Our membership is declining. We are looking at our church to see what we can do.

We continue to have Bible Study and look forward to the Lent groups, where we can meet with those from other churches. CTOD Singers meet monthly at our church. We have a Music Group which leads the singing at Café Church services. We continue to have Café Church on the first Sunday of each month. We are also re-vamping messy Church for the autumn, which will become Family at 3 and meet on the fourth Sunday for craft, drama, singing and refreshments. Wednesday fellowship continues for anyone who wishes to join, it is interesting and we are a friendly group.

We continue to help with the running of Aggies on the Green for refreshments and light lunches. With the other churches in Hurst Green we produced “Follow the star” the nativity in the open air on the green, with a real donkey. We supported an Easter Craft Session at Aggies. We regularly join with our local churches for services and activities including “Pimms and Hymns” and Remembrance Sunday. On Maundy Thursday the local churches provide our early morning commuters with hot cross buns at the local station.

We support CTOD events like the fifth Sunday services and Walk of Witness.

With our smaller and aging congregation we do as much as we can.

**St John’s, Hurst Green**

_Wendy Hewitt_

St John’s has continued to work on our Mission Plan, this year focusing on fostering a deeper faith for all and outreach. An Alpha Course introduced newer church members to deeper discussion of spiritual issues. This year there have been nearly 30 Baptisms including 4 together during one Café Church in May. A 'Pass it On' initiative took place early in the year both to encourage more regular
giving to the church and to welcome 'time and talents' that can be used to benefit all; so new people have been added to all sorts of rotas including Intercessions, Reading, Serving, Cleaning, Sunday School and more. St John’s hosted the area Confirmation and Baptism Service with 26 confirmations, 10 from St John’s (3 from sister church St George’s) and 3 young ladies from Moorhouse School for pupils with Language and Processing difficulties. Moorhouse pupils and those from several other local Primary Schools regularly visit St John’s for seasonal special services and also to discover more about Church practice and spiritual issues. Advent Awakenings have proved a popular ecumenical gathering on Monday mornings at 6.25am where quiet thought and reflection provides a spiritual boost on cold winter mornings.

Schools, local Churches and Residential Homes contributed thoughtful and striking artwork to a ‘Stations of the Cross project’, as reported in The Bridge (Southwark’s Diocesan newspaper). Topics movingly portrayed included Mercy, Fear, Burdens, and Powerlessness. All were linked to the theme of 12 passages of Scripture during the journey of Jesus to the Cross and the Resurrection. This community exhibition remained in place throughout Lent and was visited by people from all parts of the community.

St John’s plays an important part in the Hurst Green Fair, providing refreshments and delicious cakes at Aggies (St Agatha’s Hall) and providing and manning a Bouncy Castle. This has proved a useful opportunity to share what St John’s offers, including Wednesday lunch provision at Aggies, YoYos our thriving Mums and Toddlers’ group and the fortnightly coffee morning at Church for older parishioners. St John’s and other local churches take regular services at Windmill Manor and David Gresham House residential homes. Windmill Manor now hosts Rhyme Time monthly where local Mums bring under school age children to enjoy music, nursery rhymes and refreshments.

In addition to this support of local projects, advertised in social media by our new Communications Officer, a grant has also been received to commence a youth choir every fortnight on Tuesday after school, which will contribute to some services including those at Christmas. Earlier in the year, St John’s also welcomed again Bishop Desire and his wife Claudaline from the Democratic Republic of Congo where the Church is trying to overcome civil war by ministry to the Youth, Mission and Evangelism.
“Be on your guard; stand firm in the faith; be courageous; be strong. Do everything in love.” 1 Corinthians 16 v13-14. This has been the recurring theme for us this year as we study God’s word and worship and pray together and support each other through life’s challenges. We have enjoyed getting together for Harvest lunch, Bonfire night, Passover and a trip to Pevensey Bay.

It has been a blessing to be involved in a number of different initiatives this year. We had the privilege of joining with Criss Cross holiday club, masterminded by King’s Church with a number of other churches getting on board. Some of the children joined me on a SU holiday. Some of us are off to Green belt this year, my first time but I keep meeting folk who have been in the past or who will be there this year! Some men are off to The Forge Run by CVM.

We have continued working together with the other Hurst Green Churches. We run services and a carol service in Windmill Manor, we joined together to sing carols in the Diamond, we ran an Easter Crafts morning. We have opportunities to take assemblies in local schools and get involved in their celebrations at Harvest, Christmas and Easter.

There have been two highlights this year:

At Christmas we presented “Follow the Star” an outdoor nativity on the Green. Actors from all three churches nobly dressed up and acted out the story. Refreshments were served. We plan to repeat it this year on Sunday 9th December at 4pm, All Welcome!

The second was during Lent. Using the One Friday booklet produced by CPO, Anna asked local Schools, Care homes, Churches and clubs to take one of the 14 themes and present a piece of work. These were then hung in St Johns and folk were invited to come and Journey with Jesus. We used the artwork at the final CTOD Lent course service and in an Easter service for Holland School. It was enjoyed by a lot of people in the community and was inspiring on so many levels.

We have been blessed again by being part of CTOD and fellowshipping with our brothers and sisters across Oxted and District. Folk enjoyed the Lent Course very much this year. We joined the walk to Titsey in July and scrummy tea and cake before the annual service in St James.

But most of all it is so lovely to feel welcome in all of our churches and able to
share others events and initiatives. I think sometimes we think this is the norm but in my travels I have realised how privileged we are in CTOD to share in this way.

**United Reformed Church**

*Diana Jones, Elizabeth Young*

On Saturday, 11 November 2017, the Rev Graham Dadd was inducted as minister to the joint pastorate of the United Reformed Churches in Oxted and Marsh Green. The Moderator of the URC’s Southern Synod, the Rev Nicola Furley-Smith, presided over a well-attended joyous occasion, with many local friends present.

Worship is at the heart of Oxted URC’s activities. It is good to be led in worship by the minister and to welcome visiting worship leaders from across denominational boundaries. Members of the congregation also participate through leading worship, reading, and intercessory prayers. During 2017, retiring offerings, following monthly Communion services, raised £7388 for home and overseas charities.

Regular events in the calendar are Prayer and Share on Tuesdays and Wednesday Fellowship, the latter providing inclusive outreach to the local community.

In November we welcomed Baroness Joan Bakewell, who delivered the annual Snelling Lecture, on the thought-provoking theme - *We need to talk about death.*

Events leading to Christmas, included:

♦ a Christmas Tree Festival, with opportunities for local groups to decorate trees, publicise their activities and raise money for their chosen charity.

♦ participation in the ecumenical venture, *Oxted Adventure* - OURC were particularly grateful to the Bluehouse Café, who provided welcome and refreshments.

♦ a visit to the residential home, Tandridge Heights, to sing carols, hear Christmas readings and, most importantly, meet the residents.

During the WoPCU it was good to celebrate our common bond and to welcome members from our sister churches at our Tuesday Prayer and Share.

Through participation in CTOD’s Lent course, OURC members appreciated the opportunity to reflect on the Easter story through the medium of art.
A number of charities are supported through various events:

♦ March and October: a Big Brew in aid of Traidcraft. In March this included a Great Bake Off.
♦ May: the Cystic Fibrosis coffee afternoon
♦ September: a Macmillan Cancer Care coffee afternoon

Social activities have included a Back to Church Quiz and an outing to Arundel. The castle and gardens were the special features of this outing but the cathedral was also well worth a visit.

As part of becoming an Eco Church, OURC has planted a wildflower garden and is exploring ideas to create habitats for insects and, possibly, hedgehogs. A first toilet twinning has taken place, with a new latrine in Kashenda, Masisi, in the Democratic Republic of Congo. There are plans to twin our four other loos. Recyclable bags for cake sales have been introduced and it is hoped to launch a new project: 26 steps to a sustainable planet. An Eco Service in September had the title ‘Was Noah the first Conservationist’?

In October the seventh biennial Bluehouse Festival takes place, with the Snelling Lecture, Is British Democracy in Crisis?, delivered by Tim Shipman, Political Editor of the Sunday Times. It is good to see so many local friends at this festival.

All Saints’ Church

John Roberts

One of the first ecumenical gatherings following the AGM was the now regular fixture in the Oxted town calendar, namely the Oxted ADVENTure, an initiative by St Mary’s church inspired by the annual Brighton and Hove beach hut advent calendars. This year the theme was Angels and for the All Saints’ evening, Rebecca and Philip Littleford and Dee Vianna decorated our lych-gate in Chichele road and invited people to write thoughts or prayers on the back of paper angels, attaching them to ribbons around the space. Angel shaped biscuits provided some welcome nourishment. After the event, the installation was taken into the church and provided a focus through the Christmas season near one of the side altars.
For many in our Parish, the Lent Groups were again another ecumenical highlight of the year. This year was of particular interest as the course was of a new format and developed by members of our churches in CTOD. Entitled “Exploring the Easter Story through ART” each week looked at how artists down the centuries have portrayed their ideas of the key stages in the Easter story, from The Last Supper to the Emmaus Road. Some groups used the Lectio Divina approach to reflect on the associated scripture texts and then extending this by spending time with the suggested pictures, helping to gain a greater depth of understanding of what the text was saying to each person, now. With a wide variety of picture styles, compositions, textures and interpretations, we found this approach both illuminating and instructive. We have great hopes for the 2019 course which will base its themes around the art form of poetry.

Our Christian Meditation sessions have continued on Wednesday evenings, based around talks by Fr Laurence Freeman, a Benedictine monk and an international speaker in the ways of contemplation, silence and prayer. All are invited to these evening sessions commencing at 8.00pm at All Saints.

In last year’s report it was mentioned our Bishop was leading a Diocesan wide consultation and reflection to consider how the “Mission-effectiveness” of the diocese might improve, whilst seeing the number of serving priests in the diocese reduce from the current 90 to the anticipated 50 priests in 2030. Bishop Richard has now completed the consultation and a new Diocesan Pastoral Plan has been developed which is being presented to each of the 13 Deaneries. Our Parish is in the Redhill Deanery and we will be meeting with the Bishop at the beginning of December. Prayer, Formation and Mission are three elements central to the life of the diocese and form the core of the Plan. We look forward to the presentation of the Plan and discerning how it may impact our Parish and the life of our church in Oxted. More next year!

More next year from CTOD and all our Churches. Our former logo, originally devised for the 10th anniversary of CTOD, shows our hope and expectation that the fire and peace of the Holy Spirit will continue its work in us as we struggle towards unity.
Stop Press

Many congratulations to Andrew Rumsey on his nomination as Bishop of Ramsbury. We have been greatly blessed by his support over many years and by all the innovations he has brought. We shall also miss his wife, Rebecca’s, involvement in devising the “Oxted Adventures” programme of events in people’s garages during the run up to Christmas. We shall miss you all.

At least you will be with us for Christmas 2018!