



Annual Report 2018-19



**'Held in God's embrace' United Service of Worship
29th September 2019**

Covenant

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.

2018-19 CTOD Executive Committee

Chair	Revd Mark Anderson	Oxted Team
Deputy Chair	John Tolley	St Peter's Limpsfield
Hon. Treasurer	Margaret Cox	Hurst Green Evangelical
Treasurer Elect	David Cook	St Mary's, Oxted
Communications	Barbara Hester	St Mary's, Tatsfield
	Miles Corbett	King's Church
	Diana Jones	OURC
	Gwen Hand	Hurst Green Methodist
	Wendy Hewitt	St John's, Hurst Green

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Chairman's Report

Revd. Mark Anderson

Welcome to the annual report of Churches Together in Oxted and District.

I love hearing about the exciting and dynamic life of each of the churches who are part of the CTOD family. Jesus prayed for the church to be one and in our part of the world, we are doing our part in making that more of a reality. Although we are different in many ways, we have a family resemblance as we all are part of the Body of Christ and for that I am grateful. We can learn from each other and know God in a deeper and more rounded way because of our differences and because of our love for and fellowship with one another. Each church and each person who follows Jesus has so much to offer their fellow Christians and we enrich one another when we are open to learn from one another, perhaps doing things in a new way.

This diversity was evident when we met to pray together during the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity. Using different styles of prayer and worship, we were inspired and encouraged to pray for our community, our nation and each other in new and dynamic ways. Our Lent Groups are also a wonderful way to meet with people from different churches and traditions, to learn from one another; this year using poetry.

This spirit of learning from and enriching one another flourishes in the four '5th Sunday Services' held each year. They are often organised by members from different churches coming together and the collaboration produces much good fruit in the Kingdom of God.

One of the highlights of CTOD's year is the Good Friday Walk of Witness around Oxted. A good number of faithful witnesses declared that Jesus is still lifted high in our towns, villages and nation, even if many people in our land do not acknowledge our risen Lord. We know Jesus is alive and the Holy Spirit of God is active in our communities - praise God!

I am delighted CTOD has many manifestations and I have had the pleasure of leading sessions at Tic Toc ("Together in Christ, Toddlers of Oxted Churches" - for mums and pre-schoolers to enjoy their faith together). I can't admit to singing well enough to take a place with the CTOD singers, but maybe one day!

This year we have been challenged to help those in need by our charity of the year 'Their Voice'. We all need to do our part in helping those affected by human trafficking and modern slavery. Their Voice inspires us by their commitment in reaching out to those who can feel isolated and alone. We welcome their

invitation to join with them in bringing the love of Jesus to those in desperate need of love, but also meeting their practical needs.

I am grateful to all those whose participation and contributions make CTOD a success. Thank you.

CTOD Charity of the Year: THEIR VOICE

Carolyn Thom

Their Voice was selected as Charity of the Year by CTOD in November 2018 and we thank everyone for such a privileged nomination. We appreciate your prayers and the interest you have shown for those people we reach out too, who are marginalized by society and live in poverty.

During the current year we have already seen a 12% increase in survivors seeking assistance with greater numbers of those living in the community rather than the Safe houses. We have recently taken on a new contract with 'Migrant Help' providing men's toiletries to men who have just been rescued.

We continue our work with young women some as young as 20-21 years old, who find themselves pregnant having suffered the harrowing ordeal of Modern Slavery. They are now trying to come to terms of living in an unfamiliar country, exposed to negativity and struggling with loneliness and despair. However, despite their ordeal they show great love towards their child and often see them as a focus and purpose in their lives. One woman said, 'Every child is a gift from God'

In April this year God provided us with premises in the local community where many of these women and children can access the practical support they desperately need to support them through their pregnancies and into motherhood.

Another aspect of our work is to raise awareness and we have been able to make presentations to three of the Churches with another programmed for October. The congregations have been very generous with donation and volunteering.



At Easter we were presented with a beautiful Easter cake which we took down to the safehouse for the women and children to enjoy. This as an excellent evangelistic tool to speak about the Christian faith!

A few weeks ago, we had the pleasure of helping one of Their Voice's clients who we've been supporting for several years move into her own flat. It was a

great day for her to move in with her son and we were able to help with the furnishings needed to get her started in her new life. She is now wanting to enrol at college to study English with a goal of wanting to work in journalism. It is a privilege to journey with the women as they start to rebuild their lives again.

Our desire is to continue to show God's love in a practical way.

<http://theirvoicemodernslavery.org.uk>

CTOD EVENTS

Lent Course 2019: 'Questions on a Lenten Journey'

John Tolley

As people know, following the success of the homemade art course in 2018, we devised a course using poetry in the current year. I think we should all be grateful for the hard and brilliant work done by the devisers of the 5 sessions, John and Maureen Roberts, Alan Coombe, David Cook, Sue Compton and Wendy Hewitt. And to the marvellous editing by John and Maureen.

However once again the number of people attending the course fell to just over 80 (last year's figures were 97 and the year before 125). As a result, we once again reduced the number of groups we ran and of course this reduced the choice available to participants. We should also thank the leaders and the hosts of our groups. Following the 2018 process we did not give an unfettered choice of time for the groups and this may have deterred some people from signing up.

People who attended the course in general liked it. Even leaders were worried about a course on something they found beyond their comfort zone, and other people saw it likewise. However, the feedback was that groups gelled as in previous years and most people found the course a good one (though some of the poems were difficult). Our booklet helped – though in one case, not enough – and some people found the length of the sessions insufficient.

One of the reasons why there may have been fewer participants was that there was quite a lot of competition. St John's and St George's had weekly lent lectures on interesting subjects. St Peter's Limpsfield had a basic Christianity lent group in the local pub. Another reason could have been that the late Easter this year meant that schools finished earlier, and holidays were earlier. In 2020 Easter is a week earlier than in 2019 so we may have similar problems again.

We have been asking all the churches to consider what kind of course we should have next year. Our homemade courses are popular with participants and they have suggested a course on music – but with lots of different suggestions. Two people suggested hymns as a theme (though leaders of groups vary considerably in how good they are at leading hymn singing!). Other people wanted music of a more classical bent. At the last Council meeting people suggested a course on an aspect of Christian belief and practice. This may mean a course from somewhere else.

Our normal timetable is to choose the course during the summer and autumn and to finally agree at the December Executive following an approval in principle at the CTOD AGM.

Week of Prayer for Christian Unity

John Tolley

This year's Week of Prayer followed the pattern set last year with one exception. Last year we all agreed to open our weekday services to members of all our churches. We did the same this year. We had wondered whether we ought to prioritise an event in each church, as on some days there are services in several churches at almost the same times, but we decided that this was too difficult. So the main difference was to designate the final Sunday of the week as "Covenant Sunday" and asked all churches to give our Covenant out in pew sheets and if possible to get someone to read it out – or to read it out together – at the main

service that Sunday. We then met together at the Kings Church offices in the evening in an extra service to give thanks for the Covenant and to re-affirm it together.

For me that was a good move forward and I once again enjoyed my time at other churches' weekday events. And I found the Covenant Sunday event inspiring and worthwhile. We need to continue and develop the concept whilst both being inspired by the wider Churches Together movement and understanding how we can use the week to develop our own unity in our local churches.

Good Friday Walk of Witness

John Roberts

This year we were joined by over 70 pilgrims from our local churches for the annual Walk of witness through Oxted, taking in five stops from the Council Offices to the War Memorial. We were blessed with some beautiful weather (see photo) and were again accompanied by a flautist and Revd Vince Short on the guitar. This year I led the walk using a new script prepared by Fr Stephen Hardaker from All Saints. It was encouraging to see more people on the street than last year, and many enjoyed the Hot Cross Buns that were being distributed, wrapped in a serviette answering the question as to "Why a cross on a Hot Cross Bun?" We pray that people took pause to think about the message we were conveying through our witness, hymns and prayers.



Carol Singing with Rotary

John Tolley

CTOD regularly sings at the Rotary Christmas Tree. In 2018 our normal time was taken by people from Oxted School and we had to delay which caused a certain amount of difficulty. We shall need to try to get our usual time back this year. We had more people than last year, but it would be nice to have a lot more this coming year. People choose the carols they like but we need a person with a tuning fork – or perfect pitch – to give us the note that will allow us to sing a common pitch! A lot more people would also encourage members of the public to join in and makes our singing easier to hear across the traffic noise.



I still think it is worthwhile to advertise the existence of Churches Together at this important season for Christians.

5th Sunday Services

Rev. Mark Anderson

I write this having last night attended our third 5th Sunday service of 2019. I am delighted to report a good attendance, as we had at other services. We are grateful to those who host, plan and lead our times together. As we meet to worship our God, we experience forms and styles of worship which are not familiar, but which help us to respond to God's love for us in different ways. We are sometimes comforted and sometimes challenged, but always welcomed into

the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whose Spirit we can worship together, in the unity of the Holy Spirit and the bond of peace.

Our March service was in Lent and so we used material from our CTOD Lent course (on poetry) to inspire one another. We heard reflections and thoughts from people who had participated in the Lent course sessions which had already taken place.

In June, Wendy Hewitt from St John's Hurst Green hosted us at St George's Crowhurst and lead a Taizé style service of singing and said prayers. The repeated words, phrases and harmonies in a peaceful setting were a wonderful contrast to our usual style of Sunday morning church services.



In September we were at the Church of the Peace of God in Oxted and welcomed Carolyn Thom of Their Voice (CTOD charity of the year) to speak to us. This service was planned by a group of people from several churches and we enjoyed experiencing and participating in a variety of styles as we worshipped, prayed, reflected and listened together.

We often have a 5th service at the turn of the year, at which time we look behind us and ahead of us, as is fitting at the end of December. We know God has been faithful in the year gone and will continue to be so in the year to come. We remember God has been our strength in difficult times and our joy in times of happiness and celebration. Our journeys with God are enriched as we journey together.

5th Sunday services are wonderful occasions of fellowship, worship and prayer in a variety of styles. We enjoy the opportunity to join together with people from all the churches in the CTOD family to do what is common to us all: giving the glory to God with thanksgiving. I encourage you to join us next year, especially if you haven't been to one yet!

CTOD 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 – March 2018	.....	70 boxes
April 2018 – March 2019	.....	53 boxes + 16 Red vouchers for self-collection.

The foodbank is continuing to see rising numbers of people coming to the foodbank. 2018 was their busiest year, giving three days' worth of emergency food to over 1200 people. Nearly half of those that came to the foodbank were seeing changes or delays to their benefits and a third were single people.

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 though:

- tinned sponge puddings
- bags for life
- tinned fruit

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 and St Mary's, Tatsfield have, for several years, been collecting for Christchurch 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. St Mary's Tatsfield also supports the Westerham Foodbank to which local people are sometimes referred.

CTOD Singers

Molly Holman

Our last meeting before the summer break was 18th July. I was encouraged by one of the largest attendances we've had in a long while, all of nine! ... including our pianist Mary Cook. The powerful voices of the two men inspired us ladies to put more verve into our singing and 'belt' out our hymns with just as much enthusiasm and volume as the men demonstrated in their voices. We all felt wonderfully inspired and uplifted.

I decided to move the venue to All Saints' Parish Room as from September as I felt being in a more central location might attract new members from all the local churches around us. However, despite all my efforts advertising in All Saints' Church with framed notice boards at the entrance, in newsletters and pewsheets via CTOD Publicity together with sending regular emails to over forty on the mailing list, there appears to be either a total lack of interest or Thursday is not a good day for most. In fact, the attendance on Thursday was most dismal and disappointing to say the least, with no one from Hurst Green attending. Hopefully, the change of venue has not been off putting to singers from Hurst Green and that it is only a temporary blip.

At CTOD's 5th Sunday Service at URC on 29th September I was most impressed by the congregation singing all the hymns in full harmony and mindfulness of the words and overheard some saying how much they enjoyed the singing. So, the question is, why not come and join the CTOD Singers?

Christian Men's Breakfast

John Roberts

At 7.00am on the second Monday of each month (except August), the table in the upper room of the Gospel Hall, Old Oxted is set with rolls and croissants for the Christian Men's Breakfast. Each month one of our number will share some thoughts on the Word, leading us into a period of prayer for the needs of our community and the wider world. All men are welcome to join us – no previous experience required!

This October we celebrate the 30th anniversary of this group, founded by Peter Keymer in the hall at St Peter's, Limpsfield. With the exception of our holiday

month every August, this meeting has been held every month of that 30 years. Surely a powerhouse of prayer for which we are all grateful.

Criss-Cross

Claire Blades

We know from Jesus' prayer in John 17 that He wants unity among Christians. He prayed for it. He expects it. He blesses it. Churches Together in Oxted and District is one expression of that unity. Criss-Cross is another.

This summer, members of nine local churches worked together to run the summer holiday club called Criss-Cross. Now in its fourth year, it attracted 122 children from all over the Tandridge District. Some have church backgrounds, others do not. All are welcome as adults from different Christian traditions put aside differences over doctrine and fix their eyes on Jesus.

Established by King's Church in Oxted, Criss-Cross is supported by Christians from:

Cornerstone Christian Fellowship, North Tonbridge

Evangelical Church, Hurst Green

St John's Church, Hurst Green

St John the Evangelist Church, Coulsdon

St Mary's Church, Oxted

St Mary's Church, Westerham

St Peter's Church, Limpsfield

The Eden Church, Edenbridge

Volunteer leaders and helpers came from some of these churches, while others gave generous donations to help cover the cost of running the event. As the Rev Mark Anderson, curate at St Mary's Anglican Church in Oxted put it: "We love joining in with King's Church and others to bring joy and hope to all."

After months of planning, we set up Criss-Cross on the first Monday of the school summer holiday. Doors opened to the children from Tuesday to Friday. There were morning and afternoon celebrations every day, with four different

teaching tracks rotating before and after lunch. They vary each year depending on the gifting of the volunteers, but this year we had craft, circus skills, devotions, and sport.

Every year we have a guest speaker. This year it was Doug Horley, international children's evangelist and composer of the song "We Want To See Jesus Lifted High." He captivated the children and adult helpers alike with his science experiments, action songs, and talks.

Working with Christians from nine churches was a delight. We focussed on our love for Jesus and celebrated our differences rather than allowing them to put a wedge between us. Many of us will be back again next year when Criss-Cross will run from Monday 27 July to Friday 31 July 2020.

For more details, or if you wish to join team next year, email me at claire@kingschurchoxted.com



AFFILIATED GROUPS

Christmas Cards to Prisoners of Conscience

Sue Mallinson

Every year around the world people are imprisoned because they stand up for their faith or to protest about particular inequalities in their society.

Their action can offend the political leaders, and so they lose their freedom; we know them as 'prisoners of conscience'. Each year we invite you to come to 'Write a Card to a Prisoner of Conscience'.

We have their names from Amnesty International and other Christian organisations; we are assured the cards reach these people; we know they are encouraged and strengthened by our messages, because they know they are remembered.

We offer coffee and home-made cakes and a place to choose a card and sit to write to someone on the list. We did that last year and thank all who came by.

We will do it again this year, on Saturday 23rd November from 9.30am to 12.30pm, in the Meeting Room at Oxted Community Hall, Fairtrade and other goods will be on sale. St Mary's Church Christmas Fair will be in full swing at the same time and we thank them for granting us space.

Housing and Homelessness Action Group

Stuart Paterson

Since our last report members of the Group have met twice. Late last year we donated £100 to the Renewed Hope Trust, which was planning to run a night shelter at its centre in Amy Road for 15 weeks from mid-December.

In July this year we issued a £50 cheque to Oxted Citizens Advice towards a fund-raising effort by one of Citizens Advice's advisers to reunite an elderly couple from Smallfield with their furniture. This had been moved to Perth after the couple had an offer of housing there when threatened with homelessness in Smallfield, but the offer was withdrawn at the last minute. The couple then had an offer of alternative accommodation in Smallfield where they are now living. Burstow Parish Council has organised a van and a driver and the St. Silvan's Charity has donated £200 towards the costs. When all the funding is in place our donation will be cashed and the furniture returned from Perth.

Our Group met in September and has £118-68 remaining. This is being held in reserve in case funding is needed towards transport costs for homeless people from Tandridge District to travel to identified accommodation outside the area.

Tic Toc

Together in Christ, Toddlers of Oxted Churches

Sarah Darby

Last September Tic Toc celebrated its 30th birthday. It has entered its fourth decade and is still thriving, New members bring new ideas and resources thus enriching our fellowship together. We are now a large group to meet in domestic homes but there are always some absentees, so newcomers are still welcome.

In October 2019 we had a fascinating talk by trainee ordinand Bernie Excel who was on secondment at St John's HG. She told us about her work in East London with the homeless. She explained that she had decided to be ordained not to be a parish priest but to have more influence on various committees for the homeless in order to bring about change in attitude and policy.

In November we learned about Revd Vince Short's career before being ordained. He has written many excellent songs of praise and has had several published in his own book. He sang some to us and we joined in. We felt he was hiding this talent and he should circulate this book more widely amongst local churches to use in their worship.

We have greatly missed the resource of the BBC. This year there has been a dearth of programs on matters of faith and especially Christianity. We have had to seek elsewhere. Last November we enjoyed a podcast by Rabi Sacks about 'The Selfie Generation'. We have also discovered on YouTube recordings of talks given at St Paul's London. We listened to Bishop Sarah Mullaly, first female Bishop of London talk about her calling, and her vision for London. We recommend these talks as a resource for group discussions.

Before Lent we listened to Brian Draper's recording: Soulfulness: Deepening the Mindful Life. This was so inspiring that after Lent we reflected on his Lent meditations and next December we shall study his Advent meditations from last year

During Lent we studied the CTOD created Lent studies 'Questions on a Lenten Journey'. Much preparation and research had achieved this group of studies. There was plenty of time to share interpretation of the poems and hear new poems brought by the facilitator.

During sessions without a speaker or a recording we have enjoyed Bible Studies from the book of Mark. During Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, we studied the booklet 'Only Justice'. We all read The World Day of Prayer service and discussed issues around immigration. We have enjoyed craft and prayer and share sessions.



We have just compiled our rich and varied programme for Autumn 2019, with three local speakers. Please do tell others who might enjoy this type of fellowship group on a Monday morning term time only.

St Mary`s, Bletchingley

Marian Buck

Our events this year:

Christmas

Nine lessons and Carols

Candlelit Carol Service

Christingle Children`s Carol Service

WoPCU

Saturday Morning Prayer followed by Breakfast and Chat in Church House

Lent

Stations of the Cross every Saturday in lent at 12 noon

Good Friday Tenebrae Service

News of our refugee family

The Jakmara family have now all arrived so we have a three-generation family of eight. Maher and Fatima are the parents and they have three sons. Mohammed, Omran and Said. Mohammed is married to Nariman and they have two little girls Fatima and Sylla. We are pleased to say they have happily settled in and are very much part of our Village community.

I head up a team of volunteers who help them with such things as transport, shopping, house and garden, medical appointments and education. Our Arabic translators have been great and we owe thanks to Sarah Danby who has helped us with this.

We are all on a learning curve and discover more and more links with the Muslim and Christian faiths. The Jakmara`s often pop into the church and have a special devotion to Our Lady. (In fact, I have learned that there are more references to Mary in the Koran than the New Testament!) Said has mown the churchyard grass and volunteered to dress up as a shepherd for the Christingle Nativity. The

whole family turned up in sympathy the Sunday following the terrible massacre in New Zealand.

In August Rev Phaedra arranged to have a Bring and Share party to celebrate their first year. The Syrian food they contributed was delicious but also gave them a chance to show their thanks.

The Syrian community in the area have started to arrange events at the Harlequin Theatre Restaurant in Redhill. We have been to the Conversation Café which is held fortnightly and all are welcome. I will keep CTOD informed of future events.

REPORTS FROM CTOD CHURCHES

All Saints'

John Roberts

On Sunday, 29th September 2019, we celebrated the 5th Sunday service in the Oxted United Reformed Church. It was organised by Chris Bruce-Jones (URC) who was keen that the service be planned as an ecumenical event from the outset. He pulled together a small group from St Peter's Limpsfield, Hurst Green Evangelical Church, All Saints' and URC. Entitled 'Held in God's Embrace', we heard movingly from Carolyn Thom CEO of this year's CTOD charity 'Their Voice', how her personal encounters with God have supported her work in the charity and with their clients. In her reflection, Maureen Roberts invited us to ponder the prayer focus showing our footprints leading us to the cross and the light of Christ (see photo on front cover) and then, in a time of silence, inviting us to recall any of our own personal encounters with God. As one of the group emailed afterwards "I love the



way God weaves our efforts together to be a blessing to many....". A sentiment echoed by several who participated in a wonderful Ecumenical Service.

Our Christian Meditation evenings have been continuing on Wednesdays and have been supported increasingly by people from other churches. In September we hosted a moving film to celebrate the work of Jean Vanier who died earlier this year. The film "Summer in the Forest", shows how Jean formed the L'Arche communities and how "he accepted and included the people who society hid away". This was followed by refreshments in the Parish Room. The Wednesday reflections over the next few weeks will be recordings from Jean Vanier.

As mentioned in the Walk of Witness report, Fr Stephen prepared a new booklet for the Good Friday walk.

Building on CTOD's experience of developing their own Lent Course material based upon works from visual artist, this year we prepared a bespoke course entitled 'Questions on a Lenten Journey' using the art form of poetry. The themes for each week were suggested by Janet Morley's inspiring book 'The Heart's Time' with the weekly poems and reflections chosen by members of the different CTOD churches.

We thoroughly enjoyed developing the course and believe we ended up with a good mix of both challenging and thought-provoking sessions.

Following the completion of our Diocesan Pastoral Plan, our Deanery of Redhill has now joined with Epsom Deanery and the new Dean is about to be appointed. The three key elements of the plan are Prayer, Formation and Mission and the first initiatives are being rolled out, namely Schools of Prayer and Weeks of Accompanied Prayer. Alpha courses are being encouraged by the diocese and All Saints' is starting to prepare for its first course in 2020. Much going on as usual.

Hurst Green Evangelical Church

Margaret Cox

"Therefore encourage one another and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing" 1 Thessalonians 5 v11.

For Steven and me, 2018 ended with us both having time in hospital and recuperating! The church folk helped us through that time and took

responsibility for services and events leading up to Christmas. They took part in Follow the Star, an outdoor enactment of the Christmas story, put on by the three Hurst Green churches on the village green which was very well attended. They joined the other joint initiatives, singing carols at Windmill Manor, at the Station and in the Diamond pub.

It was a joy to be well enough to join with them for our carol service, singing in Morrisons on the Sunday before Christmas and at our Christmas day celebration.

It was good to meet together for the Covenant Service on 31st March and spend time praising and speaking with God. We really value the fellowship we enjoy with our fellow brothers and sisters in our local churches.

The World Day of Prayer in March, which this year was in St Mary's, Tatsfield and All Saints, Oxted was a particularly lovely service. It is always so special to think that people all over the world are praying the same prayers on the same day, I am sure it delights God's heart.

A number of us once again enjoyed the Lent Groups. Some of us admitted we were not sure how we would get on with poetry but the folk who produced the material did such a good job that it was very accessible and engendered lots of discussion.

We had a number of visitors at our Passover meal. It is good to be reminded of the story of how God rescued his people, recounted so often throughout the bible, and how Jesus rescued us from sin.

One of the special events this Easter was welcoming Holland School in two shifts, to St. Johns for an Easter Service. We also once again built an Easter Garden in Hurst Green school and I led an Easter assembly there.



The Hurst Green churches also ran an Easter Craft morning. It is great fun with adults and children enjoying being creative together.

It never ceases to amaze me what people can create with flowers. The flower Festival at St Mary's, Tatsfield was full of wonderfully ideas on the theme of Christian symbols. It was such fun taking part in St John's flower festival later in the year with the theme "Let there be Light". We discovered the windowsills there are huge! It was really inspiring to walk around reflecting on each interpretation.

The Taizé service in June left me reflecting what richness we get from having such different styles of service on the 5th Sunday. It is such a great opportunity to meet and share in each other's churches.

Once again, we joined in with the Criss-Cross holiday club and enjoyed being part of the team. It is full on but very rewarding. Our children who attended all said they had a good time.

Hurst Green Methodist Church

Gwen Hand

This has been a difficult year for our church. Our new minister Revd. Kathy Flynn decided she could no longer work with the leadership team at the church and will leave the Circuit completely next July. For the next year the Revd. Stephen Mares has stepped out of retirement into part-time ministry. We are extremely grateful to him and having worked with him before are very happy.

Our membership numbers have continued to drop through bereavement and illness. We hold several Local Arrangement Services throughout the year, organised by a small team. Our Wednesday fellowship continues. There is a regular prayer group. There have been discussions with the other members of our church circuit about the future of the circuit and we have arranged a prayer morning for 26th October.

We support several charities throughout the year: East Grinstead Foodbank, Biggin Hill Romania Group, All We Can, Stripy Stork, Action for Children and Methodist Homes.

We continue to support as many CTOD events as possible.

We will be praying for the future of Hurst Green Methodist Church.

King's Church

Miles Corbett

Kings Church has continued to develop its community initiatives, and work with our friends in CTOD to engage in practical ways wherever possible. Criss-Cross a children's summer club grew substantially again this year and continues to be a great opportunity for all the local churches to collaborate.

We continue to participate in the East Surrey Winter Night Shelter, turning our Church offices in Amy road into overnight accommodation for the homeless, this was successful and we will be continuing this in 2019.

Our Just Looking and Alpha courses are growing and continue to encourage many to explore faith in Jesus for the first time.

Our involvement with Oxted School has grown over the last year, with us providing two RE lessons to every Year 8 class covering the subjects of who Jesus is and why he died, alongside the continuation of the Reading Assistance initiative and The Hub Christian Union.

While currently on hold, the Baby Café did provide support to hundreds of new local parents, including breastfeeding counselling, over the last year. We also gave Christmas Hampers to a number of local vulnerable families through our links with Tandridge District Council.

LIMPSFIELD & TATSFIELD TEAM MINISTRY

St. Andrew's Limpsfield Chart

Sue Compton

For some time, Churches Together has been grateful for Molly Holman's CTOD Singers – who meet informally most months to choose and sing hymns together – Sue Varcoe is an enthusiastic supporter! We invited them to St Andrew's last summer to swell the voices in our Summer Songs of Praise held on the third Sunday of August. This was an informal evening Service led by Wendy who introduced four poetry readings as well as the hymns we all chose on the night. We were well accompanied by our organist, Tony; Vince Short played his guitar and Father James enthusiastically joined in with his saxophone. Many people from different local Churches arrived – increasing the number of August Teas served that day. Members of our own congregation were probably too busy

serving and then clearing up after teas to join in the Service, but 'Summer Songs of Praise' is already on our calendar for the third Sunday in August 2020 and it will be good if more of us can join in!

As usual a number of us joined Churches Together Lent Groups when the sessions were again written locally. Wendy's idea of basing them on Poems was accepted by CTOD Council at its AGM and the results have proved as enjoyable as those based on Pictures last year. We celebrated the first three sessions in March at the usual CTOD Evening Service on the fifth Sunday of the month. It was beautifully led by Revd Mark Anderson from St Mary's, Oxted who is now Chairman of Churches Together.

A year ago, our Minister in Charge, Wendy Harvey, was on 'sabbatical' in Fiji, leaving us with a succession of visiting clergy to take our Sunday Services. We welcomed previous Ministers, returning after several years, bringing back memories and inspiring new ideas in their sermons. Wendy has now announced her retirement from St Andrew's at Christmas 2019 and we shall all miss her; she will be continuing her Prison Chaplaincy and we wish her well and thank her for all she has done for us.

St Peter's, Limpsfield

Sarah Darby

It is sad to report that in August Revd James Percival announced that he will be leaving Surrey in 2020 in order to accompany his wife Revd Kathryn Percival, vicar of Lingfield and Dean of Tandridge to her new post in Portsmouth Cathedral. In the meantime, let us rejoice in all he has motivated, encouraged and achieved in the last year. As a result of our MAP consultation we have been working on involving the very young and the very elderly.

Messy Church now meets monthly. Attendance has risen to 25-30 children. In July one member elected to be christened in the Family Service. Messy Church participated in Limpsfield in Bloom Upcycling Festival and won first prize for their depiction of 'Cast your nets on the right side of the boat' made from upcycled plastic bottles, an old lobster pot and a boat of upcycled wood.

Musical Memories takes place in the Millennium Room every second Thursday morning each month. This is a fun and stimulating singing group for those with dementia and their carers. Guests are offered a hot beverage, cake, conversation and a live pianist. They enjoy songs from the sixties which bring back emotional

memories of happier times. Cost is £2.00 per person and carers attend free. Please make known this event to any relevant carers.

Panda Nursery has now moved from St Peter's Hall to its own premises in the Glebe Meadow. The hall is now available for new bookings during the day. An after-school club for children between 5-11 years now meets there every Monday-Friday from 15.30-18.30.

In addition to the CTOD Lent studies Revd James Percival ran a course of Lent studies in the newly refurbished Bull Pub.

Paul Budgen has stepped down from being church warden in order to pursue his role as a SPA. He has set up a WhatsApp prayer group for anybody who wishes to join. This has proved surprisingly popular amongst all ages and provides a strong prayer basis for all village and church issues.

Sarah Paxton is now in her third year of training as a lay reader. She is spending three months with Edenbridge Church to widen her experience of pastoral life. Caroline Campbell our church administrator is also training to be a SPA

After thirty years devoted commitment, our Music Director Ann Osborn has chosen to step down at the end of the year. She has greatly contributed to the musical heritage of St Peter's. There is a job description on St Peter's website so if you know any potential applicants please guide them to consider this exciting post.

In the meantime, Geoff Martin, our Junior Choir Master is establishing an unrobed singers group to sing every third Sunday of the month. Practise is from 09.15-10.00 on the day, so reducing the commitment to weekly evening choir practise. All new participants are welcome.

The combination of Ann retiring and James leaving means many changes ahead in 2020....

St Mary's, Tatsfield

Barbara Hester, Jennifer Evans

This year has been a particularly busy one for St Mary's with many baptisms, weddings, funerals and one confirmation in February.

The small Pastoral Team continue to keep in touch with many villagers through the 'Hear Here' clinic which they run once a month in the village centre. Hear

Here 'Hearing Champions' are the recipient of the 2018 FaithAction, Faith & Health Award.



There were two services in November to commemorate 100 years since the end of WW1. For the second year running many villagers attended the open-air Act of Remembrance on the Saturday morning in the centre of the village. The Eucharist Service held in church on the Sunday was enhanced by a Remembrance Flower Festival featuring displays by the flower team, paintings from two Tatsfield Art Groups and the work of Tatsfield School children. It was followed by a buffet lunch which attracted a good number of villagers.

The church was once again adorned with flowers in May for the church's biannual Flower Festival. The theme, this year was 'Signs and Symbols of the Christian Church'. Many villagers were involved in producing the displays which were sponsored by Village Organisations. The event began with a concert in the church on the Friday evening followed by supper. In the region of 500 people visited the church over the weekend.

In March St Mary's hosted the morning service for World Day of Prayer. There was also a Men's Breakfast in the Old Ship Pub in a joint venture with New Life Church, Biggin Hill. Sunday Church Teas, from May to September, continue to be very popular and a golf day was again held in September. A Thrift Sale was held in the Tatsfield WI Hall in April with proceeds to the Bishop's Lent Appeal. It was so successful that another is planned for 19 October with proceeds this time going to the Robes Project for winter night shelters. Food donations continue to be collected throughout the year for Christchurch Brixton and Westerham Foodbanks and some of the harvest donations, which the school help to collect, are also distributed locally.

Mission Action Planning has been a focus for St Mary's this year, and we are grateful to Revd James Ashton, who in his role as Southwark Mission Enabler, has aided our deliberations.

In a combined venture, St Mary's together with Tatsfield Primary School and the Tatsfield Fairtrade Group have, this year, sold 180kg of Kilombero Rice. In doing so two children in Malawi have been able to go to secondary school for a whole year.

Very sadly Carolyn Anton our Parish Office Administrator for the past seven years died in August and at present our Team Vicar, Vince and his wife Veronica are on three-month sabbatical until the beginning of December.

OXTED TEAM MINISTRY

St George's, Crowhurst

During the last year we have continued to work on bringing more folk from the local community and beyond into our church. The limited facilities are a challenge, but we have succeeded in attracting plenty of music lovers to several concerts.

We hosted a number of Lent Talks on a variety of subjects covering the evolution of the earth and humankind and relating these to the Bible, belief and the science of today.

Visitors from far and wide continue to frequent our church and this year included a large group of green pilgrims walking from the south coast to join others at a meeting in London. They spent an afternoon at St George's enjoying our hospitality and environment before moving on to St John's.

Our efforts to respect, protect and encourage God's creation have been bearing fruit in the churchyard. The spring saw a profusion of wildflowers soon followed by nesting birds and numerous insects including some rare and unusual species.



Our thanks to Revd Professor Mary Seller who has kept our regular service pattern going whilst Rector Anna Eltringham has been on sick leave.

St John's, Hurst Green

Wendy Hewitt

Reverend Anna Eltringham was sadly taken ill in July shortly after her collation and induction as Rector of the Oxted Team. Thankfully Anna is recuperating, and we wish her a speedy, thorough recovery. This was a real blow after Anna's very hard work overseeing the 25th anniversary of women's ordination exhibition at the OXO tower in South London. Anna is Dean of Women's Ministry for Southwark Diocese.

Church events this year include a series of Lent Talks on subjects such as Genetics, Palaeontology, Aging and God and the Bible. A highlight was the celebration of Reverend Professor Mary Seller's 25th anniversary of Ordination in May. Mary was presented with a beautiful stole designed and hand embroidered by Hilary Dilnot.

St John's saw several projects this year, including a Reverse Advent Calendar with donations to the local Foodbank which are now ongoing. Sue Fox made a 'Head in the Hole' nativity scene to challenge us at Christmas to consider our place in Christ's story. Our Halogen lighting system is obsolete, so we are fundraising to install LED lights. Generous legacies and grants have added to funds raised at a piano recital by our multi-talented organist Hilary Dilnot, whose skills were further in evidence when she helped Sue Farrell to organise a Flower Festival in July that raised over £1300. 25 local groups and churches contributed beautiful flower displays on the theme - 'Let there be Light!' Knights Garden Centre loaned flowering bushes at the entrance and the whole church was transformed. Coffee and homemade cakes were enjoyed by visitors. One lady travelled 35 miles after finding the festival listed on the internet. Mrs. Diana Bush a parishioner of many years standing and regular flower arranger opened the festival.

The Youth Choir has grown, ably led by Sarah Belton. They have contributed regularly in services, singing modern songs and joining in choir anthems. The fortnightly coffee morning is popular, also the Art Group and Yo-Yo's Carers and Toddlers. Young people are encouraged in their faith from the crèche upwards in four groups depending on age and stage. The older youth group will assist in this year's Harvest service. Their group – Sunday Munch meets for breakfast and learning monthly.

Assisting local Residential Homes is a team effort with other local churches and representatives of several Hurst Green churches joined us to help with a new venture 'Tea and Hymns' for older folk, some with dementia one Sunday afternoon in early summer. We hope to repeat this and at the time of writing look forward to our usual Autumn fun quiz night and the Hurst Green Fair on 21 September.

St Mary's, Oxted

David Cook

2018/19 has been a year of looking backward and forward. Looking back, we had been blessed by the ministry of Andrew Rumsey – now elevated to the Bishopric of Ramsbury within the Salisbury Diocese. Under his leadership our Church grew both in Faith and numbers. Our stalwart wardens, Catherine and Stuart and our clergy, Rev Mark Anderson and Rev David Weightman assisted by former CTOD Chairman Rev Ken Robinson and our Lay readers Sue Mallinson and Frances Withers stepped up to the plate and oversaw the "vacancy" period which has turned out to be just over a year.

We now look forward to the installation of Rev James Ashton who has been confirmed as our new Team Vicar. James is well known to many of us as he and Andrew developed a close working relationship a couple of years ago as James was gently easing his way back into ministry following a career break.

Under Mark's leadership the afternoon café services have flourished while David has faithfully led many Sunday morning services.

We also look forward to the Alpha course starting in September and to our Bible Study Home Groups continuing as the nights begin to draw in.

Our Mission statement sums us up well "To know Christ, Grow our Community and Renew our Heritage."

All three objectives are on-going – in particular our long-awaited exterior conservation works to stabilise the walls has been completed – the next phase will be to work on the tower and the porch project. "Though we are many we are one body – for we all share the one bread"

We have recently been blessed and thank God for the generosity of the late Brian Trickett who left a large bequest to St Mary's.

St Peter's, Tandridge

Revd. Mark Anderson



St Peter's, Tandridge hosted the induction and collation (or welcome in other words) service for our new Team Rector in June. Anna Eltringham is not new in the sense as she is well known as vicar of Hurst Green. She now oversees all four churches in the Oxted Team and we welcomed her to her expanded patch with joy. Members of St Peter's love walking and in addition to the Ride and Stride, members of all four churches in the team walked between Tandridge, Oxted, Hurst Green and Crowhurst as part of our Rogation celebrations.

Rogation is when we ask for God's blessing and protection upon the fields and crops. Tandridge still feels very rural and we have our local farmer contribute to our Parish magazine. Our church is very much part of the local community and plays a key part in organising and putting on the Tandridge Village Fete, which baked in hot sun this year. The egg throwing, tug of war and throwing wet sponges at our new Rector were highlights!

We love bringing the community together at events such as the fete. Other events have included a movie night, music concerts and Messy Church. Chris Difford (previously of the band 'Squeeze') and Jeremy Lloyd (Assistant Director of Music at Rochester Cathedral) were very well received - on separate nights! Several people who have grown up in Tandridge and who have moved away, returned this year to be married in St Peter's - always a joy to see.

Our worship is also blessed with a regular music group and one-off performances such as the Acstede Quartet performing Haydn's Seven Last Words from the Cross on Good Friday.

Many events help the new St Peter's Community and Heritage Group fundraise to improve our Grade 1 listed building. We are hoping to raise money to provide an inside toilet, kitchen facilities and a more flexible space inside. We were pleased to install a nave altar earlier this year, whose shape references the stone window arches of the building. Outside the church we are grateful to the wider Tandridge community for helping tidy the churchyard each year and we are pleased with the new roof on our lychgate.

We are excited to welcome our new Team Vicar who will be starting in January 2020. We have faith that the next year will see The Revd. James Ashton lead us in developing all that is good and beautiful about Tandridge, its community and church.

Church of the Peace of God, Oxted United Reformed Church

Diana Jones, Elizabeth Young

During the year OURC has been led in worship by its minister, the Rev Graham Dadd and visiting worship leaders from across denominational boundaries. Monthly Communion service retiring offerings have raised, over the year, some £7000 for home and overseas charities, including Entebbe School Uniforms (in connection with Oxted One World Group), Alzheimers and Médecins Sans Frontières. In the autumn the minister lead a Bible based course 'Tenants of the King'.

Regular events are lunchtime Prayer and Share on Tuesdays (in term time) and fortnightly Wednesday Fellowship - the latter providing inclusive outreach to the local community.

October saw the seventh bi-annual Bluehouse Festival of music, drama and literature, with the Snelling Lecture: *Is British Democracy in Crisis?* by Tim Shipman, Sunday Times Political Editor. An eclectic mix of events were appreciated and well attended. Personalities included Andy Hamilton of *Have I Got News for You*;



Lally Snow, award-winning war zone photojournalist, writer and filmmaker and pop legend Mike D'Abo. Musical performances included Stephen Aviss & Friends, the Ruisi Quartet, acclaimed classical pianist, Emma Abbate. It was good to welcome many friends to this, ever popular, festival which raised £1650 for Tandridge Voluntary Action Group.

Advent Sunday worship was led by the Rev Nigel Uden, Moderator of General Assembly of the URC. The following Sunday, St Catherine's Hospice held a *Tree of Light* service at OURC. Other Christmas activities included, participating in the ecumenical venture, *Oxted Adventure* and visiting Tandridge Heights, to sing carols and, most importantly, meet and chat with residents.

Services at Easter included *Remembering the Last Supper* on Maundy Thursday and a Good Friday *Service of Reflection*, following the CTOD *Walk of Witness*.

Charities supported through events, included: *Their Voice*; *Traidcraft*; *Cystic Fibrosis* and *Macmillan Cancer Care*.

Social activities included, in the autumn, the popular Back to Church Quiz; a Church Family Party in February, enlivened with Eco party 'games'; a summer outing to St Albans, much enjoyed despite being, probably, the wettest day of the year!

During the year OURC achieved Bronze Eco status and is reviewing its audit and action plan, along with church lettings agreement, to ensure commitment of other users. Other Eco initiatives included:

- completing the twinning of all five of our toilets
- *Living Lent* commitment by congregation - saving half a tonne of carbon emissions.
- Eco presentations given to 'Tangent' and at Marsh Green URC's Eco Day for adults and young people, *Faith in a Changing Climate*, led by Christian ecologist and URC minister, the Rev Alex Mabbs
- the congregation growing pots of salad at home
- gathering recipes for a booklet to be produced by the congregation, including recipes for leftovers and surplus fruit and vegetables

