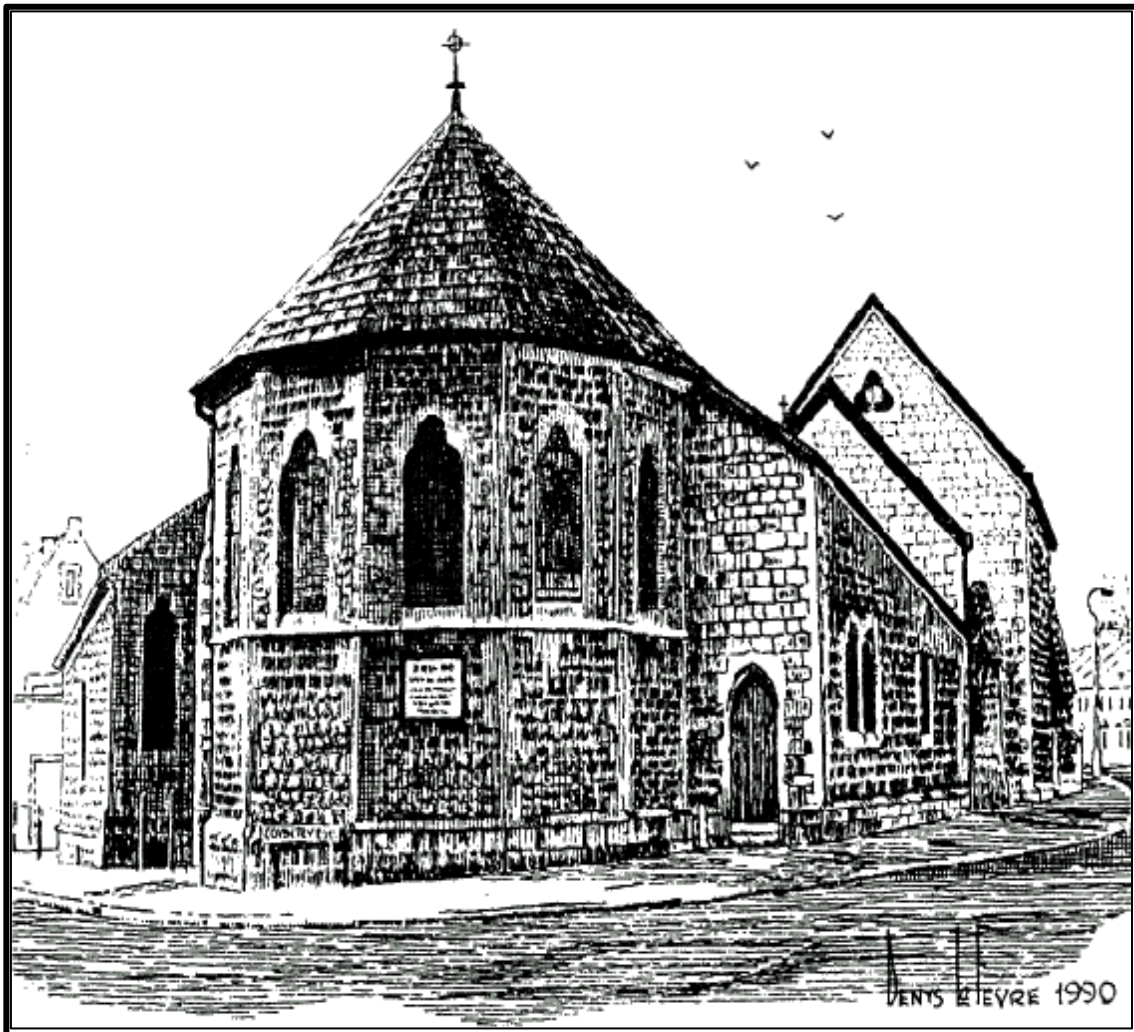
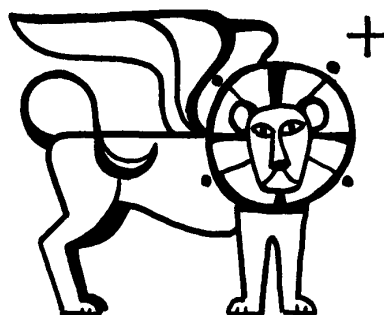


ANNUAL REPORT 2020



St Mark's Church, South Norwood
Albert Road, SE25 4JD



ST. MARK'S PARISH CHURCH
ALBERT ROAD, SOUTH NORWOOD, LONDON SE25 4JD

THE ANNUAL VESTRY MEETING
TO BE HELD ON SUNDAY 9th MAY 2021 IN THE CHURCH
DURING THE 10.00AM PARISH MASS

A G E N D A

1. Appointment of secretary for both meetings
2. Election of churchwardens
3. Parish priest's confirmation of result

ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHURCH MEETING

A G E N D A

1. Minutes of the meeting held on Sunday 11th October 2020
2. Matters arising from the Minutes
3. Secretary's Report
4. Vicar's Report
5. Election of Parochial Church Councillors for 2021/2022
6. Election of Sidespersons 2021/2022
7. Election of Deanery Synod Representatives 2021/2022
8. Election of CTSN Representatives 2021/2022
9. Electoral Roll Report
10. Churchwardens' Report + Report on Fabric & Ornaments
11. Report on Parish Finances: Annual Accounts for 2020
12. Adoption of PCC Accounts for 2020
13. Election of Independent Examiner for 2021
14. Report on proceedings of Deanery Synod
15. Reports from Parish Organisations
16. Date of next PCC meeting
17. Any Other Business
18. Closing Prayer

APCM 2021 - Vicar's report on the year 2020 (Jan-Dec)

Well, what a difference a year makes! 2020 certainly made a big difference to our lives as a Church family, as a community, as a nation and of course in our personal relationships with family, friends, colleagues, even complete strangers. This difference was, and still is, the COVID-19 strain of Coronavirus, during which we learnt new ways of being community.

So, I begin at the beginning. We started the year with the ***Watchnight Eucharist and Renewal of Covenant Service*** at Holy Innocents, during which we were enriched by the preaching of our Placement Student Sola, then Reader-in-Training at St Augustine's College of Theology. This preaching engagement culminated in Sola's last day on Placement with us, so we said goodbye to her and sent her off with our blessing after three months in the United Benefice – she and I met up later to finalise the Supervisor's report.

We continued with Services on Sundays and Thursdays in both Parishes as we celebrated the Feast of ***Epiphany*** and during Epiphanytide, the ***Baptism of Christ*** and the ***Presentation of Christ in the Temple*** which brought our Christmas Celebrations to a conclusion.

Then on 7th February, we said our sad goodbyes to our sister Jennifer Bowling (died 22nd Dec 2019) at the Requiem Mass here at St Mark – little did we know then that this would be the last hugely populated event we will host for a long while. We pray that Jennifer continues to rest in perfect peace and her family be comforted. We pray the same for Helen Burroughs as she and family continue to feel the loss of husband Steven, whose Funeral was at St Mark on 13th March.

The *Season of Lent* begun on 26th February as usual with the ***Ash Wednesday Eucharist with Imposition of Ashes*** before I travelled to Barbados on 6th March to attend the St Martin's Church 'Prayer Breakfast' (7th March) to which I was invited to give the Keynote Address in celebration of International Women's Day 2020 on the theme ***#EachForEqual***; and to Preside and Preach the celebratory Mass the following day at St Martin's Church.

I arrived safe and sound to begin my 10 days holiday including the portion of 'busman's holiday'. Talks of COVID-19 had begun to surface before I left for Barbados - travel was uneventful. However, on arrival at Grantley Adams Airport, Barbados, we had our temperatures checked before we were allowed to continue our journey through Immigration.

While there, I attended a meeting hosted by the Bishop of Barbados for his clergy at which they discussed the new ways of being church while at Church – these included regular handwashing/ hand-sanitising, NO greeting by touching therefore NO sharing of the Peace, one could touch elbows (which

would be covered by the sleeves of one's shirt), distribution of communion in one kind only.

I decided there and then that when I returned to the UK, we would have a joint Mothering Sunday celebration at St Mark (on 22nd March), as I felt stronger restrictions would soon be in place. It was not meant to be.

I arrived in the UK early on the morning of Tuesday, 17th March, to the news that as of later that day, All Public Worship was suspended. I quickly arranged a meeting for the United Benefice on Thursday evening at St Mark - a few of you attended. Having had a conversation with Josh the day before, we were able to record in Church, the Services for Mothering Sunday and the following Sunday, Lent 5. This was lucky as by the following week, we were not allowed in the Church building, not for public worship or private prayer, not clergy, not laity, not visitors, no one. **Lockdown 1 had begun.**

We, like other parishes up and down the land, then began the planning of some form of public online worship. We opted for the recorded variety.

With Josh's technical guidance and assistance, we produced online Sunday 8am and 10am Eucharists from the Vicarage, with Readings, Sermons and Intercessions coming primarily from the homes of Mother Susan and Cicelyn. We produced daily Morning and Evening Prayers in a similar vein. Music for the Eucharists came from the Storey household, where Andrew produced the music and his sons James & Oliver, the singing of the Hymns.

Producing the liturgies of Holy Week and Easter was quite something. Huge thanks especially to those who recorded the Passion Gospel in parts and to the young people who contributed pictorial Palm Crosses which were displayed during the Palm Sunday Mass as we begun Holy Week. Cicelyn recorded 15 Stations of the Cross (the 15th being the Station of the Resurrection) using the script and pictures from St Mark's church, accompanying music was produced by Andrew; Mother Susan provided the Good Friday meditation and I together with Josh had good fun as we tried as far as possible to keep to the original script for the Dawn Vigil, lighting and blessing of the Easter fire, marking the Easter candle, announcing its entry into the 'church' (in the Vicarage) and the rest of the Easter Day Liturgy including the Eucharist.

As I said we had fun but it was also very tiring, at times frustrating especially when one had to re-record an entire item be it the sermon, the prayers, the Readings or indeed the entire Mass. You too were able to see and laugh at some of these disasters during the 'Outtakes' section of the **St. Mark Talent Night** on 21st Nov.

Nevertheless, I think we did very well while we learnt to be more patient, more tolerant and kinder to each another, in the knowledge that the God who was

faithful to us before the pandemic continued to be faithful to us during the pandemic.

Amidst all this, we tried to keep the community together not only through the online Services and the usual communication channels of email, telephone and text messaging but through a few distanced-doorstep visits as the Vicar distributed Pewsheets to those who couldn't access the online worship initially.

We lost another member from St Mark, Marlene Bogle and Abdul lost his dad, both to COVID-19. Marlene's funeral on 20th May was my first 'graveside only' Funeral, numbers of guests no more than 12. This was the pattern for Funerals for the rest of the year, the only saving grace was that the number of guests rose to 30 as per the Funerals of now ex-St Mark's church members Colin Squirrell, Don Hollioake and Julie Emsden.

This Lockdown continued through Pentecost and Trinity Sunday and finally on July 5th the Churches were allowed to open for public worship but with the following conditions – a Risk Assessment must be produced, hand sanitising gels must be provided and congregants must be registered either via the NHS COVID-19 App on their smartphones or manual registration, no congregational signing, no sharing of the Peace, Communion in one kind only.

We opened at St. Mark on July 12th, at Holy Innocents on July 19th and from July 26th, we acquired the necessary camera and WiFi (among other equipment) so both Parishes could worship in the one building, St. Mark's, from where the 8am and 10am Mass could be live-streamed to those who were isolating and shielding at home. This we did while mid-week Mass continued at Holy Innocents at the new time of 10am (formerly 9.30am) – **Thank You to everyone** for your generosity in paying for the camera and associated equipment which resulted in us gaining lots of new national and global congregants. **Thank you very much** to all those who took on board the suggestion to move from the Envelope /Family Purse to Direct Debit / Standing Order to continue paying your tithes or indeed to join the Stewardship Scheme via Direct Debit/ Standing Order.

We continued this worship pattern for the rest of the year with parishioners from both parishes fully participating in the Worship and these include our young people. As we were permitted, we introduced Cantors on Sundays.

We conducted **Confirmation Classes** via Zoom but we're still awaiting a Deanery Confirmation Date. A **second Lockdown** was introduced but Churches were not required to close and we didn't – the PCCs voted accordingly. No **Winter Shelter** this year at Holy Innocents due to COVID restrictions.

Many thanks to Marcia and her team for the successful hosting of this year's socially-distanced Macmillan Fundraiser on 25th September, in spite of the COVID restrictions.

We rejoiced that the Bishop of Dover, the Rt. Revd. Rose Hudson-Wilkin was able to preach virtually for us at Advent 29th Nov as we marked 125 years of the Dedication of Holy Innocents; and for the Bishop of Croydon, the Rt. Revd. Jonathan Clark who presided and preached at our Midnight Mass on Christmas Eve. The next day, Christmas Day, under the auspices of Christians Together in South Norwood (CTSN), Cicelyn, Marcia, Julie, the Dumbrills and John Collis worked tirelessly to keep our promise to provide meals for those who were on their own on Christmas Day - ***Huge Thank You to Cicelyn and her team and to all the Drivers who made the delivery possible.***

We had other reasons to celebrate during 2020 – Shavaun was ordained Deacon on 19th Sept., Sola was licensed Reader on 11th October, Mother Susan was inducted as a Third Order Franciscan on 24th October, and on the following day during the 10am Parish Mass, the Bishop of Southwark conducted the 'secret' wedding of Mother Roxanne to Neville (I heard it was a wonderful surprise).

We have sustained our donation of 'non-perishable' goods to the Croydon Food Bank and the Croydon Refugee Centre – thanks to all donors and those who deliver the donations to the respective Collection Points. Thank you too to donors of milk bottle tops and stamps which serve a worthy cause.

As we continue to pray for Helen, June, Enid, Una and all our members who are housebound, we join with our nation in thanking all those who work in the NHS and beyond to keep us safe. We give thanks for those scientists and medical practitioners who have designed vaccines to help to stem the spread of COVID-19.

Following the St. Mark Quiz Night on 28th Dec., we finished the year as we began with the ***Watchnight Eucharist and Renewal of Covenant Service***, this time live-streamed from St. Mark on 31st December.

As we look forward to a better time in 2021, we remain confident in our calling to bring the kingdom of God here in South Norwood and beyond. We promise to continue to show the love of God, one to another as we keep the faith, deepen our discipleship and strengthen our community. Fed by the Eucharist, rooted in prayer, we remain the welcoming, compassionate people of God who seek to see Christ in the face of all whom we encounter.

Thank you for all your support to me and the Ministries Teams during this most unusual year.

Every blessing, *Mother Roxanne*

Treasurer's Report on Parish Finances: Annual Accounts for 2020

2020 was a bad year to be a treasurer as there was a lot of spending and not as much income. However, you will have seen from the accounts that we ended the year with money in the bank, mainly due to Mother Roxanne's excellent begging!

The deficit for the year was £10,313.16 which is mainly due to the fact that we could not get rental from the Hall for much of the year due to COVID-19 restrictions, and also couldn't hold our usual events for the same reason.

However, thank you to those people who changed their giving to go straight into the bank, it has meant that planned giving was only a little less than last year. Obviously, we had less Plate collection money as people were not in church, but we did have some large collections at the funerals which were held so Plate giving was, in the end, slightly up on last year.

In the accounts you can see some income from 2019's Christmas Fair. The Outreach payments were for presents for the Ministry Team and an Honorarium for Josh Dumbrill, who has done such sterling work live-streaming the services all through the year.

Not knowing what was to happen, we bought a new printer at the beginning of the year, which is the equipment expense. The cost of the live-streaming equipment has gone under church running expenses along with the utilities and the insurance. The website has gone from strength to strength under Josh's watchful eye and we now have the ability to pay through the website for our events, and to donate money to the church (please note!). I also have online banking set up now so that makes things easier as well.

You might wonder why there is nothing in the clergy expenses column - please ask the clergy about this! They have been slow to claim their expenses, but I have been told there are some receipts that I will get eventually.

We paid all of our Parish Share, £22,500, as well as the £600 per year we have to pay for historical areas from the 1990s. We held the Macmillan coffee morning again this year, albeit socially distanced, and the money was sent direct without going through our books. Unfortunately, we could not arrange Christian Aid charity collections, or any other collections this year. We sent a cheque to one charity after Jenny Bowling's funeral, but it was not cashed.

The accounts have been verified this year by Rod Dumbrill, who has forensically examined everything and finally declared himself happy. At the end of the accounts there are some explanatory notes but if anything is not clear I am happy to respond to any questions.

Penny Smith-Orr

Churchwardens' Report 2020

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, our church building was closed for a large part of 2020, which meant that our Annual Inspection was postponed until further notice. The fabrics, ornaments and all registers are in order. The gas safety certificate, the electrical inspection report, the health and safety review and the fire safety check are all up-to-date. The insurance certificate is displayed.

The urgent repairs outlined in the Quinquennial report were undertaken by Simon and I. Works on the roof of the ladies' toilets are still ongoing. Simon and I have also attended to other remedial works in and outside the church.

On behalf of the congregation, sincere and grateful thanks must go to all who serve in the life of the church in performing various duties, our servers, the technical team dealing with the on-line streaming of services, cantors, church and hall cleaners etc. Without these good works we would not be the vibrant church we are.

Going forward there are some new members in the congregation and part of our mission in the coming year is to encourage them to become part of the church family.

I would like to extend my grateful thanks to Mtr. Roxanne, Mtr. Susan, Simon, and all members of the PCC for their support, and also members of the Mothers Union during the year.

Donald Ferguson (Churchwarden) & Simon Driscoll

Gift Aid Secretary's Report 2020

The Gift Aid claims for 2020 were as follows:

Gift Aid small donations scheme, GASDS (plate giving) for the year 2019	827.41
First Gift Aid Claim for 2020	1227.27
Second Gift Aid Claim for 2020	2,315.13
TOTAL for the year received in our bank via BACS	<hr/> £4,419.81 <hr/>

Notes:

With the GASDS scheme, which is the plate giving, you will notice I claim a year behind, therefore 2019 is the usual amount. This will not be the same for 2020, due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The two gift aid claims are from family purse envelopes, which have been infrequent due to the pandemic, and people who have paid by standing order or, encouraged by Mother Roxanne, directly into the church bank account. I have also included those who have given donations through the giving page on the website, having indicated they wish to gift aid by filling in a new declaration form, and for those for whom I already hold a declaration form in my file.

I think you will agree that the total of £4,419.81 is very respectable (especially when 2019's total included 3 months of standing order payments from the previous year!)

A big thank you to everyone who has contributed to this total: it has been very welcome and helped the church's funds.

If you pay more income tax than you give to the church and other charities during the year, you are eligible to gift aid your donation; however, if your situation changes and you are no longer able to gift aid, please let me know. As you can see it is **vital** for the church that as many members as possible gift aid their donations. I will be happy to give you the appropriate form to fill in and to help you if you have any questions.

This has been a very difficult year for everyone and your contributions are doubly appreciated.

Ann Squirrell

Secretary's Report 2020

At the time of the Annual Parish Church Meeting (APCM) in October 2020, there were 57 members on the new Electoral Roll.

The following members were elected onto the Parochial Church Council (PCC) membership was as follows:

Jan Dumbrill, Ann Squirrell, Josh Dumbrill, Patsy Mitchell, Penny Smith-Orr and Peter Irono.

The following also served on the PCC:

Priest in Charge:	Revd Roxanne Hunte
Assistance Priest:	Revd Susan Wheeler-Kiley
Lay Preacher:	Cicelyn Hinds
Churchwardens:	Donald Ferguson

Penny Smith-Orr and Cicelyn Hinds were duly re-elected to remain as Deanery Synod Representatives.

Beverley Herbert and Cicelyn Hinds were duly re-elected to remain as Christians Together in South Norwood representatives for the coming year.

At the first PCC meeting following the APCM, held on the 4th November 2020 Penny Smith-Orr was re-elected to the role of Treasurer and Cicelyn Hinds was re-elected to the role of Secretary. Also at that meeting, the PCC reviewed the Governance Policy. The policy sets out useful guidance on best practice for the PCC and will continue to be reviewed annually.

The Macmillan Coffee Morning was held on Friday 27th September organised by Marcia and her team. Cakes and biscuits were donated to raise funds.

Finally, I would like to express my sincere thanks to Mother Roxanne, the ministry team, churchwarden(s) and PCC members for their support during the year.

Cicelyn Hinds

North Croydon Deanery Synod Report 2020

Cicelyn Hinds and Penny Smith-Orr are your representatives on the Deanery Synod. Usually, they meet three times a year, although in 2020 there was one meeting and two virtual meetings.

In February, the speaker was Aiden Phillips from Croydon Trauma Informed Community on how we as churches might respond to street violence in Croydon.

The purpose of the study was to find out how trauma in early life, especially childhood, affected individuals in later life. Adverse childhood experiences are said to affect how adults view the world. The aim of CTIC is to work with people to provide a more compassionate way of working across phases in childhood. Synod was informed that young people will at some point in their lives experience fear, others are displaced from hope. Tanya expressed the need for awareness of how adults interact with young people and how to support them when they are experiencing trauma. In so doing they would raise awareness of how society and community works. The organisation is linked with other agencies such as, 'Off the Record' which also supports young people.

The Deanery has already organised some of its young people in the Public Spirit project, which was in its second year, with the focus on Faith linking

with Social Justice through discussions, using examples of Jesus' interactions with the people he met, the young people will be guided towards positive, rather than hostile encounters, with authority such as the Police.

In June we welcomed our new Archdeacon of Croydon Venerable Dr Rosemarie Mallett, and each Parish introduced itself to the new Archdeacon. We then had a talk from the new Archdeacon on her thoughts about being in Croydon.

The speaker at the October meeting was our very own Revd Canon Roxanne Hunte. She introduced the book *Ghost Ship* by Fr Azariah France-Williams and spoke about the ideas on racism within it. During Black History month the various churches in the Deanery had put on many events organised by a subcommittee and this book and talk fitted perfectly into the programme.

The rest of the meetings usually consist of news around the Parishes and, last year, much information on COVID-19 and whether or not various activities could take place. Churches were given until April 2021 to hold their APCMs, which is why we had ours in the autumn so that we could hopefully get back on track in 2021.

Penny Smith-Orr

Christians Together In South Norwood Report 2020

During 2020, five ordinary meetings were held. The delayed Annual General Meeting was held on 7th October. All meetings were held via zoom link and were well attended despite the circumstances. At the AGM Jane Bashford was duly elected Chair, Mother Susan, Hon. Secretary, and Beverley Herbert, Hon. Treasurer.

At the beginning of the year, the first holiday club planning meeting was held and we had every reason to believe the project would have been a success. We also held the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity service during January. Our last face to face meeting was held on 19th February 2020, with an ambitious programme of projects including an Environmental/Climate change day, and interfaith work being planned. We hope that when we have come through the pandemic we will return to these important matters.

Our Lent Groups started but it became increasingly obvious that a lockdown was about to be declared, so we decided to abandon them. There was of course, no Good Friday Walk of Witness which was a great sadness to most of us, and no Easter lunch and tea.

We also had to abandon Christian Aid Week, and the Croydon Floating Shelters, hosted in their different time slots by Holy Innocents Church and the Baptist Church.

In November Mother Susan attended the Zoom meeting of the Churches Together in

South London Big Gathering. The topic for discussion had been “how can we encourage greater racial diversity in leadership? Is the ecumenical space less racially inclusive than other Christian gatherings?” The two presentations had been from Chine McDonald, from Christian Aid, and Richard Reddie of CTBI.

Croydon Churches Forum meetings were attended by Pete Leveson and Mother Susan. The effect of the Council cuts in providing for public services was discussed, and it was agreed that the churches are likely to have an important role to play in provision of care for vulnerable people and in supporting community groups.

An Advent course run by Revd Dr Stephen Day was offered to all CTSN members – this was well attended.

Our Advent campaign “Follow the Star” which aimed to cheer up the area with posters proved to be too ambitious in the circumstances, with the exception of the Baptist Church who displayed their poster until Candlemas. No carol singing could take place outside Aldi.

Christmas lunch and tea, however, was a great success, with Cicelyn and a team of volunteers preparing a delivery service in St Mark’s kitchen. We delivered around 40 meals to those around the neighbourhood who would normally have attended in person the Christmas Day hospitality.

Individual churches have held services in their own way throughout the year, many of which have been either livestreamed or recorded on YouTube. We have endeavoured to be supportive of each other ecumenically. The Baptist Church hosts the Community Kitchen which has been a lifeline to many in the neighbourhood. Other churches too have played a vital role in providing meals and support during a difficult year. As 2021 approaches, we hope to reconnect with St Chad’s, as well as the Pentecostal churches, and outreach to Woodside Christian Centre.

Mother Susan, TSSF

Hall Committee Report 2020

The Committee have not met for quite some time now, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, but we still manage to deal with the day to day running of the Hall.

Due to the lockdown we were unable to host the Christmas Day Lunch in the church hall as is our usual practice, sponsored by Christians Together in South Norwood ('CTSN'). Nevertheless, myself and our team of volunteers prepared and delivered Christmas lunch to around 40 residents in the community. I would like to convey my sincere and grateful thanks to all the volunteers, but especially to Josh, Jan, Rod, Julie, and Marcia for the help they gave me in organising this gratifying event.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank Jan Dumbrill for her commitment and hard work during the past year and for the efficient way in which she has dealt with the hall bookings and other matters.

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank Jan, Verdal and Clover who helped with the cleaning of the hall, and also a special thank you to David for emptying the bins and also undertaking other odd jobs.

Finally, I would like to extend my sincere and grateful thanks to Mother Roxanne, the Committee and the volunteers for their commitment and hard work during the past year.

Cicelyn Hinds

Hall Report 2020

I can report that total revenue generated from hall usage in 2020 was £2,140, a significant decrease from £9,649.40 in 2019, owing to the closure of St Mark's Hall during the Coronavirus pandemic.

At the beginning of 2020, the Hall hosted five regular users. We still do not have a regular faith-based group, which has in the past generated a significant portion of Hall revenue. The Hall was not used for elections in May 2020, which were postponed owing to the pandemic, however, the accounts include a payment of £800 from the General Election called in December 2019. The Hall was used five times by one-off users in 2020 before its closure in March. Comparisons between years are as a result unreliable, however, the Hall was used eighteen times in 2019 by one-off users.

CTSN sponsor two events each year which use the Hall. The Easter Monday tea was cancelled this year as 'Stay at Home' guidance was still in place at Easter. However, the Christmas Day lunch (arranged by Cicelyn Hinds) was a great success, which saw the Hall used to prepare 34 meals which were

delivered by our volunteers. A successful Macmillan coffee morning took place in the Hall in September, which was well-attended.

Works on the roof of the ladies' toilet were ongoing at the start of 2020 and have since been resumed. Future planned works are identical to those reported last year, as these could not be completed in 2020. These include sealing and polishing the hall floor, replacing the broken window in the kitchen and ordering a new cooker.

Some minor works were completed in the first few months of 2020: the drain in the playground (which causes problems with drainage in the kitchen and has contributed to flooding in the basement) was cleared, fluorescent bulbs were replaced in the hall, new percussive taps were fitted in the toilets, along with a new hot water heater. Various other minor works were completed in the toilets to replace broken outfitting.

My grateful thanks are due to Cicelyn for ensuring the Hall is kept clean, and for her continued support of the Hall's operation. As we look to the future re-opening of the Hall for hire, more volunteers would be welcomed, to help with cleaning, and in particular to lock the Hall after evening events. My thanks, too, are due to Mother Roxanne for her continued support and guidance.

Jan Dumbrill

Family and Education Committee Report 2020

During 2020 we were unable to meet or do much fundraising. We started with the usual unwanted Christmas gift sale and through the year Jan managed to sell some marmalade, some chutney and some other bits and bobs.

We also managed to have a Pancake Breakfast after the 10am service, but shortly after, we were all closed down due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Towards the end of the year, we managed to rally and held a highly successful online Talent Night with lots of people joining in. Our online quiz at the very end of the year went well, but the income for that will appear in next year's accounts.

As the fundraising committee, this has been a sad year for us, as we only managed to raise just under a thousand pounds. In future, you might like to consider being part of the fundraising team. We will be needing funds as we are hoping to get the old schoolroom up and running as another source of rental revenue and will have to spend some money to do this.

Hopefully we can all get together for some events soon!

Penny Smith-Orr

Magazine and Publicity Report - 2020

MAGAZINE

Unfortunately, only two editions of the Parish Magazine were produced in 2020. The 'Stay at Home' guidance in place from March onwards as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic saw the church closed and as a result we were unable to print and collate the magazine.

At the start of 2020, the Magazine was well-established, and continued to serve its purpose as a method of outreach - but there was always a need for more articles from members of the congregation to create an interesting and varied publication each month.

March 2020 marked the thirtieth edition of the new magazine since I took on the role of editor in April 2017. In that time we have published over 150 articles, from clergy, laity, and even from those with no connection to the parish at all. My thanks are due to all those who have been responsible for the various aspects of producing a Parish Magazine - printing, collation, delivery, collecting subscriptions from advertisers, from subscribers, and of course to all those who have contributed articles to the magazine, big or small.

As we witness a huge communications shift in the wake of the Coronavirus pandemic, serious thought will need to be given to a Parish Magazine's place in St Mark's future mission and outreach. One possibility is to move the magazine online, and distribute it as a digital publication. However, it may be that with the recent introduction of a new St Mark's email group and WhatsApp group, there is no longer a need for a Parish Magazine in its current form, whether it is distributed physically or digitally.

WEBSITE

Predictably, the shift to online services in March 2020 saw a large uptick in website hits compared to 2019. In the first half of the year during the first lockdown, we averaged around 15,000 impressions (number of times pages on the website were viewed) per month, as people used the website to find our online services, notice sheets etc. August 2020 saw a large spike of around 43,000 impressions, which correlates with the commencement of live-streamed services from July 26th. Impressions then settled back to around 20,000 per month for the remainder of 2020. We have continued to use Twitter as a form of outreach, and to direct people to our online services - at the end of 2020 we had around 190 followers.

A Google search for '*st mark south norwood*' will now show our church website as the top result, and more vague searches such as '*south norwood church*' will also place us near the top of search results. Looking forward, we need to consider what else to put on our website, to give people an insight

into the church community and what it has to offer. Keeping a website up to date is crucial, and we will need to ensure this continues to happen in future.

ONLINE WORSHIP

In March 2020 we started our St Mark's YouTube channel, where we uploaded our pre-recorded, and later live-streamed 8am and 10am Eucharists, as well as Sunday school, Morning Prayer, Evening Prayer, and later in the year, Compline, plus special services such as our Watchnight Eucharist, and fundraising events such as the Talent Night and Quiz Night. 2020 saw us gain 166 subscribers (people who have asked to be notified of new uploads to our channel), which was helped in no small part by the 'secret' wedding of our very own Mother Roxanne to Neville and the large number of overseas viewers this event brought with it! It was our first (and so far only!) video to surpass 1,000 total views, with nearly 100 people watching live on the day. Other popular videos included our first online service on 22nd March, which by the end of 2020 had been viewed 415 times, and a perfectly 'normal' Evening Prayer on 5th December which was viewed 646 times in total - to this day Mtr Roxanne can't work out what she said!

In 2020 our online audience watched around 2,700 hours (about 112 days!) worth of videos on our channel. At the end of 2020 we had gained just under 18,000 views across all these videos (as of March 2021, marking one year of online services, we had surpassed 20,000 views and are now well on our way to 25,000). Interestingly around a third of these views in 2020 were from YouTube recommending our content to people, meaning a large number of these views have likely come from those not connected to the church or congregation in any way. Indeed we've seen viewers from across the globe - from the US, Canada, Guyana, India, Barbados and Pakistan, among others.

Alongside our YouTube channel we also started using a podcast platform to publish Morning and Evening Prayer, and later Compline, as well as the readings and sermons from our Sunday services. These podcasts (audio recordings available on-demand online) have again been very popular, and are available to listen through Spotify, Apple Podcasts, or your podcast player of choice. In 2020 we saw around 1,500 downloads of our podcasts, including from countries such as the US, Ireland, Russia, Canada and Norway. Podcasts for Lent, Holy Week and Easter were particularly popular, such as Stations of the Cross, recorded by Cicelyn, and the Passion, recorded separately by a number of people in the congregation.

While we initially chose to pre-record our online services (since for a long time we weren't able to be in church), on 26th July we live-streamed our inaugural mixed-mode (both in-person and online) service - a phrase with which the ministry and technical teams are now eminently familiar! We reaped the benefits of an investment in our sound system in 2016, without which we would not have been able to record and live-stream services and events at the standard to which we have. While services from March to July were filmed with just an old iPhone and edited with basic software, the transition to live-

streamed services required more investment in video equipment and a broadband contract, although no initial investment was required on the audio side. Once cantors and small choirs were permitted to sing during services, we purchased new microphones for our choir and organist, which has greatly enhanced our online services - and we are grateful to our musicians for adding to our worship in this way.

While the shift to online services has brought its costs and challenges, I think it's shown us just how vital the provision of mixed-mode worship is both to those in our congregation who are housebound, and to those thousands of miles away. Thanks to the hard work of the ministry team, technical team, our musicians, readers, intercessors, and all those who continue to make live-streaming possible each week, people from the other side of the world, who may not have ever heard of, let alone visited South Norwood before, can - and do - join our services online.

Josh Dumbrill

St Marks' Sunday School Report 2020

The year started as normal with a visit to the pantomime to see "Beauty and the Beast", produced by St. Mark's Players at St. George's Church Hall, Beckenham. It seems such a long time ago now, but we all had an enjoyable afternoon, with the usual waving of glow sticks and shouting 'He's behind you!'. Our thanks to the PCC for subsidising the childrens' tickets.

Then lockdown came, which changed things dramatically. We were unable to have the Mothering Sunday family service with the posies for the children to hand out. The Sunday School was also paused while we decided how to proceed, as we could no longer meet as usual.

After speaking with Maureen, Patsy and Sharon, then Mother Roxanne and Josh, we decided to try to record Sunday School on video each week. We agreed that Maureen and I would take turns, and Josh would upload it to the church's YouTube channel each week, separately from the live-streaming of services. A big thank you to Josh who made it possible for our Sunday School to carry on. I needed extra help, as I had difficulty in both producing and sending my recording, and again Josh came to my aid.

We had our usual break for August, although we were unable to hold a party at the end of term, and we restarted in September. In the run-up to Christmas, St Mark's held a talent night which was live-streamed on the night, with the acts being recorded beforehand. A couple of the Sunday School children participated in this, which was a great success.

This got us thinking that we may be able to put on a Nativity play after all, and with the help of Josh and Mother Roxanne we recorded our play “While Shepherds Watched”. After the introduction, there was a reading by one of the children. The actors were in sibling pairs to comply with the COVID-19 regulations at the time. The Nativity play told the Christmas story through the eyes of the shepherds and was very well received when shown during the ten o’clock service. All the children enjoyed the experience.

Thank you to everyone who enabled the Sunday School to carry on during this very difficult year.

Ann Squirrell

St Marks’ Mothers’ Union Report 2020

The only face-to-face meeting was held on Monday 16th March 2020, just prior to lockdown. The presentation of the 2019 accounts were made and subscriptions collected. We were hoping that we could still donate towards the flowers to make posies for Mothering Sunday, but unfortunately this was not to be.

We also discussed the General Meeting which was going to take place in Belfast, which we were anticipating attending. In the event, this was cancelled and deferred to 2021 or possibly 2022.

All the events in the diocese then took place on Zoom, and although tentative at first, we soon got used to it. This included a Lady Day Service on the 25th March, and our Diocesan AGM on the 2nd July, 2020. On the 20th July, a branch leaders’ meeting was held on Zoom by our Diocesan President, Comfort Fearon.

It was reported that Mary Sumner House, our Worldwide Headquarters, had installed a new computer system, the website has been updated and we were told that information was going to be more readily available. We now have a monthly ‘e’ Magazine, giving information on the diocese and worldwide. We also have a new Annual Prayer Diary which was out just before Christmas and was delivered to our members on foot or by mail.

We have teddies, baby blankets, matinee sets and hats ready to be delivered but have been unable to due to the pandemic.

The last event of the year was the Diocesan 9 Lessons and Carols Service on the 17th December, by Zoom, which we enjoyed.

Ann Squirrell