

2019 REPORT OF THE VICAR OF CHRIST CHURCH FOR THE 2020 APCM

Our 160th anniversary year proved to be very busy indeed. I am enormously grateful in particular to David Simpson for his constant help and support. It has not been easy for him to be the sole Churchwarden but he has shouldered many tasks with patience and good humour. But we do need to elect **two** Churchwardens to office. It has also been good to work with Sarah Castle (our SPA) as well as our 2 Readers, Farhad Hedayati (congratulations on his 20th anniversary) and Flis Banks, and we thank them for their support. The whole church continues to be hugely indebted to Sara Taylor our Administrator who works – from her super new office! – behind the scenes and makes so much run so smoothly. We were delighted to be able to welcome back Tom Theakston as our new Director of Music in February and we have much enjoyed his strong musicianship. We thank Nick Lindsay and Julie Grainger for acting as vergers at funerals and weddings. The PCC has worked very hard this past year: in particular we thank Debbie Morley for her work as PCC Secretary and also thank John Davey for continuing in the role of PCC Treasurer working alongside our part-time paid bookkeeper, Margaret Hamps. This year Debbie Morley is stepping down as PCC Secretary and we thank her for her strong contribution over a number of years, as well as those other PCC members who are retiring. Many other people contribute much to the life of Christ Church. I can't possibly mention everybody but am grateful to them all including church cleaners, flower arrangers, servers, chalice assistants, readers, intercessors, stewards, refreshment servers, small group convenors, gardeners, handyman, lift givers, pastoral team members, the social events committee and those who supervise our Hall and its users with particular thanks to Stefan Bown and Angelina Skelton. It was good to be able to hold various study courses in church this year during Lent and Advent. We are indebted to the strong team of leaders of Junior Church, Stepping Up and KFH. Thank you to Paul Brazier for maintaining the website and to Brenda Clark and Naomi Lowe for producing our wonderful quarterly magazine. Finally, Safeguarding is a vital issue for every church to ensure proper and robust procedures are in place to care for our children and vulnerable adults and we are grateful to Jenny Tomlinson and Jane Simpson who look after this important aspect of our life for us.

The whole Christ Church family was saddened at the death on 15 May of Susan Rocksborough Smith. She was a long serving member of the church and had given much to its life in many, often quiet and unseen, ways. We were able to give thanks to God for her life at a packed funeral on 30 May. During 2019 we also mourned the deaths of Harry Watson and Pauline Shepherd-Walwyn who were valued members of our congregation.

The PCC was particularly delighted to be able to complete the full refurbishment of the hall by the Autumn of 2019 and which was blessed by the Archdeacon on October 20. We are very grateful to Stefan Bown and those who worked very hard with him on this project – and mention must also be made of Paul Deen and his team who achieved such an amazing transformation which has been universally admired and is proving to be an important asset for both church and community. It is wonderful to see the re-opening of the Toddler Group which was such a strong piece of outreach in the past. We also held a major stewardship campaign. Thanks to some generous donors we have been able to transform the back garden. Generally, our buildings are in a good state of repair and there was little that the architect highlighted in his recent 5 yearly inspection. We were especially delighted to be able to continue to work on our vision of **'SHARING GOD'S LOVE'** and to be guided by our Mission Action Plan. The Bishop and Archdeacon have both complimented us upon this achievement. Some of our work – such as the refugee project and our eco-church project – are ongoing and we are grateful to those who are taking the lead. These and many other varied items will continue to be on the PCC agenda in the coming months.

But we should never forget that uniquely the local Church of England parish church also exists for those who are **not** its members – and so it is good to be able to visit some of the schools and residential homes in the parish and to baptise, marry and bury those who wish to use our pastoral services. We are also part of the Diocese of Southwark, the Deanery of Merton and Churches Together in West Wimbledon. What unites us together is our worship of God and our care for others. The time we spend together in Church on Sundays in worship and the care and welcome we offer are crucial and I pray that we will faithfully continue to be active in **SHARING GOD'S LOVE** Sunday by Sunday and week by week.

Michael Burns, March 2020