

LATE SPRING 2011



CHRIST CHURCH

WEST WIMBLEDON



Parish Magazine

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Dear Everyone...

I am writing in the full glow of a wonderful Easter at Christ Church. Any of you who were there at any point on Easter Day will, I hope, have shared with me a real sense of joy, celebration and thanksgiving on a beautiful day; whether that was as the dawn broke and we gathered around the new fire, in the middle of a packed, chocolate smeared, 10.00am service or quietly in the evening. I went into a few days of dozing and gardening full of gratitude...

And gratitude is really what I wanted to write to you about in this edition of the magazine.

Around the time of publication, we will be celebrating (and yes, celebrating is the right word!) our Stewardship Sunday on May 22nd. Once more we will all be encouraged to make sure that the levels of our giving to God are at least keeping pace with inflation and perhaps making adjustments accordingly.

In addition, this year, we will be focussing on the need for us all to consider the possibility of remembering Christ Church in our wills and paying attention to the blessings that can come to a church after a legacy has been made.

And again we will have to be careful not to give the impression that we're just

after your money for the sake of it. Really, I'm not interested in money for itself but I do recognise that the generosity of generations of worshippers at Christ Church and the generosity of those who worship here today is what enables us to have mornings like Easter Day, is what enables us to offer pastoral care, a space to come close to God, a place for children's workshops, a place to sing and dance (come to a Life Lines service!), a place for God and God's people to meet.

I know that many, many worshippers were grateful for that wonderful morning on April 24th. If there are to be more such experiences, we all need to think carefully about how we can use our resources to make sure that happens.

As well as repeating the things

The Christ Church mini-bus... wishful thinking or a real possibility?



we know well and love, we would also very much like to expand what we are able to offer at Christ Church. At the moment, our levels of giving allow us to do what we do. But our work with children and young people would blossom if we were able to afford a youth and families worker. Think what a blessing a mini-bus would be. Our audio visual equipment is either antiquated or non-existent. Our lighting is poor and so far our lighting appeal has left us around £15,000 short of the amount we will need to renew it. If we had somewhere for them to live, we would almost certainly by now be a parish which would be asked to train a curate.

What we do is great and on good days like Easter Day, we are grateful for the many blessings of our church life. Properly resourced, we could do even more.

'The generosity of those who worship here today is what enables us to offer pastoral care – a space to come close to God'

Revd Richard Lane, 16 Copse Hill, Wimbledon, London SW20 0HG. Tel 020 8946 4491 ccparrishoffice@yahoo.co.uk



Charitable Giving Update

Pat Spencer on the causes Christ Church supports

The Bishop of Southwark's Lent Call
Links between churches in the diocese of Southwark and Zimbabwe began in 1991. Because of the continuing dire situation in Zimbabwe the Bishop of Southwark decided that this year all the money raised for his Lent appeal should be given to various projects in that country.

Bishop Christopher writes:

I visited Zimbabwe over the New Year leading the Epiphany Retreat for clergy from the Dioceses of Harare and Manicaland. Amid ongoing struggles and difficulties the remarkable strength of Christian faith and hope is an example to us all. We have a great opportunity this Lent to make a difference through prayerful support and encouragement as well as financial aid.

The Area of Kingston, as many at Christ Church know, is linked to the Matabeleland Diocese and we were fortunate last year to be visited by its dynamic bishop, Cleophas Lunga. He is particularly keen to strengthen the structure of the

church in his diocese so that it can be better equipped to serve the people. He hopes to raise money to provide toilets for the churches of St Anne's Pumula South and St. Paul's Cowdray Park, and new church buildings at St. Clare's Nkulumane, St. Joseph's Emganwini and St. Katherine's Kingsdale.

The Diocese of Manicaland is trying to rebuild its structure after a dispute with the last Bishop and needs funds to provide training for new ordinands. The Diocese of Masvingo is particularly anxious to improve its schools and there are numerous small projects to promote self sufficiency and growth in Central Zimbabwe.*

Zimbabwe is a country with the potential to be rich but sadly its resources are not wisely managed. There are about 12 million people with an estimated life expectancy of 47 years. About 1.3 million of them are living with HIV/AIDS. However the literacy rate is high – 91% – and with help conditions could improve.

This year's Lent Call links directly with an area of charitable giving which we, at Christ Church, have identified as an area we are particularly keen to support.

*You can read more about all these projects at <http://www.southwark.anglican.org/what/lentcall-projects>



PCC News

Brenda Clark on Church Council developments

The PCC has decided to form a new link with the parish of St Francis of Assisi Barham Green in Bulawayo. This is part of our area link with the diocese of Matabeleland and we look forward to working with the congregations of both churches to establish and strengthen the link to our mutual benefit.

In the autumn, the gas fire in the Truman Room failed. On the verge of laying out £2-3000 to install a new gas fire, the PCC discovered that the existing gas supply comes directly from the hall. Given the uncertainty over the future of the hall, we have decided that in the immediate future we will heat the Truman Room with a more powerful free standing heater. The PCC recognise that for any meetings and discussion groups to be well attended, the Truman Room must be well lit and warm!

In addition to being hazardous to change, the light bulbs in church now blow with such frequency that continuing with the existing lighting provision is unsustainable. A Lighting Appeal Fund was set up last year, and now stands at something over £20,000, thanks in large part to a £17,000 legacy. The

PCC has decided, subject to satisfactory arrangements for after care, to proceed with a specification prepared by a company experienced in providing lighting for churches. The quote for this work is in the region of £35,000. It is hoped that a refreshed Lighting Appeal will close the gap between funds raised and funds required.

Proposals for the new development plan for the church hall and vicarage are now with a dedicated PCC Steering Group. This group has met with diocesan officers to crystallize the parish vision, explore potential planning issues and have invited two firms of architects to draw up possible schemes that would achieve our vision. The steering group has been encouraged and impressed with the approach of diocesan officers. Plans are still embryonic and not yet ready for wider debate.

We have begun a new 1st Sunday of the month service – Celebrate Together – which seeks to bring together our 10am and 11.30am congregations. It is well attended and early signs are that it is proving to be a success. People frequently comment on the friendly welcome they receive.

Our Community Garden

An unused plot of land on the grounds of Christ Church has been put to a new and worthwhile use

Christ Church recently opened a new community garden. On Sunday 10th April, Revd Richard Lane cut the ribbon to the unused plot of land beside the church hall.

After hours of hard work, a group of local residents had cleared away weeds and rubble, and planted some fruit bushes and potatoes.

With the support of the Transition Town Wimbledon Food Group, this garden is open to church members and the local community, and work will be at an arranged time between those involved.

Those involved in the garden include Joyce Pountain, Caroline

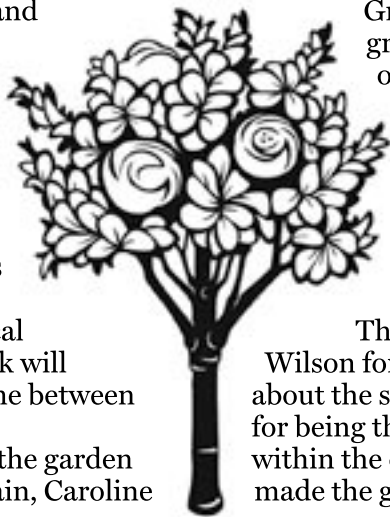
Pankhurst, Coordinator of the Food Group, Julie Kiss, who manages their website (www.wimbledonfoodgroup.co.uk), Juliet Boyd, local resident and on TTW Steering Group and Natalie Mady, local resident and volunteer with

Capital Growth. Capital

Growth have provided a grant for the garden, as one of the 2,012 food growing spaces they are aiming to set up in London by 2012.

TTW are pleased to be one of those spaces, and are grateful to Alban

Thurston and John Wilson for contacting TTW about the space originally and for being the contact points within the church who have made the garden possible.



Christ Church's Community gardeners are working with TTW to create a little bit of the 'Good Life' in West Wimbledon

The Archers & Christ Church are in it together

The Transition Town movement, of which Christ Church's Community Garden is part, started from a concern over climate change. It asks what steps can be taken to make where we live less dependent on oil, then plans how to get there. A lower energy community requires more recycling, mending things and local sourcing. It relies on communities working together and pooling their ideas.

Since the first Transition Town began in Totnes four years ago, hundreds more have sprung up across England. In this part of London, there are now Transition Towns in Tooting, Wandsworth, Kingston and Putney, as well as Wimbledon. There is even a Transition Town Ambridge, for followers of 'The Archers'.

So far, Transition Town Wimbledon (TTW) has formed a Food Group to set up com-

munity gardens and help people grow their own food. It looks at ideas like mapping fruit trees in the area and helping people reduce their heating bills.

TTW is also working with the Ricards Lodge School Art Club on a project to use recycled material and is helping the school set up a garden and pond, to provide peaceful outdoor activity for students and a resource for Food Technology and Science departments.

• If you'd like to help out at Christ Church Community Garden contact the TTW at wimbledonfoodgroup@gmail.com or phone Joyce Pountain on 020 8946 3750.

FINANCIALS 2010

Sufficient or Insufficient?

Chris Montagnon, Chairman of the Finance Committee, on how our finances are not all they seem

Last year our income at £187,000 exceeded our costs of £153,000 to give an operating surplus of £34,000. (In the previous year the surplus was only £3,000).

This apparent good news may not be all it seems. An unexpected legacy of £17,000 was the main reason our income increased: not something that happens every year!

Our planned giving did increase: up to £80,000 from £72,000, so last year each of us on average gave Christ Church about one pound per day. Our collections at services

were down by over £15,000 from the previous year (which was of course our sesquicentenary) but this means we are giving less to our designated charities.

The church hall lettings were up by nearly £4,000 to just under £23,000 and this year costs were down so the Church Hall generated net funds of some £7,000 in part due to there being no major repairs carried out as we wait to decide what we will do with the Hall.

The good news in our costs is that we did not have any big repair bills either for the hall or the

church: we spent just over £3,000 on this in 2010 versus nearly £10,000 the previous year.

Every year we have to contribute to the diocese which uses this money to pay the salaries of all the priests in the diocese. Our contribution this year was £91,000, some £2,000 more than in 2009. Our other costs in the ongoing running of the church were well controlled and remained roughly the same as the year before.

So without the legacy and if our repair bills had been a bit more like normal our income would have been just over £10,000 more than our costs. That is good news but it is not enough to cover the £14,000 that we need to save every year for the long term cost of replacing the organ and dealing with very large repairs to the church such as the roof.

Our budget plan for this year includes funding the new lighting system for which we need some £15,000 more than we have already. This aside we have not planned for any real increase in planned giving and all our costs may well rise a bit: our contribution to the diocese is going up by £2,000. So our budget plan is to break even, which would mean not putting aside any of the annual £14,000 referred to above.

So sufficient or not? In the short term we are paying our way but the longer term would not be good if we had some big repair bills. Please keep giving!

Christ Church Funds

At 31 December 2010 the PCC had funds of £764,000. The bulk of these funds have arisen from the generosity of previous parishioners who paid for the Church Hall and also for properties used by previous curates and vergers. The latter properties were sold some time ago and the sale proceeds were put into investments.

The actual value of Christ Church's funds are much greater because the PCC also owns the land on which the Church Hall stands, which has not been included in the accounts.

Charity law dictates that the majority of the PCC's funds are tied up and the capital cannot be touched. However, the figure of £764,000 also includes £216,000 which is at the disposal of the PCC and has been put aside to help meet future maintenance costs of the Church which are expected to be substantial.

The PCC earns income on these funds (both investment income and net surplus on Hall lettings after related expenditure), which in total amounted to £24,000 in 2010. This income can be (and is) used to meet general PCC expenditure.

| Summarised income statement | 2010 | 2009 |
|---|-------------------|------------|
| Income | £187,000 | £174,000 |
| Expenditure | (£153,000) | (£171,000) |
| Operating surplus (before gains/losses on investments) | £34,000 | £3,000 |
| Less (Savings for long term costs) | (£14,000) | (£14,000) |
| Net Resultant Surplus (Deficit) | £20,000 | (£11,000) |



Covenant...

Or Chaos



View from the Pews

Coalitions, as we know, are convenient rather than coherent. Born of historical circumstance, shared self-interest and practical necessity, they need the oxygen of mutual regard and common purpose to thrive, while retaining a degree of separate identity and healthy distance between partners.

The Church of England is a coalition forged by similar forces around three equal elements of scripture, tradition and reason. While evangelical Anglicans have relied upon sola scriptura and 'catholic' Anglicans have looked to tradition for their liturgy, the centre ground has been held and governed with a steely liberalism by those who value reasoned interpretation of both and believe a balance between them to be the defining genius of Anglicanism.

This via media appears to most as happy compromise or engaging fudge. The result is attractive, distinctive and workable. Even better, most would agree that God has used it powerfully. The Almighty has a sense of humour.

The Anglican Communion, the world-wide face of Anglicanism

and the direct and indirect offspring of the Church of England is something else. It is a loose relationship without a common confessional statement. Its foundational structures are often traduced or ignored by its members. It is ravaged by sub-Christian bickering about colonialism, sexuality and biblicism and smitten by exclusions and lawsuits.

Yet in its many localities Anglicanism is cherished from the mitres at the top, to the boots on the ground, but unfortunately not for the same reasons. A chasm has opened up between the national churches of America, upholding, as they see it, progressive Western Christian belief and practice, and the churches of the South, numerically far more significant, who regard this liberalism as undoctrinal, deeply decadent and offensive to their conservative congregations.

In previous generations such differences of outlook were masked by distance and cultural ignorance. Today the consecration of a lesbian bishop in Los Angeles makes immediate headlines in Lagos.

Historically such discord between indigenous churches has been par for the course, but it remains a scandal to our faith and

witness and a huge distraction to our Christian mission.

We need a measure of agreement. For God's sake and basic Christian bonds of affection we have to learn how to nurture some common understandings and to resolve and live with differences. For the Church of England, below the familiar and customary norms of conduct and liturgy, there are the sturdy structures of canon law, unseen until the unwary stub their toes against them.

For the Anglican Communion there is no equivalent. While the Church of Rome has a monolithic centralised structure, all national Anglican churches are proudly autonomous. Collective undertakings have been voluntary; collective discipline has not been on the agenda.

So what can be done? For over five years schemes to provide a survival kit for the Communion have been debated, defined and redefined. The result is the Covenant recently adopted by all three houses in our General Synod. It will also be discussed shortly by all C of E diocesan synods.

From the start the Covenant has been the work of Rowan Williams, the Archbishop of Canterbury. He saw from the outset that the conflict,

the strident rhetoric and lofty indifference, the actions of separation, would have irreparable consequences for Anglican churches. Although urged to set up mechanisms of control, he established groups to explore 'a wholly consultative approach to deciding contentious matters'. He envisaged a diversity within Anglicanism which was limited by consent based on a serious common assessment of local change – a forbearance in love.

The text of the Covenant has been repeatedly altered to encompass the various shades of opinion and the first three sections have enjoyed qualified approval from many commentators. They set out with new clarity what the Anglican Communion is and aims to be. It spells out the interdependence of communion and autonomy and the mutual expectations of churches regarding faith, mission and order.

However, the content of the fourth section, blandly entitled, 'Our Covenanted Life Together' will ensure that it will be rejected by those very churches it aims to bind together. Why this should be and what it means must be material for another article.

Colin Holloway

Christendom V Christianity

Wide-angle View

The 19th century Christian philosopher Soren Kierkegaard made a telling distinction between Christianity and Christendom. The latter is the world of institutional religion - the churches and traditions developed over the centuries. The former is the living faith inspired by the story and example of Jesus Christ. They ought to be identical; as we know all too well, the gap is vast. History shows the melancholy truth that people calling themselves Christians have often been among the best evidence for Original Sin.

Kierkegaard's distinction is used by many modern Christian thinkers. The theologian Stanley Hauerwas likes to call himself a 'pre-Constantinian' Christian, since the split between the essential faith and the institutional religion began in his view with the Roman Emperor Constantine's conversion to Christianity and the association of empire with the faith. Thereafter the churches were dangerously

entwined with political power and the temptations of Mammon. The liberal Christian think-tank Ekklesia echoes this view: it's been downhill all the way since the 4th century AD.

There is a good book that needs to be written called 'Jesus against Religion'. Plenty of times in the Gospels Jesus is found undermining the representatives of organised religion. He is a scandalous figure, insisting on the spirit of the Hebrew Law and offering sharp rebukes to those who only know the letter. This has been a warning to the churches ever since - and it has often gone unheeded.

There is another good book to be produced on what I think we can call the Forgetting of Jesus by Christians. Many evangelical 'conservatives' talk a lot about the need to follow the authority of scripture, but don't cite Jesus as they do it. A minority of noisy Christians seems convinced that the Bible has supreme authority and must be taken as literal truth in all respects. All this has little or nothing to do with the messages of

the Gospels, for the good reason that you can't quote Jesus in support of militant homophobia or other obsessions of the so-called 'religious right' around the world. (One can go further: as Revd Nick Holtam of St Martin's-in-the-Fields church has argued, there is surely something idolatrous and heretical about assigning supreme authority to the Bible, and thus not to God and Christ.)

The forgetting of Jesus is part and parcel of the elevation of Christendom - the interests of institutions and factions - above Christianity, the living faith. It has consequences: first, the divorce of the churches from the society they must communicate with if mission is to make sense; and second, the split of the churches from the essentials of Christianity.

Last year's British Social Attitudes Survey reported that just 50% of respondents described themselves as Christian - down from 66% in 1983. The end of the Christian majority in the UK is in sight: a massive failure of mission and cultural transmission over two to three generations.

The internal rows and moral crises of the churches in recent years have surely contributed to the decline in the cultural presence and force of our faith. Gandhi said, 'I like your Christ, but not so much your Christians'. If Christians forget Christ and focus instead on who gets to set the rules of Chris-



tendom, they should not be surprised if ever more people agree with Gandhi.

One aspect of the disconnection between Christendom and Christianity is apparent now in the failure of many in the churches to see how far Christian values now permeate modern society in 'secular' guise. There is much of Christianity in modern secular doctrines of human rights and equality. There have been several legal cases brought by 'conservative' evangelical bodies wanting the right to exemption from equalities law so that they might exclude gay people from receiving particular services. All have been thrown out, often by devout Christian judges.

Being on the wrong side of the arguments over equal rights for women and gay people is a consequence of taking the values of inherited Christendom as supreme, and not seeing that the universalist spirit of Christianity as modelled by Jesus might be expressed better at times by non-Christians than by soi-disant believers. If we paid attention to the Gospel of Christ, we'd see that this is not something Jesus would have been surprised about..

Ian Christie

A Tribute To Those Who Contribute To The Life Of Christ Church

Extracts from the Vicar's Report to APCM 2011

Once more our Church Wardens, Mark and Sharon have been terrifically supportive of the life and work of the church over last year. Both have significant commitments beyond the life of the church and so are busy for most of the time. We are very grateful for the sacrifices and contribution they both make here.

Thanks also to every member of the PCC. Plenty of clergy dread their meetings with the PCC. I pity them because I very much enjoy meeting with the PCC. Sometimes ministry can be a rather lonely experience and the opportunity to share in a real sense of doing things together is a blessing. It is to the PCC's credit that this sense of a shared ministry is deeply embedded in all that we do here and that it never feels like a battle!

Martin Evans and Brenda Clarke

have stepped down from the PCC after having served for two three year terms. They get at least one year's break and we thank them very much. Also this evening we elect a new cohort of Deanery Synod reps. We express our particular gratitude to John Wilson, Jenny Tomlinson and Lynda Coleman, now released from Deanery Synod. All have given distinguished service.

I'd like to pay tribute to Heather Field for her generosity in continuing to co-ordinate the Bruno Bear Club even though she moved to Epsom about two years ago! She is now on the verge of handing over to new co-ordinators and so I'd like to say how appreciative we are that this important work has been sustained by Heather long after we might have expected her to end her involvement.

As another year turns, so once more I need to thank Sara in the parish office. Sara is a crucial part of the effectiveness of our church

community and we are very grateful indeed for her efficient and dedicated stewardship of the parish office. Last year I was very happy to welcome Irene to her new role of Director of Music. Irene has found her feet this year and is now in a position to think of ways in which music at Christ Church can be developed. Grace Tapping continues to be a 'pillar' of the church – though not a very tall one! She's rock solid and we're very grateful for her endless commitment, kindness and hard work.

I'd like, this year, to thank three other groups of people. Again and again, I hear how 'good' Christ Church feels. Three groups of people that I think contribute enormously to the way church 'feels' to people are the Stewards, the Pastoral Team and the Cleaners. All are essential tasks, all are done incredibly well and we all benefit from the ministry of those

who welcome, tidy up after and care for those who worship here.

Once again we have welcomed new people to church and are of course delighted to do so. Once again we have had to say goodbye. This year we have lost our good friends Richard Thurgood, Monica Brown and Doreen Howell. In their own special way, each has given so much and we miss them. That said, imagine the joy at the party in heaven as three new Christ Church guests arrive.

Finally and joyfully, our new high altar kneeler was completed and the last element of our 150th birthday celebrations was laid down at our Patronal Festival (only 14 months after the end of our celebratory year!) Thanks to all the stitchers co-ordinated by Wendy Hamilton. My thanks also to all the others who contribute so much to church life, and who help make Christ Church so very special.





Social Side

Dee Babar on our church's busy social calendar

The enthusiasm the congregation of Christ Church feel towards **Robbie Burns** was manifest on Saturday 5 February when we held a supper to celebrate the life and works of the Scottish poet. Haggis, whisky tasting, poetry recitals, bagpipes and Scottish dancing all featured during the evening in the Church Hall which had been given a suitably tartan trimming. The fact that the **Jigsaw Players** were recording a concert in the church that evening necessitated some careful coordination to ensure bagpipe music didn't infiltrate their Brahms and Strauss!

By popular demand we held another **Quiz Night Supper** on Saturday 7 May. Attended by over 70 people, it was a thoroughly enjoyable evening of competitively-edged fun, accompanied by a delicious chilli con carne.

On Sunday 12 June there will be an **Open Gardens** event where we shall have the chance to visit some of our congregation's more picturesque and carefully tended gardens. The afternoon will culminate with tea and home made cakes in Celia Berwick's delightful garden.

Looking further ahead, we will be holding an **Auction of Promises** on Sunday 4 September to raise money for the church lighting appeal. We last held an auction in May 2008 when the promises ranged from airport transfers, baby sitting and cookery demonstrations to the use of holiday homes and hedge cutting! This year's auction will be held in the Church Hall around midday, when a light lunch with wine and soft drinks will be served. We do hope that this event will be keenly supported both by those offering their promises and those bidding enthusiastically and generously for what has been promised.

Eaine Chester has offered to hold another **Wreath Making Workshop** in September, as a result of the great success of last December's evening. If anyone has any suggestions for forthcoming social events please contact me or one of the Social and Fund Raising Committee members.

Burn's Night is always a popular event in Christ Church's social calendar

