

ANNUAL REPORT 2019-20

ST JOHN'S, HURST GREEN



**Diocese of Southwark
Archdeaconry of Reigate
Deanery of Tandridge
Parish of St John the Evangelist Hurst Green**

st John's
HURST GREEN

Rector's Report

2020 is proving a very strange year for everyone. However, this report is concerned with 2019 and as you read you'll be reminded of all the things we do and are as 'church' in normal times. However, 2019 was a strange year for me too which had a big impact on all of you.

After being licensed as Team Rector a few days later I found myself in the Intensive Care Unit of St Bart's Hospital following a near fatal cardiac arrest.

What do this year and last year have in common? As I reflect it is an overwhelming surge of love and compassion experienced by me personally in 2019 and more generally in our community as the COVID crisis unfolded.



So I would like to say a personal thank you for just how loved I felt in the summer of 2019. It started with a wonderful celebration at St Peter's as I became Team Rector but it grew more intense as my family and I received so many heartfelt messages, gifts and acts of kindness in the days

and weeks that followed my illness. It demonstrated to me what church is at its best: the body of Christ, compassionate and overflowing with God's love, alive and active in people's lives today. Thank you too for keeping this spirit at St John's alive in my absence. Then, when trouble hit again for all of us in 2020, the same thing happened. As a team of churches we connected more with each other and in different ways reached out beyond the building to love our neighbours (or receive that love from those around us) more fully than we ever had before.

So what do we learn from this? In times of suffering and crisis Jesus ministers to us through his people. Despite a situation being dreadful, somehow things are redeemed. What might be terribly negative can somehow become hugely positive. The many, many messages of personal

thanks for the online services during Lockdown and the comfort they brought demonstrated this to me too.

In normal times life is very busy. Church life is no exception as you'll see from this report. However times of crisis stop us short to realise that we can clear out the unnecessary weeds of our busyness so that the flowers of peace, healing and compassion can grow. It's a bit like the story of Martha and Mary. Martha was always busy but Mary took time to sit at the feet of Jesus where she would be fed and sustained ready to face her brother's death and Jesus' death which would follow. Jesus suggests we too choose this 'greater part', rest with him, receive his love and sustaining spirit to keep us going through the downs and ups of life. That's certainly something I learnt the hard way during my enforced rest of 2019 and something many of us learned through Lockdown.

As we look ahead, I hope and pray as a church community we'll continue to rest at Jesus' feet and receive his healing, hope and compassion both for ourselves and for those around us.

Revd Canon Anna Eltringham, Rector, Oxted Team

Assistant Clergy Report

It is very nice not to be put on the scrap heap when one retires! We three retired clergy who live in this parish are blessed to have our offering of continued service accepted, welcomed and encouraged.

Mary Seller: I continue to contribute to Sunday worship, and fill in at other times when Anna is away. However, I do opt out of the modern styles of worship, as I feel totally unsuited to it. I enjoy helping with occasional services, pastoral matters, visiting members of our congregation at home and in hospital. My great joy is an 'end of life ministry', through which I conducted 24 funerals, and interred the cremated remains of 14 individuals in our Memorial Garden during the year. I am also able to do other little jobs that I enjoy such as the PCC photograph display in the church porch and overseeing the tidying and maintenance of the church grounds. All this leads to a richly busy life; some days I work as long and as hard as when I was actually in full-time employment, but I love every moment of it!

Charles Bradshaw: I very much enjoyed being a parish priest and still miss sharing in the lives of people at critical times. Retirement offers a different ministry. I especially enjoy preaching and I am pleased to be able

to do this largely across the Deanery. It gives me a chance to see how other churches are developing, and a feel about where they are going. I tend to be invited to take services at Crowhurst which is a joy. Its congregation is small, but very loyal and supportive.

Neville Jacobs: With many years in a longish life, I have been immersed in a range of Anglican parishes. Over the last couple of years I have volunteered at Windmill Manor Dementia Care Home and taken the short service of Home Communion at David Gresham House on a Sunday every few weeks. I count myself fortunate that in the last twenty years of my retirement, I have ended up as part of the family of St John's. St John's is a particularly friendly and caring church in my experience, and we can be thankful, under God, that we have together enjoyed so much of His grace.

Revd Prof Mary Seller, Assistant Priest

Churchwardens' Report

2019 is a year that we are not likely to forget in a hurry (and we suspect that will apply to 2020 too!). It started well as the familiar rhythms of post-Christmas, Lent, Easter, Trinity got underway. In May, we celebrated the 25th anniversary of Mary's ordination to the priesthood and she was



presented with a purple stole which Hilary Dilnot had embroidered with flowers. A tea party attended by over 80 people was also held to mark the occasion. Another happy event took place at the end of June when many of us attended the Collation and Induction of Anna Eltringham as the Team

Rector of the Oxted Team Ministry; we're delighted how this brought attention to the links between the four Oxted Team churches and has resulted in increased interaction.

And just five days later, we were all reeling from the news that Anna had been taken very seriously ill and was in hospital following a cardiac arrest. Testing times for Anna, her family and for our church family as we held her in our prayers. We found ourselves in a quasi-interregnum and had to quickly learn how to ensure services continued, PCC meetings were chaired and a whole host of over things. Over the coming months, we

drew on the support of many of our congregation and, of course, Mary who played such a big role in running the services. Anna returned to us in time for Harvest, a joyous service - not least because of the 41 children in attendance!

One of our biggest projects in 2019 was "Let There be Light" for which we needed to raise £25,000 to pay for a replacement LED lighting system for the church as the existing system was out of date and non-sustainable. At the start, we had no idea how we were going to meet this target, but somehow this captured everyone's imagination and through a number of grants, donations, and fundraising events we hit the target in just over six months. We remain incredibly grateful to everyone who helped.

2019 was a full and varied year and we would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone who does so much work on behalf of St John's. Not only Anna, Mary, Charles, Wendy and Monica but the unsung helpers who stand on the PCC, look after our church admin and finances, clean, arrange flowers, provide us with beautiful music, provide refreshments, prepare the church for services, look after the grounds, fundraise, the servers, the crucifers, the sidespersons, the intercessors and many more. Thank you for all that you do.

Cathy Booth and Chris Johns, Churchwardens

Lay Ministers' Report

Monica Fenton has been a Southwark Pastoral Auxiliary (SPA) since July 1994. Wendy Hewitt was licensed as Lay Reader in Autumn 2018. Their roles are different in so far as Wendy is commissioned to preach, teach and take non-Eucharistic services at St John's or other parishes. Monica's role is of a pastoral nature, as indicated in the title SPA.

Looking Back: Since the last APCM Wendy has led Morning Prayer one Sunday a month at Blindley Heath; taken services at Windmill Manor and run Rhyme Time with Mums and Toddlers. The residents



enjoy interacting with children. She visited Wolfe House fortnightly and volunteered at Croydon University Hospital, singing to stroke patients. She helped at St John's during visits of local schoolchildren.

Looking Back: Since the last APCM Monica has continued making pastoral visits in the parish, being sure to be aware of any needs amongst the sick, the lonely or any situation of concern that she hears about. A listening ear proves very welcome to those she calls upon. She is a lay chaplain at East Surrey Hospital, which she visits once a week, always visiting the cardiac care ward, but also visiting anyone from the parish who happens to be in hospital. During the past year she offered support to those who attended ‘Time to Remember’ gatherings some Saturday mornings, where people mourn and give thanks for those who have died. Bereavement support is an area for which she is particularly trained.

Churches Together in Oxted and District (CTOD): CTOD activities feature for both Wendy and Monica. Wendy was involved in CTOD activities such as 5th Sunday services, Walk of Witness, sharing best practice at the council latterly concerning work with lonely older people.

Looking forward: Frustration has crept in for both of them since the beginning of lockdown and all activities have been curtailed, with no definite signs of being able to continue with their work in the foreseeable future. It has made looking forward difficult, since not being in touch for virtually six months with people in their field of work, means new possibilities are not coming to the fore. However, both are hopeful that their work can and will continue and new ideas become fruitful. Not being able to share ideas and talk them through face to face has been a negative, but praying for God’s guidance we believe something positive will surely emerge to inspire.

Monica Fenton and Wendy Hewitt

Finances

Headlines for 2019

Total Income was £165K, (£148K in 2018), comprising:-

- a) £49K for Restricted / Designated purposes: £18K from St Agatha’s bookings, £29K for “Let there be Light” campaign, and £2K investment income, including the Win Marnell Fund.
- b) £116K for general purposes: £90K from regular giving and services, £17K other donations (incl. for use of church and rooms) and fundraising, £5K from HG News advertising, and £4K for weddings, funerals and baptisms.

Total expenditure was £151K, (£149K in 2018), comprising:-

- a) £35K for Restricted / Designated purposes: £6K for St Agatha's running expenses, £23K for the lighting renewal, and £6K on other restricted purposes associated with grants and legacies.
- b) £116K for general purposes: £63K for Diocesan Pledge to Southwark Parish Support Fund, £18K on payroll, £1K on Mission donations, £26K on other church running costs, and £8K on HGN printing costs, finance costs and other subs and fees.

Therefore, overall we made a surplus of £14K, being:-

- a) £14,405 Surplus on Restricted / Designated: £6,449 on St Agatha's, £1,312 growth in Win Marnell investments, and £6,644 on other grants and campaigns.
- b) £246 surplus on the general work of the church.

Our net assets at the end of 2019 were £113K, comprising £58K in current accounts, £42K on deposit, £8K investments and £5K in timing adjustments in amounts receivable and payable. This was represented by £63K in Restricted / Designated funds and £50K unrestricted.

Acknowledgements

I took over as Honorary Treasurer in 2019 and wish to thank Ian Wilks and John Mills for remaining as my assistants for the remainder of 2019 and ensuring a smooth transition.

I wish also to thank Kate Reynolds and welcome Alison Richardson as St Agatha's Treasurer since the start of 2020.

And many thanks to Stephanie Foster for administering our Regular Giving and reclaiming Gift Aid.

And finally, a big thankyou to Anthony Cock for his hard work and many years of service as Independent Examiner. He stood down after the 2019 accounts were finalised and I now propose Barbara Forrest, who has kindly agreed to replace him.

Looking forward to 2020

2020 has brought us challenges, and the Finance Committee (Julian, Anna, Mary, Cathy, Chris, Alison, Stephanie and Henk) has been meeting virtually on a more regular basis to steer us financially through these difficult times, helped by a new expense, donor and finance system that has streamlined processes and provides a greater level of information for decision-making.

You may have seen or used the new card readerplates for contactless donations, very fortuitous in these Covid-restriction times.

Income

The Covid-19 lock-down has caused a sharp loss of income as we have been unable to hire out St Agatha's, the church and rooms for most of 2020. I am extremely grateful to Standing Order givers who have maintained or even increased their donations, and acknowledge the extreme generosity of a few individuals who have helped mitigate the declines in other donations.

The overall result is a decline in income of around £4K per month, offset by £1K monthly while employee Furlough was in operation. To allow us to plan and continue our work, I strongly urge you to sign up to **Parish Giving Scheme**. Think of this a replacement for Stewardship envelopes and Standing Orders – more details coming soon!

Expenses

Fabric work for 2020 includes £14K for St Agatha's toilets and renovations, which was unavoidable as committed before the pandemic, and the PCC has budgeted £10K on repairs to the roofs of the Lady Chapel, York and St John's Rooms.

We also welcome our new curate Lotwina Farodoye and her family. While we do not pay her salary directly, St John's share of her housing costs will be £5K p.a.

Julian Taylor, Treasurer

Summary Accounts for PCC of St John's for the year ended 31 December 2019

		Unrestricted Funds		Restricted/ Designated Funds		TOTAL FUNDS	
		2019	2018	2019	2018	2019	2018
Income	Note						
Regular giving, services' collections, Gift Aid	2	89,574		-		118,786	104,096
Other donations, grants & fundraising	3	16,892		29,212		16,892	18,404
Hurst Green News		5,537		18,487		24,024	19,470
PCC share of wedding & funerals		3,972		-		3,972	5,219
Investment Income		-		1,816		1,816	365
Total Income		£115,975		£49,515		£165,490	£147,554
Expenditure							
Misson donations		1,357		-		1,357	2,171
Printing, finance charges, subs & fees		8,374		-		8,374	7,724
Diocesan Pledge, payroll, all other expenses	4	105,998		35,110		141,108	139,554
Total Expenditure		£115,729		£35,110		£150,839	£149,449
Balances brought forward 1st January, 2019		(21,147)		119,206		98,059	99,954
Net Surplus / (Deficit)		246		14,405		14,651	(1,895)
Reclassification of Reserves	5	70,306		(70,306)		-	-
Balances at 31 December 2019		£49,405		£63,305		£112,710	£98,059

Notes	Unrestricted	Restricted/ Designated			
1 The accounts were examined and found satisfactory by independent examiner Anthony Cook on 11 February 2020.					
2 Breakdown of Regular giving income, etc:-					
Regular Donors & Stewardship Scheme	71,413				
Gift Aid	13,502				
Collections	4,659				
3 Breakdown of Grants and Fundraising:-					
Donations and Grants	7,595	Let there be Light' & other Donations	27,962		
Donations re York Rooms	2,190	Legacy	1,250		
Fund Raising Events	6,186	Grants	-		
Sundry Income	921				
4 Breakdown of other expenditure:-					
Diocesan Pledge	62,540	'Let there be Light' Project	22,785		
Church Payroll expenses	14,092	St Agatha's Personnel expenses	4,176		
Repairs and Maintenance	7,315	St Agatha's Other expenses	6,937		
Church Insurance	5,177	St Agatha's Insurance	925		
Other running expenses	16,874	Other expenses incl. W Marnell flowe	287		
5 The Reclassification of reserves was to remove the accumulated deficit on the General Fund, so that now the Reserves correspond to the Restricted and Designated funds total. As part of this, it was agreed that St Agatha's transfer £15K to the CoIE CBF account, carried out in Mar 2020.					
A full set of accounts may be downloaded from:	https://www.stjohnshurstsgreen.org.uk/content/pages/documents/1596880647.pdf				

Formalities

The Parochial Church Council (PCC)

The current 16 PCC members consist of clergy, churchwardens, Reader, Southwark Pastoral Auxiliary, Deanery Synod representatives and elected members. There are six evening meetings a year and the day of the week is varied.

The PCC is the legal governing body of a parish and, together with the Rector, makes decisions on every aspect of church life: mission, worship, children and youth, finances, buildings and grounds.

In May 2019 the new PCC decided to revert to a separate meeting this year for the APCM rather than it being incorporated into the Parish Eucharist, as in 2018 and 2019.

When Anna was suddenly taken seriously ill at the beginning of July, soon after her induction service as Team Rector, a very challenging time followed, both emotionally and practically. We found ourselves doing unfamiliar things at short notice, discovering just how much Anna was involved in. Many events were cancelled or postponed but PCC meetings continued, chaired by the churchwardens. Anna was able to attend the meeting in November and to chair again in January.

The appointment of an Oxted Team Curate was one of the most exciting decisions this year, agreed by all four PCCs. Lotwina Farodoye has already had an impact and will be a very welcome addition to the PCC, a fresh voice as we navigate our way through a very different world. If you would like to join us, do consider standing; this year there are four 3-year and three one-year vacancies. Meetings are likely to be via Zoom in the immediate future, so in the comfort of your own home!

Electoral Roll

In 2019 the Electoral Roll was completely renewed and a figure of 133 was reported at the APCM. This had risen to 141 by March 2020 and an update will be given at this year's APCM.

Tandridge Deanery Synod

A Deanery is a group of Church of England parishes in a geographical area, in this case the area covered by Tandridge District Council in the most rural part of Southwark Diocese.

Deanery Synods, the formal meetings of a Deanery, form a link between parishes, the Diocese and wider church. They provide a channel for

sharing information and new developments, with presentations and visiting speakers. This year Gabby Parikh, Southwark Head of Parish Giving, spoke about the Parish Giving Scheme, recently launched by the Diocese, offering an effective donation management system for parishes. St John's Treasurer attended the meeting and plans to adopt the scheme.

There are usually three meetings a year, in February, June and October, in one of the churches in the Deanery. Members (currently 90) include all licensed clergy and lay people elected at annual parish meetings.

This year there are four 3-year vacancies for Deanery Synod representatives who automatically then become PCC members. The Deanery Synod provides the chance to become part of something bigger; to learn from and support other parishes facing similar (and different) joys and challenges. Please speak to one of the current St John's representatives to find out more: Janet Fearn, Janet Harman or John Mills.

Janet Harman, PCC Secretary

Legalities

Safeguarding

The Church of England has recently updated safeguarding procedures, and these can be found on their website - *Promoting a Safer Church*. The Southwark diocesan requirements have also been updated and can be accessed at <http://southwark.anglican.org/safeguarding/diocesan-policies-and-procedures> They cover everything from adult/children ratios in groups, taking and publishing of photographs, templates for use with children's activities and outings etc and everything you might need to know for safeguarding children and vulnerable adults. A new hard copy of this document can also be found at the back of church.

Safeguarding officers from the Oxted Team ministry have held a number of meetings to discuss how we put the guidelines into practice. These have proved very helpful and particularly beneficial in dealing with the new safeguarding policies, procedures required for hall bookings, web pages and streamlining and simplifying the process of recruiting new volunteers.

We shall continue to encourage those who are required to undergo online safeguarding training to complete this. In addition, we will endeavour to make the congregation and other users of the church aware of all safeguarding procedures and best practice.

Sue Fox and Cathy Hyde, Parish Safeguarding Officers

Health and Safety

Our Health and Safety Policy is available in the church porch and in St Agatha's Hall. We have had no accidents in the last year and we carry out regular inspections to check the building is safe. Risk assessments are carried out for all one-off activities and events.

If you notice anything which looks unsafe, please let us know so we can put it right.

Cathy Booth, Health and Safety Officer

HR

In 2019, we formalised a number of employment arrangements and issued contracts which affords better protection both for the employee and the PCC of St John's. In early 2020, Rachel Wilks stood down as the York Rooms booking co-ordinator having held this post for some time, and we thank her for all her hard work. Her replacement, which will be combined with the St Agatha's Hall role will be appointed when it is permissible to hire the rooms again.

As at the end of 2019, we had six employees – Parish Administrator / HGN, Communications Officer (mainly grant funded), York Rooms Booking Co-ordinator, St Agatha's Hall booking Co-ordinator, Director of Music and Youth Choir Leader (entirely grant funded). All other posts are voluntary and are not paid.

Cathy Booth, Churchwarden

Assets and Maintenance

Church Rooms

We continued hiring out St John's Room on a commercial basis and allowing the use of the York Rooms on a donation basis. The York Rooms were well used during 2019, continuing to support the life of the church, including their use during the celebration in May of Mary Seller's 25 years as a Priest. After



March 2020 we were able to hire them out commercially and Monica Fenton continued to lead a work group to consider what needed to be done in preparation for that; one result was the installation of Wi-Fi. At the end of the year a new Committee, led by Barbara Richards, was formed to oversee the future running of the York Rooms once we are able to let them commercially and St John's Room. Many thanks to Rachel Wilks for her work in organising the rooms.

St Agatha's Hall

2019 was a year of mixed success for Aggies in which a healthy profit was generated and the kitchen was refurbished with help from a grant from Oxted Parish Council and a kind donation from an anonymous donor. This resulted in a new fridge, freezer and cooker hood. The old gas water heater was replaced with an electric one in the Ladies and the old-fashioned murals were over-painted cream thereby brightening up the hall. We sadly said goodbye to our Treasurer, Kate Reynolds, with our thanks for her hard work over 5 years and we have been fortunate to replace her with Alison Richardson who took up the role at the end of 2019.

The downside of 2019 is that we unfortunately suffered some vandalism at Easter with the side windows and glass panel in the door needing replacing. We also parted with 2 booking secretaries but, looking on the positive side, the website is now much more efficient and the booking system is more user-friendly and up to date. This will enable us to fulfil our community role more effectively in years to come. With many thanks to Cathy Hyde for her organisational help.



Church grounds

The church grounds are extensive, and take a lot of work to maintain and keep looking tidy. We employ a gardener to do the most arduous work of grass cutting, tending the Memorial Garden and trimming hedges. We would prefer it if volunteers would take on these regular jobs to save us money, but few are forthcoming. An additional expense during the year was the need for a tree surgeon to fell a dead sycamore, a nearby diseased one and several dangerous overhanging branches; all bordering the memorial garden. We are extremely grateful to volunteers who take on specific areas: Brenda Batchelor looks after the north side; Sue Fox, the rose bed; Joan

Brackpool, the pots by the main door; Barbara Richards, the shrub bed above the Memorial Garden; Mary Seller, the flower bed opposite the church door; and the November Saturday ad hoc leaf clearing team. We are glad that so many visit the Memorial Garden and enjoy the peace and beauty of the church grounds. Many thanks to Mary Seller for her organisational role.

Cleaning

We are very grateful to those who have continued to clean the church throughout 2019, but as ever, we could always do with more volunteers! We also now have to think about a rota for the cleaning of the York Rooms, as we hope to let this space out in the near future. If you feel at all able to help with cleaning any area of the church, even for just a short period during the year, please let Sue Fox know. Thanks Sue!

Fabric

The church buildings required a fair bit of attention during the year. A major concern was the condition of the rendering on the outer wall of the York Rooms, where areas of the render had become badly discoloured and were peeling off the wall. Separately there was a small water leakage through the York Rooms ceiling; this increased during spells of heavy rain later in the year. After a site meeting with the contractor who had done the original rendering, and contacting the company that provided the render, it was agreed that there was a problem but neither could give an explanation. Eventually, after getting opinions from several roofing companies and the diocese architect, it is thought that the issue lies in the overly porous coping stones at the top of the wall. Remedying this is ongoing in 2020.

Rainwater ingress also occurred during periods of exceptionally heavy rain through the Lady Chapel roof (and, early in 2020, through the St John's Room ceiling!); inspection showed this to be because of cracks in the degraded lead roof (which was replaced in 2020).

The largest project of the year was replacing the main church light system with LED lights - the old halogen spotlights and down-lights that were fitted in the rafters above the nave had become unreliable with bulb-replacement difficult. The position of the new lights and installation of a new control panel gives us a much more adaptable and pleasing lighting capability, and the use of LED lights greatly reduces our electricity bill. Also, the emergency lights and illuminated exit signs in the main part of the church were replaced, so reducing our ongoing maintenance costs. Cathy Booth did a wonderful job liaising with the contractors in the planning and execution of the project.

During the year various routine inspections and servicing were arranged, including: PAT testing; the lightning protection system; boilers and heaters; fire alarm system; emergency lights; the Ezyglide sliding partition doors/walls, plus the five-yearly inspection of the church's fixed electrical system. Other jobs included having the gutters cleaned, adding more soil to, and re-seeding, part of the overflow car park and making its entrance clearer with yellow paint. Thanks to Sue Fox for doing a great job in using cloth ribbon to better demark the step between the chancel and nave and to another member of the congregation who, in memory of her father, replaced the much frayed St George's/Diocesan flag that flies from the flagpole. Then there were various odd jobs such as fixing door handles, replacing lightbulbs and re-setting the odd paving slab. There's always plenty to do, so volunteers to help are welcome!

Chris Johns, Churchwarden

Worship

Worship at St John's is varied from the reflective services of Holy Communion on a Wednesday and 8am on a Sunday; through our sung Eucharist at 9.30am every Sunday which joyfully involves upwards of 30 children and their families on the first Sunday of each month; to Cafe Church at 11am on the third Sunday where a different mix of people provide lively contemporary worship, wonderful crafts, creative prayers, coffee and croissants and a warm welcome to all.

There are also other special services during the year such as the poignant 'All Souls' service at the start of November where those who grieve light a candle, reflect and give thanks for a loved one who has died, followed closely by an accessible Remembrance Sunday service, always full to bursting with a myriad of people from the local community including many young people from uniformed organisations who enjoy getting involved.





Let's not forget the pastoral offices where we gather in the presence of God to offer a new life, a relationship or the soul of a loved one in worship, to God. In 2019 there were 27 baptisms, 4 weddings and 33 funerals.

In 2019, the Bishop of Croydon joined us for our Patronal festival on the 12th July (transferred from December). Revd Anna had just been taken ill and +Jonathan's pastoral oversight and heartfelt message of comfort and strong encouragement to all do what was needed to keep St John's going was gratefully received. Thank you to all the clergy from across the Deanery who helped lead services during this time too.

A variety of people bring our worship alive. During 2019 we have continued to appreciate amongst other things

- Hilary Dilnot's Musical Direction and great gifts on the piano and organ
- the adult choir, who swell in numbers at Christmas and Easter and provide a spectrum of musical styles
- the youth choir and their contribution to all age services and their joyful after-service concerts led by Sarah Belton
- the talented and upbeat cafe church band
- the quiet behind the scenes support of our sacristans led by Jane Smith
- intercessors and readers who bring God to us and us to God
- the flower arranging team who bring Creation indoors and add a colourful backdrop to our services.



On this last point, a highlight of 2019 was our first flower festival for a number of years. The organisation was led by Sue Farrell and there were 25 displays created by church flower arrangers and local people and groups. It took place just after Revd Anna was taken into hospital. The theme was 'Let there be Light' and it really brought God's light into a dark time.

Revd Canon Anna Eltringham, Rector, Oxted Team

Fellowship

2019 got off to a good start with a Candlemas dinner in the church. The church had been beautifully decorated with lights, candles and flowers and was a lovely setting for an event attended by over 100 people.



The men and ladies continued to meet separately for drinks in the first part of 2019 usually meeting at either the Diamond or the Haycutter. 9 or 10 ladies usually gathered, but the men's group regularly drew much bigger crowds!

In March, the first "community cinema" took place in the church where the film "Time Bandits" was shown.



A rogation walk took place in June at which about 20 people from across the Oxted Team walked through the four parishes. Some hardy people walked the entire route and some walked part of the way. There was worship, refreshment and enjoyable company – and the weather was kind too!

In July, we launched the "Let there be Light" fundraising campaign and we held a number of events which raised significant amounts of money. We started with a flower festival at which many local organisations participated, producing stunning, imaginative arrangements and the festival was very well attended with people coming from far and wide. In September, we held a Harvest Quiz night at Aggies which brought out the competitive spirit of the many members of the congregation and local people who attended. The wonderful catering team put on a lovely harvest supper and everyone had a good time. And in November, Hurst Green Singers held a Come and Sing event featuring the Faure Requiem in aid of church funds. Quite a few people from St John's sang and many others attended the performance.

There were some slideshows describing various holidays, again as fundraisers for the church. Sadly, we won't be seeing any of these in 2020!



And the Oxted Team held two Creation Evenings – one in Crowhurst which included cocktail making, flower arranging and fire lighting and a second at Tandridge with rag rug wreaths, felt wool sheep and night sky watching through a telescope.

Thanks to everyone who arranged and / or attended these events.

Cathy Booth, Churchwarden

Mission

'God's Mission' or Missio Dei is not something we do for our own interest or by our own motivation. It is a greater movement of the Holy Spirit in which we join. A few years ago we created a vision to help us:

'Welcome everyone, deepen faith, inspire action and share God's friendship and love'.

We are involved in the work of God's Spirit all the time. But there are some specific ways we have joined in during 2019:

- Schools - We have welcomed children from the local schools for visits and their Christmas and Easter services; have visited the schools for assemblies and faith related activities and supported them pastorally.
- Monthly Art Group enjoyed by a variety of local people and now ably run by Pearl Stevens
- Fortnightly 'Coffee and Chat' group, run by



Pearl Hobson, Diana Bush, Barbara Richards and Janet Bradshaw and particularly popular to those who live alone.

- YoYos baby and toddler group made possible by a great team of volunteers, well attended and described by some as the best group in the area, in particular the cake!
- The St Agatha's Coffee shop, continued during 2019 has now come to a natural end after 25 years. Thanks to all who made it possible for that long!

- Hurst Green News, delivered to 2,800 households each month, provides information about local churches, events and advertisers. Thank you to all who deliver, fold the newsletter, write articles and the committee. Articles always welcome!



- Food Bank - after Advent 2018 we continued a collection point for the East Grinstead Foodbank and are grateful to the Booths who make a weekly trip to the drop off point with bags of food for vulnerable families
- Fairtrade – Janet Fearn oversees the St John's fairtrade commitment and has organised some lovely events to raise awareness and sell fairtrade products.
- Charities - nearly £1400 was given to eight different charities in 2019. These included the Children's Society through a Christingle Service with Holland School; sponsoring Richard, a child in Ghana, through Action Aid (money raised by the Sunday School eg cake sales etc) and of course Christian Aid collections and fundraisers such as the 'Big Brekki' and 'Boys beer, darts and loud music evening' co-ordinated by Debby and Phil Harris and assisted by a number of 'invisible' volunteers.
- Community Cinema – attempted early 2019 for which grant money bought St John's a new projector and screen. There was a good atmosphere but we discovered licensing laws heavily restricted the films we were able to show.

- Tea and Hymns at St John's, attended by a variety of people including residents of David Gresham house and Wolfe House and Rhyme Time at Windmill Manor; a cheerful sing a long of childhood favourites for residents and local parents and toddlers, both led by our Reader, Wendy Hewitt

There is so much to be grateful for.

Revd Canon Anna Eltringham, Rector, Oxted Team

Discipleship and Pastoral Care



'Discipleship' means learning from Jesus how to follow him. At St John's, this starts young, when children who attend crèche, YoYos or enjoy the children's area at church are simply aware they are held in God's love.

Those baptised at St John's know this too. A Baptism Visitor usually attends the baptism and makes a connection between the family and St John's, following up afterwards with visits and anniversary cards (organised brilliantly by Monica Fenton our SPA working with a number of volunteers).

As they get older, infant aged children may attend 'Pebbles', then Rocks (junior age) where a great team of leaders, many with teaching backgrounds, creatively engage them in learning about Jesus which everyone delights in hearing about when they come back into the church service!

At the end of last year 19 children aged 7+ received their first Communion in the Candlemas service in February. They loved the preparation sessions, learned eagerly and prepared reverently for their special day when, in a packed church, they made this important next step after baptism on their journey of faith.

Thank you to Peter Langham who co-ordinates Sunday School and also 'Sunday Munch' which is a group once a month for children aged 10+ who explored all sorts of interesting topics last year including food banks, the impact of COVID on people's lives, coping with change and an occasional quiz.

As children reach their teens they understand better what Christian service means and assist in church with reading, serving at the altar, worship (singing and playing instruments) and welcoming. Some also enjoy fellowship with other teens at the Sunday Evening Oxted Team Youth Club (games and short talk and prayer based on a theme for the evening) and/or the Youth Group (a bible study, prayer and discussion group), both led by Mark Anderson.

At confirmation, some teens or adults chose to make a commitment to living a Christian life and are confirmed with the gift of the Holy Spirit by the bishop. In 2019 we did not prepare any for confirmation but plan to do so in 2020.

Then finally as adult disciples we are nurtured by teaching, preaching and worship. Mostly this is through our own personal devotions and Sunday Services whether traditional sermons or more interactive and discussion based at Cafe Church. There are also Lent study groups (Churches Together) which this year explored 'worship', or the 'Faith and Life' Lent talks which in 2019 and 2020 grappled with issues such as the ethics of genetics, Creation and Climate Change, dementia and the spirituality of ageing.

Finally, back to where we started, as we grow and deepen our faith, all is held in a spirit of love and care through the church and one another. Our Prayer Chain continues, organised by Diana Bush, where any personal

prayer requests are passed down a chain of 18 people who promise to pray confidentially for the needs of others. Then as well as the pastoral care undertaken by clergy and others (see earlier reports), the whole body of Christ care and pray for one another in various ways.

Thank you to everyone for making St John's a special place of nurture, growth, love and prayer.

Revd Canon Anna Eltringham, Rector, Oxted Team

office@stjhurstgreen.co.uk | 01883 712674 |
www.stjohnshurstgreen.org.uk

St John the Evangelist, Church Way, Hurst Green, Surrey, RH8 9EA
Charity No. 1133107