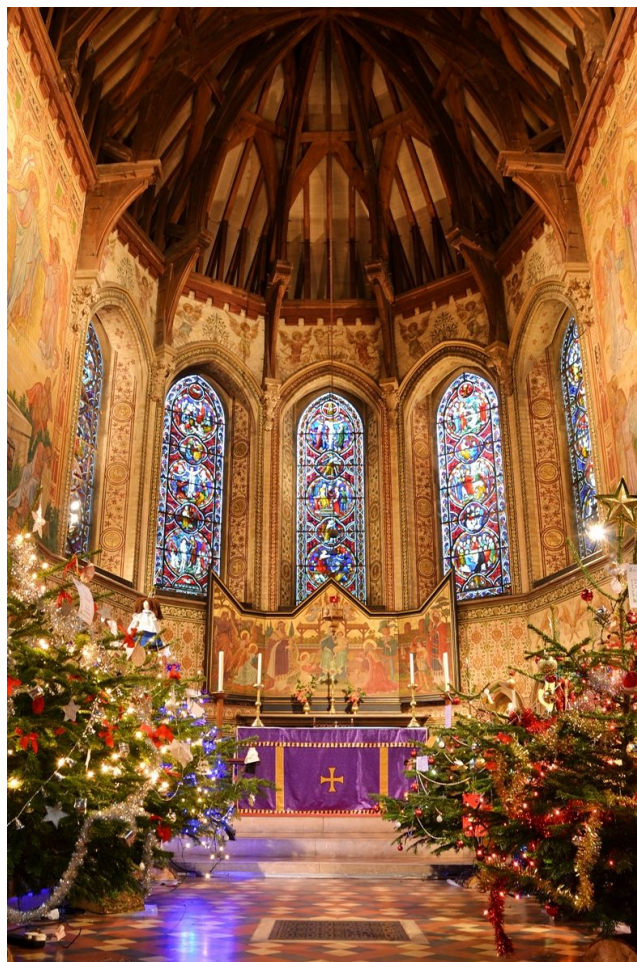


Christ Church Erith



Annual Reports

2021 - 2022

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Ministry Report

Since the Rev Monica Cameron left Christ Church has been in interregnum. Before leaving Rev. Monica arranged for Rev. Ann Norman to come out of retirement and return to help out. The Bishop gave Rev. Ann, a Distinctive Deacon, permission to conduct Communion by Extension for the duration of the Interregnum. She has also produced and led the Services for All Souls, the Carol Service and Crib Service and is working on the Orders of Services for Holy Week and Easter. She also liaises with the visiting priests.

Funmi Makanju, Christ Church's LLM and Anna Chaplain, led Services of the Word when Rev'd Monica was ill and is doing so again during Rev'd Ann's illness. Funmi assists in all other Services, shares the preaching and oversees the Funeral Ministry. This last year has not been an easy one for Funmi. Her father's increasing frailty and death has meant many visits to Nigeria, but she has continued with her ministry, including preparing sermons to deliver on her return and supporting members of the congregation. We continue to offer Funmi our love, prayers and support at this difficult time.

We are very grateful for all the visiting clergy who have taken Communion Services and have enjoyed their preaching and different styles of leading services.

It is a delight to be come out of the restrictions imposed by the pandemic and to again enjoy worshipping in Church, and particularly to have the All Soul's, Carol, Crib, Ash Wednesday and Easter Services. It is wonderful to see people returning to Church and new members joining the congregation.

We are grateful for all who have continued to sustain the life of the Church through the last difficult years and rejoice at the signs of growth and new life over the last few months with people volunteering for new roles and responsibilities. The numbers of people reading lessons has doubled, people have come back on the intersessions list and new people have joined, younger members have volunteered to be Servers and a member of the congregation is doing the Growing Leaders Course. But more sides-people are still needed. If you would like to volunteer please speak to the Wardens, Funmi Makanju, or Rev'd Ann.

It is especially heartening that Kid's Club has restarted, with that and Toddler Church and Messy Church, run by our Project Jacki Clements our Children's work has improved massively.

Planning is continuing for our Celebrations for the Queen's Platinum Jubilee in June and for a day of prayer, fundraising and support for

Ukraine on Saturday April the 2nd.

Particular thanks are due to our Wardens, Natalie and Doreen who are responsible for the Church during the Interregnum. Pray also for Deji and Claire our elected Parish Reps. who will be involved in the appointment of the new incumbent.

Please pray for a new Vicar who can deepen the spiritual and community life of the congregation, so that as one people, they may share God's love, mercy and grace with this parish.

Rev'd Ann Norman

Report from SDF - Jacki Clement

The projects supported by SDF continue to grow in attendance and remain very popular with the local community.

The Christmas party was a great success and will become a yearly event. Around 200 people came and reports were that they all had a wonderful time.

Toddler Church continues weekly and through the school holidays, attendances range from 30-60 every week, donations range from £10 to £20.

Messy Church is also very popular, in February we had over 60 people attend, donations are lower from this project, usually around £10 but families are enjoying coming into church and meeting other families. Carers Support for Carers and Cared For, and for Carers and Former Carers is now well established with an average of 12 attending each session and donations averaging around £8.

We were awarded a grant from Orbit Housing to fund a monthly session from Carol Ann Wells who sings for the group, this will pay for 12 sessions.

New projects in the pipeline include the Bear Prayer Trail (as yet no date), Easter Egg Trail (on Easter Saturday) which will also encourage local children to help make up the Easter Garden, a holiday club which is to be jointly run with St Augustine's Slade Green, and an 'End of Summer' Community Day.

Report from the Church Wardens - Doreen Ives & Natalie Slator

This has been a very busy year for your Wardens, with so many more responsibilities placed on us. Delegating responsibility for special tasks within the Church Community has worked in some cases but unfortunately, for various reasons, not all. However, we do thank all who have worked with us to keep the Sunday service, Weddings and Funerals happening in Christ Church Erith. Our thanks go out also to the visiting clergy who are taking us through this interregnum.

The fabric of both the vicarage and Church buildings has been a task that has taken up a lot of our time as also the grounds of both places. Necessary repairs etc. have been completed in the vicarage and fortunately we now employ a regular cleaner in the Church once a week for two hours, to keep the basics done. A regular monthly gardener has kept the grounds of both premises in reasonable shape. Both cleaning and gardening could benefit from more attention, but the income of the Church will not stretch to that and, despite continued calls for volunteers, the response has not been good. The Church needs a deep clean, meaning the carpets and tiles need to be given much more attention. Wax needs to be cleaned off the carpet in the Sanctuary and on some pews. Our cleaner just does not have enough time to do that. We need to organise a day over one weekend for a group of volunteers to come together to complete these tasks.

Repairs to broken stained glass windows and damaged wall paintings have been undertaken and paid for, either through insurance or grants applied for and gained from charities. We commissioned a report and quotation for cleaning and general regeneration of the wall paintings but without substantial grants or donations this work will not happen in the near future. The Church heating system has caused many hours of talk and frustration over the year but through the tenacity of Natalie we have managed to keep the place warm enough to hold services over the winter period. We very much hope the boilers are now sufficiently secure to make sure next winter is not such a problem. We do continue to worry about the cost of our utility bills but inevitably with the Church now being used so much more by the community and the rise in fuel costs generally, we are going to need to increase our income by some means or another.

Following the damage to the windows, quotes were obtained for preventing roosting pigeons landing, but again these were at a figure of £2,000 plus rising to £4,000 plus and deemed not affordable although necessary both to stop catapults being used by some people and also the need to continuously clean the front steps of droppings which are then walked into the Church building.

A further major piece of work that is in the process of being completed is the restoration of our Church Organ. This much-loved instrument gave up the ghost altogether and needed major works to get it playable again. It is now in a condition that experts consider sufficiently good to take us through the next five to ten years, but more major replacements and work is needed to fully restore the organ. We now need to recruit a permanent organist to play for our regular and special services. We are currently exploring all avenues to achieve this.

Finally, security is always a concern when there is no occupation of the vicarage. We have explored security cameras, but quotes received have not been considered affordable. We feel the next best thing is to improve the outside lighting and for this reason the FOCCE committee decided to get the lights outside the west porch fixed and working again using the remaining funds in the FOCCE account following the completion of the toilets project. We have had a quote for lighting outside the north porch for the emergency exit opened up during 2021, but as yet no funding is available to do this.

Our congregation is increasing gradually, and this now demands a return to 2 sides persons each week to step up for each service in order to allow the Church wardens to fulfil their other duties. We need to set up a rota for this task. Please volunteer to help in this way. For more details, please speak to Natalie.

The task of recruiting a permanent vicar to serve both St Johns and Christ Church is under way and we sincerely hope a successful candidate will be appointed soon.

Once again, our thanks to all who respond to calls to help and participate in our services
Doreen Ives & Natalie Slator

Report from the Secretary - Claire Perkins

With the Covid-19 situation continuing the Parochial Church Council (PCC) continued to meet via Zoom.

The APCM was held in April, and since Mother Monica had informed us of her decision to leave Christ Church this was hosted by Doreen Ives as Acting Chair.

The following officers were elected by the PCC for 2021:

- Vice Chair of PCC – Doreen Ives
- Secretary – Claire Perkins
- Treasurer – Gwen Fayemi

Okechukwu Iwuagwu continued as Deanery Synod rep with Roderick Johnson replacing Sylvia McLean.

We have been very fortunate that Natalie Slator and Doreen Ives agreed to continue as Church Wardens. It has been a very challenging time to be in Interregnum but they have guided the way to keep everything running as smoothly as possible.

The working groups remain as the Social Committee, Hall Committee, Christmas Tree Festival Committee, Friends of Christ Church Erith (FOCCE) and a Media/Magazine Committee.

A decision was taken by the Diocese that the Parishes of Christ Church Erith and St Johns Erith who are also in Interregnum be combined to create a Parish of Erith with one vicar residing over both churches. The vacancy has yet to be formally advertised but we are hopeful of an appointment this year.

Electoral Roll – Davison Simbagegavi, Electoral Roll officer

No report provided

Report from the Deanery Synod Secretary – Okechukwu Iwuagwu & Roderick Johnson

There were three Deanery Synod meetings held and attended by Okechukwu Iwuagwu in the last year. All meetings were held via zoom due to the COVID-19 pandemic

Matters arising are outlined below: -

Meeting held on 28 April 2021: There was a presentation from Abi Hiscock (A growth enabler with Rochester Diocese Copestake) on COVID-19 recovery plans for the church. The presentation included talks on "the called together mission". The presentation was focused on "the called together mission" priorities which included;

- Helping churches plan for intentional growth;

- Helping churches implement permanent changes that have been inflicted on them due to the pandemic;
- Stewardship mission;
- New vocations for church members; and
- Growth of Hybrid churches.

The deanery synod meeting was informed that the growth enablers were able to run workshops for churches to assist with any strategies or plans they have moving forward with the “called together mission” priorities.

Meeting Held on 1 July 2021:

- There was a talk by Billy-Jo O Leary from Home for good;
 - Laura Webster (who works for the Erith Deanery Youth Trust – 1 day a week) informed the meeting that she also now works for the Bromley and Bexley diocese providing support for family and children (3 days a week);
-
- All churches within the deanery gave a brief update on how they were coping during the pandemic and Rev Adam Foot prayed for them;
 - Rev Adam foot gave a reminder that all PCCs should be looking into clergy wellbeing documents and how to support this;
 - The Erith Deanery Youth Trust (EDYT) was to be wound up at the next meeting on 4 August 2021, followed by a short meeting with the new Erith Deanery Youth Trust Association (EDYTA). Deanery synod members were informed that they were entitled to become members of EDYTA and encouraged to join in order show support to the group; and
 - The financial accounts for the period 2019-2020 and 2020-2021 were also approved at this meeting.

Meeting held on 12 October 2021:

- Rev Jane Winter, the chair of the consultancy group “living in Love and Faith” gave a talk on this subject followed by discussions.
- The deanery synod members were advised that EDYT has come to an end and EDYTA is now in place. Rev Adam Foot informed the meeting that at the AGM for EDYTA held on 8 September

2021, a request was made for more deanery synod members to become members of EDYTA

Dates and venues for the next Erith Deanery Synod Meetings:

Only one meeting has been scheduled so far and it is a physical meeting to be held on 13 June 2022 @ St John's Welling.

Anna Ministry Report - Funmi Mekanju LLM Christ Church Erith Anna Chaplain

Activities on hold due to COVID

Hall Report - Ayodeji Akande, Hall Manager

Due to the covid lockdown the hall wasn't in use for several months. Once lockdown was lifted, we started receiving enquires for hall hire. Hall hire has now picked up and with an average of 2 bookings a month.

The committee welcomed some new regular hirers.

We have Mulvihill Academy which is a Dance school, they have use of the hall on Wednesday evenings and Sikh Martial Arts who is in the hall on Sunday afternoon.

Please see below for the fees for 2021

Saturday Hall Fees 2021
11am - 11pm (12Hrs) £695
2pm - 11pm (9Hrs) £575
12Noon - 7pm (7Hrs) £400
8am - 2pm (6Hrs) £300

We renewed the Gas boiler support contract with Blue Flame

The Hall roof that was leaking is now fully repaired.

The hall is still in high demand for Saturday hiring and is still used by the wider community and church for community events.

Thanks to the committee members for their support. If you can help maintain our hall or join the hall committee in some capacity, please feel free to contact any member of the hall committee.

Report from the Bellinger's - Natalie Slator, Tower Captain

This last year has taken its toll on our group. We were forced to close the tower for several months due to Covid, the lockdown rules, then the risk because of ventilation in the access to the ringing room caused ringing to be stopped for several months but eventually the Church of England allowed ringing to resume.

We are working hard to improve our standard and welcome the congregation to church every Sunday, though with a much smaller group than before. We have rung for several weddings on Saturdays and funerals during the week through the year.

Our secretary, Liz, has just had a hip replacement and is at present out of action. There are 32 steps to the ringing chamber so we are not expecting to see her up there very soon.

One of our trainers, Deryck, has developed cancer and is at present undergoing treatment though hopeful of being able to continue when the Radium treatment is finished. He is very keen so we will wish him a successful treatment and hope that we can continue with learning how to handle the rope very soon.

Once we get back to a certain amount of strength, we are going to hold some open days where everyone can come and see what ringing is all about. We get a lot of help from our local association, Lewisham, where many ringers are experienced and wish to help pass on the enjoyment of bellringing. Once you get started it is fascinating with lots of different methods (rather like tunes in music) and meetings among the ringing community at different churches in the area.

Here's hoping that next year is a great year for Christ Church and that the Reverend Bolden's love of bells and bell ringing will carry on at Erith for many years to come. He paid for the tower to be built and for the bells to be cast and hung in the early 20th century just before the first world war. We celebrated our centenary in 2014.

Natalie Slator
Tower Captain.

Report from Kids Club

Kids club had closed down due to a lack of Volunteers, but we are very fortunate that it has started again from Sunday 6th March 2022.

Safeguarding Children Annual Report

No issues to report

Choir Report - Heather Taylor

I really do have difficulty trying to write this year's report due to various circumstances not least the fact that we have not had a regular organist since the summer.

The services have been sung as always but sometimes not as well as we would have liked and not up to our usual standard but never the less we have maintained the choral tradition of our church and our dedication as Choristers to worship God in song. I want to thank particularly Margaret, Rosina, Elizabeth, Joan and Sylvia who by their regular attendance have helped me with this task I am also grateful to Des, Lea, and Maggie when they have helped out also Mathew who plays when he can for our services.

Joy of Joys we managed to hold a Carol service which boosted our moral and Thanks to Rev Barry Wright who sang with us on that occasion and also Jack who came out of retirement to play for Midnight Mass as our organ had been partially repaired and was playable then. I am sure you will hear more about the repairs and refurbishment. of that from Natalie who i thank for all the work she has done on that instrument for us, we really as a choir need our organ playing in all its glory again.

I am hoping that this coming year may bring the return of some previous choir members and I hope we may have some new members. Regarding returning members it was good to have Gbenga back with us as he came home for a visit he says he really does miss our choir.

Parish Magazine Report - Paul Hyde, Editor

Overview

- Best-selling edition was December 2021 which sold about 43 copies in total.
- Circulation continued to be affected the post-pandemic decline in church attendances.
- Advertising also affected.

Subscriptions

The number of persons subscribing to the magazine has remained broadly similar to those for the previous year:

Year (April – March)	Hand delivered	Postal	By email/PDF
2020/1	5	3	2
2021/2	8	3	3

Advertising

This year, advertising returned to the magazine following the easing of the pandemic. However, there was only one paying subscription at £55 pa, plus two who were granted free advertising in recognition of services provided to the church.

Circulation

During this year sales of the magazine continue to have been reduced compared to pre- pandemic levels, in line with church service attendances. The magazine had historically sold about 50 copies each month. This figure dropped to about 20-25 during 2020/1, although thanks to the Christmas Tree Festival, the December 2020 edition sold about 35 copies. 2021/2 saw typical circulation figures rise to about 35, with the December 2021 edition reaching about 43.

I'm pleased to report that, unlike in the previous year, a full edition was published for every single month.

All editions during this year contained a summary of COVID related general advice and restrictions as announced by the Government and appeals for donations to church funds and volunteers to help with the running of the church, in addition to the normal parochial fare.

General content

Starting with the September edition, the front cover design was refreshed to include a full-page photo or other graphic as a background to the logo and text. This innovation seems to have much appreciated by readers. There have been no significant developments in the “look and feel” of the rest of the magazine, nor the scope of its contents, during this period.

My sincere thanks to the few parishioners of have sent me articles and other material which has been included in the magazine over the last year. My role as Editor is to compile and collate these into a consistent format so as to produce a unified magazine each month. Once again, I have myself contributed at least one article each month, ranging from the regular Town & Around piece, to occasional longer, more thoughtful articles.

Pew Sheet

The Pew Sheet for each Sunday, plus other important services, was continued in its familiar format throughout the year. In addition, some

new Service Sheets were created, most notably for Communion by Extension.

Report from the Erith Christmas Tree Festival - Claire Perkins

Planning the Christmas Tree Festival from August was challenging again in 2021, not knowing what the COVID situation would be like in December. But as we recognise this is a very important event for the community we decided to go ahead with planning.

Tree numbers were reduced to 50 as we did in 2020 to allow sufficient distancing between each tree but unfortunately not all were sponsored. The Charity Fair, evening concert and carol concert did not take place this year, but we were honoured to host the Mayor again who stayed with us for quite some time.

Thanks as always go to David Fitch for providing and installing all the electronic equipment during the weekend and to Danielle and Darryl Mercer at Bexley Garden Centre for providing the wonderful trees.

Attendance by the church congregation as visitors and volunteers was again very low meaning the work falls on the few. The committee needs new volunteers and a new Chair with fresh enthusiasm and ideas to take the festival forwards.

We were delighted to be able to make a donation of £100 to the Greenwich and Bexley Community Hospice in addition to making a donation to Church funds.

Report from Friends of Christ Church Erith (FOCCE) - Doreen Ives

Our activities were totally curtailed by the COVID restrictions during 2021. Apart from a brief interlude where we held a sweepstake on the "STRICTLY COME DANCING" TV contest and of course I encouraged existing FRIENDS to make their annual subscriptions/donations. These were the only fund raising events of the year.

The final retention payments have now been made for the Toilet

Project because a whole year has elapsed since it was completed and we have now decided to use the funds still in the FOCCE account to pay for the lighting outside the West Porch door to be put into good working order again as a small contribution towards making the Church building more secure. Further outside lighting is badly needed.

You will read in the SDF report how regularly Christ Church is being freely used for many community family activities now that the building has its own toilets. I believe it is fair to say these facilities have made it possible for our local families to finally come in and understand how Christ Church works and can be part of their lives. So much gratitude is owed to those FRIENDS and charities who support this group.

Please become a member of FOCCE. Your support will make future projects happen.

Doreen Ives

Social committee Report -Marlene Elugande

Year 2021 has been a challenging year due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Lock down and restrictions on gatherings have prevented regular scheduled celebrations such as Easter and other activities from been held.

We have been assigned a designated storage space in the church hall for items we have acquired but the storage space will require a cleaning before it can be put into use. All items which are currently stored in individual homes will need to be relocated to the storage space and an inventory of all items will be taken. Items acquired by the social committee includes chaffing dishes, chair covers, table covers and sashes. These items are available for rent for a token sum and 10% of profit will be paid to the church. None of these items were hired in this financial year. We will be liaising with the church treasurer to maintain our account for transparency and accountability.

An inventory list, receipts and transactions will be presented to the treasurer to facilitate and aid the process.

Social committee have been involved in serving tea, coffee and little refreshments after service on Sundays in the church hall.

As restrictions are lifted and we return to some form of normality, we plan to mark the Queen's Platinum Jubilee with a Jubilee Lunch scheduled for the 5th of June and organise other activities during the year.

Report from Christ Church (Erith) Church of England Primary School

The school as with others had many problems during the last year due to Covid, but now we are using the Government money to put on booster classes and individual coaching for some groups of children to bring them up to the standard we would expect of them.

We had a quick "OFSTED" inspection on 22nd November which was just checking we were still an "Outstanding" school and they were satisfied.

Our new building St Margaret opened in September replacing the very dilapidated St Columbos which has since been demolished.

Unfortunately, the school is losing its Principal Mrs Gillian Ball after 20 years of service. Mrs ball has seen the school develop and grow under her time as Principal and her knowledge and expertise will be greatly missed. We wish her well in her retirement

Last but not least our School Dog Otis will be retiring with Mrs Ball having also reached "Retirement Age"

The use of animals in school is now widely accepted but Otis was one of the first another achievement for Christ Church.

The School will be celebrating with the rest of the country events for the Queen's Jubilee, this will be I am told a weeklong celebration and it is fitting that it will be Mrs Ball's final event for the school she has served so well.

Report from Men in Sheds - Emily Willey

Activity at Men in Sheds in the past year has been centered around

getting back to normal after Coronavirus national lockdowns. The project has resumed pre-covid operating hours, completed commissions and is in the process of restarting their outreach work. In July 2021, the Shed's funding was renewed by City Bridge Trust for another two years. This funding boost enables the community group to continue vital peer support and work towards becoming sustainable.

Output- 167 men's shed sessions run at primary workshop at Christ Church Erith 01/04/21- 28/02/22

Output- 872 Attendances 01/04/21- 28/02/22

Session highlights in the past year include completing the community garden planters, a shed outing to Bexley Brewery's The Bird and Barrell and welcoming new members to the group.

The group completed 15 commissions for local organisations and members of the public such as a planter table, bird table and knitting spindles. The Shed also ran their first market stall for two years in December 2021 at the Wasteless Market in Erith.

Output- 63 New Referrals 01/04/21- 28/02/22

In comparison to the same time period in the year 2019/2020 (using pre-covid year for a fair comparison), Men in Sheds referrals has increased 23%. In addition, our client group have become more diverse. Historically our membership group have all been men from a white British ethnic group. Referrals this year have been 9.5% female, with our first female member starting in 2021. In terms of ethnicity, 14% have been from a non-white British background. Although there is still more work to do to ensure the shed is representing different communities in Bexley, we have seen a step in the right direction in the past year.



Report from Beavers and Scouts

No report provided.