

## Vicar's report of 2023

We began the year in January by hosting the annual service of Christian Unity, inviting the local congregations connected to Churches Together in Chislehurst and Bickley to come. Patrick Regan, CEO of KintsugiHope gave an inspiring talk about well being and God's purposes for our lives.

Following on from Patrick's visit a new Well Being group started in February and continued into the spring. Thanks to Heather for her leadership of the group. At the end of the month we welcomed Anna Khan CEO of Welcare to a Sunday service and she highlighted the importance of our ongoing support of this local charity that does so much to help disadvantaged families.

To commemorate the coronation of King Charles we had a special lunch in May after the Sunday services and in June a large number gathered for a Saturday morning Ladies Breakfast, with guest speaker Rachael Newham. Also in June the Rock Choir gave a concert in aid of the Food Bank and we were very pleased to once again have Bishop Rob Martin visit for a Wednesday Community Lunch, along with Bishop Qampicha and his wife Safia from N Kenya.

Local historian Joanna Friel, who has spoken here on a number of occasions, came in July to give a talk about the local building SITKA and it's history related to scientific research. Later that month a dozen church members joined the Humphries family at their pitch at the New Wine Celebration in Detling and enjoyed a sample of the worship and teaching there.

In August Marilyn and her team provide another wonderful Holiday at Home, giving an opportunity for fun and fellowship for people in the church and community.

A Saturday morning Men's Breakfast welcomed Roman Maumenko, Youth Pastor in Anerley, who spoke about the impact of the war in his home country of Ukraine, including stories of God's intervention in dramatic ways.

October saw the beginning of a midweek Bible Society course on the book of Romans. This proved very popular and we focussed on the same material on Sundays until Advent. To coincide with Halloween Catherine and Matthew organised another successful Light Party and the building was filled with families learning about the Light of Jesus.

In November Roman Maumenko spoke on a Sunday morning and the church hosted the launch of a new book 'Transformative Testimonies', a collection of stories of how people came to faith in Jesus, edited by John Hemming Clark.

As well as the usual busy Christmas services and activities in December we had a concert and a production dramatizing the nativity called 'It's a Boy!'

Throughout the year our usual regular activities took place, including Friendship Café, Community Lunch and for families: the New Mums Group, ABC, Dad's and Tots. The Men's Group, organised by Paul, met each month for various activities and Life Groups gathered for Bible study and friendship.

We continue to enjoy sharing the office space with Spinnaker Trust, who are always an encouraging and supportive team. Our support for local and international mission work and charities continues in many ways and Paul Endersby was once again able to visit our Mission Partner, Nsumbi Trust, in Uganda.

I am very grateful for a large team of volunteers who continue to offer support and serve in many and varied ways. Sunday services are well resourced by different teams: preaching and leading (Sue, Cath, Angela, Paul and Peter Morris) AV, welcome and music team. Thanks everyone, you all work hard!

Catherine Ibrahim continues to provide fantastic support as our administrator and finance assistant. We are very grateful for her cheerful and efficient role in the church office.

Catherine Humphries continues to oversee our ministry with young families and the growth in numbers at 10.45 shows what an impact Catherine and her team are having (Sundays, with Kids Church and Youth Rangers, and throughout the week). Very few churches in our diocese have the same trend in terms of growth.

Growth in numbers is a wonderful challenge to be facing, but it is an issue we must tackle. Children need good leaders and they soon grow into young people at secondary school. We tried unsuccessfully to appoint a part time Youth Minister and our new PCC will need to pray and consider what the next step will be. We also need to facilitate gifts in the congregation to enhance ministry in discipleship, Sunday services,

work with older folk and pastoral care. A training programme for those called to lead will be set up later this year.

I'm particularly grateful to the volunteer team who inevitably carry a greater share of the load: the PCC, including Phil and Sara as Church Wardens, Treasurer Gina and Angela as PCC Secretary (Angela is stepping down from this role) My wife Cath is patient and supportive in so many ways and I thank her for all she does to help me and to serve in different ways.

Please continue to pray that Christ Church may honour God in providing a community committed to the purposes of the Kingdom of God and the message of the Gospel. It is a privilege to be a part of such a dynamic, diverse and caring congregation.