

Vicar's report of the year 2025

We have continued to be blessed by seeing the numbers joining the church community increase throughout 2025, including more young families and young people. Pete Jones joined our team of paid staff at the start of the year and as Youth Minister began connecting with the young people on Sunday mornings at Youth Rangers straight away. In addition social events and the trial of a mid week group kept the interest going. A summer 10.45 Sunday Youth Service was a great success. We are very pleased to have Pete on board demonstrating enthusiasm and acting as a great role model for our young people.

Catherine Humphries, our Family Minister, continued to pour energy and passion into her role and as a result more and more children and young families are finding a home at Christ Church, and discovering ways to grow in discipleship and friendship.

Matthew Humphries got accepted to begin training for Anglican ministry, left his long career as a Met police officer, and is now based with us as he trains through St Mellitus Theological College in London. It is great to have them both exercising ministry here. We anticipate exciting times ahead for the Humphries but hope to hang onto them for as long as we can!

In March Sue Gilder was given a well-deserved Mayor of Bromley award in the Civic Centre and a few of us were there to celebrate. This was in recognition for many years of service to the community as a hospital/hospice chaplain, and as a Lay Reader at Christ Church.

We were delighted to welcome Bishop Simon to preach on Palm Sunday and this was the start of a busy Holy Week, with lots of folk attending services and events for all ages.

We had a service in May to mark the 80th anniversary of VE Day and, as usual, welcomed the pilgrims from St Martin in the Fields church at the end of the month, giving them much-needed hospitality on their way to Canterbury.

In June Helen and Mary were able to celebrate 4 years of the New Mums group and invite many of the families who received such vital support to a party in the Link.

Also in June Sue Gilder had a celebration for a big birthday (!) and we invited Rev Tim Mills (ex-curate of Christ Church) to preach on the Sunday before a bring and share lunch

Stephanie Maurel, who was with us for a year training for ministry, got ordained in Rochester Cathedral at the end of the month. We miss having Stephanie here but are delighted for as she began her curacy at St Johns church in Sidcup.

At the beginning of July we once again hosted the annual service of Christian unity for all denominations in Chislehurst. Martin Pointing from Bromley CAP (Christians Against Poverty) spoke and launched our link with the organisation to help those in debt in the local area.

Later in July we welcomed Rob and Sue Martin, regular visitors to us with a long history of friendship. They spoke about the ongoing mission work in the region of N Kenya where Rob served as Bishop.

At the end of the month Matthew and Catherine headed up a group of a dozen or so folk to go the New Wine Summer Celebration in Shepton Mallet. The Humphries provided excellent hospitality throughout the week and we all received much from the great teaching and worship together.

Holiday at Home in August was organised this year by Seren (taking over from Marilyn, who worked hard for many years to make it such a successful event) It was a great occasion with lots of friendships formed or renewed and a variety of activities to entertain and inspire.

One of the highlights of the year was the Confirmation Service here on 7th September. Bishop Jonathan came to preach and confirm 21 candidates from 6 churches in the deanery, including 5 people from Christ Church. It was an inspiring occasion and a reminder that the Gospel is always at work to ignite faith in Jesus Christ in people of many different ages and backgrounds.

In September we launched a new set of Bibles for the church, New Living Translation. This translation brings the Bible up to date with clear accurate script and inclusive language.

In October a group of ladies went away for spiritual refreshment to the annual 'Leap of Faith' weekend and Matthew organised evening gatherings called 'The Furnace' to bring New Wine teaching through video into the Link.

The annual Light Party, organised by Catherine and Matthew, once again attracted large numbers of families, who enjoyed craft, games, food and a message of hope and joy in the Gospel to counter the darkness of Halloween.

Also in October the diocese chose Christ Church to be the first church to join a new national learning Community, run by Lead Academy, to explore ways to enhance the vision and progress of churches where numbers of children and young people are thriving. Four of us went to Oxford for a 2 day residential programme and began feeding ideas back following this.

We also ran a course called 'Hearing God's Word' for 9 folk from 3 different churches across the deanery (including our own church) This course, in addition to follow up 'Speaking God's Word, gives permission for occasional preaching if successfully completed.

Also in October a concert took place in the church to raise funds for Bromley Christians Against Poverty.

In November there was a Ladies Breakfast, attended by 60, and featuring a talk given by Adrian Dobbs about science and faith.

Joanna Friel came in December to give another of her fascinating and informative local history talks, also launching her new book, which features some beautiful photos of the church.

PCC had, for some time, discussed the need for another staff member to assist with pastoral care and we were delighted at the end of the year to interview and appoint Rachel Haig to the role of Pastoral Lead. She started her new job in January 2026.

So, all in all, there is much to be grateful to God for as we consider the growth of the church here and the ministry we are able to participate in.

The staff team is growing, and this is because of new ministry opportunities, but also the generous giving of the congregation. Catherine in the office continues to enthusiastically and efficiently manage the administration with excellence and creativity. She also provides terrific support for Gina and the finances.

Already mentioned is how grateful we are to have Catherine H and Pete overseeing the ministry with children, families and young people and next years report will reflect the hard work and fruit of Rachel's pastoral ministry since starting in 2026.

On top of this are many volunteers serving on teams, and the church cannot function without their generosity of time and energy.

I am thankful for our PCC, and particularly Phil and Judith as Church Wardens, Gina as Treasurer and Ruth as PCC Secretary. All of them have encouraged and supported me in their various roles. After many years Sue Gilder decided to retire from the PCC, and we are so grateful for all her wisdom and encouragement in joining in the vision of the church over that time.

The team who support the church in 'up- front' ministry, leading and preaching, are Angela, Cath, Sue, Paul and Peter Morris. It is a blessing to have a varied team who bring a range of experience to enhance our Sunday services in different ways.

Then there are teams where people serve in music, AV, refreshments, Community Lunch, Friendship Café, New Mums, Flowers, Kidz church, Youth Rangers, premises and grounds, Life Groups, support for the Food Bank and a lot more. All of these volunteers give much of their precious time, gifts and energy week by week to serve God's Kingdom and enable Christ Church to be a thriving community for the sake of the Gospel.

I am always grateful to Cath and my family, who support and encourage me in so many ways.

As St Paul wrote to the church in Philippi many years ago:

'May God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ give you grace and peace. Every time I think of you, I give thanks to my God. Whenever I pray, I make my requests for all of you with joy' Philippians 1:2-4