

THE
OUTLOOK

DECEMBER 2020 –
FEBRUARY 2021



Emmanuel Church Sidcup

Methodist and United Reformed

URC Moderator's Christmas Letter

Christmas 2020

Dear friends,

As I write the papers are saying 'Christmas is cancelled this year'. What a dreadful thought! And now the recent lockdown makes us worry who can be in our bubble or whether we are going to spend Christmas alone.

Of course, the real Christmas is never cancelled and that is a great relief for the whole world. Like many ministers I am at home this year, shut in my study answering emails, doing Zoom meetings and making phone calls. It's a very different type of ministry we are engaged in. We need to remember Christ's coming more this year maybe than at any other time.

Friends have said they cannot wait to put up decorations: the sparkle and ribbons, the lights piercing the darkness of a December afternoon, the hope of presents and a great big tree all lit up. In truth, this year we *really* need Jesus. We need the Lord to give us hope where we have lost it.

It always seems amazing to me that God should choose a helpless baby to pierce the darkness of the Roman empire and the hardness of humanity's hearts. But God did. A baby who has come for over 2,019 years and will come to us again this year – despite a pandemic. We may choose the tinsel and sparkle of Christmas, but Christ chooses our hearts.

⁸ *And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night.* ⁹ *An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified.* ¹⁰ *But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people."* ¹¹ *Today in the town of David a Saviour has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord.* ¹² *This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger."*

Luke 2:8-12

As we approach Advent and Christmas, we know that this year we are living in challenging times. We may not be able to sing of love coming down at Christmas in our churches, we may not be able to be with family and friends and the brokenness of the world continues. Yet Jesus, the Christ- child, the Light of the world, will still come to us. Christ is still the source of our hope and joy. Nothing can stop our Lord coming to meet us where we are.

"Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people." Luke 2:10

Christ is a never-ending source of love, light and wellbeing. Not only are we the cracked clay pots in which Jesus places the light of the world, we are the

vessels God uses to spill out the light of love into the world. Full of this light we know we don't have to be afraid of the future. For God is with us. With us in pandemics, injustice, bereavement, pain and fear. Christ is never cancelled from our lives. All we have to do is shine.

I wish you and your families, a very blessed Christmas.



KNOW YOUR URC MODERATOR

Dear friends,

I have been asked to share a bit about myself, so here goes:

I was born in Cuckfield, West Sussex. We were living close to my grandparents who lived in Hassocks. They went to Hassocks Congregational Church while my parents went to a little Anglican church in our village. Apart from 2 years in America, I have spent most of my life in Oxfordshire or Sussex, though I have moved about 17 times in total.

It was my grandma who told me the stories of Jesus. I usually sat on her knee and she read from her bible. When I was old enough, she bought me a Good News bible which I started to read but I don't remember how far I got with it. However the stories and love from the bible must have stuck because I committed my life to the Lord as an adult on July 12th 1987 in a Baptist Church evening service and I have never looked back.

I left home at 19 to start my nursing course at Southampton University which I really enjoyed. I then went to do Midwifery at Oxford. I worked as a Midwife for about 10 years before going into research. I worked on several Department of Health contracts finishing back at Oxford University. All the time attending church, ending up at Temple Cowley URC in Oxford.

When I received my call to ministry and began my training I worked for a Community Development company. I used to think what an odd group of skills I have grown but being a minister in a church ready for regeneration, it all came in handy.

I love the URC. I chose to join the church because of the Statement of the Nature, Faith and Order. It made a great impression on me. Here was a church that was willing to stand up for its principles and also try and change. I knew that it was going to take time but change was written into its heart!

I am looking forward to visiting the churches when we are allowed to again. We are all learning new ways of being but we are empowered by the Holy Spirit and have many gifted people.

Thank you for all you are doing in your local church.

God bless

Bridget

Letter From Our URC Interim Moderator

This is a "two C" letter. The first C is "Covid". Can I hear a groan? Not again.

We are well aware of the devastation caused by coronavirus. Fifty thousand deaths in our country relate to the pandemic. In such situations the cry goes up from many people who are presently asking, "Why is this happening" or "Where is God in all of this?"

Christians believe that Jesus is fully divine and fully human. Yet we sometimes overlook the second part - the fact that Jesus lived on this soil for thirty-three years and suffered a most horrendous death.

Jesus lived in a world of perpetual illness. Jodi Magness, in her book about daily life in first-century Galilee - "Stone and Dung, Oil and Spit", calls that environment "filthy, malodorous and unhealthy." A case of the flu, bad cold or even an abscessed tooth could kill. This was Jesus's world. Thankfully not ours in 2020.

Let us find comfort in knowing that when we pray to Jesus we are praying to someone who understands - not only because He is divine but is human and experienced a life so fundamental and dangerous that even those presently living in the most sparse conditions on earth could not comprehend. It puts these frightening present times into perspective.

Jesus continually sought out those who were sick. Most of His so called miracles correlated healing to illnesses and disabilities. Debilitating skin conditions (under the rubric of "leprosy"), epilepsy, blindness, deafness and paralysis were only a sample. When Jesus saw a person in need, the Gospels tell us that His heart was "moved with pity" as related in Mark 6, 31 -34.

Let us imagine a battle between God and the virus. Is the virus winning? It has shut down churches, some of which will never open again. I know of two United Reformed churches in the South London area which have already closed. It is the NHS, not God, that heals. This is our new faith. The old religion of God has become an archaic irrelevance to many.

The British Social Attitudes (BSA) survey is published annually. It tracks changes in British social opinions and behaviour and is widely used by business and Government to direct future policy. In 2018 25% of those surveyed very sadly agreed with the statement "I do not believe in God". That number increases with each passing year.

Friedrich Nietzsche famously proclaimed, "God is dead", to express his idea that the Enlightenment had eliminated the possibility of the existence of God. Sadly Nietzsche's statement is becoming more relevant to a larger sector of the UK population.

So 25% of the UK population don't believe in God but a number of them are asking where God presently resides during this crisis. Rather hypocritical don't you think?

It is so sad to follow the graph of those dying from the virus. People could argue that it teaches the world a lesson but others could argue that He is not all-loving. They don't comprehend God. God sent His Son to earth for our benefit. He wished His Son to suffer for our benefit. He tolerated His Son to be vilified and humiliated beyond imagination for our benefit. Yet many still blame God for Covid.

The truth is no one really knows the answer but God. One thing we do know for certain, though, is that God hasn't abandoned us. Multiple promises in the Bible tell us that He will never forsake or leave us in our time of need. He is still walking by us; helping us get through this terrible time.

Where is God? God is right with us.

—oOo—

I have already briefly mentioned that many do not believe and are asking where God (and Jesus) is at present. Now I turn to the second "C", Christmas. There are so many overlays of trivia nowadays that the TRUE message can be hard to find. Problem is that many never find it. Many do not even try. Worse still - many do not know where to look.

The trend is moving strongly towards a disassociation of the birth of Jesus with Christmas. But first let us take another look at one story irrevocably linked with Christmas - concerning the Star. Much controversy has arisen around this star which the Magi followed (if you believe) and were supposed to follow (to the unbelievers).

Unless you are blatantly biased (and in serious research that is a heinous crime) you must keep a balanced view. Can astrologers prove that a "bright star" shone around that time? Witnessing Biblical scrutiny it seems to me that most researchers begin on a blatantly biased premise. Stories told about this birth are a load of claptrap and all wrong.

So when we read this passage, "we have seen His star in the east" is it a figment of the gospel writer's imagination derived from another source? Very sophisticated software has tracked the path of stars and planets over the past centuries. The beauty of such an exercise is predictability. Early astrologers (Magi) could produce a very accurate line by tracking such heavenly bodies. If modern navigators could track a very fine line from the stars why could the Magi have failed to do otherwise? That was their stock-in-trade.

In 2BC the conjunction of Jupiter and Venus would have created a *very bright star* at that time. Until now it was assumed that they approached but never actually crossed. So this star is actually the combined light from two planets but to the naked eye from earth it would appear as one. So we have very strong proof that a very bright star existed in 2 BC.

But no. They are still at it. As this star did not appear around 25th December commentators suggest that our "Christmas time" was not the birth of Jesus. There has never been any evidence to suggest that Jesus was born on December 25th. No one knows when He was born.

There is a saying which goes "you cannot have your cake and eat it!" Very true. What do people want? Do they want to accept all the stories which are circulated around the complete myth of Jesus and refuse to believe any which support His birth?

Jesus didn't have a birth certificate – not, at least in the format with which we are familiar in the U.K.. That is faith - to believe in something of which we have no definite proof.

How often have you called to Jesus for support? Have you felt His presence very real on certain occasions - usually in stress and grief?

Now transfer these thoughts to others in Emmanuel. Do you think that they have had the same thoughts and experiences? Of course they have. Now enlarge this to Christians everywhere. And add all the non-Christians when the need was there. The buck had stopped. The door had been firmly closed. There *was* no one else to whom to turn. Yes, we are now covering hundreds of millions of people. And we are only dealing with those who are alive at this present time.

Then stop and stand back. Ask yourself why are so many trying to break down Christmas and Christianity. I have no wish to degenerate Marks & Spencer. It has enough troubles at present. But take out "Christ" from "Christmas" and all that is left is "M&S". Is this concept worth celebrating? I will finish at this point but I leave you to ponder over that point in the days that lead up to our Saviour's birth.

So let me wish you and your family a most blessed Christmas. Let us hope that "Covid" is a much forgotten word in 2021. Let us wish that more will come to unearth the true meaning of Christmas in 2020.

Colin Watson



A Message from the Methodist Circuit Stewards

Dear Friends,

As circuit stewards, we just wanted to reach out to you all, in these very strange, and for some, most difficult and challenging times, to offer our thoughts and prayers for us all.

As the daylight hours reduce and we move closer to Advent, where we prepare our churches and ourselves to celebrate the birth of our dear Lord, it's clear that we will be restricted in those joyful Advent occasions.

As well as reaching out to say we are thinking of you, we also wanted to remark on the fantastic pastoral care that we continue to hear about across the circuit. As a true testament to our Saviour, who taught us that love for our neighbours is following in his footsteps, you are blessed with countless instances of that love all across the circuit.

But in these difficult times, we can turn to God, rely on our faith and trust in Him to give us the strength and fortitude to follow the guidelines and advice as best we can in order to combat the virus, stay safe and protect the vulnerable.

If there is anything that we, as a team can do to help, or if you would simply like to chat, then please let us know and we will get in touch via phone call as required.

Please do not hesitate to contact us.

Take care and God bless

Jim, Sharon and Dorrance

A Prayer for Advent

God of hope, who brought love into this world,
be the love that dwells between us.

God of hope, who brought peace into this world,
be the peace that dwells between us.

God of hope, who brought joy into this world,
be the joy that dwells between us.

God of hope, the rock we stand upon,
be the centre, the focus of our lives always,
and particularly this Advent time.



OUR BOOK OF REMEMBRANCE

DECEMBER

Harold Martin	1968
Beatrice Mary Adams	1983
Kathleen Mary Worrall	1987
Christine Leighton Watkins	1990
Joan Mary Stephen Purry	1994
Margaret Anthony Oatridge	2002
Bert Runacres	2004

JANUARY

Arthur Brinley Davis	1969
Joseph George Kearsley	1978
Lily Oswald	1988
Mabel Brunton	1990
Vincent Sawyer	1983
Gillian Averil Lister (née Huett)	1991
Marjory Treacher	1995
Ernest John Reader	2000
Elsie Runacres	2001
Geoffery Betts	2003
Pat Stephenson	2011

FEBRUARY

Henry Russell Verinder	1981
Maurice Adams	1985
Lilian Thompson	1986
Thomas George Brawm	1956
Rose Brawm	1979
Andrew James Bruce Boland	1979
Edith May Davidson	1985
John Clifford Davidson	1950
Florence Emily Wellman	1995
Elsie Jackson Watson	1999
Agnes Hutchison	2000
Sydney Charles Upson	2000
Evelyn Frances Ellercamp	2002

**“To Everything There is a Season, and a Time
to Every Purpose Under Heaven “ (Ecclesiastes 3:1)**

When we first became aware of this pandemic it was Springtime and the golden daffodils were flowering in the garden. On the trees the buds were ready to burst into leaf. The grass had started growing again after the cold Winter. Out in the fields the crops were shooting through the brown fertile soil. The blossom was beginning to open on the fruit trees.

Winter had passed and the welcome signs of Spring gave us something to look forward. Little did we know how our daily lives were about to change in so many ways.

Whilst we were out walking recently and noticing how the trees were changing, I began to think about the seasons and how they have changed over the last few months. We have been preoccupied coping with the restrictions which Coronavirus has inflicted on us. Thankfully, nature has continued to take care of our world.

As Spring gave way to Summer the trees became clothed in fresh green leaves. The tulips and daffodils faded and gave way to a different array of blooms covering every colour of the rainbow. The lack of rain was a concern, but nature sorted that out. The flowers continued to delight us, and the lawns, parched by the sun, regained their freshness. The crops in the fields grew and turned golden. The fruit ripened in the orchards. The farmers harvested the grain and made sure the supply of winter food for their animals was replenished.

Now it is the season of “mists and mellow fruitfulness”. There is a carpet of leaves everywhere. It is still a joy to relive childhood as we rustle through the crisp leaves in their array of colours bronze, gold, russet, burgundy, crimson. A recent trip to the National Trust gardens at Sheffield Park treated us to a spectacular display of beautiful autumn colour a delight as the sun highlighted the amazing brightness of the colours. In our garden the orange berries on the pyracantha add to the colourful autumn scene and there is an autumnal smell in the air. In the hedgerows the hips and haws turning red are welcomed by the birds.

In the garden the winter jasmine flowers and the roses still cling on in the warmth as the days shorten and the sun sinks in the late afternoon, giving us a sign that winter is not far away. We are reminded that it will soon be time to plant new bulbs in readiness for Spring. As the Winter

solstice approaches we know that in the months ahead most of the trees will be bare, there will be red berries on the holly, only the hardy plants which can cope with the possible frost and snow will bloom. In the bare soil the snowdrops and daffodils will be preparing to shoot and welcome back the Spring. The biggest change will be reflected in the falling temperature and it will be cold.

In our everyday lives so much has been different and very strange since those early days in March! How thankful we should be for the changing seasons which have continued as normal throughout this unprecedented pandemic. There are so many things in our daily lives that we have missed, let us remind ourselves of the words from Genesis Chapter 8 v. 22

**“As long as the earth endures, seedtime and harvest,
cold and heat, Summer and Winter, day and night will
never cease “**

Judith



**Christmas
2020**



Unfortunately, due to Covid 19 most of our normal Christmas events have had to be cancelled. We are left with the following.

Sunday 20th Dec 10.30am Lessons & Carols

Friday 25th Dec **10.00am** Christmas Day Service

Please note there will be no midnight Christmas Eve service at Emmanuel, and no service on Sunday 27th December.

Love in a Box

Thank you to everyone who filled a box or donated money. It was obviously difficult this year to buy the items for the boxes but 17 were delivered - plus the money - to the Baptist Church in South Darenth which was the pickup point for the area.

I have since spoken to Gwen at the Baptist Church and just over 130 boxes were collected. The Mustard Seed Relief Missions driver said there had been some donators dropping out this year - mainly schools - but others had joined in.

A container stocked with the boxes will be driven to Moldova for distribution. The container will hold 100,000 boxes and they have a back up of an additional lorry should donations exceed that number.

Jennifer

Pastoral News

Congratulations to Doris Willson, Philip's mother, who celebrated her 102nd birthday in November.

It is good to hear that Syd Howlett is making progress supported by regular carers and physiotherapy. Maureen is always pleased to receive a phone call. She remains very cheerful but we must continue to pray for both of them, it has been an especially difficult time during this pandemic.

Pat Brace is recovering well from a fractured leg. Although she is managing to get out and about, we hope she will soon be back to normal.

Lawrence Bush has had a hip replacement and is progressing well. Kevin Barnes has stepped into his place to clean the Hall when it has been used. We are very grateful to Kevin.

We remember Freda Skinner and Lorna New in St. Margaret's care home. Freda has been very happy to chat through her window and continues to keep busy with her knitting.

Our thoughts and prayers need to be with all those who have not been able to worship with us, either through illness or preferring to isolate themselves for safety during the pandemic.

Regular phone calls have reassured us that people are keeping well and safe by adhering to the rules. We will be pleased to see everyone back in church despite having to wear face masks and observe social distancing.



Subject to change due to Covid-19

Services for December

6	10.30am	Julie Gardner	
13	10.30am	Mr Martin Leonard	Communion
20	10.30am	Elders	Lessons and Carols
25	10.00am	Elders	Christmas Day
27		No Service	

Services for January

3	10.30am	Elders	
10	10.30am	Mr John Twidale	
17	10.30am	Mrs Val Loader	
24	10.30am	Mr Colin Watson	AGM
31	10.30am	Mr Martin Leonard	Communion, Covenant service

Services for February

7	10.30am	Mr Paul Ayliffe	
14	10.30am	Mrs Val Loader	
21	10.30am	Mrs Maggie Ayres	
28	10.30am	Mr John Twidale	

Revised Common Lectionary

Liturgical Date	Calendar Date	First Reading
2nd Sun of Advent	Dec-06	Isaiah 40:1-11
3rd Sun of Advent	Dec-13	Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11
4th Sun of Advent	Dec-20	2 Samuel 7:1-11, 16
Nativity of the Lord - Proper I	Dec24 & 25	Isaiah 62:6-12
Nativity of the Lord - Proper II	Dec24 & 25	Isaiah 62:6-12
Nativity of the Lord - Proper III	Dec24 & 25	Isaiah 52:7-10
1st Sun after Christmas Day	Jan-01	Isaiah 61:10-62:3
2nd Sun after Christmas Day	Jan-03	Jeremiah 31:7-14 or Sirach 24:1-12
Baptism of the Lord	Jan-10	Genesis 1:1-5
2nd Sun after the Epiphany	Jan-17	1 Samuel 3:1-10, (11-20)
3rd Sun after the Epiphany	Jan-24	Jonah 3:1-5, 1
4th Sun after the Epiphany	Jan-31	Deuteronomy 18:15-20
5th Sun after the Epiphany	Feb-07	Isaiah 40:21-31
Transfiguration Sun	Feb-14	2 Kings 2:1-12
Ash Wednesday	Feb-17	Joel 2:1-2, 12-17 or Isaiah 58:1-12
1st Sun in Lent	Feb-21	Genesis 9:8-17
2nd Sun in Lent	Feb-28	Genesis 17:1-7, 15-16

The full Lectionary can be accessed on line at

<https://lectionary.library.vanderbilt.edu/lections.php?year=B&season=Lent>

Make sure you get the correct year

Please Note

The closing date for copy for the **Mar/ Apr / May** Outlook
will be Thursday 18th Feb
Earlier contributions will be welcomed.

Tony Howard

Emmanuel.church.outlook@gmail.com

Revised Common Lectionary

Psalm Reading	Second Reading	Gospel Reading
Psalm 85:1-2, 8-13	2 Peter 3:8-15a	Mark 1:1-8
Psalm 126 or Luke 1:46b-55	1 Thessalonians 5:16-24	John 1:6-8, 19-28
Luke 1:46b-55 or Psalm 89:1-4, 19-26	Romans 16:25-27	Luke 1:26-38
Psalm 96	Titus 2:11-14	Luke 2:1-14, (15-20)
Psalm 97	Titus 3:4-7	Luke 2:(1-7), 8-20
Psalm 98	Hebrews 1:1-4, (5-12)	John 1:1-14
Psalm 148	Galatians 4:4-7	Luke 2:22-40
Psalm 147:12-20 or Wisdom of Solomon 10:15-21	Ephesians 1:3-14	John 1:(1-9), 10-18
Psalm 29	Acts 19:1-7	Mark 1:4-11
Psalm 139:1-6, 13-18	1 Corinthians 6:12-20	John 1:43-51
Psalm 62:5-12	1 Corinthians 7:29-31	Mark 1:14-20
Psalm 111	1 Corinthians 8:1-13	Mark 1:21-28
Psalm 147:1-11, 20c	1 Corinthians 9:16-23	Mark 1:29-39
Psalm 50:1-6	2 Corinthians 4:3-6	Mark 9:2-9
Psalm 51:1-17	2 Corinthians 5:20b-6:10	Matthew 6:1-6, 16-21
Psalm 25:1-10	1 Peter 3:18-22	Mark 1:9-15
Psalm 22:23-31	Romans 4:13-25	Mark 8:31-38 or Mark 9:2-9

Covenant Service

We plan to hold a Covenant Service on
31st January 2021

**The preacher will be Mr Martin Leonard
and there will be Holy Communion.**

The Corona Virus Blues

I'm a little virus, I don't care
All I simply want to do is share, share, share
I love to land on sticky tongues
On my way to your lungs, lungs, lungs.

Inside I'll make myself at home
Before making you ill to groan, groan, groan
Then I'll make you cough and sneeze
And away I'll go again on the breeze, breeze, breeze.

It is a shame if you are not very well
As I'll make your insides swell, swell, swell
I don't really want you to die
But if you do I'll just sigh, sigh, sigh.

I have to spread myself around
Before a clever vaccine, is found, found, found
Then I'll be the one who's dead
And you won't have to take to your bed, bed, bed.

Roger Latch


Diabetes UK 1 Million Step Challenge 2020

I would like to thank everyone in the church who sponsored me in my 1 Million Step challenge for Diabetes UK. This was to be achieved between 1 July and 30 September. It meant that on average I had to walk about 10800 steps a day. This was a challenge.

However I managed to achieve this feat on 6 September – all 'boots on walking' ie I did not count steps around the house. I walked alone and with friends and family to whom I am very grateful. I walked locally, around Kent, Cornwall, Wales, Warwickshire and Hampshire.

There was no minimum sponsorship for the charity but I managed to raise the amazing total of £1342.00. Thank you everyone.

Maggie Williams



Christmas Card Tree

As usual, the Emmanuel Christmas card tree will be at the back of the church during December, for you to hang a card to your Church friends on.

If you would like to leave a donation in the box provided, please do so. Money collected will go to our Christmas charities.

The Manna Society

Thank you for Emmanuel Church's **Harvest Festival gifts** to the Manna Centre. The food that we have received will be used throughout the next twelve months to provide meals to some of the poorest members of our society.

Although the pandemic prevents us from serving meals directly to our clients in the centre itself, we continue to provide takeaway meals every day, 7 days a week. The meal consists of a hot dinner and a sandwich. On an average day we provide 130 meals.

The work we do here is a practical and compassionate response to poverty and homelessness. The majority of our funding and our foodstuffs come from the Christian community. Without the continuing generosity of our supporters we would be unable to continue our work.

We are dependent on voluntary donations to raise approx. 85% of our annual £490,000 budget. Without your support we would be unable to offer the services we do. Any help you can give, financially or practically (food or men's clothing) throughout the year, will benefit some of the poorest members of our society.

On behalf of those who will benefit from your generosity please accept our thanks.

Best wishes,

P J Boyle

Manna Society Administrator

Annual Church Meeting

The Annual Church Meeting was scheduled for 22nd November but, obviously, had to be postponed.

It is now hoped to hold this on 24th January after the morning service.

This will be a very short meeting but is essential as the Accounts need to be approved and appointments confirmed..

Most of the reports were submitted prior to the November shutdown. These have been compiled and it was agreed these be printed in Outlook

Only a few copies will be available at the meeting for those who have not received Outlook, so please bring your copy of Outlook with you.

ANNUAL REPORTS NOVEMBER 2020

Church Secretary

What a strange year. Right at the close of 2019 we learned that Revd Alison Davis would be leaving. We were all sad to hear this but wished Alison well in her new post. It was intended she would leave at Easter but then the pandemic arrived and the URC agreed ministers should not move on until after lockdown. This was obviously a huge help to us at Emmanuel. Alison was in regular telephone contact, produced a fortnightly newsletter for all our members as well as organising some services via Zoom which members from all three of her churches linked in to. We were delighted that the Sunday Emmanuel opened for worship again was also Alison's last weekend here and so she was able to lead worship on that day and we were able to thank her and wish her goodbye.

The Methodist Circuit has continued to support us this year and their online Sunday services have been greatly appreciated. Members unable to access these online are sent a paper copy of the service by post each week by Joanne, the Circuit Administrator. This will continue for some time.

In re-opening the premises a huge thank you is due to all the Elders – Peter Lake drew up the risk assessments for the Church and hall and is continually having to check them as guidelines change. Thanks are also due to Laurence Bush and Tony Howard for their help in allowing us to open safely.

Since our last AGM we sadly have to report the deaths of three members – Rosemary Patterson, Josie Corcoran and Dorothy Limeburner. These ladies had not all been able to attend for a while but had been long standing members at Emmanuel. Happily we have two positive items to report. We were delighted to formally welcome Elsie Goodman into membership at Emmanuel, and some members were able to attend the wedding of Ella Izzard and Joe Stone when they were married at Emmanuel on 1st January. The service was conducted by Alison.

Last Christmas Emmanuel supported the Bexley Winter Shelter as our charity and the carol singers raised money, as usual, for Action for Children. We do not know if we will be able to go carol singing this year. Support for Harvest was incredible – most of us are not shopping in the usual way but there was a large quantity of goods donated and these were collected by the Manna Society who work to feed London's homeless. We are also supporting Mustard Seed's Love-in-a-box and thank you to all who have contributed to this.

My final thanks are to you all for your support - although things are different it is good to see so many members on a Sunday morning. I know we are all very grateful to Katherine for playing and am sure we all look forward to being able to really sing the hymns out loud again.

Jennifer Willson

-----oOo-----

Lettings

Until the first lockdown in March bookings were running at a comparable rate to the previous year earning just short of £10,000 in that period. Lettings then stopped abruptly and completely until that lockdown ended. Thereafter there was a trickle of bookings as a few groups returned. This again all but stopped when the second lockdown was announced at the end October. At the time of writing just three groups satisfying government exemptions continue to hire. In the time since the original lockdown just £1700 has been earned, meaning the annual lettings income for the year will be approximately half that earned in the previous twelve months.

We have endeavoured to meet all the Government restrictions whilst continuing to be available for support groups and other allowable activities. We have written a risk assessment and action plan to mitigate against the Covid risks with which all hirers must comply. This has necessitated limiting the number attending meetings and applying strict hygiene requirements. All groups are expected to sanitise equipment before use in addition to our regular in-house cleaning regime.

One of the AA groups is continuing to meet and we have provided desperately needed accommodation for music examinations. We have also let one room as a temporary office and have taken on a new after-school group. Most of our original hirers are keen to return but are reluctant to do so bearing in mind susceptibility of their membership. We will keep their time slots available until we pass through this current cloud.

The current situation can be expected to continue well into next spring when the hope of a vaccine may encourage groups to return. So hopefully next year's lettings income may match this year's before getting back to 'normal' in 2021 -2022.

Peter Lake, Church Lettings Manager

-----oOo-----

Outlook

Issues were produced every 3 months since the last AGM, coinciding with the issues of the Preaching Plan. One was delayed by a month due to Covid 19. We print about 120 copies per issue of about 28 pages and we send about 17 copies by post. The large printer in the Church office still seems to be coping well with the load. Many thanks to everyone who has contributed but please remember that this is Emmanuel's magazine and needs as much input from the congregation as possible.

Tony & Judith Howard

-----oOo-----

Property

Work completed since the last AGM.

Heating All central heating boilers and wall heaters have been serviced.

External All gutters have been cleaned and a few repairs made.

The Green room fire door was repaired.

Fire Extinguishers Fire extinguishers have been serviced.

Internal The printer was serviced.

Full electrical inspection and remedial work.

The signal light for the organ has been repaired.

The computer projector (mainly used by Women's Hour and occasionally for services) has been replaced.

The Griffith's room heater time switch was replaced.

The total amount spent on maintenance since the last AGM, excluding the projector, was £5387.

Proposed work

A quinquennial inspection is now due.

External There is a cracked pane of glass over a side aisle which should be replaced.

The asbestos roof over the Hall toilets is in a poor state and should be replaced.

It is not intended to do this until it deteriorates further.

The last external repainting (which was only the Manse side of the Hall) appears to have been in 2012. We should probably have both buildings repainted next summer.

Damp The internal walls in the front porch of the Hall are showing signs of damp but it is proving very difficult to determine where it is coming from.

Internal The kitchen area in the Church needs attention due to a water leak causing rot in the under-sink cupboard.

The Church heating could perhaps be improved with a room thermostat in preference to the thermostatic radiator valves.

Tony Howard

-----oOo-----

Food Bank

We have been taking food and toiletries to the Food Bank for several years now which used to entail a weekly visit with the generous donations put at the back of the church, but that came to a stop in March of 2020 with the arrival of the Coronavirus and the closing of the Church.

We thought that we could arrange a time to meet outside the Church for people to bring their donations but that was considered too risky and so the wonderful people from our congregation were asked to leave them in the boxes supplied at the various supermarkets. This went well for a while but with the long queues that developed this became onerous.

We then learnt that the Food bank had made arrangements with Morrisons to buy the food that they needed so everyone was asked to make their donations to the Food Bank directly. This made sense, saving us all a lot of time and it meant that the Food Bank only bought what they needed, avoiding shortages and surpluses.

Well done everyone who donates – it is a lifeline to many people who find themselves, for whatever reason, unable to feed their families. Keep up the good work especially at the moment with so many people unable to work.

Roger & Chris Latch

-----oOo-----

Church Flowers

The flowers in the church are being done again as we have re-opened. The list for volunteering to do the flowers or donate money for them to be done for a special occasion is at the back of the church. If two people want the same date there are the 2 arrangement positions – The main pedestal and the memorial table.

I am happy to continue doing the flowers rota, so if you want any information please ask me.

Marion Parfitt

-----oOo-----

Outreach

There have been no Outreach activities this year due to the coronavirus situation. Hopefully we can start again in 2021.

Jenni Thornton

-----oOo-----

Friday Coffee Mornings

Something is definitely missing since March and that is our Friday Coffee mornings. We were open for business every week regardless of the weather. There were always the same group every week plus a few passers-by who called in – especially coming from the doctors' opposite.

We hope to open when we can, so please come and support us when we do. When we do start up again we hope to sell some bric-a-brac outside to raise some much needed funds.

Marion Parfitt

-----oOo-----

Women's Hour

Since our last report a lot has happened in our lives. We had a good start to the year at our fellowship meetings with a few new faces joining us for tea and fun. This came to a complete halt in March and this took us all by surprise. The ladies all look forward to reopening in the near future. Looking back we did have a successful Christmas get together with a buffet lunch which everyone enjoyed. We also held a Valentines afternoon when the ladies appreciated the decorations in the hall.

I have been phoning the ladies and keeping in touch with them as most of our members live on their own. Luckily they have kept well and their families where possible kept an eye on them.

Our Freda is in a care home and is knitting 'For England' as her daughter Sue tells us. She is keeping well and has lots of company there.

I thank her for her many years with the Women's Hour Fellowship and we will get together when we can as next year is our One Hundred Years Anniversary. God bless all my ladies and see you soon.

Marion Parfitt

-----oOo-----

Parent and Toddler Group

Pre Lockdown we had lots of fun at Toddler group and we ended 2019 with our traditional Christmas Party and had our Special Guest Father Christmas give out gifts to the children. We participated in Lucy's Pink Day and have had themed arts and crafts activities provided and organised by Sarah.

Unfortunately we have not been able to return to meetings since Lockdown but look forward to returning in the New Year. We have had many of our volunteers eager to return. Volunteers: 8, Families attending: Approx 10 (20-25 people)

Ros Marchant

-----oOo-----

Messy Church

We started our 7th year of Messy Church in September 2019 and it just got better and better through Christmas and into the New Year. We had our February 2020 meeting on the 8th with the theme of love and 50 children plus parents and grandparents and then at the end of the month things began to go pear shaped with Covid 19 on the horizon. Our planned theme was "Spring is Sprung" with some wonderful crafts on the 14th March but as each day passed getting closer to the date we began to realise that our Messy world was being turned upside down.

We came to terms with not being able to hold a meeting for the children's sake and also because most of our Messy Angels are in the "At Risk" group so we decided to hand out craft packs to parents outside the hall but then realised that the risk of spreading the infection was too great so abandoned that idea as well. We tried, for a while, emailing craft ideas, quizzes etc. but with a range of ages from 2 to 13 and some negative feedback I must admit that that was abandoned too.

We have no idea when we will be able to start Messy Church again, but certainly not until we get a viable vaccine – perhaps some time next year when this dreadful virus passes into history.

Roger Latch

-----oOo-----

Thursday Morning Ladies Badminton

Well, what a year it has been for us all and obviously our badminton had to shut down for a while, although we were there in spirit and managed to meet up outdoors socially distancing of course, a few times.

We have resumed playing taking all appropriate measures for the last few weeks but sadly this may have to stop again although we are not sure (is anyone?). However, what I would say is that the bond we all share through this group has helped us to manage this terrible ordeal with our funny little texts and messages of motivation to one another. What a great group and long may it continue!"

Liz Newcomb

-----oOo-----

4th Sidcup Guides

Meeting- Fridays in term time 7.30-9pm. Emmanuel Church Hall

Guiders- Maggie Williams Liz Rees

We have 15 guides and 1 young leader (Tayah). There are 3 Brownies waiting to come up to Guides. (There are rules how many can meet in the hall so when rules are relaxed we will welcome them).

We started the school year in the usual way meeting on Fridays. Carol singing in Tudor Court in aid of ACH. Winter camp in Gilwell in January was enjoyed. Then came Lockdown 1. Virtual meetings were started over Zoom in the summer term. We met once at Cudham camp site outside in August with 8 girls. We restarted in September on Zoom. As we had tentatively planned a meeting in the hall Lockdown 2 arrived. We continue over Zoom.

Tayah was selected to attend an international jamboree in Poland this summer. Sadly due to Covid 19 it was postponed and sadly has now been cancelled altogether. We hope another opportunity will present itself for Tayah in the (near) future when we will perhaps return to the 'old' normal.

Maggie (aka Magpie) and Liz (aka Heron)

-----oOo-----

6th Sidcup Brownies

We started 2020 with 23 Brownies attending. We had a busy year planned with several trips out and events scheduled, but unfortunately, we had to cancel them due to COVID19.

Spring Term In February we attended Thinking Day at Kemnal's hosted by the 7th Sidcup. We completed our First Aid skills builder badge, raised money for Lucy Light with Lucy's Pink Week and participated in a Sponsored Jump to raise money for Girl Guiding Australia to help after the terrible bush fires. We

had also planned a Talent Show to raise money for Tayah to go on a trip to Poland with Guiding, but both the talent show and trip have had to be postponed.

Summer Term The summer term saw us all go into Lock Down. We stayed in contact with our Brownies via the WhatsApp group. We asked our girls and leaders to clap for the NHS in uniform for St Georges day and awarded badges to those who took part. We kept in touch and sent out information to our parents and girls for several badges that Guiding had organised over the initial lock down period: a VE Day Sleepover, Adventures at Home and the unit ran the Guiding Light Challenge. We were very happy to be able to award all the girls with some badges at the end of term.

Sadly, the end of the summer term saw Claire Smith leave the unit to concentrate on her health and her son Andrew. We have been very lucky though, and have been joined by Issy Richardson as our new assistant leader.

Autumn Term This term we have started Zoom meetings every Friday. We have planned to complete our Influence Skills Builder, Viqueen, Halloween Walk, Remembrance and Institute of Physics badges. We have compiled and delivered packs with all the materials and instructions for these badges so that every girl, regardless of whether or not they take part in the zoom meetings, will have the opportunity to achieve this term's badges.

We have had several girls move up to the Guides and come up to us from the Rainbows. We now have 18 brownies on our books. We are expecting 3 more girls to move up to Guides at the end of the year and have 10 Rainbows on our waiting list to start in January.

This concludes our Annual report for 2020. We sincerely hope that 2021 is a healthier and happier year for everyone.....

Ali Jones

-

-----oOo-----

6th Sidcup Rainbows Annual Report 2019

Pre-lockdown, the Rainbows helped raise money for the Australia Bushfire Appeal, participating in a Jumpathon. We also celebrated Chinese New Year, Lucy's Pink Day and worked towards the Wing Badge and the Friendship badge. We celebrated Thinking Day 2020 and came together with other groups in the district. This year it was hosted at Kemnal's Scout Hall.

During Lockdown, we have been busy and kept in contact with our Rainbows and offered badge work and special events including VE Day Guiding Sleepover at Home, District Picnic At Home, Adventures at Home, 40 Day Summer Challenge, Spy Adventures. Naomi kindly delivered Easter treats and badges to the girls.

This term we have created a Rainbows at Home Magazine - Autumn Edition for our Rainbows, packed full of ideas and activities for the girls. Edited and produced by Naomi who did an outstanding job and dedicated many hours to

creating it, there are contributions from the Leadership team and Rainbows - lots to keep the girls busy. We then hand delivered them to the girls during half term. We have had lots of lovely feedback. The girls have been working towards the Halloween fun badge, Nature badge, Home help Challenge badge, Parliament badge and Children In Need badge. We are now in the process of creating Rainbows at Home Magazine - Christmas Edition. We were sad that we were unable to meet face to face since Lockdown but we have enjoyed keeping in touch with our Rainbows community.

Rainbows: 26 Volunteers: 6

Ros Marchant -

-----oOo-----

3rd Sidcup Scout Group

3rd Sidcup Scout Group like everyone, have had a different year than was planned. The group turned 85 years old in February and all sections celebrated with a party to start a chain of events to celebrate across the year, sadly this couldn't happen due to Covid.

Between March and September, we held virtual camps, sessions and online challenges to keep our members engaged in Scouting and started back face to face meetings at the church hall in the middle of September. We have had to adapt our programme to maintain social distancing but we can still have fun and teach new skills, as we have before and will continue to do so.

Thanks go to the leaders and parents who support the group in what has been a challenging year, and the Church for opening up the hall for us to meet again face to face. Virtual Scouting works but you can't beat the face to face interaction on Monday evening or when we are allowed to go camping.

We are looking forward to continue Scouting for many more years to come.

Stay Safe. Yours in Scouting,

Kevin Barnes

GSL @ 3rd Sidcup Scout Group

-----oOo-----

Weekday Activities

Before Covid-19

Monday	2. 00pm	Woman's Hour (except Bank Hols)
	5. 45pm	3 rd Sidcup Beavers
	6. 30pm	3 rd Sidcup Cub Scouts
	7. 30pm	3 rd Sidcup Scouts
Thursday	10. 00am	Ladies Morning Club
Friday	10. 30am—noon	Coffee Morning
	1. 30pm	Parents & Toddlers Club
	4. 45pm	6 th Sidcup Rainbows
	6. 00pm	6 th Sidcup Brownies
	7. 30pm	4 th Sidcup Guides



MINISTER

Awaiting new Minister

CHURCH SECRETARY

Mrs Jennifer Willson
37 The Grove
North Cray,
DA14 5NG Tel: 020 8302 0059
emmanuelchurchsidcup@gmail.com

HALL BOOKINGS

Mr. Peter Lake Tel: 020 8300 6181
07711 043876
lettings@emmanuelchurchsidcup.org.uk

EDITORS

Tony and Judith Howard
9 Priestlands Park Road
Sidcup, DA15 7HR Tel: 020 8300 6936
Emmanuel.church.outlook@gmail.com

CIRCUIT WEB SITE CHURCH WEB SITE

www.orpchiscircuit.org.uk
www.emmanuelchurchsidcup.org.uk.