

CHRIST CHURCH, EPSOM COMMON

Registered Charity No. 1127945

www.christchurchepsom.org.uk



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Dear Friends

I find it hard to believe that it's a year – and what an amazing 12 months! – since, on the eve of my sabbatical, I wrote my last pastoral letter. I was extremely grateful to you all for releasing me for what proved to be an immensely rich experience that will sustain me for a long time.

Since returning in December there have been many challenges, not least the shock announcement about the closing of the Wells Social centre. Considerable prayer and consultation led to the painful but seemingly right decision to suspend weekly services there. I am pleased that many of those from Christ Church on the Wells have found a home at the parish church and hope that we can continue to seek God's Will in how best to demonstrate a loving Christian presence on the Wells estate – and, indeed, all our local estates.

It is this desire to be more outgoing and integrated within the local community that saw us participating in MGS04, the recent Borough-wide Arts Festival. *'Treasures of Christ Church'* was a superb example of networking as we developed local partnerships and attracted hundreds of visitors to our beautiful building. (And, thanks to the torrential rain overnight before the EU Referendum which flooded our paths, hundreds of voters had an early taste of what was in store as they passed through the church to the Polling Station in the Hall.)

Our long term vision of **'Christ Church as a Living Well and Christ Church living well'** is becoming increasingly embedded into our communal life. The recent sermon series (still available on line), APCM and PCC Away Day have all contributed to this and, I believe, given fresh impetus and vocation.

To bring this vision to fruition – making it a lived reality – we need to foster current enthusiasm and deepen our understanding of the opportunities and the challenges. Consequently, I am proposing a series of focused events during the Autumn to try to define further our mission and purpose, thus helping us to prepare for what may well be an intensive but ultimately fulfilling few years ahead.

Wednesday 31st August 'Holy Day' – 24 hours to pray through the Living Well Vision using the Celtic rhythms of St. Aiden. This will include hourly themes for personal devotion as well as times of corporate worship and the church being open for drop in.

Sunday 25th September 'Holy Dreams' - 10 am Parish Communion during which we will be sharing plans for 'Christ Church being a Living Well', dreaming dreams together about our longer term vision and receiving wider ideas.

Sunday 9th October 'Holy Resources' 10 am Parish Communion during which we will review how we are living well financially and identifying needs for the future.

Saturday 22nd & Sunday 23rd October 'Holy Habits' - launching the Living Well Discipleship Scheme and reflecting on how we live healthy, holistic lives in terms of practical spiritual guidance.

Please prioritise these events as they will help prepare us for more targeted conversations around possible enhancement of our premises and any fundraising that would be needed to enable this to happen. If all goes well, I envisage that, during November, we will report back ideas from 'Holy Dreams' and invite members of the Diocesan Advisory Committee for further advice in preparing a Statement of Needs. Our architect can then begin drafting plans for consultation in the New Year with a view to faculty and planning applications during 2017. When the full extent of a project is clear, we would need to launch the necessary funding campaign. Completion of any project is, of course, several years away.

I believe we are entering a very exciting phase as a church community and have particularly enjoyed exploring and unleashing different spiritual gifts at *REVIVE*. Real growth in our church will happen only by tapping into the power of God's Holy Spirit – which I feel is desperate to break through if only we would let it! During these summer weeks, as we listen to individuals' stories of God at work in their lives, I pray there will be a real outpouring of the Spirit to gladden our hearts and unlock a passion that will ignite a spark that becomes a flame of new life and hope. Let us say "yes" to God in all aspects of our lives and truly be part of Bishop Andrew's vision for the Diocese in '**Transforming Church and Transforming Lives**'.

Praying for God's refreshment for you all over the summer.

"Come unto me all you who labour and are heavy laden and I will refresh you."

(Matthew 11:28)

Rosemary