

The Parish Falconwood



Bishop Ridley

CHURCH

2020 Annual Reports
For APCM 2021

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Church People

Vicar
Church Wardens
PCC Secretary

The Vicar

As you know, an APCM report reflects and give thanks for what happened during the last year. And this APCM booklet you read is a testimony that even though the church doors were at closed various times during 2020-2021, the church continues its mission here in Falconwood.

I know that many of you supported each other through your Christian love and generosity — telephone calls and spending time with each other on Zoom or Facetime. The one thing we all got accustomed to during the last year is waiting. Waiting for the right time and Ecclesiastes comes to mind:

We do not know what lies ahead of us, but the one thing we do know is that Jesus's spirit has faithfully guided us to this point.

a time to be born and a time to die,
a time to plant and a time to uproot,
a time to kill and a time to heal,
a time to tear down and a time to build,
a time to weep and a time to laugh,
a time to mourn and a time to dance,
a time to scatter stones and a time to gather them,
a time to embrace and a time to refrain from embracing,
a time to search and a time to give up,
a time to keep and a time to throw away,
a time to tear and a time to mend,
a time to be silent and a time to speak,
a time to love and a time to hate,
a time for war and a time for peace.

What do workers gain from their toil?
I have seen the burden God has laid on the human race.
He has made everything beautiful in its time.
He has also set eternity in the human heart.

(Ecclesiastes 3:1-10, from The Bible, NIV)

This little poem from the Old Testament reminds us of our life and times – of all the different things we experience and go through in a lifetime. And what a precious gift life is. We get to do all sorts of things, very soon we can meet all sorts of people again, see all kinds of beautiful things, taste all sorts of wonderful foods, visit all kinds of exciting places, and the greatest of experiences is that we get to love and be loved by others through Christ.

What will the future look like for us as the church in Falconwood in 2021 and beyond?

The first thing we need to do is come back as a church family, which takes time. As Ecclesiastes's reading teaches us, there is a time for everything, and we need to trust in this.

I received this in my email inbox, which I found very helpful. It is addressed to leaders, but in many ways, everyone who is reading the APCM booklet is a leader in this respect;

"It's tempting to paint 2021 as a relief to all our problems. Trust me; I feel the urge to do that too. Deeply. But that would be a mistake.

For some leaders, it would be a fatal one. Either because it could take you out because of a wrong expectation of the future.

Lowering your expectations for 2021 now will lead to greater joy, a far more resilient organization/people and a much healthier you later.

As they say, the secret to happiness is low expectations. One of the reasons you're so frustrated and exhausted right now is because you expected things would be better.

Lowering your expectations increases both your resilience and your happiness almost every time."

I want to say "thank you" to the entire Church family for everything you do, for love in Christ and for each other.

As we are gradually coming out of lockdown and start a new normality, let us be patient with each other and trust in the Easter hope of the resurrection of new life.

Rev. Mark

Church Wardens

Well, that was a year that was!

The young, young at heart and those in between have, I am sure all found it a strange year in many ways. Whilst we have not been able to come together as we would normally for weekly services and particularly for Easter and Christmas, we have found other ways to worship during those periods when Bishop Ridley Church has complied with Government and Diocesan guidelines and closed its doors for communal worship. Where we were able to remain open for private prayer we have done so. There have been no weekly activities in church during the course of the year but contact has been maintained with the various groups to keep them up-to-date as we manoeuvred our way forward.

The Quinquennial Report mentioned in last year's report arrived and did not identify any major issues and there were no surprises. We were able, when restrictions allowed, to undertake the work to repair the window frames facing The Green and replace the fire exit doors on the same side with more robust metal doors which we hope will cause less problems than the wooden ones they replaced. We also added a ramp to the doors to allow easier access/egress into the main body of the church together with some safety railings. The heating was fully serviced and the faults repaired though delayed until January 2021 due to the unavailability of the necessary parts. Unfortunately, we were unable to hold any

work parties during the year but when possible, some garden maintenance was undertaken by volunteers. We will just have to wait and see what we will be able to undertake during the coming year.

During the periods when the Church was open it was cleaned in accordance with Diocesan and Government Covid-19 guidelines, seating met the social distancing requirements and risk assessments were undertaken at regular intervals throughout the year. There was one very special highlight during the latter part of the year when the church was able to open its doors for the wedding of Ryan and Eleanor Freeman. It was not the wedding they had planned, numbers attending drastically reduced in accordance with Covid-19 requirements but in some ways, I hope that they felt it was still their special day.

At the end of September, we said farewell to Liz Wood who has been our church administrator for the last 10 years. We are grateful for the work she has undertaken on behalf of the church during those years and we wish her well along with Amy, Alex and Ben in their new life with her wider family in Eastbourne. Additionally, Gary Bisson, our deputy warden, stepped down following his and Kim's move to Sussex. We send them our thanks for their commitment to Bishop Ridley over many years including for Gary's periods as warden and latterly deputy warden and Kim for her work with the younger members of the church in Sunday club. We send them our good wishes for the future.

Behind the scenes during periods of lockdown church business continued to be undertaken by a variety of means including Zoom to ensure that we were as ready as we could be when we got the ok to re-open safely for worship.

In closing Pat and I would like to take this opportunity to thank Letitia for her ongoing support as deputy warden, Joe our Verger and indeed everyone who has assisted us in fulfilling our roles during this very different year.

*Pat & Derek
Church Wardens*

PCC Secretary

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the last APCM was held in September and therefore we seem to have come round to this year's meeting very quickly. There were no new appointees to the PCC in 2020. Gary Bisson stepped down following his and Kim's move away from the parish and Sarah Rogers resigned on 11 October for personal reasons.

Elected officers for 2020-2021 were: Secretary: Karen Freeman; Treasurer: Neil Jost and Vice Chairman: Derek Sears. Derek Sears and Patricia Waters were elected as Churchwardens.

The Parochial Church Council (PCC) met six times in 2020. In order to comply with lockdown restrictions, some meetings were held via Zoom. Our ordinary meetings began with a scripture reading and a time of prayer. The main subject for discussion has been the church's response to the pandemic but other subjects discussed included: Parish Weekends at Home and Away; Christmas services including the delivery of hampers to the elderly in

our community; Diocesan and Deanery Synods; Churches Together in Welling charity giving; Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults; building and maintenance; Bishop Ridley School; leadership teams; church finance and the future role and appointment of an office administrator.

Liz, Mark, Jayne Runacres and I maintain our digital church presence. Our Bishop Ridley Facebook page elicited an amazing response to our appeal for toys and gifts for the mothers and children who take refuge with Bexley Women's Aid which shows what an important way our website and social media pages are for connecting with our community (see photo below). To maintain our social media profile please ensure you 'Like' and 'Follow' our Facebook page and 'Like', 'Share' and 'Comment' on our posts.

It was wonderful to celebrate Ryan and Eleanor's wedding in church in October and we were all thankful for the prayers and help of our church family that enabled the wedding to go ahead.

I'd once again like to thank my PCC colleagues for their support and encouragement during the year. I'd also like to extend my thanks and appreciation to Liz, our erstwhile Church Administrator, and wish every success and happiness for her future in Sussex.

Karen Freeman
PCC Secretary



Church Leadership Teams

Mission and Outreach

Music Group

Pastoral Care

Prayer Ministry

Mission and Outreach

With the suspension of activities within the church and social distancing throughout 2020, all the team's usual mission and outreach work couldn't take place. However, in an endeavour to keep in touch with our Lunch Club, Tea & Chat members and people identified as living alone or isolated in our community, it was decided to put together Christmas gift bags to show that they hadn't been forgotten by the church and lift their spirits at Christmas. A total of 75 were delivered and were very much appreciated. Many thanks to all those who contributed and made it happen.



Santa's little elfers came to the rescue by packing Christmas gift bags which were well received

Mission and Outreach Team

Music Group

As I write, it's been a year since we have had any live singing or music in Bishop Ridley Church. Sadly, due to Coronavirus restrictions, singing was one of the first activities to be stopped and may well be one of the last to resume. Fortunately, Mark came to the rescue with some recorded songs and music, for which we are very grateful.

For those of you who are missing singing, there is always Songs of Praise on the BBC and many other online church services. After all, there are no restrictions on singing in the privacy of your own home!

Debbie Haughton

Pastoral Care

Since my last APCM report we've been pretty much in a state of 'Lock Down' or with movement restrictions in place. However, the Pastoral Care Team has continued to try and maintain contact with the more vulnerable members of Bishop Ridley along with getting their shopping and ensuring that they receive the weekly news sheet and any Parish letters from Rev Mark. With more and more people being vaccinated and the gradual lifting of restrictions, there looks to be a return to usual activities. Church services have recently restarted, although many folk are still unable to attend for a variety of reasons, but we will continue to provide help until it is no longer necessary.

The current restrictions still mean that, unfortunately, we are unable to offer Home Communion or lifts to church. Hopefully it won't be too long now before normal service can be resumed!

Many thanks to you all for 'looking out' for each other during this unusual time and showing the love of Jesus in action.

If you have any pastoral concerns, please do contact either

Rev. Mark	020 8298 0065	Email: mark.tariq@me.com or
Grace or Adrian via the church office	020 8303 9998	Email: info@brchurch.org.uk

God bless

Grace and Adrian

Prayer Ministry Team

The prayer circle has been quite busy with lots of needs beside those brought to us by the virus. There has been lots of answered prayer, which is wonderful and does wonders for our faith, in spite of everything.

There has obviously been no prayer after services because for most of the year there have been no services! However, a few people took advantage of Mark keeping the church open during the first lockdown to come and spend an hour or so in quiet prayer on their own.

The prayer triplet formed by Grace, Jeanne and Margaret hasn't been in operation either because we haven't been able to meet. When we're all finally 'released' from our confinement it would be lovely to see some more prayer triplets formed.

I know people have been praying alone at home or with others in digital services, but how lovely it will be to pray together in church once more!

Margaret Robinson

Church Life

Home Groups
Oasis and Weektime Prayer
Ladies' Social Group
Men's Fellowship Evenings
Zoom Coffee Mornings
Ridley Bear

Home Groups

For most of the last ten months our home group has met via WhatsApp and Zoom fortnightly, to hold each other in prayer and perhaps discuss things we are reading or watching on YouTube. Some of us have been watching 'Unlocking the Bible' talks by the late David Pawson (<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UChcMzsUck5hwRHE77AOTNSA>). Although it is not as good as meeting in person, we all find this an essential way of keeping in touch and supporting each other.

We are only five in number: Jackie, Laury, Fred, Gary and Toni and would welcome newcomers to our group.

Laury Bartlett

Other groups have not been able to meet since the initial lockdown in March 2020. If you are interested in joining a group when they are able to resume, please contact Revd Mark.

Oasis and Weektime Prayer

Since the beginning of the pandemic and the first national lockdown in March 2020, it has not been possible to open the church for these activities.

Jeanne McCormick

Ladies' Social Group

As you can imagine, the opportunities to meet this year have been zero. Let's hope and pray that sometime later in 2021 we will have an opportunity to get together.

It is good to have opportunities to get together and we are happy to welcome anyone to our ladies' events. Should you wish to join us or if you have any suggestions for other activities, please see contact me after a church service or by email (karenfreeman64@btinternet.com).

Karen Freeman

Zoom Coffee Mornings

In the periods that the church was closed, Zoom coffee mornings were held after online church services on Sunday mornings. When we have been unable to meet in person, it has been a wonderful opportunity to catch up with our church family, even though our topics of conversation were limited to where we had had our daily walks and the excitement of visiting a supermarket.

Hopefully it won't be too long before coffee after church services will be able to resume.

Karen Freeman

Ridley Bear Challenge Everest Appeal for the charity Fare Share

At the beginning of January 2021 Ridley Bear made an unexpected return to Bishop Ridley Church for a special one off 'lockdown' appeal.

Inspired to fundraise for the charity Fare Share, following the appearance of the Manchester Utd footballer Marcus Rashford and his mum Mel on BBC Breakfast, Ridley Bear set an indoor challenge for our children, uniformed group leaders and really anyone else at church who wanted to join in and that was to climb up a virtual Mount Everest on their stairs at home.

Not surprising during this extended period of lockdown, it was nice to support a good cause and to do something as part of a team whilst in the safety of your own home.

A number of children enthusiastically (and perhaps parents not so enthusiastically!) took part in the challenge. So many thanks in particular to the 8th Welling Brownies and their families, our uniformed group leaders, children and leaders from Sunday Club, and not forgetting the Rev. Mark and various members of the church family who also put on their woolly hats and anoraks for a few stair-climbs as well.

We had some great photos sent in which were shared on our Facebook page and we reported on Ridley's progress each week with a little update so we knew how far he had climbed.

The virtual ascent of Mount Everest which is 29,028 feet high, was the equivalent of climbing about 3000 flights of stairs. We started on Saturday 2nd January 2021 and completed on Monday 22nd February, so after 7 weeks and 2 days of climbing our stairs at home we can say "Challenge complete!"

The initial target was to raise £250, however with gift aid donations it has now exceeded £800 which is fantastic and will go towards supporting lunchtime meals for disadvantaged families during school holidays.

Thank you to everyone who entered into the spirit of the challenge, which we hope raised a smile during such difficult times. With many thanks to everyone who donated, encouraged or did some climbing at home, every step was worth it!

Ridley Bear Challenge Everest Appeal
c/o Bishop Ridley Church, The Green, Welling DA16 2PG

www.justgiving.com/fundraising/RidleyBearAppeal

Ridley Bear
David Snow



Youth, Children and Safeguarding

Safeguarding Children, Young People and Vulnerable Adults

Youth Council

Babes and Toddlers

Sunday Club

7th Welling Cubs

8th Welling Brownies

8th Welling Rainbows

Safeguarding Children, Young People and Vulnerable Adults

Despite Covid-19 affecting 'church' as we know it, it continued to be a very busy year in terms of safeguarding as one would expect. At the start of the calendar year we received the usual email from the Bishop's Lead for Safeguarding to remind parishes as they prepared for their APCMs of important issues and responsibilities the new PCC would need to commit to. Before we had a chance to comply Covid-19 struck, churches closed, our APCM was postponed until 23rd September meaning that the new PCC could not meet for the first time until early October.

During 'lockdown' the Diocesan Safeguarding Team in the main worked from home, but parishes were reassured that one member of the team would endeavour to be in the office to provide all the safeguarding support that might be needed. In addition, they issued a monthly Safeguarding Bulletin to provide up-to-date information and guidance.

The Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) realized almost immediately that receiving physical documents as proof of identity from an applicant applying for a DBS would cause difficulties for Lead Recruiters. They therefore revised their temporary guidance on checking ID Documents to enable them to be viewed over a video link, or scanned images to be used in advance of a DBS check being submitted. There were a number of DBS renewals in 2020 and some checks relating to the Update Service giving us the opportunity to test the changes fully and all worked well.

Had the Covid-19 pandemic not happened, Parish Safeguarding Officers (PSO) would have been invited to the annual service in Rochester and then for refreshments afterwards in the garden at Bishops Court, but sadly that could not happen. Bishop James therefore wrote to all PSOs saying what he would have said had we been able to gather together as we had done in previous years. A kind and appreciated gesture. Possibly because this did not happen, all PSOs were invited to attend a meeting via Zoom broken down into the three Arch Deaconries; for Bromley and Bexley this took place in early December. Good to meet fellow PSOs and new members of the Diocesan Safeguarding Team and I believe more might follow.

I apologise for constant reference to the pandemic, but sadly it has impacted so much, not least on Safeguarding Training. In response to no longer being able to have face-to-face modules for training, the National Safeguarding Team created a brand-new package of Leadership training. The new module is made up of two sessions and for the foreseeable future, all the trainer led elements in the module will be carried out via Zoom. I am afraid I cannot say anymore at this stage as my training is not due to be updated until May 2021.

Returning to the practical elements, in March we were advised that because the Safeguarding Audit in 2019 had been well received by parishes as it helped in the formation of an Action Plan and highlighted areas where improvement was needed, the diocese decided to issue a self-assessment tool based on the audit but updated to take account of guidance. Although parishes were not required to submit this to the diocese, they were meant to use it to track progress that had been made in implementing safeguarding policy and to identify remaining gaps or actions that needed to be taken. Under normal

circumstances I would expect to have been able to complete this by the end of May, but again because of Covid-19 I was not able to finalise it until the end of October following the first meeting of the new PCC. My thanks to Mark, our Vicar, Pat and Derek, our Church Wardens and Adrian our Pastoral Team Lead, for reviewing this and the accompanying Action Plan with me.

I mentioned at the start of this report the important issues and responsibilities the new PCC would have to commit to. Let me provide a little more by way of detail. Most of you are aware that the PCC is responsible for all aspects of safeguarding in relation to children, young people and vulnerable adults. The new PCC therefore each year must reaffirm its commitment to Diocesan Policies, evidence of which must be displayed on the Safeguarding Notice Board in the Narthex. As trustees, all PCC members must be DBS checked and under Church of England safeguarding requirements must complete safeguarding training at least to Basic Awareness level, ideally to Foundation level. Everything relating to safeguarding must go before the PCC for approval and I am extremely grateful for their diligence and support. I am grateful too to Karen, our PCC Secretary, for ensuring that all the relevant documentation comes my way. On the subject of thanks, let me extend for myself and on behalf of the PCC a very big thank you to Bob Pearce for his service over many years as Children's Advocate. Bob has decided to stand down from this role this year and we are so grateful for his commitment and his ability to relate to all our children and young people over the years.

I mentioned the PCC being responsible for all aspects of safeguarding but let us never forget that safeguarding is the responsibility of us all.

Letitia M. Ashcroft
Parish Safeguarding Officer

Babes and Toddlers

Well, what can I say, what a year! Covid-19 took hold and closed most things in our normal life. God-willing we will get through this. Christmas 2019 came to Babes and Toddlers with a party and Santa, food and fun and games. We returned on 15 January 2020 to new term with some new members. Our membership to that date was 33 children. We were closed on the 26 February because of sickness, possibly the start of the virus. Half-term came and we were only open for 2 more weeks before we were forced to close because of Covid-19. So the story continues into 2021, when will it end and get back to NORMAL? We missed all the children going on to nursery and school and we are not sure how many we will have left on our original books when we finally return.

Keep safe everyone.

Alison, Anita, Ellie and Pam

7th Welling Cubs

2020 started with making plans for Camp but it was not long before these were shattered. March brought Covid-19 and the out in Scouting was suddenly out!

We started a Facebook group to maintain contact with Cubs through their parents and encouraged them with badge work. A number of Cubs earned badges including gardening badge, DIY, Home Help, Chef, Hikes and Music.

We took part in the Great Indoors Challenge organised by the Scout Association and set the Cubs a very varied series of challenges to complete including knotting, making obstacle courses, making names out of socks and to share their achievements. It was great to see pictures of their achievements.

In April we joined the virtual camp organised by Northumberland Scouts to achieve the world record for the highest number of Scout members sleeping out of their beds either in tents outside or in dens created inside and received a joining in certificate for this. Some of our Cubs were very creative with their dens and for some it was the first time they had slept outside and it gave them the bug to want more. Typically, the week had started glorious but as soon as John and I put our tent up in the garden it started to rain but that's Scouting and the bacon sandwich cooked outside was great! We also joined a virtual campfire organised by Thriftwood Campsite.

We clapped for the NHS and on St George's Day did this in uniform. We celebrated 75th VE Day with a series of activities and picnics and the houses looked great with the bunting the Cubs had decorated together with their Spitfires and Hurricanes.

In June we took to Zoom meetings which was a challenge but we are enjoying them and have a good group who attend each week and we learn from them as well. We do a mix of badge work activities, games, Scavenger Hunts quizzes, cooking. Badges covered were Air Activities, Local Knowledge, Astronomers, International and Environmental as well as firework night activities, Chinese New Year, Remembrance Day and the Cubs enjoyed making the poppies to display at church. Although we have learned a lot over the weeks with the work we try to keep it quite light hearted and also include a range of games to give a bit of movement rather than just sitting at a screen.

We have had two Cub Forums when the Cubs have given us ideas of what they want to do on Zoom and we have included their ideas in our programme. We have invested a new Cub over Zoom and managed to pass over his badges from one screen to another. It has been great to have parent help as well with such things as making models of places of interest from around the world and making mug cakes and Easter nests.

We have enjoyed outside visitors – African drumming who taught the Cubs to play using pots and pans and wooden spoons from their kitchens – don't know if parents enjoyed that one, Reptile Encounter who showed, and told us about, different snakes and lizards and a chameleon with an amazing tongue and a visit from Councillor James Hunt, Mayor of Bexley

who was able to tell us about his time at 7th and answered some interesting and quirky questions the Cubs raised.

We were very pleased to receive a Commendation Award from the Mayor to recognise exceptional contributions and acts of kindness made to local individuals and communities during the Covid-19 Pandemic.

This has been a very different form of Scouting this year but although we have enjoyed it we look forward to being able to meet face to face and being able to put the out back into Scouting!

7th Welling Cub Leaders

2nd Welling Brownies

2nd Welling Brownies has continued to run during this difficult year.

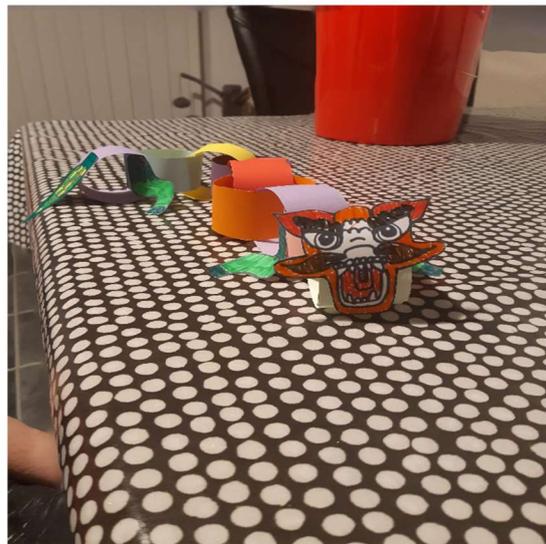
We have met virtually on Zoom and have had lots of fun meeting this way. Activities have included providing Christmas, Mother's Day and Easter crafts, quizzes and games (the absolute favourite being scavenger hunts!

We also set a project for the girls to complete at home with a reward chart tracking their progress.

The leaders and young leaders have all had an input and continue to work as a team despite the circumstances and this has been appreciated by the girls and their families.

2nd Welling Brownie Leaders

Cub Activities during the pandemic



8th Welling Brownies

We were just about to go on our annual pack holiday with 27 out of the 28 girls going when lockdown occurred. It was going to be busy and a challenging holiday so all were very disappointed. However, being positive all the resources, paperwork and theme are ready for when we can go again.

We started Zooming with our brownies practically from day one and have been ever since (we do take a break during the school holidays). We normally have about 14 girls Zooming on a regular basis. During the year we lost 6 older girls that were due to go to guides, and we have gained some new girls from rainbows. Not all girls can Zoom due to various reasons, and to keep those involved we do email out the activities that we do, so they can join in.

The division have tried to keep all the girls involved by arranging a VE Day sleepover, picnic at home and a sleigh challenge at Christmas. They all got badges and certificates for taking part. The majority of girls joined in and was lovely to see all their pictures and photos. We also sent out resources such as the 40-day summer challenge and Paw Print Challenges in which the whole family could get involved and also the Poppy activities for Remembrance Sunday.

We have also been joining in with the virtual climb of Everest, which the girls and parents have thoroughly enjoyed.

Until we meet again, we are not sure how many girls we have 'lost'. We hope everyone will return, we have got a healthy waiting list but only time will tell what happens. Two of our young leaders have gone to uni, but we have gained a parent who is just about to start her guiding qualification with us.

We plan to have a big celebration party when we are allowed to say welcome to the new girls and goodbye to the girls that have gone to guides.

The parents have been very supportive and we have had some lovely comments about how we have been keeping the girls involved throughout the year with different Zooms, activities and 'events' - in a big way focusing on them has kept us going.

Sue, Jessica and Shirley

8th Welling Rainbows

2020 was definitely a strange year. Rainbows started the year fundraising for Australia after they heard about what had happened because of the Bushfires. They managed to raise an incredible £420 via Smartie Tube Kindness challenge, cake sale and donations. A huge thank you is due to parents, friends for sponsoring the Rainbows, those who bought cakes and gave donations at the Cake Sale and for donations from BR members. We have received a thank you from Girlguiding Australia. Then, shortly after, meetings were suspended due to Covid-19 pandemic. Despite meetings being suspended we were still as busy.

To continue the Guiding spirit we embraced a new world to us - the virtual world. We started with setting no-meeting challenges for the Rainbows before immersing into regular Zoom meetings. Zoom meetings started off with low resource activities while finding our feet. It is amazing what can be made from a toilet roll tube! The last 2-3 terms we delivered activity packs with resources in for each weekly meeting.

During these meetings Rainbows have been earning a lot of badges – Innovate Stage 1 Skill Builder, Network Stage 1 Skill Builder, Animal Lover Interest Badge, Know Myself Theme Award, Festival Roundabout, Reindeer Challenge, 25th Birthday Badge, 40 days of Summer Challenge, Pudsey challenge and Let's Go Explore. Rainbows at home had lots of fun celebrating the VE Day 75th Anniversary by completing challenges like having an afternoon tea, making decorations, signing/ dancing to old songs and by ending the day with a sleepover where they had to sleep somewhere other than their own bed. Rainbows also enjoyed a Picnic at Home event run by Greater London Kent (GLK) County.

We like to have an active part of our meeting so the girls are not sedentary for all the meeting and have run games and activities including Scavenger Hunts which they really enjoy. We also allow time for Rainbows to show items or share with everyone what they have been doing that is important to them to encourage their social interaction. We spent one meeting holding a pet show, which is something we would never have been able to do in face to face meeting.

We have adapted our ceremonies to virtual and have managed to successfully hold virtual Promise and Pot of Gold (goodbye) ceremonies. We have taken time to welcome new girls and 'virtually' celebrate our very first Rainbows earning their Gold, Silver and Bronze awards; 2 girls have earned their Gold, 1 girl has earned her Silver and 3 girls have earned their Bronze. This is such a huge achievement for the Rainbows and represents a lot of work done at home as well as a high attendance at meetings to cover all areas - it is even the first in Welling District! We are so proud of the girls and are also grateful to parents for supporting them.

8th Welling Rainbows turned 25 in November and although we could not celebrate in the way we had wanted to we had just as much fun with making mug cakes and dancing, which Rainbows, siblings and their parents enjoyed. We even gave out candles with the cake ingredients so we could all sing Happy Birthday to us and blow out a candle in our mug cake together.

We also had external visitors join us on our Zoom meetings; we had a session on how to play African drums using pots/pans. The Rainbows really enjoyed this but not so sure about parents! We saw how blue the tongue is on a Blue Tongue Skink, heard a laughing Kookaburra laugh, learnt about a Skunk's diet and how Meercats interact and had an incredibly fun and energetic dance session.

Sarah Hardy, one of our helpers, was awarded her 10 year service award and 8th Welling Rainbow Leaders received a Commendation Award from Councillor James Hunt, Mayor of Bexley

We would not have been able to embrace virtual meetings without the support of the parents and we are so grateful for their continued support.

Pat Waters



Church Links

Churches Together in Welling

Churches Together in Welling

Churches Together in Welling (CTW) is a group which represents nearly all the church denominations in Welling. It meets five times a year (including one meeting for its AGM) to hear how other churches are building God's kingdom here in Welling and to arrange joint church activities.

The aim of CTW is as follows:

1. Include in weekly prayers, prayers for Welling churches and Leaders.
2. Work together to support Christian Aid.
3. Share in preparation for Easter during Lent and support an Act of Witness on Good Friday.
4. Send Christmas Greetings to all homes in Welling.
5. Hold World Day of Prayer Service.
6. Observe the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity.
7. Run Joint Courses for Marriage Preparation, Sickness or Bereavement Counselling.
8. Observe together Global Day of Prayer.
9. Share worship together in rotation on 5th Sundays at Evening Service.

When there is a fifth Sunday in the month the churches rotate holding a service in their church. Sometimes this is a specially arranged service or it is the church's usual Sunday evening service and it is wonderful to join in and see how other churches and denominations worship God.

The World Day of Prayer was written by the Christian women of Zimbabwe and the theme was "Rise! Take Your Mat and Walk". Information about The World Day of Prayer can be found on their website <https://www.wwdp.org.uk/>

CTW organises the Lent activities. This alternates each year between running a Lent course and a range of activities, including craft, poetry workshops, Lent courses and lectures. These activities are a good opportunity to meet with other Christians in the area. Because of the Covid-19 pandemic, events did not happen.

The big event each year is the Good Friday Walk of Witness from St Mary's Church at Shoulder of Mutton Green to St John's Church, Danson Lane which is followed by a hunger lunch at St John's, again because of the pandemic this had to be abandoned in 2020 and will not take place in 2021 either.

Another victim of the pandemic was Spark in the Park and sadly it has been decided that it will not take place in 2021.

The Christmas leaflets were also not delivered because of the pandemic and the November/December lockdown.

As usual, we appeal to the BR community to support CTW services and events. Could you help at collecting for Christian Aid; attending Spark or delivering Christmas leaflets? If so, or if you would like more information, please speak to one of the CTW representatives.

Revd Mark Tariq

Les Brett, Treasurer CTW

Karen Freeman

Grace Woodley

“Sharing the love of Jesus in our community”