



Christ Church
Spitalfields

Annual Review 2008-09



Christ Church logo design by Oliver Smith

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Aerial view of Spitalfields taken from the 'Gherkin', photo courtesy of EZDT on Flickr

Rector's Introduction

Welcome to this year's Christ Church Annual Review

Whether you are a newcomer, a supporter or a returning friend, I hope that this review gives you a feel for life at Christ Church and a desire to support us as we seek to explore together the beauty, generosity and power of God and as we endeavour to help others to come to know the love of Jesus. Spitalfields has and continues to be a vibrant fusion of cultures and it is a privilege to be part of the body of Christ in this neighbourhood. Do please pray that we would be open to the leading of God's Spirit and the call of God's heart for the many thousands of people that live, work and play in the streets around our church.

Yours

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Andy Lich". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a small horizontal line under the final letter.

Ministry



Christ Church Weekend Away 2009 at Ashburnham Place

Prayer

Prayer Ministry has continued to be an important and valuable feature of the 10.30am Sunday service at Christ Church. The Prayer Ministry Team aims to encourage people to seek God as we stand alongside them in prayer - presenting requests, seeking his will and enlightenment, and witnessing the power of the Holy Spirit changing lives.

As we continue this work as a team, we also recognise the importance of encouraging and equipping as many people as possible within the church to become more confident in praying for one another, so we will be holding some training sessions in June 2009 which will be open to the whole church.

There have also been some Prayer Consultations this year. However, this resource has been limited as the team committed to Prayer Consultations is small. We hope in the coming year to open up more opportunities for this facility within the church. If you are interested in having a Prayer Consultation or participating in the team, please speak to your Missional Community leader, Andy, Rod or Sophie Maggs who is responsible for organising them.

Our Prayer Ministry team is currently comprised of eight members led by Sophie Maggs and myself, three of us are usually available to pray with people on a Sunday. We would love to expand this team, so if you are enthusiastic about prayer and are interested in joining us we would love to hear from you - however, big or small a commitment you could make.

Lynne Sivyour

Worship

As I write we are approaching Holy Week, perhaps the most significant time of the year for our worship as a church and as I reflect back on the past year, we have so much to be thankful for.

The biggest blessing has been the provision of our developed PA system, enabling the whole congregation to hear what we are playing and singing (always quite important), as we lead them in sung worship. And of course this would not be functional without our wonderful new PA team, headed up by Emma, and without Will and Edmund's hours of testing and getting to grips with the new system.

It has been exciting too to see Simon and Darren leading worship regularly in the main service, and singing some of their own songs, especially as others have needed to take time out. Another answer to prayer after so many years is Steve, our first drummer! But on a sad note we had to say goodbye to Cath last year, one of our most talented musicians and worship leaders. Challenges ahead include resources for the new evening service that we hope to start this summer.

My prayer over the next year is that we will continue to grow as a worshipping community in love for each other, that our worship will reflect this and through our worship more people will be drawn to the Lord Jesus.

Alice Cooper

Teaching and Training

Values Course – At the beginning and end of each term we host a welcome lunch for newcomers. To accompany the welcome lunch at the beginning of each term we are now running a short course, sharing our vision and values on week 1 before turning to our four marks of membership in week 2 and then connecting participants to a team or a Missional community as they integrate into life at Christ Church.

God Course – Early in 2009 we began a six week course exploring theology for life. The aim of the course is to consider what Christians believe, why they believe it and most importantly of all, why it matters - what difference does it make to our lives as disciples of Jesus? The course is shaped by the three persons of the trinity; the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, looking in some depth at who they are and what they do. Each session is participatory and creative, and though occasionally challenging, good fun.

Leadership Brunch – building on the Life Shapes Course and Intentional Christian Living, this year we are beginning each term with a Leadership Brunch. This is an opportunity to invest in our leaders, build a leadership community and set our vision for the term ahead by highlighting the shape of the term and the Sunday teaching program.

Rod Green

Children's Church

The number of children within Christ Church has grown over the last year, and as in the rest of the church there has been some change.

Children's Church runs on a Sunday morning during the 10.30am service. We have up to 10 children attending, with ages ranging from a few months to 8 years, with more of the children being in the age range of 3-5. There is a group of 6 church members who teach the children, joined by others who support this teaching and look after the smaller children. We try and involve all the children in some aspect of the "class" at the level they are able to understand. We are currently using the material set out by scripture union for 5-7 year olds called Splash, and try and adapt it to meet the needs of all our children.

Links are beginning to be made with the work led by Alice for children in the community, church children are beginning to attend Kids' Club and children we know in the community are joining in with Missional Community events.

In the next year we envisage that the number of children attending Children's Church will grow and the way we run things will need to develop as these children will mainly be babies. We will need more people volunteering on a week to week basis, so do consider whether you could be part of nurturing the younger members of our church family.

Hannah and Will Spiring

Weekend Away

This year 79 people went to Ashburnham Place in Sussex for a weekend of teaching, relaxation and fun. Grace Turner from Firelighters helped us reflect on reviving our faith and our mission, whilst Nick Turner led worship.

Stepping out of our daily routine to spend time with God corporately provided a wonderful opportunity for us to build our relationships with each other and with God. Highlights included teaching sessions and seminars on mission, addiction and the 12 steps, a mystery play - beautifully enacted on the terrace on Sunday afternoon and free time spent treasure hunting, walking, playing football, walking on a beach (or eating chocolate cake depending on whose story you hear!), sewing or just chilling.

The weekend gave us an opportunity to spend time with our mission partners, Tina, Peter and Matthew from France, and Nick and Helena from Uganda.

Many challenges were given to us, including:

- If 10% of people read the word and 90% look at the example we as Christians set, what are people seeing in us at Christ Church?
- What do we have faith for? Are we expectant and listening to God?

Watch this space for news of plans for next year.

Kim Gooding

Action



Christ Church Kids' Club, photo courtesy of Martin Euden

Missional Communities

This has been a year of consolidation and change for Missional Communities. All of the Missional Communities are well established, with 65% of church members involved in one way or another. Some communities are continuing to develop a sense of fellowship in preparation for mission while others are seeing their community attract members from outside the church.

Forum hold regular cultural debates and discussions at Rich Mix, Pathway have launched an English language conversation class at Christ Church School, STP are extending the community garden they built last year and City Life are planning events offering friendship and support for young professionals and those working in the city at this challenging time.

This year has seen a number of changes in the different Missional Communities. Lisa-Raine is taking more of a back seat role in Forum and Holly and Rachel Newsome have joined Lara on the leadership team. Neil has also stepped back from the leadership of City Life and Steve and Emma have joined Sam to lead.

After a successful Alpha Course last Autumn a new Missional Community has emerged called Alpha Plus. Alpha Plus is for those exploring the Christian faith, for those new to the Christian faith and for those passionate about Alpha. Niyati, together with Ann and David Stuart-Smith are now leading this Missional Community.

Rod Green

Local Outreach

This year has seen the fulfillment of a long awaited dream, to see a youth worker appointed to work with the teenage boys on our local estates. Andrew was appointed in November 2008 and has quickly forged friendships with the boys - as I write, the Christ Church under 14's football team (coach - Jake Rider) is due to play its first match this Saturday.

Andrew's future plans include; a Monday night club, based at the Hanbury Centre, "what we need is a place to hang out" said a 15 year old boy Andrew was talking to recently; residential visits and a homework club run in conjunction with XLP, a youthwork charity we have links with.

Other highlights of the year have been:

- Our 2 interns! Erin joined us on a placement from Houghton University just in time for the summer mission! She worked alongside Alice, visiting families, helping run kids' club and girls' club and working in the school. Our girls' club girls are writing to her to persuade her to visit again soon! Jazz also joined us in September on placement with XLP and her positive outlook and servant heart has made her an invaluable member of our girls' club and kids' club team. We hope to work more with XLP as they increase their involvement in Tower Hamlets.
- Our girls' club weekend away last July at Sarah's house. One girl was especially touched by a booklet we gave her there, she prayed and experienced the peace of God's forgiveness.

- A visit from a YWAM team, who worked tirelessly for 48 hours transforming the Hanbury Centre where we run all of our clubs.
- 44 kids for our kids club Christmas party who listened spellbound to Andy's retelling of the Christmas story.

Alice Cooper

Mission Support Team

We have met monthly through the year to share information about our friends who are serving God overseas - to pray for them, their work and the people God has called them to serve. Mark and Jude were back with us for the birth of their second son and are now back in central Asia with Seth and Silas. Nick and Helena will be returning to Uganda at the end of April, and Peter, Tina and Matthew continue to be based in Lille in northern France. We also support Joe and Denny, who work in a Christian medical college in south India.

If you have an interest in worldwide mission, or want to identify with what our friends are doing, please know that you are very welcome to join with us on the second Monday of the month in the Crypt at 7.30pm. We also aim to be a supportive forum for anyone wanting to explore mission opportunities.

Ian Whitehouse

Summer Mission Week

Our summer mission is always a great opportunity for those who work long hours and can't be involved in local outreach on a regular basis to put aside a week of their year to bless the community. This year was no exception.

Anna Green headed up the Sunday afternoon outreach, going out with her team onto the steps of the church and beyond with home-made cakes, while the band at the front of the church worshipped and drew people in.

From Monday to Friday, we worshipped and did battle in the heavenlies every morning in the marquee on Allen Gardens, right in the middle of the estate. In the afternoons Alice and Andy headed up the childrens' holiday club with our usual assortment of crafts, singing, games and dramatic bible stories, starring amongst others the unforgettable Goliath aka Samuel Makoko.

In the evenings, Anna headed up the girls' café, with Caroline Clark leading craft activities, while testimonies were given by different people each evening. It was wonderful to watch the girls grow in confidence and self esteem as they used their God-given creativity. Stephen Foster headed up the boys' football, so important to our outreach as until Andrew's appointment this was the only time during the year when we were working with the teenage boys, perhaps the most obvious group in the community who need our input.

We look forward to our next summer mission – Christ Church Summer Action Week (CSAW) running 8-15 August 2009.

Alice Cooper

Open Church, Public Access Programme and the Arts

With the help of our Open Church volunteers we have continued to welcome hundreds of visitors each week to Christ Church. We also took part again in the Open House weekend in September. The Friends of Christ Church Spitalfields have kindly supported us in the production of a new heritage display which tells the story of Christ Church from the 1700's to the present. We are also very grateful to Rachel Jones who stepped down as Welcome Officer this year. Rachel worked hard to establish our heritage records and visitor services, which are of great benefit now and for the future.

Our Public Access Programme established in 2008 enables us to support cultural and community organisations that could otherwise not afford to hire Christ Church as a venue. Events in the past year have included a silent auction in aid of St Josephs Hospice and concert performances by the Renaissance Singers and Musically Compass.

We are continuing to develop an Arts Programme at Christ Church. Nora Heard co-ordinates a series of excellent musical recitals on the first Friday Lunchtime of each month which have seen a growing regular attendance. Church Staff have recently contributed to a 'Holy Week' programme of film, theatre and music in the run up to Easter and have organised an exhibition of the architectural designs produced for our Crypt Redevelopment Competition.

We look forward to further developing our Access programme in 2009/10.

David Bishop and Lisa-Raine Hunt

Governance



Christ Church set for a dinner event, photo courtesy of Zafferano

Church Leadership Team and the PCC

2008 has been a year of developing vision, which has seen the Leadership Team encouraging us all to affirm our four marks of membership: | Regular attendance at worship and prayer meetings | Giving financially | Engaging with a ministry team | Joining a Missional Community.

We have two statements that reflect where we feel God is leading us:

‘Who we are’: We are a friendly group of people exploring together the beauty, generosity and power of God, whilst helping others get to know the love of Jesus.

‘Where are we going?’: We want to be amazed by God; desiring him and depending upon him above everything else, therefore we are intentionally ‘looking upwards’ in worship and prayer. We want the kingdom of God to renew our neighbourhood; changing lives and transforming the city, therefore we are intentionally ‘reaching outwards’ in words and actions. We want to live in the power of the Holy Spirit; seeing lives transformed and relationships enriched by Jesus therefore we are intentionally ‘moving onwards’ as disciples and in fellowship.

PCC highlights include: CRC established; a new logo developed; evening service plans emerging; crypt redevelopment plans; new staff. The next year will be exciting and challenging as we seek to grow in our faith and pray for the resources (people and finances) to enable our vision to be fulfilled.

Kim Gooding

Church Finance

2008 has been a tough year financially - we were looking to fund church growth through profits from our venue business; but this business has needed to drastically reduce its targets due to the current economic climate.

But God is faithful, through a difficult year the books were balanced and God has ensured that we have been provided for. The prayers of many have been answered as detailed by the various accounts in this review. Some funded highlights from 2008 were:

- The birth of Missional Communities
- New chairs bought for the Nave funded by a generous Gift Day
- A developed PA system for the Nave, part funded by a generous Gift Day
- A youth worker, Andrew, has joined the staff team
- A new logo and communications package has been commissioned
- Architects for the crypt redevelopment have been appointed

The Church Resources Committee (see p20) was formed in 2008 and has a dedicated group of individuals seeking to make the most of our resources to support the mission of the church. This team has been invaluable, do keep them in your prayers in the next year.

So what of 2009? Make no bones about it, it will be a hard financial year for our church with many people in the congregation and parish being directly affected by the recession. Thankfully our God is unchangeable - in good times and in bad.

From a finance perspective I am excited about:

- Our church giving (as always). Are we sowing generously as a church to bring about the harvest that God desires? (2 Corinthians 9:6-8)
- Nailing our 3 year financial planning to enable strategic decision making
- Fundraising through the church office
- Seeking creative business opportunities in these difficult times

I am looking forward to God challenging and blessing the life of our church through all of the resources at His disposal, please continue to pray that He blesses our finances. He is able to do more than we can possibly imagine (Ephesians 3:20-21).

James Bishop

Christ Church Foundation

The Christ Church Foundation is a fund for the long term maintenance of our church building. We were delighted last year that our trading company CCSV, were able to put into the Foundation a very healthy figure from its surplus. With this year's credit crunch the Foundation trustees are praying for another surplus and for the long term sustainability of our building.

Foundation Trustees are The Rector, the Wardens, Charlie de Wet, Philip Vracas, Kaye Loveridge and John Critchley

Church Resources Committee and Christ Church Venue

The Church Resources Committee oversees all aspects of church finance, staff and buildings. During the year progress has been made in developing human resource policies and establishing governance structures.

Christ Church Spitalfields Venue (CCSV) made a modest financial surplus in 2008 despite the challenging economic environment affecting corporate hirers. In 2009 we are working hard to diversify our client base to include more wedding receptions and charity events.

Our Vergers have continued to ensure that the church building is maintained to a high standard and improvements have been made to the crypt kitchen to cater for church events. At 35 Buxton St the three ground floor bed sits have been refurbished and re-let.

Following a wide ranging design competition we have appointed Dow Jones Architects for the crypt redevelopment. All five short listed designs were recently shown in an exhibition in the crypt. The challenge of fund raising for the crypt now begins in earnest.

David Bishop

The Friends of Christ Church Spitalfields

The Friends of Christ Church Spitalfields is the charity that has provided £10 million over the last thirty years for the restoration of Christ Church. The Friends are backed by the loyal generosity of some two thousand local, national and international supporters. The restoration of the interior was completed in September 2004 to high acclaim and won seven major awards.

The Friends have now begun in earnest to raise the further sums required to restore the magnificent 1735 Richard Bridge organ. About £250,000 is still needed. Before William Drake can begin work to the instrument itself, probably in 2011, the extraordinary mahogany case will be repaired and restored. This year The Friends have commissioned Catherine Hassall to investigate the painted, gilded and varnished surfaces of the organ case, her report describes the original decorative scheme of 1735 and provides a basis for the restoration.

The Friends have also participated in the crypt redevelopment panel. Only limited works were carried out in the crypt during the restoration and there is now opportunity for complete re-planning to meet the present and future needs of the church. The panel unanimously selected Dow Jones Architects.

The Friends publish a newsletter, “Columns” and organise specialist Hawksmoor tours. For more information on all our activities, or to make a donation visit www.christchurchspitalfields.org

Christine Whaite

Our Partners



Christ Church School Playground



City Gateway



Norton Folgate Almshouses



Door of Hope

Christ Church Charities and Norton Folgate Almshouses

Christ Church has three charities; London Dispensary Fund “For the relief of the sick or poor in the parish of Christ Church Spitalfields”, Dame Mary Baker “Operating in the parish of Christ Church Spitalfields, to relieve those in need, hardship or distress” and Christ Church Foundation - see p19.

In 2008 LDF gave a total of £2,840 to 15 individuals, helped 2 young people go to CYP camp, 2 local schools buy Christian books, gave a goodwill gift to our bellringers and gave Christmas gifts to our link charities. DMB gave a total of £1,785 to 4 individuals, a gift to Christ Church School for their 300th anniversary and to Spitalfields Crypt Trust for a music teacher for NHP.

If you know of anyone who you think is deserving of our help, please speak to one of the trustees. LDF and DMB Trustees are Andy Rider, Martin Lane, Fay Cattini, Hosten Garraway, Ava Bose and Derek Stride.

We are privileged at Christ Church to be involved in the oversight of 13 almshouse units of accommodation for the poor and needy of East London. In the last year Harrison Housing have taken on management of these homes and have been a very welcome team, running the almshouses for us on a day to day basis and helping us to plan their redevelopment. We look forward on reporting the progress next year.

Andy Rider, Caroline Clark, Hannah Spiring and James Talbot are members of Christ Church congregation and the Almshouse Trustee body.

Christ Church School

We are a primary school that serves around 160 children and their families, most of whom live very locally to Christ Church. In 2008 we celebrated our 300 year anniversary, making us one of the oldest state funded primary schools in the country.

About 85% of our pupils are Bangladeshi Muslims and this gives us an amazing opportunity to share Jesus' love with them on a daily basis.

Looking Back

Over the last year we have:

- Enjoyed learning with our new curriculum, particularly all the practical lessons and trips.
- Continued to develop our work with parents with weekly English classes, toy library, back to work sessions and informal parents meetings, outings to the countryside and an outdoor pursuit centre; and a weekend away.
- Celebrated our 300 years with an amazing performance in Christ Church which was written especially for us, and an exhibition of life at Christ Church School in the past.
- Managed big changes including our Deputy Head and other teachers leaving due to promotions and a quarter of our pupils moving away and being replaced by new children, many of whom are new to speaking English.
- Been blessed by the involvement of many local businesses.

Looking Forward

Over the coming year:

- We will continue to improve the quality of teaching and learning.
- We want to grow our different leadership teams including staff, governors, parents and pupils.

Opportunities for Involvement:

- Pray for the whole school community including staff, pupils, parents, governors and volunteers.
- Supporting us with your skills by leading assemblies, being governors, sorting out our ICT equipment, teaching music, art or sports and helping with after school clubs.
- If you have school age children, consider sending them to Christ Church School.

Judi Hammill

Christ Church Bellringers

We continue to enjoy ringing at Christ Church and during 2008 we have maintained the 1st Sunday ringing with the odd extra Sunday and special services added. We rely on a small number of regular ringers and I am very grateful to those and others who have supported ringing at Christ Church during the year.

Once again we have welcomed a number of visiting bands, from as far away as Exeter and Norwich, and some from places closer to home - Basingstoke and Leytonstone to mention just a few. We also, as usual, rang for Weddings, Spitalfields Festival and London Open House (again a large number of visitors came up the tower) and we welcomed the Society of Royal Cumberland Youths for 3 practices during the year.

17 Full peals (each approx 3 hours long) were rung during 2008, highlights include two brand new methods, one of "Christ Church Primary School 300 Delight Major" for, surprise surprise, the 300th anniversary of the school and one of "Rider Delight Major" to congratulate very good friends to the ringers, Andy and Carol, on their 25th wedding anniversary.

Not much has happened on the maintenance front this year but we are now the proud owners of an air conditioning unit, courtesy of the Friends of Christ Church, for which we are most grateful - we just need to have it wired in!

There was some talk of exploring if the bells could be augmented but that project is on the back burner at the moment, perhaps more on that in the future.

We are hoping to host another Open Tower event for Church Members and friends following the 10.30 Sunday worship, we will announce the date soon and you will have a chance to see what we do and “have a go” with some expert instructors.

As always it has been great to be associated with Christ Church and we hope that you have enjoyed hearing your bells.

Alan Regin, Steeple Keeper

Tower Hamlets Evangelical Fellowship

THEF has undergone something of a revamp over the last year. It now meets together each month for breakfast at one of the participating churches. This has proved to be a good way to see what the different churches are doing. There is often a time of worship before the different church leaders share news and prayer requests and then pray for each other. THEF is currently discussing a strategic plan for 2009-2010 which will enable the different churches to work more closely together on a range of different projects and events, thereby having a greater impact on Tower Hamlets as a whole.

Rod Green

Partner Charities

Christ Church supports four key charities in our local community:

The Spitalfields Crypt Trust (SCT) was started in the Crypt of Christ Church in 1965 and remained there until 2000. In 2002 purpose-built premises were opened on Shoreditch High Street and SCT continue to work on Christian principles - offering a range of high-quality support, rehabilitation and training services to people facing problems of homelessness, addiction, poverty or social isolation. Alongside established projects, we have two new exciting projects this year: 'Evenings At the New Hanbury Project' offering two evening groups for on-going recovery support, and 'YourTime', a work-opportunities project where participants volunteer their time and skills. We have re-roofed a shed, redecorated a number of properties and are contracted to maintain a local churchyard. If you have any jobs needing doing, please ask us to quote!!

Crossroads Counselling Service began in 1994 as the response of churches in Tower Hamlets to help people on low incomes struggling with emotional and mental health difficulties to access professional counselling services. Crossroads Counselling has since grown to be one of the major providers of therapy in Tower Hamlets today. We are motivated and inspired by our Christian Faith to build a community where people are no longer trapped by enduring emotional and mental health difficulties and where broken lives are rebuilt. We provide professional counselling for to up to 60 adults and 19 children a week. We are most thankful to be a Partner of Christchurch, through whose continued support we can continue to make a difference to the lives of people in Tower Hamlets.

City Gateway is a charity dedicated to bringing hope to the local communities of Tower Hamlets that have not benefitted from the wider area's economic development. We look to connect with local women and disadvantaged young people, running programmes which engage them, train them and provide them with the skills and opportunities they need to enter work. We were set up by a group of City workers from Christ Church, and a number of other local churches, keen to support the community around them.

Door of Hope is a Christian charity, working with women involved in street prostitution in Spitalfields in East London. We work in partnership with other local organisations to restore individual dignity, a sense of self-worth and physical well being in the lives of those with whom we come into contact. We provide outreach service on two evenings a week and a range of daytime support services. Door of Hope's vision is "To offer hope and genuine opportunities for change to women on the streets of the East End".

You can support all of these charities by:

- Praying for them; their staff, their clients and their projects.
- Volunteering your time; all of the charities have opportunities for volunteers (contact details on p31).
- Giving financially; all of the charities welcome personal donations and the church office can provide you with details.

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www.christchurchspitalfields.org

City Gateway

020 3056 4061

www.citygateway.org.uk

Spitalfields Crypt Trust

020 7613 5677

www.sct.org.uk

Crossroads

020 8981 8388

www.crossroadscounselling.org

Door of Hope

020 7729 7982

www.doorofhope.org.uk

Tower Hamlets Evangelical Fellowship

See Andy, Rod or Alice



Christ Church photographed through Spitalfields Market, photo courtesy of John Sturrock, www.johnsturrock.com

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