

# TWENTY TWENTY THREE

*Another year in the life of Goffs Oak Methodist Church*

***Following the previous year of upheaval due to the after-effects of Covid and lockdown we began 2023 - a year of consolidation - with a fair measure of confidence. We continued to make use of two of the communication tools which had kept us in touch with each other during the previous few years. The WhatsApp group proved to be a marvelous***



***way of communicating information quickly and also a great medium for a chat about anything. We also continued to use Zoom for our prayer meetings, which occurred weekly, instead of the pre-lockdown monthly gatherings in the church building. Bible Study also continued throughout the year on Zoom.***

## **Increased community use of the church building**

In a wonderful 'win-win' situation, we started the year with many local community groups using the building for multiple reasons. The community wins, because it can use us as a hub for a variety of activities and the church gains valuable financial resources to help maintain the building.

Our groups today include Cocaine Anonymous (CA) who have been doing wonderful work in our building for a few years. The 'Food Pantry' run by the OK Foundation is helping families who are struggling during the present cost of living crisis. Every Wednesday our building is open to all from 9.30am to 3.00pm forming part of the nationwide 'Warm Space' campaign. We start at 9.30am when free coffee/tea/cold drinks are available at 'Coffee and Chat'. Then from 1.00pm until 3.00pm the Food Pantry offers a range of ambient, chilled and frozen foods. There are no charges and anybody/everybody is welcome.

Other organizations who use our premises include Living Well Taking Control—a diabetic prevention group, Baby Ballet, The WI, along with groups offering activities such as music, dancing, keep fit and karate. The uniformed organisations for young people, such as Brownies, Guides, Rangers and Rainbows also meet regularly as does the Potters Bar Town Band, who meet for practice.

## Audrey Russell

On Tuesday 7th February, we received the sad news that our dear friend Audrey Russell died at the age of 98. She was a very special person to us all and during a recent Remembrance Service she played a prominent role, telling our Guides, Brownies and Rainbows about her own contribution to the war effort, supported by some fascinating photographs and a video. Audrey was and remains an inspiration to all who knew her.



## World Thinking Day Service

On Sunday 26th February, Sandra Rose was with us to present our Guides World Thinking Day Service. Girl Guides and Girl Scouts have been marking this special day (actually 22nd February) since 1926. It is a celebration of ten million girls worldwide that remains a day for all Guides and Girl Scouts to think of each other and celebrate their sisters all around the world.

After the service the Guides presented the church with a defibrillator which took its place outside the church. Nigel Clark received it and placed it in an accessible position. The Guides had raised the money for it from a variety of initiatives. It has already proved its value to the local community as it was used not long afterwards.



*Nigel thanks the guides for the wonderful defibrillator gift.*

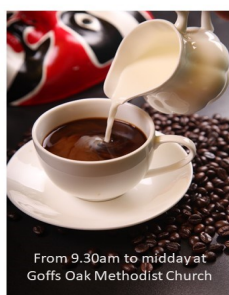
## World Day of Prayer

World Day of Prayer is an annual event that brings together people to observe a common day of prayer and learn from women in different countries. The 2023 venue for us was at St James Church on 3rd March and focussed on Taiwan with the theme, "I have heard about your faith," based on a passage from the Book of Ephesians in the Bible.

## The Food Pantry explained

Christina Omideye gave us an inspiring and informative talk during our Sunday service on 23rd April. Christina chairs the Board of Trustees of the OK Foundation, a busy

Every Wednesday, between 9.30am and 3.00pm, this building is a 'Warm Welcome Space'



From 9.30am to midday at Goffs Oak Methodist Church

Everyone is welcome. There is no charge, just the offer of a hot drink and a biscuit, and an opportunity to relax in the warmth!

Feel free to just sit, read, knit, chat, whatever...

## FOOD PANTRY

Fresh and ambient food and household essentials to help with the rising cost of living.



Wednesdays, 1 - 3pm  
Goffs Oak Methodist Church, Newgate Street Road,  
Goffs Oak EN7 5SS  
From 9th October 2022



role that she balances with her full-time career. A Barrister by profession, she was called to the Bar of England and Wales by Lincoln's Inn in 1987 and practiced Civil Law for several years.

### **Coronation lunch**

At a lovely Sunday afternoon gathering on 7th May, we held our Coronation lunch, organised on a bring-and-share basis.

### **Café Church and Annual Church Meeting**

There was a good attendance at Café Church on 14th May, led by Barbara and Joanne. Whilst sharing food we were thinking about 'Thy Kingdom Come' - a prayer initiative that encourages us all to pray for five people between Ascension Day on Thursday 18th May and Pentecost on Sunday 28th May, which in due course, we did.

A range of topics were under discussion at our AGM On 14th May, including a comprehensive review of the life and mission of the church over the past year; ideas for growing our partnership with the successful Food Pantry, which could lead to growing our outreach and a discussion about the current uncertainty in the circuit due to financial difficulties.

### **Lyn Clarke**

Local preacher and member of our church for many years, Lyn Clarke died on 7th May after a long battle against the effects of a stroke suffered a year earlier. Her movement had been limited for many years before this and her fight against such adversity was an example to us all. She maintained a wonderful sense of humour throughout her time at our church and will be missed by everyone who knew her.



### **Christian Aid Coffee Morning and sale**

This annual event on 24th May attracted a large number of people and much coffee was drunk, items sold and donations made. On the day more than £260 was raised, with more donations to come.

### **10th Goffs Oak Guides—bad news followed later in the year by good!**

We were sad to learn in May of the forthcoming loss of the 10th Goffs Oak Guides—a unique troop, dedicated to girls with learning difficulties. Our thanks and admiration goes to Tina who worked so hard to set up and run the troop to the benefit of all the girls who were members. But during early October we were to learn that thanks to Hayleigh emerging as the new leader, the 10th Goffs Oak Guide Unit for girls with special needs was able to restart. 18 girls were present at the relaunch and they had a wonderful morning.



## On an 'Adventure Cruise' with the Holiday Club

So much fun was had by everyone involved in the 2023 Holiday Club. Its title was 'Adventure Cruise'. For the week, the church hall was converted into a cruise ship with the leaders and helpers forming the crew and the children as passengers. During our daily activities we cruised the six Cs (Choice, Courage, Call, Change, Commitment, Challenge), meeting people from the Bible on the way who had had a life-changing encounter with Jesus. We presented the theme with the aid of our usual tools of song, Bible story, discussion, art, craft and games. This was augmented by a daily drama and quizzes along with prayer writing and jokes. Twenty children and five young helpers enjoyed a wonderful week of discovery, as did the adults involved with leading the groups, presentation, drama, personal testimonies, administration and providing refreshments.



*Holiday Club parachute fun (above) in the church garden, while below Adventure Cruise passengers face up to one of the daily challenges.*



## Special Services

We held a number of special services during late summer and autumn, including a **Summer Praise service** on 20th August when our larynxes got a good workout, singing some favourite hymns chosen by the congregation.

Then there was the day Barbara's grandson Cody joined the Cradle Roll on 3rd September, when he was **Christened** by another of our former ministers, Nick Young. It was lovely to see Ruth, Anton and the rest of the family enjoying a very special occasion.

On the 24th September it was **Harvest Festival**, delivered by Deacon Jacqueline Esama-John. We watched a visual presentation on the work of the Whitechapel Mission which is very much dependent on donations. The mission feeds many homeless people each day and attempts to treat them with dignity. They can get a shower, clean clothes as well as a hearty breakfast thanks to donations from a wide variety of sources. The generous offerings on display during the service found their way to Whitechapel.

We celebrated our 155th Anniversary at the **Anniversary Service** on 15th

October, led by Alan Combes and with Hilary Lucock making a surprise but welcome appearance playing the organ.

### **Macmillan Coffee Morning**

After an extremely successful and well-attended Macmillan coffee morning, Janet announced that over £300 had been raised for the charity.

### **Remembrance Day**

Following a well-attended Remembrance Day service in church conducted by Papa, most of the congregation, including many guides and brownies, headed to the war memorial for the traditional wreath laying service. On a reasonably temperate morning approximately 300 people gathered. Many of these came back to the church for refreshments, lovingly prepared by a group of our members who stayed behind making the necessary preparations for tea, coffee and other more solid provender.



*Ron lays the Goffs Oak Methodist Church Remembrance Day wreath next to the War Memorial.*

### **Quiz Night**

We had two very successful and well-supported quiz nights. The first on 24th May raised £260 for Action for Children and the second one on 28th November exceeded this with over £400 going towards the church floor fund. Yet again, our thanks must go to Jacqui, Alison and their team for laying on two superb quiz events, which are increasingly attracting tremendous support from members and visitors.

### **Margaret Carr**

The news of the death of Margaret in November caused great sadness in our church and the wider Enfield circuit. Margaret was a wonderful local preacher whose enthusiasm and service delivery did not diminish as she grew older. She often conducted the service in our church as well as playing the organ energetically during hymns. Our thoughts go to Jackie and other members of her family, who have lost a very special lady.



### **Gift Service**

We had great pleasure in welcoming Gina and Saskia from 'Mudlarks'- a



Hertford based charity supporting adults with learning disabilities and mental health issues to our November Gift Service. Gina told us about five specific projects in Hertford, including allotments and a woodland centre which provide help in a variety of ways and Saskia spoke specifically about the Mudlarks Café in Fore Street which offers training, work experience and employment opportunities. A donation of £350 was made to Mudlarks during the service.

### **Leaflet Drop**

An outreach project was initiated by Nigel during the year involving a leaflet drop, particularly to the new houses in the Goffs Oak area. The intention was to promote key services such as those at Easter and the Sunday of Holiday Club. Over a period of time Nigel organised and printed the leaflet and, with a few helpers, arranged house-to-house deliveries. We pray that this initiative bears fruit.

### **Children's Christmas Party and Carol Service**

Our Christmas Children's party took place during the afternoon of Sunday, 17th December. About 18 children from Holiday Club and Sunday Club enjoyed a craft activity, games and a sit-down afternoon tea, followed by a visit from Father Christmas. To round off a busy afternoon for the children, many of them took roles in the Nativity (right) during the Carol Service, led by Papa.



### **Carols by Torchlight**

On a cold December evening (Wednesday 20th) about 120 local people, including representatives from the two Goffs Oak churches, braved the weather and gathered for our traditional 'Carols by Torchlight' event. Papa and the Rev'd Tom Lilley from St James conducted proceedings, with the Potters Bar Town Band providing their usual fantastic brass accompaniment. After finishing our singing at the village Christmas tree, we walked a few yards to perform outside the Goffs Oak Inn. After singing a couple of carols, we were overjoyed to be invited into the pub to continue our performance there (right). The staff and customers were delighted to listen to the band and singers and showed their appreciation by enthusiastic rounds of applause and donations to Action for Children, which totalled £400. This grand total included contributions from our special services over the Christmas period.



## Christmas Eve and Christmas Day services

For our final services of 2023, we had the chance to really exercise our larynxes, especially during the Christmas Eve service, led by Joanne, when we sang many wonderful Christmas carols chosen in advance by the congregation. Then, on the day itself, Papa shared his Christmas message with us, with further carol renditions—a wonderful prelude to the day ahead.

## Next year and the future

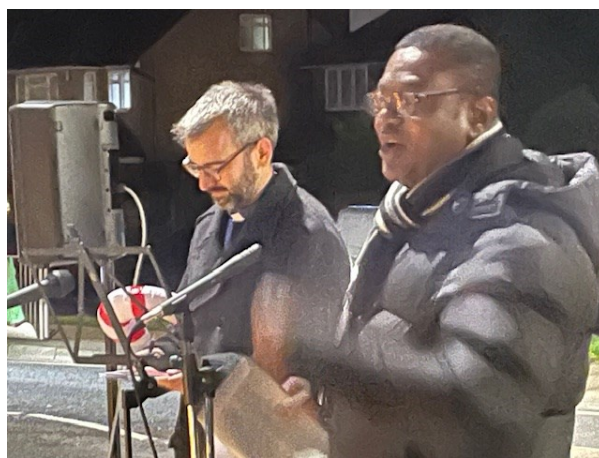
Last year we embarked on a year of consolidation after the ravages of COVID and lockdown. We also sought to find ways of reaching out to a steadily growing local community. The 'leaflet drop' masterminded by Nigel was a vital tool in galvanising this process. Our position today is very much as a community hub that aims to connect and support local people and in doing so display an active and living faith. We have hundreds of people through the doors of our church each week, taking part in activities from guides, baby ballet and karate through to brass bands, WI, the Food Pantry and Cocaine Anonymous—and much more. Attendances at Sunday services are slowly growing and we are hoping for more children to attend Sunday Club. We have good reason to be optimistic about 2024, but we must not take our foot off the pedal. Our new year resolution must be to find ways of continuing the wonderful work already being done and to attract more people to share the good news..... ***It's up to us.***

Bryan King January 2024



*Two fine Goffs Oak Christmas trees. On the left is the top of the magnificent village tree by the Memorial and to the right is our own church tree.*

*Below, Santa visits our children's Christmas party.*



*Two local churches united! Rev'd Tom of St James with our own Papa on the right jointly leading proceedings at Carols by Torchlight.*



*Puppets, Bert and Lucy, performing their daily Holiday Club sketch, with the help of Sandra (hidden!).*