

LOOK-IN

40th Anniversary Special Issue

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40th Anniversary



Welcome to this special anniversary edition of Look-In. Christ Church has been working and witnessing in Uxbridge for 40 years and as a church we are taking this opportunity to remember all that has been done over those years.

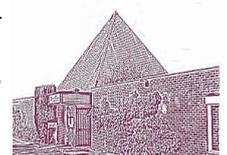
An anniversary is a strange thing. It is just a date on the calendar. It is no more or less important than any other day. It is just the day when we have gone round one cycle of the earth rotating round the sun. But an anniversary gives us an opportunity to remember another date, another moment in time when the cycle began. Join the two moments in time together and you have a line, a time-line.

At this anniversary we don't just want to remember the start of Christ

Church in September 1972 but to remember all that has been done and all the people who have played a part in the life of the church over those 40 intervening years. We want to give thanks for the leading and guidance of God and the many ways in which people have experienced God's love in their lives over those years.

The time-line of Christ Church represents the journey that we have been on for forty years. But the journey does not end as we celebrate the past. Rather, the past becomes the foundation we build on for the future, the platform from which we set off on the next part of the journey.

So, please take time to find out about our past, the work that has been done and, the very special people who have been part of the church. But also, please take time to think about the future, think about the needs that the church might be



able to respond to today and, what part you can play as the church sets off on the next stage of its journey of work and witness in Uxbridge.

I'd like to say a special thank you to everyone who has helped in any way to plan and prepare for this anniversary and an especially big thank you to you for being interested enough to want to find something out about Christ Church and its life.

Happy anniversary.

Nick



From the Christ Church Opening Issue of 'Look' - The Ministers Write

“LOVE ONE ANOTHER... IF THERE IS LOVE AMONG YOU THEN ALL WILL KNOW THAT YOU ARE MY DISCIPLES.” – John 13.34-5

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We want the new centre to reflect an ecumenical spirit. The Congregational [now United Reformed] and Methodist churches in Uxbridge are forming a union that we believe is to be a constructive move in the interests of the ecumenical work of the Uxbridge churches. We pledge ourselves to the sharing of each other's traditions and listening to each other's point of view. The building will be available to the wider ecumenical work of the Uxbridge churches. Appropriately the sermon at the Opening Service is being preached by the Rev. Kenneth Slack of City Temple, a notable ecumenical figure in the life of the British Council of Churches.

“LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOUR AS YOURSELF.” (Mark 12.31) – We seek to fulfil this command in a special way in the Communicare wing – an integral part of the scheme from the beginning. We are delighted that the Hillingdon Association of Voluntary Social Service, the Community Relations Officer, The Marriage Guidance Council and the Samaritans are all sharing the

building. We hope in time to provide for further development in this work of social caring.

When we were considering the person who should ceremonially open the door the minds of both churches turned to Mrs E.M. Robinson. This was because of the regard in which she is held after her long association with the Church in Uxbridge and also in view of her years as Secretary of the Hillingdon Council of Social Service.

LOVE THE LORD YOUR GOD WITH ALL YOUR HEART (Mark 12.20) – If we are to meet the needs of the people our own needs must be met through our private and corporate relationship with God. Jesus related love of neighbour to love of God. We see the worship of the Church as central and fundamental to the whole operation.

G.K. Chesterton once said that all religions are either Os or Xs. The noughts – totally enclosed and self-contained, just wrapped up in themselves; the crosses – reaching

out on all sides, upwards to God and outwards to the neighbour. May that be the kind of faith we share together at Christ Church.

Graham Haslam and Derek Strange

What Christ Church means to me

Making time to serve, share the love of God

Over endless cups of tea

Prayers for miracles, seeing them unfold

Worship, faith and family

Learning, growing, week by week

Questioning the things we seek

Craft club, breaking bread, Sunday diners fed

That's what Christ Church means to me

Louise George



The Year is 2050!

I died in 2026 but, in 2050, God invited me to return to Christ Church to see how it had changed. I was to say that I had been in a far country!

I looked for the familiar pyramid but the Christ Church I knew had gone. There was a small round building, looking like a space ship with semi-transparent glass walls. A simple blue board read 'Jesus of Nazareth Church' and underneath 'He said "why do you call me good? There is none good but God"'. Outside was a slim but greying man. "I'm Glenn Smith," he said, "I'm minister here." I asked if I could see the church. Inside the chairs were set in two rows in a circle facing a roughly hewn stone table surmounted by a small cross. "It's small," I said. He squeezed a remote in his hand. There was a low hum and the walls slid outwards and three extra rows of chairs rose up.

"The name?" I asked. "This was a Methodist-URC Church." He said that I must have been away a long time. "The two churches were wound up back in 2035," he continued. Their memberships were dwindling and they both became unsustainable. At the same time the Church of England split. So the remaining Methodists and United Reformists and the liberal Anglicans came together to form the Jesus of Nazareth Church. It's a coming together of those who are more concerned with what Jesus said than with what others said about him. We don't think of God as three in one anymore and we leave everyone to think of Jesus as divine in their own way. We spend our worship time reflecting on what he taught."

"Our services have changed. You would remember the hymn-prayer sandwich with a sermon. That's gone now. We may start with a reflection from me or our assistant minister and then a discussion or a

thought-provoking role play or perhaps a dialogue with a visiting Muslim or Jew or atheist. We do sing and pray together but anyone can lead a prayer."

"And communion?" "Yes, but it's simpler now. The loaf is passed round and everyone breaks a piece off and we all drink from the same cup. There are few words spoken!"

"You take all the services?" "No, but we don't have local preachers anymore. Each church has a lay assistant minister (or two) and they share in all the ministerial work. Our assistant minister is a lovely lady. She and her spouse were married here, two fantastic girls." "So the church allows that now then?" "Oh sure! Some would turn in their graves but it's not an issue anymore. My predecessor was a gay man." "You still have elders?" "No, we have task force leaders. Our task forces are ad hoc. They form and dissolve when they have done their work.

All our decisions are taken by the whole membership. I don't preside. I report to the meeting and take questions."

"What about the young?" "You would remember the Boys' Brigade and the Girls' Brigade. They joined forces and then developed into our Young Task Force. They often stage our role plays and I encourage them to have their say. We involve them in everything. We are a single community."

"Did all this happen at once?" "No, only gradually at first and then more quickly. There were those who resisted and some left but we faced a withering membership and it was 'adapt or die'. We had become very inward looking but at least people are used to us worshipping in Uxbridge town square."

Howard Cooper

