# Chaplain’s report AGM 2022

**Life has changed and there’s no going back to life as we knew it.**

I have said this often over the past two years and I believe as we emerge from this liminal time, it is good for us to review and see where we are as a church community in this time of transition.

COVID-19 has changed our life together as a church, however the essential remains, we are a Christian community that has stayed faithful in the challenging and sometimes depressing past 26 months. The essential of a deep faith and trust in God, his guidance and provision, has carried us through the most challenging time our church has lived through since WW2.

It feels to me as though we are emerging into a CCL Spring, confidence is growing, numbers in church are slowly rising again, the life of this church is vibrant, with in-person and online worship, women’s Bible study, a lively Sunday Club, and a dedicated team to make sure we lift our voices in song.

We have a new monthly prayer group to serve the professional people of Lille, linking the words of Christ to an ever-growing business community. We are expanding our cheerful welcome by planning to re-open our weekly café, and looking to the Green priorities of modern times with a new garden venture and an Urban Market Stall.

To ensure that our 19th Century church building also moves with the times we have plans, and part-funding, for a new and inviting internal glazed entrance to our church to open the church to passers-by while keeping the heat in!

The lower number of regular attendees, in particular those who are available during the week, makes it difficult to hold fund raising events, or in particular this year to hold a CCL event to mark HM the Queen’s Platinum Jubilee. But that’s ok, because that is where we are, and I am grateful to each of you for your perseverance and dedication.

Our finances have been hit hard on the one hand by our inability to hold fund-raising events like the Braderie tea room or a full Christmas market, and on the other hand by reduced numbers in church and therefore reduced levels of giving.

And yet we have been blessed: in 2020 when we received a Hardship Grant from the Diocese which allowed us to cover a massive shortfall; and again late last year when we received the closing funds from the Culte Anglican, some 33,000€.

As you heard in the Financial section of the AGM, we are using what is necessary from the 33,000€ to fund our current 1000€ monthly shortfall in income over expenditure. As wise stewards of all that we are and have, we only spend what is necessary to maintain our church presence whilst planning for the future.

That wise stewardship has led us to create a Gift Month for May 2022. Why May? It is the anniversary month of Christ Church opening for worship on Ascension Day in 1870. Each of you will shortly receive a Gift Day appeal letter, it will also go to our friends and supporters in the wider community as well as former members of our church worldwide. The letter simply lays before the reader our situation and asks if they are ready and able to make a financial gift to assert with us our faith in the future of this church as we move forward with Christ.

And move forward with Christ we will!

I would like to conclude with thanks to each of you, for

without you we would not have and be a worshipping community.

Without Anthony we would not have his smile nor his gift to the church of keeping it clean, it is the house of God

Without the Churchwardens, david and Calvin, I would not be able to discuss how things are going at church and to pray for the business of the church council each month.

Without the members of the church council we would not have wise management of our church, our buildings, our finances, our projects

Without Frances we would not have careful oversight of our finances week by week

Without Rosemary and Maggie we have no newsletter, no website, video services, podcasts, PowerPoints for the Sunday services and so much more.

Each of us makes up, builds, our community at Christ church, may God bless you and encourage you.

Canon Debbie Flach, May 2022