

## **CHURCH LIFE 2021**

2021 was another year when we couldn't hug each other and, for a lot of the year, we couldn't sing in church. St Mark's congregation got round this by going outside to sing the last hymn – it was such a joy!

Covid regulations affected the whole of 2021 and congregations had to book to come to services and then sit socially-distanced, masked and use hand sanitizer. Communion could be taken in one kind only. Brunch changed its format to keep everyone safe.

The summer months allowed us to restart Little Lions, the parent/carer and toddler group.

Margaret King started socially distanced coffee mornings to enable those who had been shielding for so long to come to a safe space and enjoy each other's company.

Harry Kirby started the Marks Brothers Bacon Butty Group and a team of people started The Elephant Club, a social space for people living with memory problems. It is lovely to see more people join these groups each month.

In October, the government changed the rules of numbers attending weddings as a new wave of covid started and we had a wedding at St Edmunds arranged in 48 hours! The original date would have fallen after the new restrictions came into being.

At the end of November, we held a 'Thanksgiving Supper' to thank all the people who support the work of the parish but who don't necessarily come to services. More than 70 people came and it was a very successful evening appreciated by all those who were there.

A surge in covid cases meant the PCC felt it wasn't safe to hold the Christingle service and a shortage of priests on the Island meant that only Christmas Day Holy Communion could be celebrated in the parish.

Meanwhile, just to make life more complicated, the ongoing saga of the Island re-organisation continued plus the interregnum.

Through all of this, we have seen God at work in our parish with people being willing to take on all sorts of roles to keep us going through the interregnum. We must thank Rev Sandie Osborne and Rev Len Fox for their continued support – we wouldn't have got through 2021 without them.