At Messy Church, lights flickered out across a map of the area – spreading God’s light where we live, work or go to school – and prayers were added on Post-it notes. There were other lights too: mini lava lamps, clay lanterns, stained glass biscuits – all to encourage everyone to think of how they shine with the love of God.

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Meet in a very windy courtyard to eat our sandwiches.

We had a sneaky look around the cathedral shop and then went straight to our workshops for the afternoon session. Val explored the part that music can play in prayer and song and how they serve a vibrant spirituality. Kay and Jo joined forces to listen to Bishop Karowei Dorgu, which was a practical exploration of how we can enact more authentic Christian hospitality. It certainly gave us food for thought – watch this space!

We met for closing worship with an address by Bishop Christopher and a rousing ending rendition of ‘Great is Thy Faithfulness’ before the final blessing:

Jesus, Lord of time, Hold us in your eternity. Jesus, image of God, Travel with us the life of faith. Jesus, friend of sinners, Heal the brokenness of our world. Jesus, Lord of tomorrow, Draw us into your future. Amen

As we journeyed back to Horley we reflected on our ‘going deeper journey’ and felt how worthwhile our day of spirituality had been.

Val Butt, Jo Coulson-Davis and Kay Hammond, Toys for Welcare

At its annual Toy Service, people at St Mary’s, Horne brought toys, wrapping paper and Sellotape for Welcare in Redhill. These would then be available for a ‘toy choosing’ event to be held later in the month. Horne Welcare rep Jo-Ann Harvey said that the Annual Toy Choosing Event is a very special event in the Welcare Calendar where parents have the opportunity to select suitable toys for their children promoting love, hope and joy. She added: “Welcare is not just there for families in crisis at Christmas time, but fulfils an ever-growing need in a huge variety of ways from parenting classes, first aid, healthy cooking and eating, and legal advice, to name but a few.”

Going deeper at the Southwark Prayer and Spirituality Day

The day was windy but bright and as we three musketeers left the station at London Bridge and walked to the cathedral the smells of food cooking around Borough Market made us feel hungry but our food for the morning was worship and workshops.

After a welcome coffee supplied by the Mothers Union, we began our ‘going deeper journey’ with morning worship which started with ‘we meet in the name of Jesus Christ who calls the thirsty to the Well of Life’. This certainly gave us an inkling of going deeper into the well and engaging in Spirituality for Contemporary life.

Following a rousing keynote address we all split up to go to different workshops. Jo started with the workshop for Christian Discernment. Dr. Andrew Walker explained very thoroughly and clearly about discernment. Val experienced the labyrinth which was a path of reflection and prayer. Kay attended a workshop on the life of Thomas Merton who was an activist and contemplative. The workshop explored two apparent opposites combining.

We joined together for midday worship and we were then able to (Continued on back page)
A time to remember

Remembrance was marked in a number of powerful ways around the benefice this year.

At Outwood members of the British Legion paraded to the church before an act of remembrance by the war memorial. At the church service, Nicholas noted that the British Legion wanted Remembrance to be a living tradition, about the future as well as the past: “The bright red poppy is a symbol of remembrance but ultimately it is a symbol of hope, a bright red burning torch of hope for young and old to wear, a symbol of hope for tomorrow, that the future will be better than the past and that ultimately God’s kingdom will come and his will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.”

At Horne, wreaths were laid at the war memorial by the church and the parish council. Preaching at the service, Tony Rich said:

Memories stir up emotions, often quite mixed ones; happiness, sadness, regret, remorse, gratitude. At our joint Benefice service for All Souls last week we remembered those we have loved and lost. It was a powerful shared moment of grief and memories, particularly as names of friends and loved ones were slowly read out.

The WW1 generation has all but gone now, but still we want to remember those who gave their today for our tomorrow. We want to remember too those who have served since, not only in WW2, Korea, Suez, Northern Ireland, the Falklands, Iraq, Afghanistan and more, but also in often dangerous peace time duties.

Active remembering leads to compassion, to works of love. The vision in Micah is one that sees a world of peace and security, that focuses on the God of love and justice who unites, instead of human injustice and aggression which divides and ultimately destroys.

We need to keep that vision and goal in Micah before us, because to be without it is to count God out of the equation, to give up hope. So in our active remembering we can resolve to align ourselves with God’s vision for humanity in Micah, to give ourselves to the work of peace and justice, of freedom from violence and oppression.

At the Burstow service of remembrance, the names on the roll of honour were read by Kay Hammond, churchwarden, and Derek Amos (left). Derek was only in his early teens when war was declared in 1939. He had already joined the Air Training Corps. When his technical school was evacuated from south London he elected to leave and go to Biggin Hill full time; an exciting life for a young boy. In 1942 he went into the Air Force as an instrument maker, a career he continued throughout his working life, and remained as part of the ground crew for the rest of the war, first in England and later in India and Burma. “I knew the pilots and air gunners,” he recalls, “And have often thought of those who didn’t come back from their missions: the last thing they will have seen as their plane went down will have been the instruments in front of them. My grandfather and father were both in the First World War and my uncle was badly inured on the Somme. It was not unusual when I was a boy to see people around with bad injuries. So many names were in my mind from an early age and it all comes back to me when I read out those names at Burstow, particularly when there is more than one name from the same family.”