

Remembering Rose's church

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IN 1923, a 23-year-old woman called Rose Whybrow was living in Chelmsford when she noticed small children playing in the streets.

She invited them into her home, and Sunday by Sunday she taught them to read, cared for them, fed them and taught them about God.

They started calling her 'Ma', and bringing their parents to her on Sundays.

Before she realized it, Ma was leading a church, so she built a chapel (she called it Bethel). Not everyone liked the idea of a woman in church leadership ("Don't argue with God!" she used to say) – even her husband Fred initially disapproved.

But the church flourished. It's still here in Chelmsford (it's called Skylark Church now). In the end, Fred even joined – the people called him Pa.

And generations have found their value through the unselfish community action of this group of God's people.

As Bishop, it's one of my greatest joys to see what God is doing through his whole church – not just the



Church of England. Did you know there are 50 places of Christian worship within the boundaries of the City of Chelmsford?

I bet there's one that would be just right for you. And I've never seen churches like Skylark as the competition; they're brothers and sisters.

I want particularly to acknowledge the work being done by David Gilbey and others at CTiC – Christians together in Chelmsford – to bring us all together. The fact is that what we call "church" is simply what happens when Jesus Christ encounters a group of people, whatever name the community ends up choosing.