

CHRIST CHURCH WARE

Issue 70

Christ Church Ware Magazine Christmas 2021

Youth Weekend Away - pg 18



Christ Church Ware
Jesus led, Spirit empowered, Grace based.

www.christchurchware.co.uk

John's Journal



from
Rev. John Hookway

...my prayer for us is that the message of Christmas, and the love of God for each and every one of us in Jesus Christ, will become clear and fresh again.

Welcome to the Christmas issue of the magazine. I wonder if you have ever spent lots of time trying to find that perfect gift for someone. You spend the time looking in the different catalogues or online, and then all of a sudden, you find it, and you know that it's perfect and the right thing. Or maybe you've been trying to solve a problem, perhaps when you were at school, and all of a sudden, the answer becomes clear. It's almost as if, in that moment, clarity comes. I'm sure that as we look at our lives, there are moments that we have these moments of real clarity in decisions – clarity in what we see and what we understand.

Clear Epiphany Moments

In scripture, we often talk about epiphanies where things become clear and that's what we talk about as the kings arrive to visit Jesus. It became clear that Jesus was there for everyone. Titus 3:4 talks about "but when the kindness and love of God our Saviour appeared" in Jesus Christ. It's in these moments that God's love for us became clear. In the moment that the angels appeared to the shepherds, when the angel appeared to Mary, when the angel appeared to Joseph, and above all, the moment that Jesus was born. Moments of real clarity. So, this Christmas season, as we journey through Advent, waiting and watching, reflecting and looking ahead to the birth of Jesus, and His celebration as well as His coming again; my prayer for us is that the message of Christmas, and the love of God for each and every one of us in Jesus Christ, will become clear and fresh again. So, I invite you to join us this Christmas time either online or in-person at any of the services in particular on the 19th, 24th and 25th as advertised.

Throughout the rest of this magazine, you'll also find moments of celebration from the past few months and also where we're looking to share

the good news of Jesus in the future along with other opportunities for ministries.

Exploring Mark's Gospel

As we go into the New Year, we'll also be spending time in Mark's Gospel on a Sunday, and we really encourage you over the holiday time to be able to read it. As you read it, I pray that you get a real clarity of who Jesus is, what He's about, what He could mean to you, what the Kingdom of God is, and how we become included in the Kingdom. Mark really enables the good news of Jesus to become clear.

Praying for You

This season, I am praying for you that you'll be able to know the peace, joy and celebration of Christmas this year with your family and friends. We know that this year will be different from the last and maybe different from many before, but I pray that you have a safe time and a real time of connection, blessing and celebration, seeing clearly who Jesus is and enjoying each other.

Wishing you a very happy Christmas and my prayers for each of you as you journey on into the New Year on behalf of the church team.

The Anchor

*We have an anchor that keeps the soul,
Steadfast and sure while the billows roll,
Fastened to the rock that cannot move,
Grounded firm and deep in the Saviour's love.*

This is the chorus from a good old hymn, *We have an Anchor*, that many of us sang in the past. The subject is the 'anchor' but do you know how an anchor works? For a ship to hold fast, an anchor is needed, together with an anchor chain and a long, strong line. Without the anchor chain, the anchoring system won't work properly and the ship will drift.

The anchor chain needs to lie flat on the seabed, keeping the anchor held in place. Without the chain, the anchor will not hold.



from
Neil Pearce



When we talk or sing about Jesus being our anchor, we have to play our part by being the chain. We need a series of links to make our chain. I thought of some 'links' which help to make a strong chain:

- **TRUST** (we need to trust God, Proverbs 3:5)
- **BIBLE** (we need to read and study God's Word)
- **PRAYER** (we need to maintain a steady prayer life)
- **ASSURANCE** (we need to believe that God will be with us, Deuteronomy 31:8)
- **SPIRIT** (we have the Holy Spirit who will help us, John 14:15 – 17)

We can add other 'links' that will help us stay close to Jesus but remember to **keep connected** (like the anchor chain) to Jesus who is our anchor.

Will your anchor hold in the storms of life?

Remember that all vessels need to be anchored, even in calm waters as they will easily drift away.

Your Magazine

Welcome to the Christ Church Christmas magazine!

We would like to say a big "thank you" to those who have risen to the challenge of writing for this magazine. It certainly has been a weird time, but as things start back up and we are able to do more together, it's great to hear about all that is, and has been, going on.

This magazine is most definitely YOUR magazine. That

means YOU are invited to contribute. It's so great to read about what's going on in and around our church, from our congregation.

So don't wait to be asked, let us know all about what God is doing in your life. It WILL encourage others. Get in touch with your ideas via the email address or office. If you're not sure about writing a full on article, we can help! The next magazine will be around Easter time, but the sooner we have an idea of what you're offering, the better.

And if you'd love to help behind the scenes, if you have relevant skills to offer such as writing, photography, design and any other skills to make a magazine happen, get in touch with us!

Get in touch at:
magazine@christchurchware.co.uk

Clearly Christmas

CLEARLY CHRISTMAS - Christmas Services at Christ Church

Carol Services 19th Dec 4:30 & 6:30pm, with 6:30pm live-streamed.

Booking required. Refreshments, including mulled wine, mince pies, tea and coffee will be served on the concourse outside at the front of church.

24th Dec - 4pm Children's Service, booking required. Also live-streamed.

24th Dec - 11pm Reflective Communion Service

25th Dec - 10am Family Service (pre-recorded online service for those unable to attend)

26th Dec - 10am Reflective Family Service (pre-recorded online service for those unable to attend)

All subject to change due to Covid

Building a Brighter and Sustainable Future



from
Lynne Good

It's interesting to hear all the discussion and ideas about climate change and the very real need to protect our home earth and all creation – and to build a brighter, regenerative, sustainable future. As I write, COP26 just started. I look forward to hearing updates but also seeing what actions result going forward. We can play our part too of course.

It can seem overwhelming or confusing sometimes, looking at all aspects and information around climate change and what actions we can take. Rather than tackle it all at once, it can help to pick a few priorities and act to achieve these, then move on to the next, then the next and so on.

You know, every step matters... they all add up. Collective impact. The thing is to take those steps. Doing something about it, in ways that we can, helps channel concerns into something positive that helps achieve what's needed.

Here are some ideas to look at and pick from:

- Look into renewable energy, away from fossil fuels and gas – but be mindful that energy prices/markets are volatile at present. It may be wise to see how that pans out for the time being, but keep your radar up.
- Change to LED light bulbs.
- Washing clothes at lower temperatures and wash when needed (not always after one wear).
- Taking showers rather than baths, shorten shower time.
- Turn the thermostat down.
- Put on an extra layer rather than turning to heating first.
- Avoid keeping appliances on standby if unnecessary.
- Turn lights off when not needed.
- Insulate and draught proof your home.
- Think before you throw anything into landfill.
- Remember the Rs – refuse (eg single use items), reduce, re-use (by you or someone else), repair, repurpose and lastly recycle.
- Compost food waste.
- Freeze surplus food or use leftovers to make yummy soups, casseroles and stir fry.
- How about growing your own vegetables and fruits?
- Look at preloved shops/sites versus buying new.

Rather than tackle it all at once, it can help to pick a few priorities and act to achieve these

- Swap and share with friends, neighbours and families.
 - You can actually buy restaurant, shop, café, hotel surplus food that would otherwise go to waste, from www.toogoodtogo.co.uk/en-gb.
 - OLIO's app brings people from all walks of life together to reduce food waste and build food sharing communities, www.olioex.com.
 - You can check out product certification labels like these:
 - Fair trade
 - MSC Certified Sustainable Seafood
 - Rainforest Alliance
 - RSPO Certified Sustainable Palm Oil
 - Soil Association Organic
 - FSC Forest Stewardship Council
 - Examples of ethical and sustainable online supermarkets to explore:
 - www.ethicalsuperstore.com
 - www.socialsupermarket.org
 - www.goodclub.co.uk
 - Walking, cycling and public transport. Electric bike and scooter hire are also on the rise.
 - Driving more efficiently can reduce emissions from fuel plus tyre wear.
 - Think about electric vehicles. More charging points are coming.
 - When gardening, you could:
 - Avoid using peat.
 - Use a compost bin.
 - Reduce use of chemicals.
 - Plant more trees and plants that absorb CO2.
- Remember to have fun with it too and be proud and pleased when you are doing your bit. We are all on a journey, and can be kind to each other, and share ideas and support. Climate change, the causes of it, the results of it and the changes that are collectively needed can feel daunting – and it's so important. However, it can also result in great community-building experiences, plus bring about positive changes and opportunities which can build a brighter future and lift us with hope. *Thank you God for your beautiful creation.*

The Work of God's Word in the World

The last issue of our church magazine featured a double page spread about the Bible Course plus some suggestions for personal Bible reading. In what other ways is the Bible being used today and how are Christians here and throughout the world being helped to learn from it?

The Bible remains the world's best-selling book, giving hope and direction whatever our age and circumstances, but the way its contents are presented changes to make it accessible to different groups the 21st century. For instance, did you know that the Bible Society's *Open the Book* programme of dramatised Bible readings in school assemblies has reached one million children in the UK? Did you know that a brand new *Good News Bible – Family Edition* (see images) has just been launched, designed to impact the lives of young people and their families? Some pages face outwards so that more than one person can use it at a time: one



may be reading a page, another colouring or writing, while another can watch a video on their phone. How is that for interacting with the Bible! Why not check it out on the Bible Society website?

The Old Testament was originally written in Hebrew, with a few passages in Aramaic, while the New Testament was written in Greek. Early on, the Bible was translated into Latin and then in the Middle Ages, the first attempts were made to translate it into English. We are blessed as English speakers to have not only the Bible in our own language but now in a wide variety of different versions. Yet, it is said that while there are 7,000 languages in the world, the whole Bible has been translated into (only) 700 of them! Why bother with all these translations when so many in the world speak English, French, Spanish, Mandarin Chinese or some other international language? The reason is that God speaks to us most clearly in our heart language, in our mother tongue. It's also an affirmation of our culture as God meets



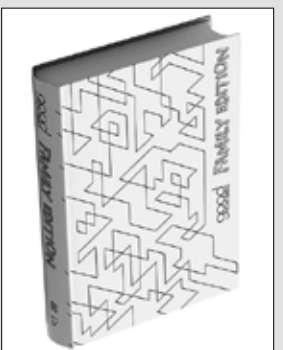
from
Mary Salter



us on our home turf, so to speak. That's what motivates Bible translators to keep going in a long, slow, painstaking task which takes many years. The joy of church members when they receive the first copies of the Bible in their own language is their reward.

What about other Bible-based ministries world-wide? In Syria, Christians are being supported with trauma counselling and other practical help through the national Bible Society. In Jordan, the national Bible Society provides food packages for families during the pandemic. In China, where it is estimated that one million people come to faith in Jesus each year, there is a great shortage of trained Bible teachers. Scholarships partly sourced in the UK are funding training for pastors and teachers. In Niger, West Africa, a 4x4 vehicle has been provided to enable distribution of Bibles in remote areas. In the Gulf States, there are many churches attended by migrant workers who attend Bible seminars and receive training and resources with support from the Bible Society.

These are just a few examples of the ministry of the Bible Societies, here in UK and national movements worldwide, sourced from their publications and website. For more information see, www.biblesociety.org.uk



Some pages face outwards so that more than one person can use it at a time: one may be reading a page, another colouring or writing.

Baptism and Confirmation

The church held its Confirmation and Baptism service on 10th October and on this special and joyous occasion, 11 candidates declared their faith in Jesus which was confirmed by Rev. Alan Smith, the Bishop of St. Albans, and witnessed by many of their family and loved ones. Here, we hear from some of the candidates why they took this step of faith.

NEVER TOO LATE

Peter Yates

I was born in Glasgow in 1955 but was baptised in Holy Trinity Church Huddersfield on Easter Day, 1956 where my three godparents all lived. During the 1960s, I attended St. Cuthbert's Episcopalian Church in Cambuslang with my father and sisters except when I joined the Cubs, and attended the monthly Church Parade at the nearby Baptist Church where the minister was my best school friend's father. Now, that friend is now a senior official in the Baptist Church ministry.

My siblings and I attended Scripture Union camps in Elie, Fife, when on holiday. In 1967, my father – a senior Civil Servant – was transferred to London so the family all moved south. On my first day at grammar school in Barnet in 1967, I received a very warm welcome from a senior teacher whom I refer to as 'Oh, my Scripture Union friend' although I cannot recall a SU lesson in my seven years there. On my own admission, I did not attend church regularly except for the monthly parades at Whetstone Congregational Church. I was in the Scouts by then and often carried the troop's flag, wearing my kilt, as well as being the national flag bearer at the District's St George's Day parades. However, I attended church periodically with my father both in Whetstone and later in Cockfosters.

Mary and I met in Totteridge in 1994, through a couple whom we knew through our separate working lives, and we soon realised we had many common interests and likes including listening to The Archers. We moved to Ware on Maundy Thursday 1997, both with successful careers in teaching and surveying respectively, and continued to do so for many years until retirement. Mary introduced me to cruising and we have since travelled to many wonderful cities and countries as well as meeting good friends. We were already engaged and quickly found Christ Church to be a very friendly and suitable church for worship.

On Friday 30th October 1998, I married Mary when Geoff Sowden (former Christ Church vicar, David Proud's curate) officiated for his first wedding service. The date was chosen as it would have been Mary's mother's 91st birthday although, sadly, she passed away a few months

earlier. None of our parents survived to see us getting married although I know they were there in spirit.

During the period when the church building was being renovated and we were using the Church Centre for services, John's curate at the time, Caroline Keightley, asked me why I had not taken communion, and I replied that I had not been confirmed so Caroline replied, "You are never too late."



In March 2019, Caroline and Paul Watson visited me at home after I had spinal surgery and I was most grateful for this and for their prayers. I was scheduled to be confirmed in 2020 just days before the first lockdown so Caroline's words were true and I was confirmed on 10th October 2021 by Rev. Alan Smith, the Bishop of St. Albans here in church.

Being brought up in a Christian church-going family and exposed to varying Christian denominations, I was always aware that my life had a spiritual dimension although, like many people, did not recognise the personal and closeness of this relationship. It has taken my surgery for me to finally recognise the importance of my relationship with God in my life. At my confirmation, I publicly declared that commitment to God.

GOD IN THE CENTRE

Hope Pearce

My journey with God has been an unbelievably wonderful steady journey, but over the last few years, struggling with medical conditions which affect my sight, breathing and heart has brought me closer to God. It has taught me that nothing is possible without God as He gives me strength

It has taught me that nothing is possible without God as He gives me strength and courage to rise up every day to fight my battles

and courage to rise up every day to fight my battles. Even when it seems unbearably hard, God walks beside me. I am looking forward to getting baptised and confirming my faith and love for God, and allowing God to wholly be in my life. One Bible verse that has recently stood out to me is Romans 8:18, "I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us." It reminds me of how much God has already done for me and how much He has in store for my life.



Naomi Pearce

I want to get baptised because I know that God has a plan for me and I want to devote my life to Him, to be born again, and for Him to be by my side guiding me in paths of righteousness.

My favourite Bible verse that really encourages me is Psalm 23:3 – 4, "He leads me in paths of righteousness for his name's sake. Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil for Your rod and Your staff will comfort me." (ESV)

Evelyn Pearce

The reason I wanted to get baptised was that I want to live the rest of my life following God and I want to walk in the path He has for my life. My favourite Bible verse is John 3:16, "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life", because it reminds me how God will protect His children and that He is willing to sacrifice His own son for us.

My Playlist

Ever since she was a baby, music has been a large part of Rebekah's life. Heavily influenced by her parents – from her mum, a mixture of Christian songs, classical music and smooth listening; and from her dad, classic rock, pop-rock and some psychedelic 80's rock. Add that to her forage into a variety of angsty music in her teen years and she now has an extremely eclectic taste in music.



from
Rebekah Schroder

My First Song One of my earliest memories is a family trip to Disneyland. I don't remember much of it as I was only three, but the *It's a Small World* ride song has always stuck with me. Apparently, I dragged my parents on it continuously throughout our stay so that explains why it is so cemented in my memories!

My special moment song While I was pregnant with my daughter, I began playing music to her while in utero. The song she would move around to the most was the song *Baby Mine* by Arcade Fire from *Dumbo*. This quickly became her anthem. When she was born, we encountered a lot of problems and she was in the NICU for three weeks. At first, we couldn't hold her and could barely interact with her. But we could sing. So, we sang this song to her till we were blue in the face. Even now, I will sing this to her to help her settle. Maybe when she's older she will hate *Dumbo* but currently we own most of the Disney Stores *Dumbo* merchandise to remind us of the special impact this song had on us.

My worship song During my university years, I began going to Hillsong Church in Central London. I remember hearing *Elohim* for the first time and feeling so at peace and close to God. This is the song that I listen to whenever I feel stressed, overwhelmed or scared, and it still gives me that peace and closeness, even if I'm listening to it on a busy train at 7am.

My dance floor song I definitely have two left feet. I love music and dancing, but just cannot seem to move to the rhythm. So, when I first heard the *Cha Cha Slide* by DJ Casper, I knew that this song would be my perfect dance floor song. I don't need rhythm when I have instructions! Now I can dance with the best of them!

My last song Of course, *Amazing Grace* would be my last song. It is such an amazing, beautiful song that really shows the love of God. The perfect send-off song.

A Day in the Life of...



from
Naomi Thompson

Naomi, who recently joined Christ Church with her husband, Elliot, shares her daily life as a music therapist...

I am a registered music therapist – but few people know what that is!

Music is a wonderful gift from God. We use it without thinking to communicate the meaning of our words, energise us for exercise, let out some frustration or have a time of relaxation. Music is part of our social identity, and from before birth we use musical sounds to tell others how we are feeling – from cute giggles to piercing screams.

Music therapists use these innate elements of music to support people towards their goals within a therapeutic relationship. In the UK, music therapists are registered with the Health and Care Professions Council and deliver a variety of individual and group sessions depending on need. We work with people across the whole life span, from neonatal wards to hospices, with a range of developmental, physical, psychological and social difficulties. Activities could include musical improvisation, music listening, singing familiar songs, writing songs, dancing to music, activities to support cognition and movement goals, plus many others. When working with people who are verbal, talking is usually involved as well!

This means that my work is incredibly varied! I completed my training 15 months ago. Since then, I have delivered music therapy sessions with children and young people in a special education setting, ran a group for older adults with dementia in a care home, and adults who are homeless with substance misuse and

mental health problems in a long stay hostel. However, in all these settings, I am looking for ways to create a meaningful connection in the moment with the people I am working with through playing music together and providing an opportunity for them to express themselves.



The music therapy room in the Special School. I deliver group and individual sessions to students in this space.

The other aspect of my working week is conducting research looking at how music therapy can support people with dementia who are too unwell to be cared for in the community or care home settings and so are supported in inpatient mental health wards. This involves collecting data (such as through interviews or data from patients), analysing it and using the findings to help inform service provision.

I feel incredibly privileged and grateful to do the work given to me. I am constantly amazed by the strength of human beings, as God's creation, in the face of huge challenges. The Bible tells us that all of humanity is beautifully and wonderfully created by God. Music is also a gift from God to be used to give glory and honour to Him. While I cannot specifically reference my faith in my work, I pray that I might bring some of the peace, hope and love of God to those I have the honour to meet.

"Whenever the spirit from God came on Saul, David would take up his lyre and play. Then relief would come to Saul; he would feel better and the evil spirit would leave him." (1 Samuel 16:23).



Seven Rebooted



After a break of almost 20 months, we are delighted to announce that **Seven** is back, and with an exciting new vision. For those who missed the first service back on 28th November, we are pleased to share this new vision in print.

For those who don't already know, **Seven** is our evening service, and takes place on the 2nd and 4th Sundays of the month at, you guessed it, 7pm! It is a place where all are welcome to come for a fresh encounter with God. It is also our least formal service, and much of that informality will remain as we relaunch.

At the heart of the vision is for **Seven** to be a place where the spirit of God is free to move, with longer periods of worship, and space for spirit-led ministry in every service. We have a passion for making it a place of discipleship, where people of all ages can explore God, and His plans for us. Finally, we want **Seven** to remain a place where we can build community and relationships, with space for conversation and fellowship.

So, to that end, the vision is built on four pillars.

Worship

We desire authentic, spirit-led times of worship where we can journey to the throne room of God. We are looking for and will be building a team of worshipers to lead us in times of praise, worship, and adoration as we seek to encounter God afresh each week. We will also be exploring how we can incorporate visual and other creative forms of worship into our fortnightly services.

Discipleship

We want all who attend **Seven** to continue to grow in their walk with God and see **Seven** as being part of that discipleship process. Our intention is to explore the fundamentals of our faith, and some of the issues that Christians face today, together with taking a fresh look at the Bible. We will be looking to deliver dynamic speaking and preaching, but in a more compact timescale to engage not just with those who are familiar with church, but those who have grown up in the fast-paced digital world, and who have a more limited attention span (think possibly TED style talks). This will be followed by informal times of discussion following the

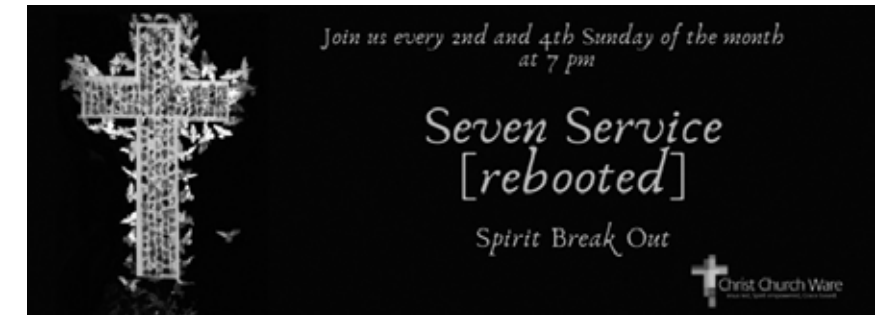
talk. We will be encouraging those attending to grab a drink and a snack and look a little closer at the questions posed by the person speaking.

Relationship

After the talk, our 11 to 18-year-olds will grab refreshments and gather together to look at the questions and chat, and it is our desire that the rest of those attending would also be able to gather in small groups to discuss the sermon, or just to share life together.

Ministry

Finally, we hope and pray that **Seven** would be a place where we will arrive, expectant for God to move. A place where we will encounter Him, not just in worship, but also have the space to be prayed for, and to pray for others. We don't believe that the gifts of the Spirit are just to be experienced at conferences and festivals, but instead, we want to grow in encountering the Holy Spirit, and to see people blessed, healed, and set free as we pray.



How Can I be Involved?

If you are excited by these plans and would like to be part of the team that facilitates this service, then we would love to hear from you. Whether you are a worshiper who wants to be part of a worship team, a people person who wants to be part of the welcome team or a behind the scenes person who would like to assist with technical, hospitality or in any other way, we would love to hear from you. Please e-mail office@christchurchware.co.uk or speak to one of the team at **Seven**!



from
Mark Hallett





Commissioned to the Streets

Christ Church has been working in partnership with the Hertford and Ware Street Pastors by supporting in them prayer, with financial aid and some of our congregation being a Street Pastor and being on the committee.



Hertford & Ware Street Pastors and distinguished guests

They all confirmed the amazing service that Street Pastor volunteers do to help reduce anti-social behaviour, but more importantly to help the vulnerable on the streets of our towns.

On Friday, 1st October, about 60 people were gathered at Hertford Baptist Church (HBC) to witness the commissioning of eight new Street Pastors. Andrew Clark, the Pastor of HBC welcomed the attendees, before David Elder, Chair of Hertford and Ware Street Pastors explained the role of Street Pastors in our communities indicating that “if you walk out onto the streets of our towns and cities in faith, then God walks with you.”; a theme picked up from Psalm 121: 1-2, “... where does my help come from? My help comes from the Lord.”

Sarah Williams from Ascension Trust, the parent body of Street Pastors, led the congregation in



Lionel Wallace (High Sheriff of Hertfordshire) talking about service on the streets

prayer. After the reading of scripture and joyous singing, David invited representatives from the area to speak, including the Mayor of Hertford, the Leader of Ware Council, the High Sheriff of Hertfordshire, the Chair of Hertford at Night, a representative from Hertfordshire Police and Fran Spence representing Hertford and District Churches. They all confirmed the amazing service that Street Pastor volunteers do to help reduce anti-social behaviour, but more importantly to help the vulnerable on the streets of our towns.

In his address, Andrew considered the theme of ‘Community Service’ enshrined in Jeremiah and right across the Old Testament; but also, one of cornerstones of Christ’s ministry, “Then the righteous will answer him, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink? When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you? When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?’” “The King will reply, ‘I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me.’” (Matthew 25:37 – 40).

Eight new Street Pastors were commissioned: Margaret Colville (Hertford URC), Andrew and Tricia Crumpton (Holy Trinity, Hertford Heath), Luke Groves-Davis (Forest Town Church, St Albans), Alison Hollingsworth (Hertford Baptist Church), Jan Stelcl and Celia Stelcl (All Nations Christian College, Ware) and Dawn Weston (Hertford Baptist Church).

In addition to welcoming eight new Street Pastors to service, the team also said a ‘Goodbye’ and ‘Thank you’ to Shirley Sloan (URC Hertford) who has been faithfully witnessing on the streets since 2008.

A grateful thanks to Hertford Baptist Church for hosting this event and to Andrew for preaching and providing the music.

David Elder
(Chair of Hertford and Ware Street Pastors)

Digging for hope – Rwanda

As part of its annual giving to Mission, Christ Church is supporting Tearfund’s work in Rwanda. We hear from Andrew how the work is impacting and changing lives...

Two years ago, I was part of a team that visited Rwanda to see this work for ourselves. Through Church and Community Transformation (CCT), Tearfund is training church leaders to engage with their communities in self-help programmes aimed at building resilience and ending poverty. While out there, we were able to witness these self-help groups learning agricultural, entrepreneurship and other practical skills as well as helping those most in need in their communities. Recently, the Parochial Church Council (PCC) made the decision to further strengthen our ties by supporting one particular project in Rwanda called Digging for Hope.

Beatrice’s Story

Beatrice (right) and her husband live in Bugesera District in Rwanda. Day in day out they would dig.

“I was a farmer who had no land for my agriculture. I used to do casual work digging for people who had land and I earned little money. I had no hope for the future,” explained Beatrice. With four children to support, life was hard.

“I had no hope of getting my own land in the area, our children did not have enough food,” she said. The monotonous digging to survive was crushing Beatrice, as no matter how hard she strived, she couldn’t change her future, or the future of her family. “We were very poor. We were always worried about the future, we were living a life without purpose,” she said.

Beatrice was then invited to attend CCT training in her church. “We realised that working together can help us reach much further.”

Beatrice’s church decided to start a self-help group (SHG), and she managed to contribute 200 RWF (around 14p) to the group each week, along with another 19 members. “It was a hard practice for me but I was encouraged by others.”

Beatrice received a small loan of 20,000 RWF (about £14), an amount she could never have dreamed of saving on her own. She set up a small business selling food in the market. Soon, she was managing to save more, make a profit and contribute ten times more than what she previously did to the SHG.

“We no longer work for others because we have our own business. We can contribute when there is a need to support vulnerable people, especially disabled and elderly people in our community.”

How will the Tearfund Digging for Hope project make a difference?

By supporting this project, Christ Church is helping communities in Rwanda experience spiritual, social and economic transformation. 1,500 people like Beatrice are expected to benefit, with a further 4,500 people benefiting indirectly.

Soil erosion, infertile soil, lack of modern agriculture techniques and the impact of climate change can all result in a lack of nutritious food. Cassava demonstration plots will be used to teach people farming techniques with the seeds distributed to community members to grow themselves.

To support some of the most vulnerable and elderly in the community, 20 toilets will be constructed. Safe water, hygiene and sanitation are crucial to keeping the community healthy.

Please pray

- Give thanks for the transformation in Beatrice’s life.
- Pray for all the churches this year involved in the Tearfund CCT process.
- Pray for the Diocese of Kigali and all the facilitators as they run this project this year.

What’s happening next?

In the New Year, we are hoping to get an update on this project from Emmanuel Murangira, the Tearfund leader in Rwanda. You may recall when Emmanuel came to preach to us in 2019, when we were temporarily meeting in Christ Church school. We will also be running the interchurch quiz on Saturday, 22nd January to raise more money for this project.

Our Mission Partners

Did you know that 10% of the money you give to Christ Church (as part of “general giving”) goes to support our mission partners? These remarkable people have to fundraise for all that they need to live and work, including supporting their families. You can find out more at www.christchurchware.co.uk/missions



from Andrew du Boulay

By supporting this project, Christ Church is helping communities in Rwanda experience spiritual, social and economic transformation.





Cross-Culture, Children and Youth

All Nations Christian College has had a long association with Christ Church particularly supporting students with their placement here. This term, we are blessed with three students, Suzanne, Toyin and Dominique who will be helping in the Children's and Youth Ministry.



Suzanne Scholze

Hello – my name is Suzi. I come from Germany and grew up in a Christian family with an identical twin sister and two younger brothers. My dad does church planting in the North of Germany, where there are many atheists and only few true followers of Christ. So growing up in a church plant, I experienced a small and close-knit church community, which had its pros and cons. Since my siblings and I did not have many Christians our age at church, we attended Christian children retreats throughout the year. These had a significant impact on my spiritual life and helped me grow in my relationship to the Lord.



Since a young age, I have enjoyed playing and taking care of babies and children, whether it was in my leisure time or during church services. After completing school, I went to Ghana for one year and worked there as a volunteer with orphans and vulnerable children. Living in a foreign country with such a different culture from what I was familiar with was an enriching and eye-opening experience.

After that, I studied primary school education in Germany for five years. During this time, God has been putting it on my heart to work with orphaned children abroad. I was eager to learn more about orphans, their situation, their needs, different systems of orphan care

etc. So I did some research and found a Christian college in the U.S. that offered classes in this area, and I attended it as a guest student for one semester.

I recently moved to the U.K. to do the 2-year diploma of biblical and intercultural studies at All Nations Christian College. I decided to do this study because several mission agencies recommend that one should take bible classes before serving abroad for the long-term. I am looking forward to learning more about missions and gaining a deeper understanding of the Bible through my various classes. It is also a great learning experience to live in such an intercultural community – I hope to grow spiritually as well as personally during my time at All Nations, and to get a solid foundation and preparation for the field God is calling me to.

Toyin Olukoya

1. Write something about yourself in two-three sentences.

My name is Toyin Olukoya and I am ethnically Nigerian. I was a primary school teacher in London prior to relocating to Stanstead Abbots this summer ahead of commencing my studies at All Nations.



2. Why did you decide to study at All Nations and what course will you be studying?

I came to All Nations to be practically and theologically prepared for serving cross-culturally. I am currently studying for a Two Year BA (Hons) Degree in Biblical and Intercultural Studies.

3. What are you looking forward to at All Nations?

I am very much looking forward to getting to know and building relationships with the youths at Christ Church as part of my Ministry Placement. I am also looking forward to my Ministry Internship in summer 2022 (although I am still not sure where I will be going yet).

4. Share five interesting facts about yourself.

- a. I love Spanish and I have been trying (and failing for many years!) to learn how to speak it.*
- b. I used to say that I would never go to a bible college – and here I am now!*
- c. I have never had a Sunday roast.*
- d. My first job in the UK was as a housekeeper in a hotel.*
- e. I passed my driving test on my fourth attempt.*

Dominique Edmonds

1. Write something about yourself in two-three sentences.

I am a gregarious optimist with a passion for scrabble, in awe of the great outdoors – more specifically in an alpine context. Very happy on a snowboard and accompanied by a cheese platter. A heart



for global peace and justice.

2. Why did you decide to study at All Nations and what course will you be studying?
I am studying towards a diploma because I am preparing to work in cross cultural mission with the marginalised.

3. What are you looking forward to at All Nations?

All Nations is a blessed place, especially in equipping oneself to serve in the mission field. I love the different modules, the amazing teaching, the fellowship and diverse community, drawing closer to Christ and digging deeper into the Word. All Nations is a learning haven – every day my lens is widened whether I'm in the classroom or not.

4. Share five interesting facts about yourself.

- a. I used to live in a boat on the Thames.*
- b. I am one of seven children.*
- c. I was once in a rock band called Rubbish.*
- d. I have never watched or read anything Harry Potter related.*
- e. Ephesians 3:14-21 moves me to tears every time.*

All Nations Enables All

It's not despite the pandemic, but because of the pandemic – the uncertainties it forced us to confront and the ways in which we've needed to adapt – that All Nations is in an even stronger position to offer cross-cultural, biblical training to students all over the world.

With flexible learning options now validated and the incredible support for our Tech21 appeal meaning that we can invest in our IT resources, we are poised and primed to train God's people to build His multicultural church! Students will be able to study through campus-based learning or distance learning utilising online forms of study. Remote and campus-based students will be able to study together. What does this mean?

The pandemic catalysed the growth of online learning, and All Nations is now able to offer more flexible learning options for students around the world. More of God's people can be resourced and equipped for mission, wherever they are.

'This success has been achieved through the dedication and hard work of so many people.'

Principal and CEO

In other good news, Redcliffe College has officially joined with All Nations! Together, we can bring new courses, fresh ideas and innovation with an even greater platform to serve the nations. Our newly validated MA in Staff Care and Wellbeing is a prime example of how combining Redcliffe's teaching expertise with our resources can serve the global church. It's a timely offering in our Postgraduate Programme, considering the reality of ministry burnout and increasing awareness of mental health in wider society. We must not forget the vital role that those involved in staff and member care play in supporting Christian workers. They are the ones who hold the ropes of resilience – both mental and spiritual – for God's people sent out to a world in crisis.

With tight Covid travel restrictions being in place since the outbreak of the pandemic and difficult visa rules, many overseas students have been waiting to undertake mission training at All Nations. The harvest is huge. Opportunities are ripe. However, thousands of potential students from the global south face financial barriers in accessing our training. This is why we

launched the Enable All appeal earlier this year. With your help, we can widen access to both residential and flexible delivery for all. We don't want any potential student to allow resources to limit the vision that God has given them. Your donation will add to our bursary fund, which helps so many students every year. Whatever you



can give will be hugely appreciated by students following God's call on their lives.

Can you enable them to get the training and preparation they need to transform communities with the Good News of Jesus?

Donate here:
www.allnations.ac.uk/enable-all-appeal

Did you know?

All Nations also offers resources for churches like yours to understand more about God's mission. EnVision is a 4-session group study resource that uses video, discussion, online materials, personal reflection and optional activities. Interested? Contact envision@allnations.ac.uk for more information and to sign up.

Join In with Summer Blast



from
Jess Cole

“It was the first event I had brought the children to at Christ Church and they were very excited to see a church building filled with such fun activities. Aged 4,5 and 7 years old, they all had a fantastic time doing crafts, jumping on a bouncy castle and listening to a Christian story. They’ve already asked me when the next event is!”

Some people have the idea that church is a cold, boring, unwelcoming and a slightly scary place to go. By throwing open our doors and inviting people in for two children’s special event, Jess and her team showed them that Christ Church is definitely not like that!

It has been wonderful to be able to meet in-person for Sunday morning children’s groups and also for our special events. We have been having so much fun!



Summer Blast certainly lived up to its name! We had such a blast with four fun filled mornings. Messy crafts, water fights, archery, Lego, junk modelling, ice cream and games... what’s not to love!

COVID put pay to our summer event last year and so this summer, it was great to be able to welcome lots of children in for times of fun and friendship building. A huge thank you to the fabulous team of volunteers, 5th Ware Scout Group for teaching archery, our super Lego man Darren, those who collected recycling and all who prayed for the sessions.

More recently during half term, we had another

wonderful opportunity to welcome people into our church with our Join In event.

Over two sessions, we were privileged to welcome around 60 adults and 90 children. There were craft activities, a bouncy castle, a ball pool with air blasters and lots of yummy cake! The grown-ups were happy chatting, eating cake and watching their children have a fun time. Louise and I gathered everyone together for a time of singing and dancing, and shared the story of Jesus welcoming the children to Him. We told them how important they are and that they are welcome in church.



Even more than that, Jesus also welcomes them to get to know Him and be His friend. We sang and danced together and the children joined in amazingly! It was great to see both the children and adults being comfortable in the space. Often just stepping foot into church can be a huge barrier but that is definitely made easier when you have a child pulling you in, eager to get to a bouncy castle!

Praise God for this amazing space we have to host events like this and for the support of people who got involved in making them happen. These events and all of our regular Sunday morning groups could not run without the amazing team of volunteers. I am incredibly thankful to you all and often say, “We’ve got great people at this church!”



The Power of Prayer

Did you know that there is a “mini army” of friends in the Christ Church community ready and willing to pray for you, your family and friends in a private, confidential way?

“Prayer does not fit us for the greater work; prayer is the greater work.” – Oswald Chambers

“No one’s a firmer believer in the power of prayer than the devil; not that he practices it, but he suffers from it.” – Guy H. King

Here’s what you need to know about the Christ Church Prayer Chain:

Our Purpose

To pray for the needs and emergencies of our church family, friends, the community, and the world as requested.

How the prayer chain works:

- Requests can be made by first person or by another providing they have permission to share the request.
- When we receive a prayer request, we will email the request to the prayer chain.

How to make a prayer request:

- Please send an email to prayer@christchurchware.co.uk or call the Christ Church Office on 01920 487267.
- Emails will be dealt with swiftly and phone calls may be delayed until the following working day if made out of office hours.

Please keep the following in mind when making a request:

- Please be succinct and to the point.
- Please choose your wording carefully so that the need is clearly stated, but those reading are not overwhelmed by the detail. It is not necessary to go into detail about relations, specific medical terminology and so on; the Lord knows all the details. The goal is to give enough information so we can pray intelligently.
- In order to respect people’s privacy, please be certain that you have their permission before posting the request. First names or initials can be used for sensitive issues.
- If you have shared a request, when appropriate, please send updates so we can keep praying specifically for the need.
- Please send updates of answers to prayer so we can all rejoice.
- Please do not forward things to the Prayer Chain list that are not prayer requests.

How to join the prayer chain:

- Email the church office – office@christchurchware.co.uk or call 01920 487267 and ask to be added to the Prayer Chain.

Guidelines:

- Please pray immediately when you receive the email.
- Continue to pray and intercede for the prayer requests until you feel a release or until an answer is posted.
- All requests are completely confidential. Please do not discuss them with others or forward messages outside the Prayer Chain.

“For this reason, since the day we heard about you, we have not stopped praying for you. We continually ask God to fill you with the knowledge of his will through all the wisdom and understanding that the Spirit gives,” (Colossians 1:9).

If you have any questions, please ask Gary Parkes



from
Gary Parkes



Harvest Prayers

Harvest is a time for us to remember all the good things God has given us, be it food, clothes, shelter or anything else. So, here is a compilation of prayers from the Christ Church School children.

Dear Lord,
Thank you for the flowers. Thank you for the animals. Thank you for looking down on me and telling me right from wrong. I feel very special because you made the world. I am grateful. Thank you for my family and friends.
Amen
Erin

Dear God,
Thank you for all the fruit and vegetables that we have and all the farmers that grow them.
Amen
Leah

Dear God,
We thank you for the Harvest Festival, the lives we live, and the things you have blessed us with during the past year and all you have provided through all our living. I come to you for wisdom and to be my light when darkness rises.
Amen
Daniel

Dear God,
Thank you for the lovely food and for the NHS helping us with COVID. Thank you for all of the crops and plants. Thank you for all of our friends and family and animals.
Amen
Martha

Holy Father,
Thank you that we are so fortunate to have these crops and that we have perfect weather to grow them. Thank you that we have the technology to plant and water many at a time. We pray for those who cannot afford the daily food they need.
Amen
Jessica

Dear God,
Thank you for the cooks who cook my food. Please help me not to waste it.
Amen
Sophie

Dear God,
Thank you for the tractors, farmers and shopkeepers for making food for us to keep us happy and healthy.
Amen
Joella

Dear God,
Thank you to the Father. He put so much effort into growing the delicious crops we eat, cook and sell.
Amen
Sam

Dear God,
Thank you for the farmers who grew my food. Help them stay safe in the field. I like blackberries best.
Amen
Ava

Dear God,
Thank you for apples on trees.
Amen
Gabriel

Dear God,
Thank you for food.
Amen
Kinza

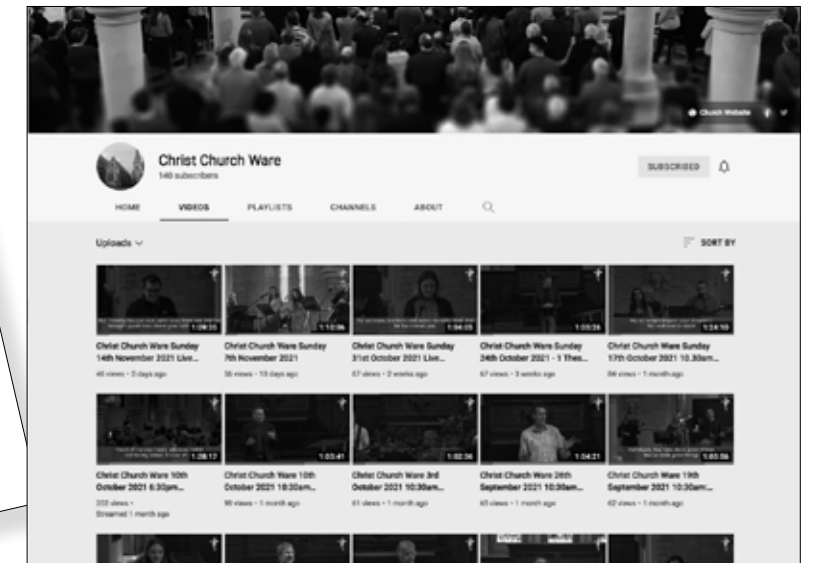


www.youtube.com/ChristChurchWare

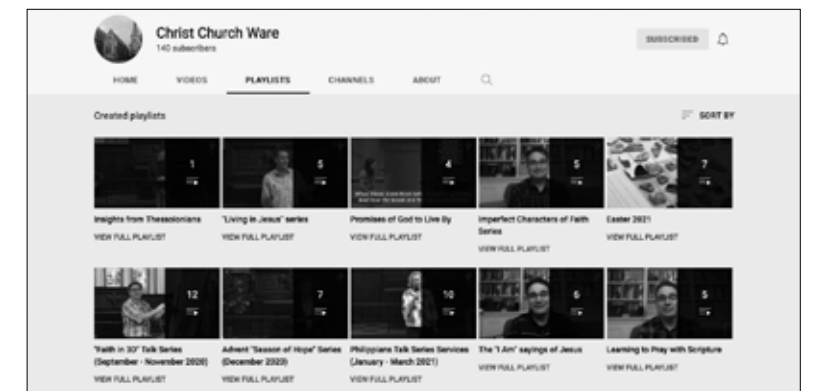
Did you know?

That Christ Church has it's own YouTube Channel?

It's a great resource for past services, featuring both the weekly services and also John's messages during



lockdown. Plus the special services we've enjoyed and snippets like the Yes & Amen presentation that we did back in Easter 2021. The site is also helpfully divided into Playlists, from Children's Church to the Learning to Pray with Scripture Series from January this year. Not only can you peruse past videos, but you can also watch live every Sunday morning at 10:30am. You can find it here: www.youtube.com/ChristChurchWare. Take a look and don't forget to press the subscribe button to keep up to date with the latest videos!



www.youtube.com/ChristChurchWare



tastelife



from
Katy Cole

Katy recently completed a weekend training to be able to deliver a tastelife course as part of our church offer to the community. She wanted to raise awareness of it here so that you know what the course is about and can support her through prayer, encouragement or by financially giving to the charity. She will also be talking about this in church sometime in the next couple of months.

What is tastelife?

tastelife is a supportive and educational charity that aims to inform people about eating disorders. It provides tools for recovery for those who suffer and those who care.



Why is there a need for community support for eating disorders?

There are an estimated 4 million-plus sufferers of anorexia, bulimia, binge eating and related disorders in the UK. 10% of teenage girls in the UK have an eating disorder but all ages and both males and females are affected. Sadly, the number of people suffering has increased post COVID and the care is patchy, often with long waiting times and high referral thresholds.

What is the tastelife course?

The tastelife course is an eight-session weekly group course for sufferers of all types of eating disorder, and those who care for them. The course is non-threatening, educational, and encourages a self-help approach that really works. It is run in the community by trained volunteers who care about those who struggle with eating disorders.

The course uses interactive and motivational methods to explain how to make changes in small steps towards health and wholeness. Its unique approach brings carers and sufferers together in an accepting environment where change is made possible. It is an experience that offers sufferers and carers a way forward and puts the steering wheel firmly in the hands of the sufferer.

The course is based on Christian values of health and wholeness but is fully adaptable and sensitive to those of all faiths and none.

When will we be running the course?

We are planning to run the course in the Church Centre from January – March 2022 and will be sending out further details soon.

Is there a cost?

There is a suggested donation of £40 for the eight sessions for people who can afford this. This goes directly to the charity to fund more trainers, courses and awareness raising.

What can I do if I want to find out more?

Speak to Katy Cole or check out the website, www.tastelifeuk.org. When we have dates confirmed, we will be sharing leaflets and sign-up details.



God's Creation

A few months ago at Bubbles, Maggie taught us about the amazing things God has created and gave everyone a plant to care for. I planted mine in Grandma and Grandad's garden and it has many purple and white flowers for us and the buzzy bees to enjoy. Thank you God for beautiful things, my friends at Bubbles and all the teachers who are with me every Sunday morning.

Daniel Swaile, aged 3
Bubbles group at Children's Church

Mum's the Word

Christ Church was converted into a wine bar as we said a huge "Well done!" to mums who not only had to take on the main load of childcare but also homeschooling during lockdown.

God perfectly weaved together this event – it was a specific call to celebrate and minister to mums who have carried their children and loved ones through the struggles of lockdown. Of course, the struggles of lockdown have in no way been limited to mums. The aim was to provide a fun and relaxed space and to inspire people to be honest with each other about what they've found hard about lockdown. Here, I shared a bit of my lockdown testimony...

"This event is to say well done, but if I'm honest, it doesn't all feel like well done. I can remember getting some things really wrong, yelling quite a lot, and getting to my wit's end. Watching my children crying at the door as I was walking away from them to get on with work, and a work situation that kept blowing up felt like torture. In late summer 2020, we did the absolute bare minimum sums and I quit my job. Life doesn't very often give us the opportunity to escape or be airlifted out of a situation, and I'm not giving a 'you should quit your job' speech. I'm just telling my story, maybe it will trigger you to tell some of yours, raw and real.



from
Louise Brett

"Jesus says receive my love, my perfect love. That doesn't require any achievement of yours. I see that you don't always have it together, I see all of it. I gave my life for you to be free. I love you even when you yell and let your children down. My love is enough for you and your children. Let me lavish you with it."

We saw around 45 mums at the event, and I received feedback from nearly everyone that they really enjoyed it and felt able to relax and have honest conversations.

So, what's next? It's great that so many people came along. There was clearly an appetite for this ministry, but there are so many different needs and ways to serve. I will be spending November praying and planning the next few events to trial.

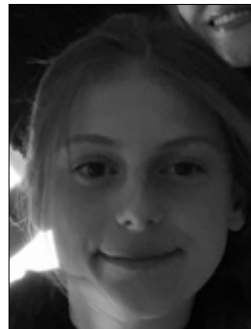
"Thank you... It was fantastic to see so many new faces in the church and enjoy time together."

"It was so good to be in church and catch up with everyone – such a chilled vibe."



Brentwood, Brighton and Harlow

What do these places all have in common? The answer is, the Christ Church youth! Here, we hear from three youths, what they've been up to over the summer and their plans as they enter a new season.



from
Isobel Cotton

Fun, Games and the Word

During the August bank holiday weekend, a group of 25 young people and their leaders went to Thriftwood Scout Site in Brentwood. Let's hear from one of the group...

In August, I went on my first youth weekend away, having only heard the stories of previous years and expecting big things.

Having arrived at the activity centre and then directed into our area by Sophie, the games started straight away, with cards and football in full swing (after trying to choose the least spider-infested bed possible). As everyone arrived and found their friends, we split into two groups for the first lot of organised activities. Jess produced a large inflatable ball and we played multiple games including 'human bowling' and 'keep-it-up' – both harder than they looked.

Next came the 'cresta run' – a wooden track with sledges which were pushed by a friend. I had heard and seen videos of the 'cresta run' – including an infamous crash caused by competitiveness and cheating – and was excited. It was a great ride, there were even mats stuck to the end to soften the inevitable crash, although it did nothing for the sudden stop and consequent slide backwards. After a busy afternoon, we sat back in the gazebo for a bible talk – all about creation, which included blaming Mark for the sins of the world as he ate an apple, and placing a model of ourselves in a swimming pool as an analogy for our

relationship in Christ. We discussed this in our small groups and had worship, before taking part in a quiz (which I can proudly say my group won).

The next day started with a great breakfast of sausage, eggs and bacon before a Bible talk and worship. After this, we went axe-throwing (with the angel axes named as they were 'filled with the holy spirit' according to Becca). After some good shots, some awful ones and a couple of close misses with rebounding axes, we made our way back for a competitive game of ultimate frisbee along with a game of manhunt. After lunch, we headed down to the lake for rafting. We built our rafts and played various games including races, pushing others off and collecting oars. Most of the rafts lasted till the end, although not with us all still on them. Some



tense games of Kubb followed and we were surprised by a guest speaker – Josh Thomas, who was an All Nations student and was part of the youth team (he's now an assistant pastor in Macclesfield). Another competitive game of ultimate frisbee and worship followed. Josh gave a really great talk before we toasted marshmallows over the campfire and finished the day with a film and eventful card games (partly done in German).

The next day, we had a last worship session and Bible talk along with another game of manhunt. Awards were then handed out and we dispersed home after a really great weekend – admittedly looking forward to sleeping in a bed without spiders or slugs.



Deepening Relationships with a Gap

This year, I have decided to take a gap year in order to prepare myself for university. I thought and prayed hard about what to do then someone suggested that I take a New Wine Discipleship Year. I looked into it and spoke to a few people I knew who had done it and asked what they thought of it. After a lot of prayer, I decided to do this particular gap year because I really felt that God was calling me to this. This course is about deepening your relationship with God and your understanding of the Bible.

During this year, I am given a placement church and a hub. My hub is All Saints' Woodford Wells and I have been placed in a church in Harlow called St Stephen's. When I signed up for the



Leaving Home and Christ Church

Hello all, I'm Caleb and I'm studying Paramedic Science at Brighton University. I joined Christ Church shortly before leaving for university but I already feel so welcomed by the church community. I have been involved in the youth team, including going on the Youth Weekend Away.

Leaving Christ Church for university was difficult for me as I had only just started to settle in. Thankfully, God has provided me with a great church here called Holland Road that I have been loving going to as I have made lots of friends and grown in my faith. However, I'm really looking forward to coming back to Christ Church during the Christmas holidays to see

year, I was able to pick a field I wished to work in. These include youth and children which is what I do, social justice, worship, creative media, family ministry and evangelism. While I am at St Stephen's, I help with assemblies, the toddler group and Sunday work which includes making activities for the children to do while the service is going on.

On Wednesdays, I go into London and meet up with other students who are also doing the Year but are working in different churches. We have teaching which covers a few main subjects including growing a deeper life with God, what our individual identity is within Christ, the Kingdom of God, Jesus's ministry, how we can understand and apply the Bible to our lives, evangelism, leadership, development of our character and what our calling is. On Wednesdays, we get to hear from a large number of different people with all sorts of different backgrounds.

During the year, we also get to participate in two weekends away which are very spiritual and towards the end of the year, we go on a mission trip abroad which we have to fundraise for. Then at the end of the year, we help with New Wine United which is the New Wine summer conference. I love taking what I learn on a Wednesday back and applying it to my everyday life and to my placement.



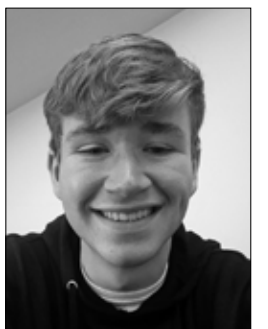
from
Sophie Hallett



everyone again!

Some societies that I have joined here are the Christian Union, badminton, paramedic society, and the chess society (I know... chess!). Within my course, my favourite part is learning basic life support as I can get stuck in with the practical elements of my degree. Excitingly, next term I will start to go on shifts with the ambulance service twice a week where I will put into practice some of the skills I have been learning this term. I would really appreciate any prayers during this time!

Do come and say hi to me when I'm home for Christmas!



from
Caleb King

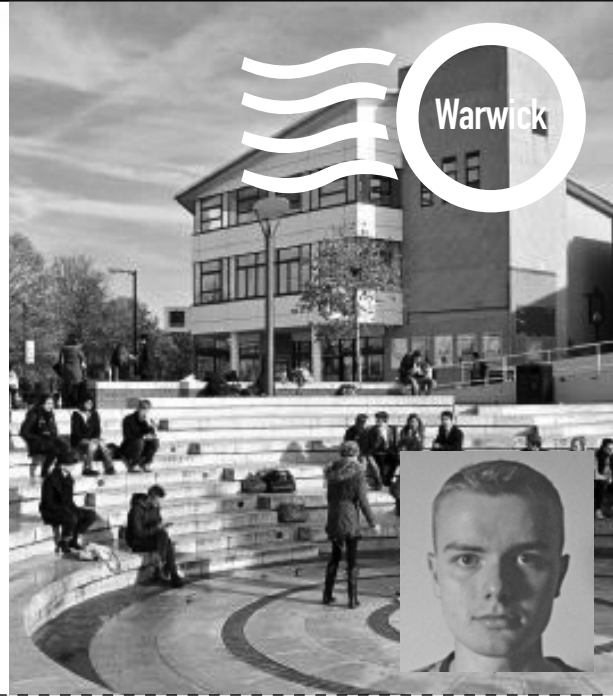
Postcard from...

Robbie Marlow...

Hi, I hope at least a few of you still remember me from way back when before COVID struck and kept us all indoors. I'm currently in my second year at Warwick University studying for a psychology degree after a very isolated first year but with hopes of a much more social and in-person second year. Four friends and I are living in Leamington Spa which has been a first for all of us as we are in an actual rented house and now have to worry about things like when the bins need to be put out!

I've recently starting writing music with my band (as we can finally actually practice together) and we're hoping to start to play around Leamington Spa and on campus. Being able to finally play music with other people again including being part of worship at Christ Church during summer has been amazing after all this time.

Recently, I started playing handball for my university which has been a great way to meet people and is a unique sport which I really enjoy.



Please pray:

- For good time management for my workload. That would be helpful as this year my grade counts towards my degree, as well as the mix of online and in-person learning being difficult to manage.
- For finding a work placement for next year which I have just started looking for (hopefully assisting psychological research somewhere).



Songs of Praise



from **John Stockwell**

Where to begin with my favourite hymn? It has taken me a while to even get a short list. Having been a part of the Christ Church family since I was about aged seven and having sung from numerous hymn and song books, I have probably forgotten more than I have sung over the years.

There are so many good hymns and songs which we do not even hear these days, let alone sing in Christ Church. Many are far more scriptural and theologically sound than many of the new age songs now being sung.

My choice is by someone I consider to be the best hymn writer of the 20th and 21st century – Timothy Dudley-Smith. He has written about 400 hymns and songs and many have become modern standards such as *Tell Out My Soul* as well as the one I chose – *Lord for the Years*.

For me, this hymn has a Biblical quality that I think both John and Charles Wesley, two great hymn writers of the 18th century would have admired. For me, there is a sense of the God of the Old Testament, timeless and with His people throughout the ages. There is a sense of the Holy Spirit, with God from the beginning and still speaking to people's hearts. There is a sense of Jesus, the Man of Sorrows, who is disowned and doubted, but who now reigns as King. There is a sense of the world that God so loves, a sense of people who are actually trapped by the materialism they have embraced. There is a sense of moving forward to the eternal future God has for us. The final verse is one I always have problems singing from the first time I sang it, without taking a deep breath or sometimes stop singing.

*Lord for ourselves; in living power remake us –
self on the cross and Christ upon the throne,
past put behind us, for the future take us:
Lord of our lives, to live for Christ alone.*

We are making a commitment to be renewed to live for Christ wherever that may take us.

Sharing the Joy of Christmas

If you're a CAP client, please stop reading now... or it'll spoil the surprise

But otherwise, do read on!

Hopefully, you already know that Christ Church has a partnership with Christians Against Poverty to deliver a free debt counselling service for our local community. We've been operating at full capacity this year and have been able to walk part of the journey with those who are struggling under the crushing burden of debt. Now, as we are approaching the season of Christmas, which should be a time that brings joy but often, it brings a stark reminder that life is really hard.

So, we would love to bring something of the joy of Christmas to our CAP Debt Centre clients by blessing them with a Christmas hamper, and we would love you to experience the blessing of being a part of this too! As the Lord blesses us, may we be inspired to bless others also!

There are some very practical ways you can get involved with this, if you are able, to help

collect together some items for the hampers for our clients. Some ideas of what you could contribute are below, though please feel free to be creative! (Please check that the use by dates are at least January.)

Crisps, Biscuits, Mince Pies, Christmas Cake, Tinned Soup, Fruit Juice, Fizzy drinks, Chocolates, Christmas Crackers, Hats or scarves, Gift voucher for a meal, Stocking fillers for children.

The items can be delivered to the box at the back of church or to Sam Rich by Sunday, 12th December. If you have any questions, you can phone 07725 607425 or email samantharich@capuk.org. Thank you in advance for being a source of blessing, prayer, encouragement and enthusiasm for serving others in our community who are going through a difficult time. We thank God for each and every one of you and we pray God's blessing on you all in this advent season.

If you, or someone you know, would benefit from free debt counselling please call 0800 328 0006.

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He Fathers-forth



from
Rosie Watson

I don't know about you but as we enter winter with a certain degree of uncertainty as to what it will hold, I find myself rebuking myself, "I should somehow be 'making things happen'... be making plans... finding a 'new norm' – whatever all that might mean.

So I find the autumn moment which prompted my poem a powerful antidote and reminder that our times are in God's hands; as Creator God, he is the Prime 'Mover and Shaker'. 'He Fathers-forth...'

'He Fathers-forth'

Each early autumn day
we count the passionflowers:
two, five, three, eight, four
wowed by their prodigal beauty.

Today there are eight again
but one is only half-revealed,
two of the three stigmas yet to emerge
(‘trees on a tropical island’ our precious young grandson named them!)

As I gaze
a tiny astonished
click
as petals pull apart
a second stigma
appears
ready for hungry bees.

I, greedy now for another epiphany,
would stay,
await the third birth
but know as I pause
this timelapsefreezeframed moment
is enough.

Our wise and loving Lord will Father-forth the full flower
at his discretion.

Hugging this truth and praising him
I move on.

*The title of my poem belongs to a wonderful, more prestigious poem:
'Pied Beauty' by Gerald Manley Hopkins.*

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Church Wardens: Lucy Davies & Bob Barker

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