

CHRIST CHURCH WARE

Issue 72

Christ Church Ware Magazine Autumn 2022

Summer Blast - page 8



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

www.christchurchware.co.uk

John's Journal



from
Rev. John Hookway

"Now faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see" (Hebrews 11:1)

Hope is an essential part of our faith, it is so important. Hope keeps us going no matter what is happening in the world around us, there is a hope we have in Jesus that is sure and certain. In changing and uncertain times, Jesus is the ONE who is certain and Jesus is the ONE who we can trust.

As we look through John's Gospel this term, we can get captured again by the person of Jesus. He is for us and with us, He understands the highs and the lows of life; and how when we trust in Him, we shall never be disappointed, we shall never be let down for all things are 'Yes and Amen' in Jesus.

We celebrate His provision for us as we come to our time of harvest. We thank God He continues to provide and we trust Him for the future. As we look toward the future, we see how God has been faithful. In this magazine, you will see things we are thankful for and things to be hopeful for.

This summer, we have had the opportunity to be thankful to God for the baptisms, for the weddings, for the encounters with Jesus at New Wine and with other encounters too. Saying 'thank you' is a huge part of harvest and it is a real privilege for me as a Vicar, with so many people who support ministries here, to be able to say "thank you".

As we look toward the future, we see how God has been faithful. In this magazine, you will see things we are thankful for and things to be hopeful for.



Also, in the midst of the challenges of life, we continue to look to support people alongside all our regular ministries. We have a course called When Dreams Change, an opportunity for us to support those with children who have additional needs, helping to care and to strengthen them.

In this financially challenged climate, we are running the CAP Money Course again. It is a great opportunity to learn how to budget or just to review budgeting and to think it through. It

WHEN DREAMS CHANGE

Course for Parents and Carers

We are running a free 4 week course exploring what happens when dreams change and how we process and adjust to our child's additional needs.

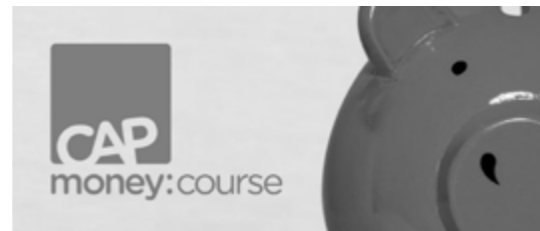
WHERE:
Christchurch Ware, New Rd, Ware, SG12 7BS

WHEN: 7:30pm - 9pm
Monday 26th Sept
Monday 3rd Oct
Monday 17th Oct
Monday 31st Oct

"It dared me to dream about things not just for my child who has additional needs but for myself as well."

To sign up please email:
office@christchurchware.co.uk

is really practical. If you are in more significant debt, we are able to help at this time either through CAP or other ways so please do talk to us.



Hope is the story of Advent and we will be looking at how we can personally share our story of Jesus, how we can help encourage others. The Christmas services are a great opportunity to invite people to find out about Jesus. Maybe you are seeking or you have a friend who would like to explore who Jesus is. In January, we will be running the Alpha course to be able to find out about Jesus.

Thank you all for all your support and care, and being a part of this wonderful community of Christ Church.

This is Amazing Grace!

I had the most incredible morning when I reaffirmed my baptism in the pool outside at Christ Church back in April! The water was totally freezing, but it really did not matter one bit!

I was a little bit nervous, but John gently reminded me that in the Bible, God told Joshua, more than once, to be strong and courageous (Joshua 1:9). I was certain that God was telling me that too.

On the day, not only did God provide the most perfect occasion with so many special people present and the added bonus of sunshine, I was also blessed by being alongside two brilliant gentlemen – Allan and Jotham. Standing in the middle of those two certainly helped me feel strong and courageous!



I had been christened as a baby, and I recognise and know that God heard those words all those many years ago. He has known me even when I have not known Him, but recently, I have come to see His grace in a whole new way, which has meant more to me than it ever has or did – and that is why I chose to reaffirm my baptism!

I became a Christian when I was 17. I had been suffering and hospitalised with an eating disorder, but after a blind prayer of desperation and through the love and care of Tina, a very good friend, I came to know God. She taught me about God, Jesus and the Bible, and I saw that, by His grace, God loved and accepted me just as I was.

My journey with God as a late teenager at Christ Church was exciting and encouraging but often challenging. Eventually, the challenges outweighed the excitement, and so I moved away from God. I am a little older than 17 now but in recent years, I have seen and heard God's voice once again.

When I was in other dark places, I was able to notice God stepping in, working in people who cared, loved and accepted me, no matter what.

My very special friend Nina brought me back to Christ Church just before the first Covid lockdown and very quietly and gently, God held out His hands and welcomed me back.

I did the online Alpha course with some brilliant Christ Church folk and this totally reaffirmed all the things I had pushed to the back of my mind. When the painting *The Light of the World* was shown, I saw and heard clearly in my heart that this was for me. Jesus had been waiting outside a door for me. I just had to ask Him back in.

I have felt totally welcomed back at Christ Church and have been blessed with some brilliant new friends as well as closer relationships with some amazing Christian role models God had already placed in my life to show me the way.



The service marked my stepping out to affirm my new start with God. I know I will still make mistakes and I will still face difficulties and dark times. I'm still me, that is why I need God, but I have a new hope in Him. By His grace, I have once again been unconditionally accepted, forgiven, strengthened and loved – and so are all of you!

This is amazing grace!



from
Hannah Clark

By His grace, I have once again been unconditionally accepted, forgiven, strengthened and loved – and so are all of you!

So Much to be Thankful for



from
Allan Ross

When Allan contacted Amigos in February to say that he wanted to go to Uganda, he was scared stiff and had no idea why God was telling him to go. However, after having visited Kira Farm with two of his children, Will and Emma, all he can say is that God is amazing, and they have so much to be thankful for... such as a toilet that flushes! Here, we hear of some of his adventures while out there...

David (see following page) stood in front of the home that he had built with his bare hands. He was beaming with joy and pride. The bricklaying skills that he had learnt during his year at Kira Farm in 2019 were there for all to see. A physical monument to the amazing work Kira Farm does for so many disadvantaged young men and women throughout Uganda.



special moment with Will and Emma.

David's plot of land is by the side of a 'road' (a red orange dirt track), and his new home consists of one small space. There is no furniture apart from one single bed covered by a mosquito net. There is no running water, no electricity, no toilet, no shower and no kitchen. Moreover, five adults live in this space!

David's previous shelter sat under the shade of a mango tree, and was half the size of his newly built brick home. Six adults had lived here before he was chosen by Josh to spend a year at Kira Farm.

The sad thing is that each September when Josh travels all over Uganda to choose the 50 lucky few young people (25 men and 25 women) to spend a year at Kira Farm to learn essential life skills and to get to know Jesus on a personal level, there are so many more that he cannot accept.



Hence why David was thankful to God and at one point close to tears. The fact that he had walked all day from his current place of work to be there that afternoon to kindly meet us was amazing. The fact that his whole family of elderly grandparents, parents, brothers and sisters all rely on him to provide for them; and the fact that he gives his time to his local church as well is staggering.

There is so much more to tell about our crazy visit to Uganda, and here are some of the highlights:

- Our meeting with Kavine (pronounced Kevin!), an amazingly determined young woman who Christ Church also sponsored in 2019.

Kira Farm is an amazing place. It is helping so many people. They have nothing yet, they rejoice and give thanks to God for everything that they do have. Their faith is extraordinary...

Josh, the manager at Kira Farm and fondly known as Uncle Josh could not contain his happiness to see the transformation in David's circumstances. There were affectionate hugs and grinning faces from ear to ear. Prayers were said aloud, and God was thanked for His infinite grace and generosity.

I stood there in the burning heat of the unforgiving afternoon sun in northern Uganda miles from anywhere, participating in this



In Uganda, women are treated as third rate citizens. For them to own property or land is very rare. Kavine is in the process of buying her own plot of land to build a home on! This is from the sewing skills she learnt at Kira Farm. More importantly, her faith in the Lord is everything to her.



- A trip to a school two hours away from Kira Farm run by another charity. The connection being my sister-in-law's church in Bath helps support this charity called ETRA. A truly humbling experience where we were treated like royalty. The whole school of 150 pupils assembled in the playground and sang the Ugandan national anthem to the three of us!
- Going to church at Kira Farm. Imagine one white middle-aged man trying to blend in with 50 young Ugandan men and women! It was totally different to a service at Christ Church with African drums and dancing in the aisles. They go to church every day for an hour in the morning and in the evening!
- At Kira Farm, we helped make reusable sanitary pads for young girls and women. They do not have the money to buy such things, so females are disadvantaged and unable to attend school when it is that time of



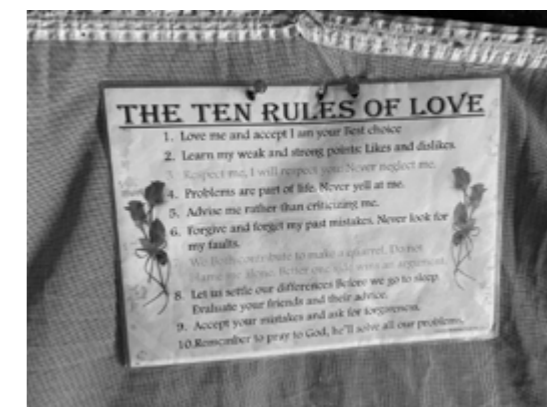
the month. They then drop out of school with no education and are forced into marriage. Being a man in Uganda is hard enough but for a woman it is far worse.

- We met Latina (not her real name), one of the female students currently there this year and heard her story. It involved poverty from birth, having twins, being in debt, an attempted suicide, turning to God and knowing that Kira Farm is her only hope. What's more, she is only 17, and the debt that was weighing down on her was a mere £15!

Kira Farm is an amazing place. It is helping so many people. They have nothing and yet, they rejoice and give thanks to God for everything that they do have. Their faith is extraordinary, even to the extent of humbling.

With that encouragement, I pray that you all go beyond your comfort zone wherever you find yourself right now in your life. You can do it with God by your side. I also pray that you all become cheerful givers. We can do so much good as a church in Christ.

I leave you with a piece of paper stuck on the wall of Kavine's mud hut in the far north of Uganda:



Far left top: David and the brick house he built

Far left middle: David's previous home. Six adults lived here

Far left bottom: Kavine outside her home

Left top: Working on the land at Kira Farm

Left bottom: Carpentry class at Kira Farm

Above: Making reusable sanitary pads at Kira Farm

Our Legacy Project

In our last issue, we talked about The Legacy Project where 10% of all personal gifting from the redevelopment fund should be used to create lasting legacy projects which bless others. One of the beneficiaries from the project is the Kira Farm Development Centre in Uganda, a project by Amigos that helps young people who have experienced violence, trauma, and unimaginable suffering to heal and believe in themselves during their one year there. They also learn practical skills to transform their own lives and the lives of their families and broader communities. Here is David's story...

“I Found Peace”

My parents divorced when I was two years old. My father was so cruel to my mother until she could no longer take the domestic abuse and left him. The problem went back years because my mother was from a different tribe, and my father's family never liked her.

When mum left, our father separated my two sisters, brother and me, and distributed us amongst different relatives. We all found this really distressing as we loved being together despite our turbulent homelife. As I was the youngest, I ended up being moved several times because at three years old, I could not do the heavy work my brother and sisters were given.



When my father remarried, he brought me back to his place. I hoped that this might be a fresh start but my new stepmother made it very clear from the very outset that she did not like me. Before long, the daily beatings started and on many occasions she refused to give me any food to eat. I loved going to school but I had to work for my own school fees. Sometimes, as soon as people paid me, my father or my stepmother would take my earnings away from me.

Then my father married another wife, a second stepmother to me and I was full of hope that she would treat me better. I did everything I could to be in her good books by doing everything she asked of me, but I was paid back with hatred and more abuse. I gave up with school and dropped out before I even made it to secondary school. I ended up working like a slave for my father's wives.

After losing any faith I had in the hope of a better future, I heard about interviews taking place in our community for training in vocational skills at a place called Kira Farm Development Centre. To my amazement, I made it through the interviews and ended up there.

I loved the peace I found at Kira Farm. All of a sudden, my life seemed to matter to people who showed me love and not hatred. I felt more at home on Kira Farm than anywhere else I had been in my life. I made friends and had fun like any normal young person, as well as learning so many practical skills. My faith in God was strengthened at Kira Farm, and I started to believe that God really did love me and that my life could change for the better. By the time I left, I felt renewed with a clear mind and a plan of how I was going to turn my life around.

When I arrived home from Kira Farm, I discovered that my brother and sisters had been thrown out of the relatives' homes they had been staying at. Our father had given them a tiny piece of land to build a home for themselves. The problem was, they had no money or resources to put towards even building a mud hut, and no one in the extended family was willing to help either.

I started by first helping them to build a hut whilst also looking for building jobs in the

community so that we could buy food. The land our father had given us was scarcely big enough to build a dwelling, let alone grow crops to eat. God was good to us and I immediately found building work, so I was able to use my wages to buy food.

Every evening, when I returned from work, I would share my Kira Farm discipleship notes. We would read from my Bible which strengthened our faith and sent us to sleep with a lot of hope that God loves us, and that He was going to make a way for us no matter what!

With my earnings from building, I rented some land, which we are now using for growing crops. I joined a local Amigos Farming Group and I have received a lot of encouragement which has made me even more focused. I have been kept busy since returning from Kira Farm, and many jobs have come via the Amigos Farming Group, which has been very encouraging. Even though I am supporting the four of us, I have been able to put aside some savings with the Amigos Farming Group savings club.

I find it funny that my father, who never cared for us, now comes and asks me for money. And our mother, whom we had not heard from in years, found out through a contact in the village that I am making some good money these days, so she has been calling and asking for financial help as well.

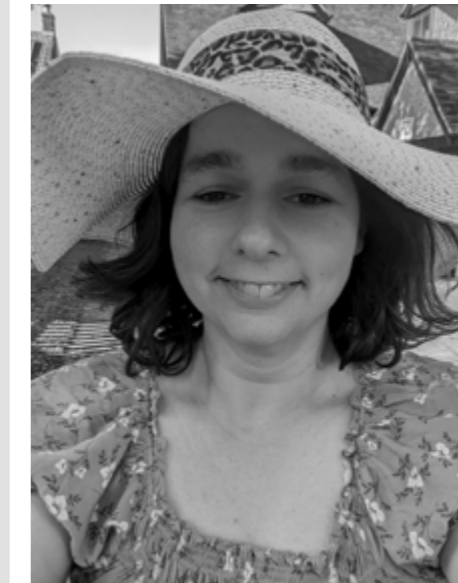
I am so grateful for the 'restorative approaches' teachings that I received at Kira Farm, because whenever I am disturbed by my father or mother, I know how to respond and not cause any friction. I can tell they are surprised by my wise and bold answers.

I have started taking my brother to building sites to train him in building skills. If all goes well, he will be able to share some of the household responsibilities so I can focus a little more on my own direction in life.

Our lives would have been a total mess if it was not for the skills I learned at Kira Farm and the support of Christ Church Ware. Together, you have not only helped me, but our whole family!

BREAKING NEWS – Christ Church Assistant Pastors!

The Christ Church Vicar and Church Wardens are delighted to announce the appointment of two Assistant Pastors, Louise



Brett and Rachel Quinlan. In 2016, a report was submitted to the Diocese for financial help that would allow Christ Church to appoint an assistant pastor. Since then, dialogue has continued with the Diocese. In 2021, Christ Church was encouraged by the Diocese Finance Committee to apply for a grant and that application proved to be successful.

The full time role will be shared by the two post holders. Firstly, they will support and assist the Vicar, and the many activities at Christ Church. Rachel will take a lead in matters of pastoral care and Louise a lead in discipleship. They are expected to commence work in October.



The Vicar, John Hookway said, "We are very excited at being able to make these appointments. It has been a long journey to arrive at a place where we are able to appoint Louise and Rachel as assistant pastors. It is a real answer to prayer, we are also very grateful to St Albans Diocese for their assistance that allows us to take this major step forward. This will also enable us to be able to strengthen the

church, support our amazing volunteers and be able to support other churches in mission in due course."

Top: Louise
Above: Rachel

Summer Blast



from
Jess Cole

Over the summer, Jess and her fantastic team of volunteers put up three very fun and different Summer Blast mornings. With lots of prayer support, they were able to welcome fifty four children across the three sessions. Let's hear more from her...

We started off the first session with a Summer Party! We thought about Jesus' first miracle of turning water into wine which happened at a wedding party. Our party involved lots of games, crafts and getting leaders messy!

The second session saw Darren Neely bringing along his Lego and along with it, we also enjoyed some crafts and games. The crafts included rock painting and sand jars for the children to take home to help them remember the parable of the wise and foolish builders – to be like the man who built his house upon the rock. The children were also able to experience the story in an interactive way when the leaders got them with water pistols during the storms in the story!

We finished Summer Blast with The Big Show where the children were split into groups. Some worked on a drama focusing on Moses parting the sea and Jesus calming the storm, while another group worked on a beautiful dance to the song When You Believe. The younger children learnt some actions to Way Maker and we had a fabulous prop making department! Lots of fun was had dressing up in costumes and then performing to parents and carers in the church.



“Summer children's events go from strength to strength. We are seeing children come back year after year, enjoying the activities and interacting with us. We are a large team of helpers and the children know an orange tee shirt is always around to help them.”

The fun is not just for summer. We have children's events throughout the year so please do get in touch with me if you would like to be involved. (Cream and cheese puffs on your face is optional!) **Our next event is JOIN IN on Monday, 24th October.**

“I did enjoy being part of the team. It gives me a chance to meet other members of the church and also families I may bump into in town.”



From Northern Ireland to Ware



from
Marcus Hart

Generally, I just love the outdoors, walking, camping and being in the sea are the things that I love most.

Just before the summer, Marcus joined the church staff team as Curate. Here, he tells us about himself, his family and what makes him tick...

I am Marcus, I am married to Jude and together we have a little girl called Ruby. Originally from Northern Ireland, I grew up on the outskirts of Belfast whilst Jude is from slightly further north from a town called Ballymena. We met in the beautiful part of Ireland that is County Donegal and we will eulogise at length about the place if you would ever like to hear about it. For most holidays, we often head back there or to the North Coast of Northern Ireland, we love the beaches there and getting into the Irish Sea.

I went to school in Belfast and then went on to study Civil Engineering at Queen's University Belfast. Whilst I enjoyed my degree and made great friendships, I knew quite early on I did not want to be an engineer. However, I was not quite ready to pursue ordination but I was certainly starting to think about ministry. I decided to dip my toes in the world of church ministry and found a ministry apprentice in London at St. Mark's Battersea Rise. I hasten to add at this point, if you had told me a year beforehand that I would end up in London, I would have run a mile. I had no desire to move to London and be in the city, but within a few weeks of being in London, I had grown to love it and had a fantastic year, so much so that I decided to stay a further six years. Following my apprenticeship, I taught maths for three years, during which I did my Church of England discernment process.



I then returned to the staff of St Mark's while studying theology at St. Mellitus, doing a mixed mode of training. At St. Mark's, I was in charge of Alpha Courses and the evening service.

Jude and I are passionate about good relationships, getting to know people well, especially over good food, but more than that, we love seeing people go deeper with God. We hope to help people grow intimate relationships with Jesus, to know Him and love Him more through the reading of scripture and in-depth prayer.



We have loved our first few months at Christ Church and feel so welcomed into the church family. We are excited by the energy and desire to grow in knowledge of God and also the will to encounter the Holy Spirit. We hope to be doing that in our lives but also to help and enable others in that too.

1. What are you looking forward to being a curate at Christ Church?

I am looking forward to learning, furthering my own development as a church leader growing in preaching, pastoring and developing others.

I am very excited by all that is going on at Christ Church, there is a real depth here and a heart to serve in church and the community. I am looking forward to seeing those develop and to see the things Christ can do in and through us.



2. If you weren't a curate, what would you be and why?

I used to teach maths before I trained for ministry. So, I should probably say that, but I often tell Jude my dream job would be a tour guide. I love history and finding out interesting facts about places and people, so getting to do that and then getting to spend time telling stories to new people would just be a really fun job.

3. Besides rugby, what are your other interests and what do you like to do in your spare time?

I used to play a lot of rugby until I had a bad injury (a shoulder dislocation six weeks before our wedding). I now watch lots of rugby instead and discuss it at length. I love all sports, keeping up to date with what is happening in most sports.

Generally, I just love the outdoors, walking, camping and being in the sea are the things that I love most.

I also enjoy cooking and trying to find new recipes which I can then eat with good people.

4. Share three interesting facts about yourself.

a. I am a double World Record Holder – 'Most People Licking Ice Creams at the Same Time' and 'Building the Largest Free Spanning Meccano Bridge' (<https://www.mclh.co.uk/our-projects/worlds-largest-meccano-bridge/>).

b. Working as a bank cashier, I accidentally set off the panic alarm.

c. I had a goldfish called Eamon (named after Eamon Holmes).

The Messiah Comes to Christ Church

Save the date!

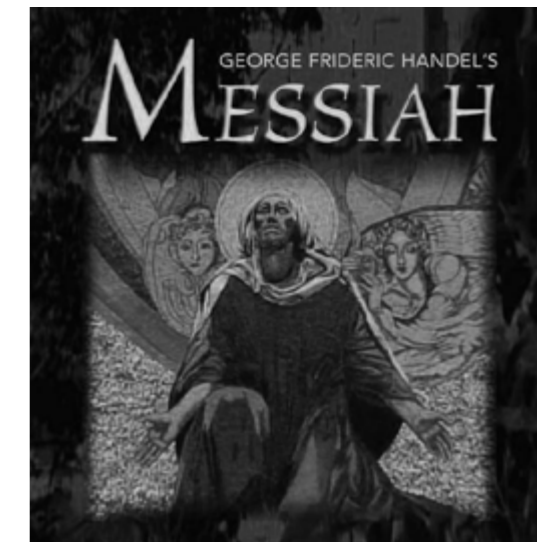
This year, the Ware Choral Society will be performing *The Messiah* at Christ Church on Saturday, 10th December at 7.30pm.



Described by the early-music scholar Richard Lockett as "a commentary on (Jesus Christ's) Nativity, Passion, Resurrection and Ascension", beginning with God's promises as spoken by the prophets and ending with Christ's glorification in heaven – including the 'Hallelujah Chorus' which is one of the most famous pieces of Baroque's choral music, and by far the most widely-known section of the work – this well-loved, majestic choral piece will be performed by a choir of about 100 non-auditioned members, with a range of musical abilities, though aspiring to professional standards. Led by a newly appointed choir conductor, Harry Sever, the choir will present the story of the birth of Jesus in a beautiful singing style.

For more information, check out www.warechoral.org.uk or email gillwoollgar@hotmail.com. Alternatively, you can also contact me at dmpscotts@gmail.com.

Diana Perkins



Thank You Christ Church Team

The Church Wardens would like to say a very big thank you to all those from Christ Church who worked on the refurbishment of the Curate's house! The work included a complete redecoration of the house, removal of a chimney breast in the kitchen, fitting a new kitchen, tidying the garden and other jobs including filling a skip in just fifteen minutes!

Far right: The removal of the kitchen's chimney breast in progress.

Right: The installation of the new kitchen.

Below middle: The brand spanking new kitchen!

Below bottom: The garden all tidied up and ready for use.



In addition to putting in many hours working at the house, Richard Clayden project managed the work and Neil Pearce was the technical adviser. In reality, Neil demolished the kitchen and then installed a new one!



Bill Griffiths (Bill the Brush) and Roger Tiffen (Roger the Roller) spent many hours decorating. Others who helped with the refurbishment were Ron Porter, Roger Evans, Andrew du Boulay and Jim Turner.



The gardeners, Peter Dane, Bob and Ann Owen were led by Sheila Dane and they tidied a very wild garden!

All completed ready for Marcus, Judith and baby Ruby to move in during mid-June.

To all those who helped in any aspect of the work, thank you!! Saying thank you does not seem adequate, but to everyone who gave their time, knowledge, experience and energy completing the work, your efforts are greatly appreciated!

It was a real team effort by folk from Christ Church Ware! Brilliant job!

Bob Barker & Lucy Davies
Church Wardens

Postcard from...

Jonathan Pardey...

London Calling is not just a classic Clash song but an apostolic call from God to reach and disciple children and teenagers in our capital.

Having spent twenty three years doing children ministry in Johannesburg, South Africa, and eighteen months in America, the Holy Spirit nudged and confirmed London to be our next assignment. A large housing estate filled with young people awaits us, and developing a successful model for urban ministry will help many more churches throughout Europe. We are passionate about preaching the gospel and making disciples. We have a creative bent, and have empowered many young leaders over the years.

Currently, we are still in Johannesburg raising the monthly support we need to live in London, but hope to move soon. We are consulting and coaching with churches, and creating children's curriculum that not only disciples, but also carries the apostolic heart of God for nations.

My two years at Christ Church back in the 80's really impacted my heart for missions, worship leading, and I did my first children's holiday club during that time.

Joanne and I have five children and two grand-children, our youngest daughter Gabriella is excited to be making the move to London with us.

Please feel free to contact us
jonathan@pardeys.com, joanne@pardeys.com



Please pray:

- For us to reach our support goal quickly
- For us to make the move to London with favour, so that children and teens can be reached with the gospel of Jesus!



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A Day in the Life of...



from
Ben Pearce

A familiar face at Christ Church, Ben shares his daily life as a Deputy Headteacher...

For those of you who do not know me, I am Ben and I have been coming to Christ Church with my family for around 10 years. My wife is Ange, and we have three children, Hope, Naomi and Evelyn. You may have seen us online or at the front leading worship. I also have other family members at church, Katy (my sister) and Geoff Cole and family; and Neil and Margaret (my parents). We used to live in Enfield but all somehow ended up in Ware!

In terms of my average day's walk with God, it goes something like this...

My alarm goes off at 6am. After a couple of snoozes, I read the 'Verse of the Day' on Bible Gateway and the chapter the verse is from, for context. I spend a few minutes reflecting on the message, which sometimes comes back to me later in the day to speak into a situation or as an encouragement, and committing the day to God. Then, I haul myself out of bed and get ready for the day ahead. I leave for work shortly after 7am and drive to Stevenage, whilst either worshipping along to worship music or spending time praying for my family and others in need, or other things on my heart. Whenever I pray for my family, I include Dashnica, our little Compassion sponsored child from Haiti.

My destination is Marriotts School, one of the largest schools in Hertfordshire at around 1,500 students and 170 staff. I am Deputy Headteacher there, which is a rewarding but high pressure job.

Walking up the long driveway to the school gives me opportunity to pray blessings over the school and the day ahead.

The day officially starts with an 8am senior team briefing (if I do not have earlier meetings

booked), and from that point onwards, it is pretty much a whirlwind of meetings, duties, walkabouts etc., and a bit of Maths teaching thrown in. I am mostly out and about, but if I am in my office, I have a revolving door of queries or situations to deal with.



As I go through my day, I will often throw up short prayers to ask God to help me, as many of the things that come my way are difficult. It might be a prayer for... confidence if I am leading an assembly to 300 Sixth Formers, patience with a particularly challenging student, wisdom if I am dealing with a complicated and upsetting safeguarding issue, sensitivity if I am working to resolve a tricky HR issue, discernment if I am meeting with a cross parent, empathy if supporting an upset student or member of staff, and so on. I would not be able to deal as effectively with these situations under my own strength alone.

After school, there are meetings or events so I will normally head home between 5.30pm and 6.30pm, sometimes later.

I am blessed if I can get home in time to join the family for dinner, where we talk about the 'news of the day'. We try to go round the table and have a prayer about a particular person or situation. Then, we work as a team to clear down and reset for the next day. Ange also has a very intensive job, as a special needs team lead based in Barnet, Enfield and Haringey, so the kids are used to working together with us on the house chores! There will then usually be ferrying of children to various clubs and activities, or badminton for me on a Monday.

Then, most nights I will knuckle down to a couple of hours more work catching up on emails or paperwork, as there is little time for that in school, before settling down for the evening. Ange is particularly encouraging in her faith, and we try to work through a Bible study series or Bible in a year etc., and some prayer time before we go to bed, ready for that 6am alarm again the next morning!

I am mostly out and about, but if I am in my office, I have a revolving door of queries or situations to deal with.



Midweek

I was first drawn to Christ Church about six years ago, when a friend told me about the Midweek Women's Bible Study group, something I was missing at my church in Hertford. When I joined Christ Church, I found Midweek gave me a great opportunity to get to know some of the ladies in the congregation. I was impressed by the welcome I received and by the depth of fellowship and level of support the ladies gave each other.

We meet on a Wednesday during term time at 9.30am with time for fellowship over tea and coffee. We then study the Bible for about an hour. So far, we have covered Bible characters, Old and New Testament books or Biblical themes. We then stop to share and pray for each other.

There used to be four of us leading Midweek, but gradually the other ladies have moved on to different responsibilities. We are therefore praying that God will call new ladies to share this task with me. It is such a vital part of our church ministry.

Here are also what some of the other women have to say:

"Midweek is a place to relax with a coffee, enjoy fellowship, study the Bible, learn and ask questions. I love Midweek because even if I can't attend regularly I know I will be welcomed if I dip in and out. It's a really good feeling, knowing Midweek is there." – Elaine

"I first went along to Midweek 25 years ago as a brand new Christian. It was, in effect, my first house group where I learnt about prayer and Bible study; and where I was able to ask so many questions in a safe and supportive environment. I remember learning just by listening to the more mature Christians and noticing how they seemed to really care about each other's lives. After a break of many years due to work commitments, I have now returned to find a new mix of women who are still sharing and caring, still praying for one another, still chatting over coffee and I am glad to be back." – Gill

Jenny Stratfold

Midweek is open to all women and it is a time for Bible study, prayer, worship and support, where women can be encouraged and equipped to do the work of the Kingdom, whether in the church, the home, the workplace or community. A place where friendships can develop and deepen, and the nitty gritty of life can be shared.

If you are a woman and are around on a Wednesday morning, come and join us, you will be very welcome.



For where two or three gather in my name, there am I with them.
Mathew 18:20





Construction of a Public Toilet



from
**Prem and Indira
Subedi**

How can the construction of a public toilet be news in the 21st century? From the western perspective, it is not news at all as we do not even think about it. This may be considered a mundane thing but in a country like Nepal, the construction of a disabled friendly public toilet is encouraging news and a testimony to our faith. It also highlights to the community the role of the local church in community work as 'salt and light'. The need for the toilet was felt even stronger during the Covid pandemic as people could not visit other people's houses asking for use of their toilet. This real story is from Chakraghatti, a town of about 10,000 people in Sunsari district in eastern Nepal.

In the locality, where disability is considered as a bad thing (even a curse from previous life), persons with disabilities (PWDs) are not normally seen in public places because of the strong stigma attached to disability. Moreover, the lack of an accessible toilet in the town further restricted their mobility to the town. Therefore, the construction of a new toilet was a real need. We raised this issue at the local level and approached the local municipality (council) and after a series of delegations, interactions and persuasion by advocating and lobbying, the local council accepted our plea. It is a joint project (local government-community partnership) with the council bearing 70% of the cost through a grant and 30% to be raised by local people. The total cost of the project was 1.4 million Nepali rupees (approx. £9,000). A committee was formed and Indira worked as the chairperson of the committee.

Initially, people were optimistic and seemed supportive and helpful, but when it was made clear to the people and members that there was no room for mismanagement of funds and no personal gain, they started to withdraw and even tried to create hurdles. Even the committee members pulled out. This was a testing time for us. Actually, this is a sorry state of development projects in Nepal. In recent times, the level of corruption and mismanagement has become so rampant that everybody thinks there is always corruption.

During that challenging time of non-cooperation and opposition, we had to be patient, gentle and respectful but firm in our approach (1 Peter 3:14-15). After a series of discussions and persuasion about land, local contribution, role and responsibilities of the committee, the work gained good momentum. Indira had to take so much responsibility like procurement of materials, finding labourers (there is a shortage of labour as most men of the village are working

overseas), assuring the standard and quality of the work, visiting the local council, submitting necessary documents to receive funds and raising local contribution which mostly came as labour.

The new toilet has three sections – men, women and disability friendly, and two washrooms. Without prayers and support from friends and local church members, it would not be possible to meet the deadline of the project.

This work has set an example of how public work should be done, and bears a good witness of stewardship and quality work. This has also opened an opportunity to work with the local government for the benefit of the wider community. This is the first wheelchair accessible toilet in the area, and a step forward in building the confidence of PWDs. There are challenges in maintaining the cleanliness of the toilet, and developing a sense of ownership and setting up a committee to ensure smooth running of the facility. The project does not end here but it is a stepping-stone to reach out further. In addition to our regular work, we are giving more time and effort to work for PWDs in and around the churches. Your prayers are appreciated in this process. We thank God for His faithfulness.



Grape Harvest in Jerusalem

Richard Harvey is a UK based-Jewish disciple of Jesus who has served with the Church's Ministry among the Jewish people (CMJ) and as UK Director of Jews for Jesus. He has lived in Ware since 1997, is a member of Christ Church and is also one of our mission partners.

Jerusalem in August was almost as hot as it was in the UK! I was there in summer to give a presentation at the World Congress of Jewish Studies, Hebrew University and was staying just outside the Ultra-Orthodox Jewish area of Mea Shearim.



The sights and sounds of the area are dazzling – a mixture of Middle Eastern heat and smells, and the life of a strictly religious community where the men wear long black tailcoats and fur hats on the Sabbath, and the women cover their heads with shawls or wigs and cover their arms and legs to dress modestly. They have large families and it is not unknown for families to have eight children or more. A couple of years ago I was based in the area for a while, meeting secret disciples of Jesus, who, like Nicodemus, would come at night, not wanting to be recognised by others for having an interest in Jesus.

My presentation at the Hebrew University was about Hugh Schonfield, a Jewish scholar who wrote a book called *The Passover Plot*.

The book came out in 1966, causing a sensation and selling over six million copies. It was also picked up by John Lennon just as the Beatles were becoming popular. Lennon gave an interview to Maureen Cleave on 4th March 1966 which got him into trouble for claiming that the Beatles were "more popular than Jesus". Beatles albums were burned in the streets, and the group could not tour the USA again.

Lennon had been reading *The Passover Plot*. He was interested in Schonfield's idea that Jesus had tried to fake his own death, but the "plot" had

failed as he had actually died when the Roman centurion put the spear in his side (John 19:34).

Schonfield's strange views and the involvement of the Beatles led to interesting questions and discussion after my presentation. Did Jesus really die on the cross? Was Schonfield a genuine disciple of Jesus? How did Jewish followers of Jesus today understand his work? Can Jewish people believe in Jesus? Many of those present were curious, and I had many opportunities to share my faith. I also discovered several secret believers in Jesus, who came up to me after the presentation.

Coming back to where I was staying, I came across the celebration of Tu B'Av, (15th of Av), the celebration of the grape harvest in Israel. The 9th of Av is a solemn fast day, given to mourning over the destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem (in both 586 BC and 70 AD) and other sad events that occurred on that day; but the grape harvest is a time of joyful celebration, music and the Jewish equivalent of Valentine's Day, where matchmaking, engagements and weddings take place, and wine flows plentifully.

I am amazed at the growing number of Jewish people who are interested in Jesus. Some are curious, others are secret disciples and many are publicly identifying as followers of Jesus as the rabbi and Messiah. For me, the grape harvest in Israel is a joyful sign of our fruitfulness as disciples. As Jesus taught:

John 15:1 – 5 writes, "I am the true vine, and my Father is the gardener. He cuts off every branch in me that bears no fruit, while every branch that does bear fruit he prunes so that it will be even more fruitful. You are already clean because of the word I have spoken to you. Remain in me, as I also remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me."

"I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing."

Please pray for continuing interest and fruit.



from
Richard Harvey



During that challenging time of non-cooperation and opposition, we had to be patient, gentle and respectful but firm in our approach.





A Wedding in Sri Lanka



from
Robert and Ruth Boulton

Charlotte Boulton is one of our mission partners. She grew up at and was brought to faith in her teenage years at Christ Church Ware. Currently, primarily based in Wattala, Sri Lanka working as a teacher, she recently got married in August. Here, her parents, Ruth and Robert share with us about the wedding that almost did not happen...

This wedding has been a long time coming. Charlotte and Manoj had hoped that they would marry in the summer of 2021 having got engaged in July 2020 during the middle of the pandemic. Charlotte's visa was due to expire in August 2020 and as no one was working in the visa department in Colombo, she was told she had to leave the country. She returned home on 1st August 2020 and stayed with us until May last year when she returned to not only her fiancé but the country which she has called home for the past five years. Due to the continuing travel restrictions and increasing Covid 19 numbers



in 2021, it was not possible for them to marry last year. When we went out to visit in March, we agreed on the date of 6th August. Family and friends were delighted and were hopeful to be able to join us to celebrate such a special day.

Trips were booked and all was looking good and then... Sri Lanka entered a period of economic crisis and worse still protests and violence. In May, we were forced to cancel our trips as the Foreign Office travel advice was changed to 'essential



travel only' and we waited and prayed that the advice would change and we could rebook. It did and so we made the decision to stick with our original plans, attend the wedding and then tour some key areas of this lovely island.

Then, just a few weeks beforehand, more protests and violence ensued, and the Foreign Office advice was once again 'essential travel only.' Charlotte was distraught at the thought of having no one there to be part of her special day. We assured her we would get there somehow.

Two weeks before the wedding, it looked like it

would just be the four of us. We continued to pray that the advice would change in time but as the day of our departure got closer, it became clear that this would not happen but God had His own way of making sure other members of the family could get there.



Ruth's brother in California needed to do a business trip to India and this was approved the week before hand, and he was able to fly into Sri Lanka to attend the wedding; Ruth's parents found that their travel insurance would cover them as they deemed their grand daughter's wedding 'essential' and her other brother and his son, George were delighted when George's mum unexpectedly agreed that despite the advice she would be happy for them to attend.

We know that many members of the congregation were praying for our situation in the lead up to this big day and for that we are truly grateful. It was an answer to prayer in every sense, and what an amazing day we had. Charlotte and Manoj smiled all day and are now settling into married life and setting up their home in the apartment that has been provided to them by the Paalam Project.

Life for the people in Sri Lanka continues to be affected by the terrible economic situation that the country is in but while we were there we felt completely safe and the people could not do enough for us to make the trip truly special.



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

Going Deeper into God's Word



from
Marcus Hart

Psalm 119:9 – 16
*How can a young person stay on the path of purity?
 By living according to your word.
 I seek you with all my heart;
 do not let me stray from your commands.
 I have hidden your word in my heart
 that I might not sin against you.
 Praise be to you, LORD;
 teach me your decrees.
 With my lips I recount
 all the laws that come from your mouth.
 I rejoice in following your statutes
 as one rejoices in great riches.
 I meditate on your precepts
 and consider your ways.
 I delight in your decrees;
 I will not neglect your word.*

The verse may say 'young person' but I think this can be applied to all people – the young in age and the young at heart. The passage tells us repeatedly how we might live in purity, going about living a holy life and it is through 'living according to God's word', 'hiding God's word in your heart', 'delighting in His decrees, not neglecting His word'. David is a little bit of a broken record here; he has one message and he is trying to make sure that his readers understand it, and not just understand but also apply it.

Why have I chosen to write on this? I believe the regular reading of scripture is so important for our relationship with God. We do not tend to go long without speaking to people who mean a lot to us – husbands, wives, parents and friends. We like to stay connected to them to hear what is going on in their day or to share what went on in ours, to learn from others and share life together. The same should be true of our Heavenly Father. The desire to connect with Him, to share what is going on in our lives through prayer and then to allow Him to speak into our lives through His scriptures. It is through scripture that God reveals who He is and how He loves us. He uses His word to teach us and guide us and that is what King David is encouraging in Psalm 119, to follow God we must live according to God's word, bury it deep in our hearts, have it on the tip of our tongues, meditate on it – allow God's word to shape us in His likeness.

We have covered the why, but the how is often the harder bit, it requires discipline and routine, sometimes sacrifice. I am sure there are many of us who, like myself, set out with grand ideas of reading the Bible, starting in Genesis and got

halfway through Leviticus and gave up. Biting off more than we could chew or not frankly becoming bored (some of it is hard going), but my top tip – like King David – I think repetition and reminders are important.

Firstly, **find the time of day that you can always read the Bible and not be distracted** or that is taken up by something else. For me, that is just before bed – there is nothing else that needs to be done at that time, so I can commit to that every day.

Secondly, **where to begin? Start in the New Testament with the Gospels** and work your way through them. Understanding Jesus will actually help when you come to the Old Testament, for so much of it is pointing to Jesus and what he will come to do.

Thirdly, **how much to read? Set yourself a minimum every time, maybe five or 10 verses** and that is non-negotiable. Always read that number of verses, you might read more sometimes but never less. That way, you will build routine and soon quicker than you realise, you will have made your way through books of the Bible.

Fourthly, **pray – take the time to respond to God and what you have read**, to have peace with God and to allow it to really speak to you.

If you have questions about reading scripture, or if you would like to have someone to read scripture with you, please do not hesitate to get in touch. I would love to help in any way possible with your journey of understanding and going deeper into God's word.



Songs of Praise

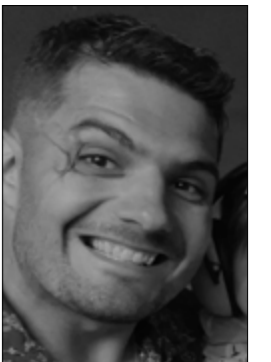
I thought that trying to pick my favourite worship song would be easy, but as I have gone through my music library, I realised that there are so many songs that I could choose. I think that to pick one song would be too hard, impossible, so I have gone for a top three.

Raise a Hallelujah by Bethel music is such a powerful song. I get filled with the Holy Spirit every time I sing it. The song reminds me that at times when it all seems too much, that is the best time to sing and praise God for all the good things He provides.

Happy Day by Tim Hughes – I was gifted a CD as part of a Secret Santa and this was the first track on it. I remember driving to pick my wife, Izzy up from the train station with this on and up loud. I was instantly filled by the Spirit that I almost had to stop the car because I was so overcome. Our two-year-old son Judah now always requests it, as it is his favourite song.

My final pick is not just one song but a whole album. I have been listening to country music

for around 11 years now and love all the new music that the genre keeps making. In August 2020, we were lucky enough to go on holiday to Sardinia with Izzy's family. That week, Chris Tomlin released an album called *Chris Tomlin & Friends*. The album consists of 13 worship songs that he recorded with different country singers and bands. It became the soundtrack to our very early morning wake-ups with Judah. We would literally watch the sun rise each day with this on in the background (and a strong coffee in hand!). Listening to the album instantly takes us back there. So many of the songs are really uplifting, we love listening to it and praising God as a family.



from
Simon Smith

I RAISE A HALLELUJAH

In the presence of my enemies
 I raise a hallelujah
 Louder than the unbelief
 I raise a hallelujah

My weapon is a melody
 I raise a hallelujah
 Heaven comes to fight for me

I'm gonna sing in the middle of the storm
 Louder and louder, you're gonna hear my praises roar
 Up from the ashes hope will arise
 Death is defeated, the King is alive

I raise a hallelujah
 With everything inside of me
 I raise a hallelujah
 I will watch the darkness flee
 I raise a hallelujah
 In the middle of the mystery
 I raise a hallelujah
 Fear, you lost your hold on me

I'm gonna sing in the middle of the storm
 Louder and louder, you're gonna hear my praises roar
 Up from the ashes hope will arise
 Death is defeated, the King is alive

Sing a little louder x7
 Oh, sing a little louder

Sing a little louder
 In the presence of my enemies
 Sing a little louder
 Louder than the unbelief
 Sing a little louder
 My weapon is a melody
 Sing a little louder
 Heaven comes to fight for me
 Sing a little louder

I'm gonna sing in the middle of the storm
 Louder and louder, you're gonna hear my praises roar
 Up from the ashes hope will arise
 Death is defeated, the King is alive

I'm gonna sing in the middle of the storm
 Louder and louder, you're gonna hear my praises roar
 Up from the ashes hope will arise
 Death is defeated, the King is alive

I raise a hallelujah (hallelujah)
 I raise a hallelujah (I raise my hallelujah)
 I raise a hallelujah (I raise my hallelujah)
 I raise a hallelujah

God has Never Left Me Unsupervised



from
Holly Crawford

Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows. (James 1:17)

I have a T-shirt that reads, 'In my defence, I was left unsupervised.' This is because I detest any form of responsibility: the very thought of being handed any form of responsibility at all scares me silly. Therefore, I am very much a follower, not a leader; and that is alright with me.

However, I have a confession: I am envious of those who have a vocation. I look at vicars, teachers, nurses, doctors and nursing home managers in my social circle with awe, wonder and admiration. It must feel nice, I muse, to have always have a plan and know what you are doing; I do not know what I am doing from one second to the next, let alone have had it all mapped out when I was still at school.

Truth be told, I have never felt like I had a vocation, although I truly wish I did. I absolutely loved school and still love learning now. Religious Education, English and Drama were my favourite subjects. Down the years, I ruled out being a vicar (I would cry during funerals,) a teacher (cannot do maths) and a nurse (squeamish).

For a long time, I harboured dreams of being an actress, not just for fame and fortune, although that would have been nice, but because I truly love acting. I actually auditioned for every drama school in the UK – twice – and got rejected every time. I took this as a sign it was not meant to be.

So, what was I to do? It was actually my good friend Lauren, who suggested journalism because, and I quote, "You like writing and you're nose – sorry, I mean inquisitive!" I subsequently attended Middlesex University and obtained a First Class (BA) Hons degree in journalism before working as a newspaper and magazine reporter and latterly, an editor.

It was while working in my 'dream job' as a journalist for a veterinary title that I met my now husband, Paul, a vet and farmer from Northern Ireland. I interviewed him in my capacity as a reporter after he won an award for his veterinary achievements.

We hit it off right away and when Paul proposed a few years later, we started planning our wedding for May 2020 – what could possibly go wrong? Quite a lot it seemed! Despite Covid-19

causing chaos, we eventually tied the knot at Christ Church and thanks to John and the team, we had a beautiful, if very different, small BIG day!

Despite going to a school with a strong Christian ethos and even having considered the priesthood, I really lost my way in my twenties. I made some bad choices and, while I never lost my faith, I stopped attending church and moved



away from God. I thought I could do things my way which was, in short, a disaster and led to a lot of misery.

Despite me wandering off, God had never left me. He continued to be there for me and I believe He led me to meet Paul. Despite everything I had done, God still had a plan for me and helped me to find the love of my life.

Paul and I were friends for a long time and it was Paul who introduced me to Christ Church. He suggested I paid a visit when I was really struggling with some issues, and so I did. Paul had attended Christ Church long before I did, as he often went along to the Sunday service whenever he was working at The Royal Veterinary College in Hertfordshire.

The Christ Church family was welcoming from day one and with their help and God's, I got some counselling and worked hard to get



better. I wanted to give Paul and myself a proper chance, but I could only do that once I had worked on myself.

I recently told a friend that whenever things go wrong in my life, it is because I lose sight of God, but when I focus on Him, He leads the way and things are always better.

Since moving to Northern Ireland, I have joined the congregation at Paul's local church and everyone has been so welcoming. I strive to be a better person and a better Christian every day and I am finally reading the Bible after thirty odd years of professing to be a Christian!

I have also been blessed to be asked to contribute some features to the local church magazine and have had positive feedback. I am honoured to play a small part in the church community and hopefully make people smile with the articles I write.

Now, I do not know if God has given me writing gifts, as I do not want to put words in His mouth, but as writing is one of the only things I am sort of alright at, I think it is perhaps something He has given me, for which I am grateful. I like making people happy and I hope my articles and my new book make people smile, especially during these uncertain times.

So, to bring us back to the beginning, what I

mean is, God has never left me unsupervised. Not once. The tough times in my life were thus because I chose not to acknowledge or listen to Him, but He never gave up on me, despite everything. I am not a high-flyer or a glass ceiling breaker, nor am I a vicar, teacher or anyone doing anything particularly remarkable in the world. Yet, I am blessed to be surrounded by people who love me for who I am. Maybe I could have been some of these things had I not lost my way earlier on, but the fact is we will never know. What I do know is, God has been kind, forgiving and generous to me and I will always be grateful.

Every day is a school day and sometimes it comes down to literally taking one tiny step at a time, but with my husband, family, friends, the church and God by my side, those steps get easier every day.

Stuck In The Middle With Ewe: Or How I found my flock and lost my heart in Northern Ireland, is published by The Conrad Press (£9.99). Email Holly, hello@hollycrawford.co.uk if you would like to order a signed copy which will be sent to you.

Alternatively, the book can be ordered from most high street bookshops, including The Book Nook in Ware. It is also available from the St Albans' branch of Waterstones and a host of websites. A paperback and an e-book version can be purchased via Amazon.

Far Left: Holly and Paul with their sheep.

Above left: One Ear gives the book her seal of approval.

Above: Holly's book, Stuck in the Middle with Ewe.

whenever things go wrong in my life, it is because I lose sight of God, but when I focus on Him, He leads the way and things are always better.



Consistency in Christ



from
Alex Kanold

Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever. (Hebrews 13:8)

In trying to figure out how to encapsulate six months of youth activities and teaching into an article with a rather tight word limit, I considered what I hope the young people's main take away will have been from this period, and landed on: change is a part of life, but we have consistency in Christ.

The next time you see one of our young people, you could perhaps ask them to summarise in one phrase what they have learnt from our youth ministry over the past six months. I would be very interested to hear if their answers bear any resemblance to my sentiment above!

So, what have we been up to?

As spring marked two years since our lives were turned upside down by the global pandemic, we reflected on this through a series of wellbeing talks, kindly led by Katie Cole and Dave Abbott. Through these sessions, our young people had a chance to acknowledge the way that COVID 19 affected themselves and others around them, culminating in a celebration that we all survived and remain united in the love of Jesus.

This was a lovely springboard upon which to then welcome our new intake of youth. As our Year Sixes prepared to leave primary education



and move on to their various new secondary schools, we hosted a welcome BBQ, transition picnic and focused on the comfort of leaning on the Lord through times of change.

With everyone settled in, it was time for the summer madness to begin!

Due to various logistics, we were unable to take the youth away to a festival, as per the traditional summer trip, so in the spirit of change, we came up with a new summer youth programme.

Our summer youth offering was a four-week programme of Wednesday sessions, each including a morning chat, prayer time and Bible Study (looking at an overview of one Gospel per week), followed by a picnic lunch, then an afternoon activity, with the young people encouraged to attend whatever parts of whatever days they were able to. The Gospel study sessions led to some interesting discussions and fantastic crafty creations.

The afternoon activities were, shall we say, varied! Kicking off the first week, was our Disguised or Recognised challenge, whereby the young people embarked on a human scavenger hunt around Ware (within a marked area on the maps provided) to try and find nine members of



our Christ Church congregation, who had very sportingly volunteered to dress up in a disguise and 'hide' in plain sight about town!

Week two, we got competitive with our Summer Olympic Games. Week three, youth leader, Luke, came to teach us the art of spray painting, which was deemed by some of the young people to be "the best youth activity ever"!

Then, the fourth week was a full-on water fight, complete with water balloons, super soaker pistols, and even our own Rev. John taking a hit!



A huge thank you to all involved. It means a lot to the youth to have members of the congregation give up their time to run these activities for them, and it is brilliant to see intergenerational relationships grow! We are always keen to have more volunteers, each bringing their own skills, experiences and personalities to the table, so if you feel that you could even occasionally help out with a youth session, please do let me know, as we would love to have you join us, and guarantee you will have a laugh!



...we hosted a welcome BBQ, transition picnic and focused on the comfort of leaning on the Lord through times of change.



Coffee Morning

Before the lock down, Joan had the idea of a coffee morning being held in the church. In chatting about it to others, she found others had also thought of it. Surely that was God confirming the idea! Here, she tells us more about it...

With the support of our Life Group, we are able to make this happen.

We meet each Friday between 10am and 12pm in the church, which is easy to access and is inviting to those who might find a church building a bit daunting. We have between 20 and 30 people who attend most Fridays, including those from

the church congregation and from the wider community in Ware. For those who are unable to attend church on Sunday, being able to get together with friends for a couple of hours once a week has helped them feel less isolated. For many, it is a regular get together for a good cup of tea or coffee, a time to chat and often have a good laugh too!

On the first Friday of the month, we have crafts to do as well! To Sheila Dane, who runs this, a big thank you!

Beginning in October, on the second Friday of the month, we will also have a Service of the Word starting at 12.15pm. This service is an opportunity for people to attend church during the week and also to connect with God.

Besides our Life Group and MADD Men, others have volunteered to help on a rota system. To each of you who help (often behind the scenes), we are truly grateful. We trust that we will continue to draw people in so that they too can enjoy the friendship offered.

Everyone is welcome, so bring a friend and enjoy time together in our beautiful church building!

Joan Turner



Looking Out for One Another

It is impossible to avoid writing about the cost of living crisis and the impact it is having on everyone, and most significantly on those who were already struggling to make ends meet. What is our response as a church and as individuals? How do we help one another through troubled times?

These are not easy questions, nor do they have easy answers! But I know one thing is needed. We need to be honest about the problem and our fears, both with God and with one another. Suddenly, we might just find out that other people are struggling too and that although times may be tough, a bit of fellowship to travel the road together and some support for one another will get us through.

Take a look at Matthew 25:34 – 45 where Jesus said, “For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.”

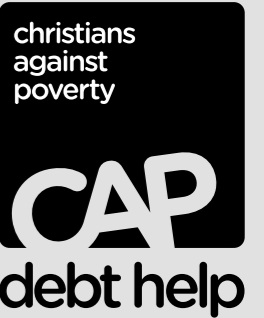
Let’s look out for one another!

Also, keep your eyes out for an upcoming CAP Money Course – we will run a series of evenings on budgeting and money management

techniques in the near future. This will provide some practical tools to manage your money well and it is open to everyone, whatever your level of income!

Most importantly, if you are really struggling, particularly if you are finding yourself with unmanageable debt (which is at least 10% of UK households, by the way, so you are not alone!), please speak to me, or book an appointment with our debt centre by phoning the CAP national number on 0800 3280006. We provide a free debt counselling service to our community and would be very happy to talk to you; or drop into CAP Café any Thursday between 11.30am and 1pm in the Church Centre and we will ply you with cake and be happy to have a chat.

E: samantharich@capuk.org
T: 07725607425
Working days Thursday/Friday



from
Sam Rich

Chapter and Verse



from
Barry Worboys

The piece of scripture that has always helped me is the calming of the storm from Mark 4:35-41, specifically verse 40 where Jesus said to his disciples, “Why are you so afraid? Do you still have no faith?”

I have experienced a minor storm on the Sea of Galilee, so I can imagine the fear of the disciples.

My working career has involved dealing with the chaos and distress of others, and sometimes with doubts in my own abilities. Many times, this verse has come to me at just the right moment to enable me to cope and effectively deal with a situation.

When I was first asked to write for the magazine, my immediate response was, “not my thing. I am more comfortable behind the scenes.” From the moment I sent my reply, the words “why not?” were placed on my heart.

Often, we are challenged to step outside of our comfort zone. We all like to think that we know what we can and cannot do. Two recent sermons I have listened to contained pieces that I believe sum up God’s love and why we need Christ.

The first told of a woman suffering from dementia who wrote, “I may forget God, but God will not forget me.”

The second referred to the ‘Jesus nut’, not as an insult, although I am sure people have thought that of me in the past. It is apparently a vital piece on a helicopter that holds together all the moving pieces of the rotating blades. Without it, they would not work together, would spin out and be destroyed.

I am just a small piece in a church made up of many gifts which is held together by Christ’s love. Although there are times when I forget God, it is good to know He has not forgotten me. It is also this verse that reminds me to put my faith and trust in Him; the wake-up call I need every day.

How Opposites Can Often Go Together

On one Sunday, Marcus was speaking on 1 Corinthian 13, and I noticed how the words ‘is’ and ‘is not’ or ‘does not’ come up. It got me thinking of how negatives can be turned into positives, especially with God’s help.

In verses 4 – 6, it states “Love *is* patient, love *is* kind. It does *not* envy, it does *not* boast, it is *not* proud. It does *not* dishonour others, it is *not* self-seeking, it is *not* easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does *not* delight in evil but rejoices with the truth.”

In verse 7 – 8, we find the words ‘*always*’ and ‘*never*’ together: “It *always* protects, *always* trusts, *always* hopes, *always* perseveres. Love *never* fails.”

I believe the use of opposites helps to emphasise the positives against the negatives in life.

Jesus states in Matthew 28:20b, “...surely I am

with you *always*, to the very end of the age.” He will *never* forsake you.

We also sang on that Sunday the worship song that included the phrase, ‘You give and take away.’ This can be looked at in a negative way if we let our feelings get in the way, but we can also look at it in a positive way. God *gave* His Son to take *away* our sins.

In the Beatitudes, we see how God blesses people by changing their circumstances for the better. We are blessed even when we are persecuted because of our faith. We can rejoice and be glad because of the promise we have in God. Even when our feelings may be asking where God is or why things happen, our faith (however small or big) can help us to realise that God is *always* with us and He will *never* leave us.

Never give up, but *always* put your trusts in God.



from
Ron Porter

The Last Word

We arrived at Christ church 26 years ago, the day David Wheaton retired. David Williams was the curate, and came to our doorstep with a box of tea and some milk, followed soon after by Pam Willis. We remember sitting on packing cases having tea, as our welcome. Three out of our four children were still at home and David Williams' Sunday evening discussion group was a great inspiration to our boys. All the children have married, three of them at Christ Church. Now we leave with the joy of seven grandchildren.



*we shall pray
that your
Christ Church
will grow in
faith and be
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beyond*

David was a consultant gastroenterologist at a local hospital trust. Antonia, a busy mother and homemaker, but still finding time to volunteer in the community, first as chair of Home Start for 10 years, and then chair of East Herts branch of the Arts Society. We lived at Amwellbury, which turned out to be a wonderful blessing. On arrival, water was pouring through the roof, so we had a lot of work to do. The gardens and house were used for strawberry teas, pampering days for ladies, children's events, young people's camps from visiting churches, a hideaway for tired vicars and much more.

We have experienced good preaching, working on the prayer ministry team and Antonia has enjoyed helping to organise the Life Groups. We were also asked to run a Life Group together,

and this had a big throughput of young people with a dynamic faith which kept us feeling young! David was overwhelmed to be given a gift of song writing, just before John Hookway arrived – an answer to prayer from 27 years before. This resulted in him giving up his job early to spend eight years 'composing' music, although in truth he was receiving it already complete.

We will miss the fellowship of some really good friends, the warmth and stimulation of Life Group, the security of a Bible believing church in very dark times for our country and our beautiful gardens in Great Amwell and France.

Now, we exchange you for another Christ Church. This time in Abingdon, Oxfordshire. We have one smaller home with a manageable garden with shorter journey times

to visit our grandchildren and entertain them as they grow up. There is a pub next door one way and our church the other, with a Co-op and post office over the road. We shall probably soon find that we can dispense with one of our cars.

Come and see us if you are passing this way.

Please pray:

- For us to find our purpose in our Christ Church and in Abingdon, and we shall pray that your Christ Church will grow in faith and be a blessing to Ware and beyond.

David and Antonia Preston

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