

CHRIST CHURCH WARE

Issue 65 SALVATION

Christ Church Ware Magazine Christmas 2019

Now faith is
confidence in
what we hope
for and is
assurance
about what we
do not see.



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

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John's Journal



from
Rev. John Hookway

Welcome to the magazine. As I write, we have not moved into our newly refurbished building whereas by the time you read these words, you will have most likely experienced it for yourself already! Even so, I want to say a heartfelt thank you to each and every person who has contributed. By that I do not want to limit that to finance; prayer, time, effort and attitude have all been needed to get us to this moment in the church's journey.

It has felt like a partnership all along the way. We have come together and responded to the Lord and we can pause and give thanks – to God firstly- but to so many of our community. It's a wonderful achievement.

When I think back to January 2019, I could not have hoped for such a positive response and the blessings we have received along the way. We have grown closer together I believe, partly physically, because of the school hall, but also in the way we have practically helped each other. Out of the necessity, we have learnt a lot so let us continue to develop our relationships.

A busy period ahead

Two years ago, one of the key parts of the redevelopment plan was to be sure we were back for the Christmas 2019 period. The church means so much to so many people that we wanted to provide all the ministry and services expected of us over this special season. You can see all of the main services listed to the left, not to mention how the building will be used by organisations like the Scouts and schools. One of my greatest privileges is to see the sense of peace and awe on people's faces knowing that God is with them. And I know I am going to see that time and again in the coming weeks.

We are going to be telling the story of Jesus and the invitation is made to everyone to find out about Him and His promises.

Recommended Reading

I have read some very helpful books recently that have helped me in my walk with the Lord and perhaps they might bless you too. *"The Ruthless Elimination of Hurry"* by John Mark Comer is one. The world is speeding so how do we keep close to Jesus in an unhurried way? The other is called *"Why Emotions Matter"* by Jon and Tristran Collins. You might remember the Bible Project and the animated videos that went with it? They were produced by Jon. Finally, *"The Boy, the Mole, the Fox and the Horse"* by Charlie Mackesy is a perfect Christmas gift; a visual treat for all the family.

New Year, new series

Just to whet your appetite, a 'heads up' that in the New Year we will be starting a sermon series on modelling our lives on Jesus, to better understand who He is, how He transforms us and how to follow Him more closely. We are going to try to refresh our own vision of Jesus, using the Gospel of Luke. I often say we are called Christ Church for a reason – it's His church so I am looking forward to sharing more about Him through that series.

Looking further ahead

There is much that I could say about plans for 2020 but I do especially want you to put the first weekend of February in your diary for two very different events. On Saturday February



**FROM THE FIRST CHRISTMAS TO TODAY,
JESUS TURNS THE WORLD OUTSIDE IN.**

WELCOME INTO THE STORY

- 22nd December 6:30pm – Carols by Candlelight
- 24th December 4pm – Children's Christmas Eve Service
- 24th December 11pm – Christmas Eve Communion
- 25th December 10am – Christmas Day Family Celebration
- 29th December 10am – All Age Service

1st we are going to open the church to the local community in the afternoon. Plans are being drawn up for a very interesting afternoon – think school bazaar but all about God! The next morning, at 10.00, we will have a rather more conventional event where we all come together to officially celebrate the church opening. The Bishop of St Albans will be here on what should be a marvellous service of thanksgiving.

Away at home

Another date for the diary is Saturday March 21st. It's our Church Away Day postponed from the Autumn – and we will be holding it at church. There will be lots of activities for everyone, and of course much more detail nearer the time but I am delighted to say that my friend Andy Sachs is our special guest. We want to spend the day inspiring each other in our faith and Andy is just the person for that. He has an amazing testimony including donating his kidney to his son!! It's also another example of our how our new facility will be; a flexible space and we are now no longer constrained by availability of venues because we have our own.

Coming Soon in 2020 @CCW

Community Celebration Day - 1st February

Celebration Service - 2nd February

Explore Course - February to March

Family & Children Extravaganza - 17th February

Forgiveness Project - 26th to 29th February

Away Day @ Home - 21st March

Confirmation Service - 22nd March

Youth Weekend Away - 27th to 29th March

New Wine Celebration Service - 29th March

Easter 9th to 12th April

For details visit christchurchware.co.uk contact the church office on 01920 487 267 or see the weekly notices.

Great is His Faithfulness

The eagle eyed among you might have noticed that on the 24th of November at each service, I asked the worship teams to play "Great is Thy Faithfulness. Don't worry- I'd be surprised and impressed if anyone spotted that! The verse for the year was "The One who calls you is faithful and He will do it" and there is something about this moment of our history where I feel that we should say that God has been faithful in the past, is faithful now and will continue to be. Praise Him for that.

God's faithfulness never ends, His blessings are new every day and so please join me in pursuing Him and His purposes for our community.

On behalf of the church team, and on behalf of Heather, Talitha and Esther may I thank you for your own faithfulness toward us and to wish you a peaceful and joyful Christmas period.

Your Magazine

Welcome to the Christmas edition of the magazine; as you read it you will see that we have really put the "Christ" in Christmas throughout. We hope that you will be inspired and encouraged by what you read.

There are at least thirty different contributors this time, making around one hundred in 2019. We are thrilled about that. One such person is Talitha who stepped forward to use her calligraphy skills on our front cover. She took inspiration from Hebrews 11 v1 which ties in nicely with so much of the contents within this edition.



Thanks to her, and to each and every person, for taking part. When Catriona and I stood up at the services to promote the magazine, it was quite overwhelming to experience the immediate responses that morning but long may it continue! It was equally encouraging to hear how the magazines have helped people in their journey with God – ordinary people doing extraordinary things serving the Lord.

So why not make it a New Year's resolution to have a chat with us about contributing? There's plenty of time before the next edition in March, so come and have a chat or drop us an email at magazine@christchurchware.co.uk. It might be a topic that you'd like us to cover or an inspiring story that you have to tell.

In any event, let's follow the Lord together.

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

*Next Magazine deadline is mid-March, but the earlier we receive your input the better!
Publication Date: Sunday 29th March.*

This magazine has been designed using stock resources from Freepik.com

Down Memory Lane



from
**Hubert 'Mac'
McLoughlin**

Mac is someone that regularly comes to the 11:00am service. He suffers from one of those dreadful health issues that increasingly robs him of memory so, in a very real sense, every service feels like his very first visit. There is sadness in that but also joy – and perhaps lessons for the rest of us. Each week over Sunday lunch, Mac tells his family what it feels like to come to Christ Church for the “first time” and we felt you would be blessed to hear what he says...

“I can’t believe that people know my name and come and say hello. It really is a highlight of my week that so many seem pleased to see me. I have gone to church all my life but never experienced people pleased to actually be there! In the Bible it talks about being born again, and perhaps I have been in my later years.

I often look around the church in awe at how people are so willing to serve each other and it’s so inspiring to be made welcome and to feel part of the Christian family. I especially like how people do not just rush off at the end but prefer to talk to each other.

I describe myself as a snail with cramp because my hip plays me up so much these days but I will do everything I can to come along as often as possible.”

**Mac’s family are very happy to share his story but please do not draw his attention to the magazine as he will not remember contributing. By all means go and say “hello Mac” though!*



The F Word



from
Rosie Watson

In case you haven’t caught up with the coming of this exhibition of stories of forgiveness to Christ Church in the week of the beginning of Lent (February 26th), here is some more info. (See also on the church website, the letter sent to the congregation on November 10th)

Fifteen or so stories on large panels, whose aim is to provide ‘narratives of hope’ - potentially transformative alternative and peaceful responses to hurt and violence. An invitation to those who visit the exhibition to examine how they might address unresolved issues in their own lives.

What a gift to our community (including our schools, colleges, university, caring agencies and other churches in Ware and the wider diocese as well as to us at Christ Church!

We believe this is an enterprise close to Jesus’ heart and hope it excites you as much as it does us and that you may be able to provide some of the help day by day that we are going to need. See letter!

As well as coming yourself, you’re adding to the 80,000 or so who’ve already visited across the world.

Do please give this your prayerful consideration and contact us for further information should you need to know more.

We look forward to hearing from you, Martin Dudley, Paul and Rosie Watson.

You can read more about The Forgiveness Project here www.theforgivenessproject.com



**The
FORGIVENESS
PROJECT**

A Day in the life of...

Each issue, we invite one of our congregation to describe how they invite God into a day in their life. This time, Dot explains a typical day as Head Teacher...

Those of you who know me well will be aware that I am much happier talking about other people than myself. However this is my story of a typical Monday in my life, and how I involve God in it.

Before any career responsibilities, I am first and foremost a wife to Richard and Mum to Robbie, Henry and Rebecca. I start the day with a shower and pray for any potential difficulties or difficult meetings that day. Then I make sure the children are getting ready for school and help with any last minute panics about P.E. kit etc., before I set off to work. While I am writing this, Rich is currently away in India and I am missing him so much.

I have the great privilege of being the head teacher of a small church primary school and I always enjoy the relative calm of the car journey because once I arrive at work it is non-stop until the end of the day. We have a breakfast club, so I like to greet those children and check in with my staff before logging on to the computer and reading emails.



Every Monday, we have a service in the church, which is very conveniently located next door to the school. Our vicar is a blessing to our community, and we will have a chat about prayer needs while the children arrive. Our service includes worship songs, teaching and prayer and I cannot imagine many better ways of starting your working week than being with children joyfully praising God. We have chosen Matthew 5:14-16 as a Bible verse that sums up our vision, and *'This Little Light of Mine'* is our theme song. Following the service, we have coffee with parents and it is great to catch up on their lives.

After church, I take a group of children for reading and then have a variety of meetings, paperwork and activities before our staff

meeting at the end of the day. I work with an amazingly talented group of teachers. Love is one of our seven school values and I feel very loved at my school. Often we then have governor meetings, where we prayerfully petition God to help us in making wise decisions for our community, before I set off home to spend the rest of the evening catching up with my family.

In the busyness of the day, I can be guilty of forgetting to give my problems and difficulties to God. (I do not think that it is a coincidence that when I do remember, solutions often fall into place for difficult situations). Fortunately, I am supported by my church family, who lift me up in prayer and help me practically. Please can I take this opportunity to say thank you to Elaine, Maggie, Ange, Ben, Birgitt, Catriona, Judith, Jan, Martin, Jacqui, Heather and John in particular. Jan Young is our new governor and it is like having my favourite aunt at work with me. Thank you also to the fabulous MADD men who recently helped us with a classroom move – that reminds me, I think Rich still owes them a beer.

If you would like to visit, you would be very welcome, but not all at once as the school is very small!



from
Dot Marlow



Please pray:

- for a good work/ life balance
- for our family
- for good decision-making
- for me to be light in the community



Holiday of a lifetime



from
Stuart Baker

What could we do to celebrate the year in which Catriona has a special birthday and we also celebrate our silver wedding anniversary? Ahh yes, we'll go to Israel and see first hand where Jesus was born, grew up and died. There's so much to tell and I can only give brief highlights here. Feel free to come and ask us more...

Day 1 - We arrived in Tel Aviv, along with our tour party. We had the rest of the day to ourselves so Catriona and I wandered off to the local beach to enjoy a leisurely stroll and drinks at sunset.

Day 2 - Off to Caesarea, a city/sea port built by Herod, named in honour of Augustus Caesar who, as a result then gave the territory to Herod as a gift. Looked round a restored Roman amphitheatre built by Herod in 25BC which is still used for events today. We also see evidence of Pontius Pilate with his name inscribed on an original stone tablet.

Fascinating to see the lengths they had to go to, to satisfy the rulers of the time. A visit to Acre or Acca, a walled city with wonderful architecture originally established in the Bronze Age (around 3000BC) which had been ruled by both King David and King Solomon and mentioned the Old Testament. Laterly a Crusader stronghold.

Day 3 - To Nazareth and the Church of the Annunciation where the angel Gabriel appeared to Mary to tell her the news that she was going to be the mother to Jesus. The church is said to be built on the site where Mary lived. Nearby was St Joseph's church; supposedly built on the site of his carpentry workshop.

Then to the church of the Mount of Beatitudes where Jesus gave the famous sermon. Here we could stand under the cloisters looking over the Sea of Galilee, so peaceful and quiet. Next, a boat trip. When the crew hear we're all English the response was 'ahhhhh, fish 'n chips'! They played a few cheesy songs, but then What a Beautiful Name by Hillsong worship. This final song was just the perfect song for this moment and brought tears to the eyes!

Day 4 - A swim in the Dead Sea really refreshing, and a trip highlight for me. Then to Masada, a fortress built on the top of an isolated rock by Herod around 30BC. History shows that the Romans were enslaving Jews around 70AD and around 800 Jews shut themselves off in the fortress so that they would not be captured. It took the Romans three years to scale the mountain and when they did, the Jews set everything on fire and committed mass suicide to prevent themselves becoming slaves or being killed by the Romans.

After this we made our way to Jerusalem where we were going to stay for the last three days of our holiday. On arrival, we went for a walk to Old Jerusalem and wandered through the maze of cobbled streets - amazing place!

Day 5 - On to Yad Vashem, the Jewish Holocaust Museum, learning what the Jewish people had to endure. Awful stories. The museum was built in such a way that it represented a triangular tunnel and the further you went, the exit (or light) at the end got bigger and brighter.



Above: Masada, high above the Dead Sea on the edge of the Judean wilderness.

Above right: The beautiful Sea of Galilee.

Below: Floating in the Dead Sea.



Then north to see the aqueduct which was built to carry fresh water to the city from over 10km away from the Shummi springs.



On to Bethlehem, now under Palestinian rule and surrounded by military checkpoints. This means that Israelis are no longer welcome but thankfully tourists are! Here we went to the Church of the Nativity, believed to be the site where Jesus was born. Sadly it seems as though Bethlehem now solely thrives off the tourist trade (there's even a McDonalds there, but before you ask, no we didn't!)

Day 6 - Garden of Gethsemane, the place where Jesus was betrayed which is beside the Church of All Nations, then on to the Church of Mary Magdalene (or the St Mary Magdalene convent) on the Mount of Olives. After this we went into the old city of Jerusalem and shown round the various districts starting at the Dung Gate!



We stopped and prayed at the Wailing Wall (sorry Western Wall, you're not supposed to call it the Wailing Wall) and those that wanted to, wrote a prayer on a piece of paper and inserted it into the wall. There was a fair amount of tension amongst the locals. We came across someone trying to take a photo (we were warned not to) and a Jewish orthodox priest started arguing with him. Military police, brandishing rifles were on scene very quickly!

We then followed the Via Dolorosa, which is believed to be the route that Jesus took to the cross and leads to the Catholic Church of the Holy Sepulchre.

In the afternoon, after our day's tour was over, Catriona and I went off on our own to the Garden Tomb next to the Rock of the Skull, where the Protestants believe Jesus was buried. This site was purchased by an English charitable trust in 1894 and now manned by representatives of the charity. We were warmly welcomed and shown a tomb that 'could' well have been where Jesus was buried and we were provided with communion to take together.



Day 7 (Sunday) - A free day in which we went to Christ Church in Jerusalem! We took part in a very moving communion service (ask me why), and then walked part of the ramparts from Jaffa Gate to Herod's Gate. From here you could look down and see all kinds of things such as the Dome of the Rock, said to be built over the foundation stone where Abraham prepared to sacrifice his son Isaac. After this we went into town for some last minute shopping where I even tried my luck at bartering.

Day 8 - Sad that it had come to an end, it was a wonderful experience and one that I feel words cannot do justice to. If you ever want to go, I would thoroughly recommend it.

Awesome!



Above: Tourists in Bethlehem.

Far left: Communion at the Garden Tomb.

Near left: The melee that is the entrance to the Grotto of the Nativity, within the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem, on Palestine's West Bank.

Below: A model of Temple Mount in the Museum of Israel, as it would have been around the time of Jesus. Temple Mount now houses the Dome of the Rock.

Chapter & Verse



from
Cynthia Kattau

Be still and know that I am God -

God speaks to us now just as He did in biblical times. This may seem like an obvious statement but it becomes more real when you have a personal encounter and that encounter can happen anywhere.

My experience was actually hearing God speak to me but I am also aware that He can speak to us in many different ways.

Around 18 months ago, I was attending a Christian conference. To finish the day there was a Eucharistic service. It was very different from what I was familiar with. As part of the service we were encouraged to be silent for long periods and to listen. I was happy to do this with no expectations.

It was during this quiet time that I heard **Psalm 46:10A Be still and know that I am God.** When I first heard this it really didn't register. But then it was rerepeated over and over. **Be still and know that I am God.**

Whilst I was still listening the rest of group started to sing. **Be still for the presence of the Lord.**

I went into what I now call a spiritual 'melt down' but which ended with a positive outcome. Before my encounter I wasn't aware that I was 'burdened'. My tears felt like a cleansing and I came away feeling refreshed and free.

So now whenever I hear Psalm 46:10 being read and the hymn **Be still for the presence of the Lord** being sung it takes me right back to that day but now it's a joyful experience.

What I have learnt from that experience is that I need to make time and space for God. Also that space can be anywhere but I also need to listen.



Postcard from...

Dear friends,

It is lovely to be able to drop you a line with our news. The first thing to say is that Michael and I remain really grateful for our time with you all at Christ Church; we feel a close friendship with everyone there. We are your near neighbours after all and from everything I hear, things are going well with you which is wonderful to know.

It feels very much like a new season for us and things are going really well. It certainly feels like it was the move that God wanted for us. We have been made to feel extremely welcome here and we are enjoying getting to know our community.

The people here are fantastic, so hungry for God. We are sensing God's guiding hand in various areas of ministry and at the heart of everything we are doing here is "love." It's was so obvious as soon as we arrived that this is the place where we were meant to be.

Michael feels right at home here. He is involved in ministry stuff here and has lots of ideas about how to take that to another level.

All in all, we are settled and happy. We think of you as family and friends and pray for you. Please do the same for us!

Caroline and Michael Keightley



People have been asking me how I'm doing in my new role.

This picture is probably a pretty good summary..

Heaven Sent



from
Charlotte Dipper

...Granny who heard "Pray" down the phone. She knew that something terrible had happened to her daughter and grandchildren.

My name is Charlotte Dipper and at three weeks old I went to heaven and back.

It was around 6pm on 23rd November 2001. After a long day taking the children to see Father Christmas at Van Hages, mum was busy organising bath time for my sister, a capable two-and-a-half-year-old girl and me, her three-week-old new born baby. Mum was doing it single handed because Dad was in Pakistan as part of the relief response from the bombing in Afghanistan.

The phone rang and a kind and understanding voice- her own mum- echoed down the line. Having left the two of us in the bathroom safely away from the 3cm deep water in the inflatable baby bath housed inside the larger acrylic one, she sobbed down the phone to her own mother in the room just leading off the bathroom due to being a tired young mum. What she did not know was that, having sensed that mummy was tired and upset, my sister decided to help by undressing us both before lovingly placing me in the bath, her intentions pure and deeply selfless.

After about five minutes on the phone, my big sister ran to mum in the living room. Instantly mum asked "where's your sister?" The toddler replied "In the bath." Dropping the phone, mum rushed into the bathroom to find her baby dead, face down in the puddle of water.

In survival mode she lifted me out of the bath and hung me upside down to allow the water to drain out of my lungs. Vitally, she had a nurse and midwifery background, having the critical knowledge of treating neonatal babies. She then ran back to the phone, still clutching me upside down and uttered the single word "Pray" to her mum. Ringing 999, she kept the phone on her neck and gave chest compressions on the corpse that limply hung from her body.

Ambulance Control Centre instructed her to resuscitate my tiny lifeless body and sent out an emergency ambulance. "I know what I'm doing" the mother replied, and she continued her emergency medical training on the life that she had brought into the world just 26 days prior.

Never stopping the chest compressions and resuscitation, she gave the paramedics access, crying out a single prayer to God, "Lord have mercy!" Only eleven months before her baby niece had died of meningitis. Gasps of air escaped from my seemingly lifeless body, desperately trying to find oxygen. The mother pressed my chest to her ear and a slow heartbeat echoed faintly just as the paramedics took over her life-saving actions.

A friend ran to the flat after getting a call



from Granny who heard "Pray" down the phone. She knew that something terrible had happened to her daughter and grandchildren. Whilst everything was happening, the small shaken toddler had helplessly watched as her mummy had suddenly flung her sister upside down and performed confusing things onto her. The presence of a familiar face helped enormously and she was carried into the ambulance alongside her mummy and me, covered in wires and buttons, lying on a giant bed.

They were blue lighted through central London to St Thomas' Hospital. After being dead for approximately ten minutes, the medical staff continued to resuscitate and stabilise me for over six hours in a critical condition. Eventually I was transferred to the ICU ward at Guy's Hospital. At the time of the accident dad was in Pakistan packing for home, and had a sense that something terrible had happened. Eventually he got into contact with mum and was told that his newly born daughter had drowned.

A week passed and during this time a

dedication service had already been planned on the Sunday at 2pm but was turned into a Prayer service. People gathered and prayed for a hundred per cent healing. When mum and dad returned to Guy's Hospital after the service at 3pm the doctors said that all vital signs changed and improved significantly between 2-3pm.

Meanwhile a call for prayer around the world went out for "an English baby that had drowned." A doctor in the night suggested to use an enzyme that was typically used for premature babies to improve the development for immature lungs. It was a success. The combination of pioneering medicine and prayer contributed to my survival as a baby who physiology was a neonate; these babies have greater capacity to survive without oxygen.

A brother of a team member in Afghanistan said to his sister "I had a really funny dream last night, where a baby had died and went to heaven, they met Jesus and then went back to Earth". So, it seems that whilst I couldn't yet tell people of where I'd been, I was given a voice by a stranger on the other side of the world. Six months later a Give Thanks Service was arranged, this celebration of life acted as a testament to others that miracles do happen and that our Creator does not abandon us.

My Journey to Heaven

This account of heaven is drawn from dreams of heaven that started at the age of five. Future flash backs and visions continued in my later childhood and remain clear in my mind today.

Whilst everyone else was praying over the baby in hospital, the furthest ever journey was being made elsewhere. Blinding light, light that a human's eyes couldn't comprehend, radiates out of the Father's face, so bright I could not make out the facial features. Around me is white. The feeling of safety and home immerse every crevice of my being as I awaken to a kind smile. So loving, so tender. I can feel these secure arms gently holding me.

A small hand clutches my own hand which dangling beside me. The giggle of a child fills the air and I sense a familiar face gazing intently at me. My cousin, who went to heaven 11 months ago is wearing a red dress, beaming up at me and so excited that I am with her. There is no hint of illness, no disability, no tears, just love that I feel from

her, deep, all-consuming love. "Trust Child" God knowingly tells me as I lift my head to face him again. I was so happy, never had I ever felt so at peace, I had no questions, and wanted to stay resting against Him forever. I closed my eyes again and He said that He was not finished with me yet. I then awoke to the sound of beeping and strange metallic smells, knowing I had more to do on this earth.



"I had a really funny dream last night, where a baby had died and went to heaven, they met Jesus and then went back to Earth"

Please pray:

- I have just celebrated my eighteenth birthday with friends and family. I love to swim, and I have no fear of water. Next year I hope to go to Queen's University Belfast in Northern Ireland to study Anthropology. Afterwards, I feel called to use what I learn to create places of safety and refuge where all people are free to connect the Good News of Jesus with the arising new generation.





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Who do you say I am?

In life, there are no end of things that we do together; decisions made in partnership. But to be a Christian, each of us is required to individually answer a big question that Jesus posed- "Who do YOU say I am?". Several of our brothers and sisters have told us about how they responded to that challenge...

Growing up in Malaysia, I was taught in school that your ethnicity defined your religion. So, being a Chinese, I was 'naturally' a Buddhist. However, despite being told that, I was always confused about my



faith since my parents rarely visited temples and we didn't have any altars at home that we prayed to. It was only on special occasions that I would follow my grandma to the temple to pray.

My confusion continued when I was introduced to Jesus and Christianity by one of my aunts, who was a Sunday School teacher, when she brought me to Sunday School. However, when I saw the other children singing songs, I was intrigued by their joy and spirit. Not long after that encounter, my mum was diagnosed with breast cancer and she eventually died about a year later, just before my 12th birthday. It was during that difficult and emotional time that led me to more questions – life, God and different religions.

Soon after, my family moved and I started attending Sunday School at my local church. One day, when the Sunday School teacher shared from John 3:16 about how much God loved us and sent Jesus to die on the cross for me, that story touched me very much. When the teacher asked who would like to give their life to Jesus, without hesitation, I put up my hand, said the sinner's prayers and invited Jesus into my life. Since that day 29 years ago, I have learnt that my ethnicity doesn't define me and that my true identity lies in being a child of God, made in His image and loved by Him.

Joanne Beer

Most people go from "not believing" to "believing" in God. I went from hating Him to loving Him.



I had an abusive stepfather, physical but especially psychological; "You will end up on the street", "You are worthless", "how can one be as stupid as you?", "No wonder you have no friends" were regular things I heard during my childhood. This was true for me, my brother and my Mother. I felt nothing but hate towards him and I blamed God for creating such a monster, especially when I witnessed the abuse towards Mother.

It could not continue so mum planned an escape for us but he almost broke her hand when she tried to flee to grandma's; mum's scream of pain and terror as vivid to me today as when it happened. I also remember a red haze come over me and I snapped, attacking him. Later, in court, I learned that I had pushed him into the fireplace, burning his hands quite severely.

Me, my mum and my Brother did escape that day and never went back. But the hell did not end. Mum was in total breakdown and tried to take her own life two times after that. Any faith I had ended completely - God was nothing but a fairy tale for weak minded people. I even tried to take my own life, but was saved by a friend – Mathias - someone I now call a brother.

Time passed, and I met my wife Hannah, a Christian and definitely not weak minded! The more I got to know her, the more I loved her and eventually I became more curious about God. I read, studied and began to understand God and feel His love. I realised that none of my childhood was God's doing; He had always been with me. I ended up praying for my stepfather, asking God to forgive him and as I did, I realised that I had forgiven him as well. Not what he did, but as a person.

I was finally able to leave the pains of my childhood in the past where they belong and move on. Today I proudly call myself a Christian. When I found my wife, I also found God. And now I finally fully feel that I have a meaning and a place in life. God helped us escape that night, God helped mother survive and to find happiness again, God made sure that Mathias was in the right place in the right time. And God made sure that me and Hannah, at the same time, started a certain game over the internet, and met for the first time. I hated him, I cursed Him, but He never turned his back on me.

Sebastian Gordon van Geijt

My parents, whilst not Christians, raised me with many Christian values; Sunday's were a day of rest so no shopping or friends over! When I look back, it's very clear that God's hand was guiding me. My childminder was a Christian, I went to brownies, and also started to hear the gospel at my local youth club.



I remember from a very young age being quite adamant about the kind of man I'd marry. I don't know why it became important to me, but I knew for certain that I wasn't going to be messed around or have an inconsiderate, trendy but awful boyfriend. When I started secondary school there was a boy in my class who was a completely unashamed Christian, and he paid the price – often teased and people trying to argue with him a lot. But there was something about the way that he talked, treated people, and carried himself through that time that really stood out to me, watching him live out his faith made me think that's the kind of guy I want to be with.

So I asked my parents to take me along to his church one Sunday, and then I started going along every Sunday, and Monday evenings to the youth club as well.

Bizarrely, despite this desire to have a really lovely boyfriend, I wasn't really very lovely myself. I misbehaved a lot throughout secondary school, suspended in Year 7 for something pretty trivial, but as a result I just got savvier at trying to get away with things. The problem was the guilt, it doesn't matter how gutsy you are in terms of doing something naughty- it's very difficult to swallow or deal with the guilt. So for a quick laugh from my friends I'd do things that would tear me apart inside for days after. Gradually over years of the youth team supporting me and guiding me in accepting Jesus, and how to live as a Christian I accepted him as Lord of my life.

Jesus Christ is the only one who acknowledges guilt, and rather than telling us how to swallow it- takes all of our shame and guilt and hangs it on the cross. I still have that capability to be naughty, but I'm also a transformed woman- more and more, day by day, year by year. Jesus is Lord and King of the world. I'm not in charge and I don't have to get everything sorted. But my response to what He's done for me is complete gratitude, and to serve him and endeavour to do His will as much as I can. It's not easy, but it brings a contentment nobody else can offer you.

And the husband? God gifted me with a wonderful man and a beautiful family.

Louise Brett

Since I was little, I have been taken to church every week but was not actually a Christian although I made some friends and learned basic stories about Jesus.



Things got bad for me between the ages of 10 – 12 because I was constantly being bullied because I was different. That made me feel that God did not love me or care about me and I'd often pretend to be ill so my parents would let me stay home from church - but they hardly ever did!

Eventually, I started to realise that I was only ever happy at church because God was there and I started to know that He loved me. On October 4th 2015 I took the decision to become a Christian for myself and got confirmed.

Being bullied is something that has never completely gone away in my life and over the years it has sometimes taken me away from God in my darkest moments, but He always reconnects with me. I remember one time at a Christian festival I decided to go forward and I was prayed for and I started to shake as the Holy Spirit came through my body and I felt overwhelmed with emotions and power.

Now I am quite happy and often read my bible and pray for people and I even lead an evening service here at Christ Church.

Sophie Hallett

From a very early age, there have been lots of moments in my life where God has let me now that he was nearby.



For example, when I was 12, my youngest brother was diagnosed with meningitis. We did not expect him to survive, and even if he did, he would not walk. My grandparents were medical missionaries and had a very strong faith and I remember they anointed my brother with Holy oil and prayed with him and my mum. Today he is a rugby playing doctor! This had an impact on my mum and you can imagine the impact that made on me.

Through my university and army days, I had cause to ponder God and my own faith several times. I might say that God was on the back burner until a friend taught me about praying and reading the Bible. God then met me in a service and showed me a picture of Jesus and His eternal offer of forgiveness. I had a solid knowledge of God before that point, but now I had gained my personal "experience".

Some people have a dramatic moment of salvation. For others like me, the journey is a series of gentle moments directed by the Lord. Do feel free to ask me more!!!

John Hookway

I became a Christian when I was 19 and a student, after getting to know a Christian girl in the next room in my hall of residence who shared her faith with me. What difference has it made to my life? Where to start!



I remember back then right from the moment I opened my life to God and believed in Jesus that it felt as if a great burden had been lifted from my shoulders. There was a sense of freedom. God was real and I felt like a different person, as indeed I was. Suddenly there was this new person, God, in my life and God couldn't be ignored. God changed me, my outlook, my relationships, my career plans and my purpose in living. I started to pray and read the Bible and what had been a closed book actually came alive and began to make sense – well, maybe not all of it and not straight away, but the bits about Jesus did.

What about relationships? While I kept my friends, as a Christian I also became a member of God's family and immediately felt a great sense of care and support and community among us. We are there for each other and I've found that to be true right from my student days up to now at Christ Church.

Career plans? I've celebrated Christmas on palm-fringed tropical beaches as well as enjoying the delights of Singapore and the exotic sights of India, all in the course of my work. No, I haven't had a high-powered jet-setting executive job but I have worked as a teacher in Ghana and Nigeria which I loved (hence the beach holidays) and also at All Nations College where I was given a sabbatical and visited South Asia and Singapore. I believe God led me along that career path and I wouldn't have changed anything.

That sense of purpose in living remains with me: to offer each day to God and to listen to what God might be asking me to do. There's no such thing as retirement from being a Christian because it's a relationship with God that deepens over time. I truly believe that the best is yet to be!

Mary Salter

I was living in Nottingham in the 1970s when friends invited me to a Sunday picnic on a hot summer's day. Their young daughter's godmother, who was staying with them for the week-end, was also present. Speaking to her during the afternoon, I thought she was rather nice but, as she was living and working in central London, it seemed unlikely that I would ever see her again.



A little time later my father became quite unwell, and I planned to visit my parents, who lived just outside London. I decided that I had nothing to lose, so found out the young lady's phone number and rang up and invited her out to the theatre. Surprisingly perhaps she said yes.

When I travelled down to see my father in hospital on a subsequent week-end, we saw each other again. She was going to church on the Sunday and suggested that I go with her. Her local church was All Souls in Langham Place, so I heard the Gospel preached. At the end of the service, visitors were invited to speak to one of the clergy if they wished to find out more. Living so far away I felt there was likely to be little opportunity in my case, but nevertheless went and spoke to a young curate. No problem was the response, "I know just the person in Nottingham you should speak to". Subsequently, I followed a Navigator programme, a sort of forerunner of Alpha, before acknowledging that I had become a Christian. I shall always be grateful to Mike in Nottingham who invited me into his home on a weekly basis and spent time with me. Looking back, I feel God certainly had a plan for me.

And what became of the young lady I took a fancy to – I married her of course!

Roger Tiffen

I was brought up going to Sunday school, but for the early part of my life God didn't seem relevant. It was at 16 that my friend Rachel, who knew Jesus, began to influence my thinking. God seemed to make a difference to her life and as my friendship with Rachel grew, I went along with her to Christian activities and events. I began to learn what it meant to be a follower of Jesus, that God wants us to respond to His offer of love, not just accept that He probably exists. He wants to show us what life in all its fullness can be. So I responded and became a Christian and my journey of faith really got underway.



Looking back, I see God's faithfulness in providing others to teach me how to continue in my walk, and providing the Bible to help me to see God's unchanging character. This helps me to look forward with excitement and anticipation, knowing that God has plans, and that I'm part of those plans.

God has helped me through periods of change, challenging times and given me strength to face things I couldn't have faced on my own. I am not on this journey alone. God wants you to walk alongside me.

Sian Woodward

Christ Church Ware has a special place in my heart, and was the place that set me on path to finding salvation and growing in my relationship with God. My heart was stirred to discover my faith further as I headed to university.

At an evening service at my new church: Alive Lincoln, aged 18, God's presence overwhelmed me and my life was transformed. Salvation, and accepting Christ as my true saviour at that moment radically rerouted my life.

Knowing God's love, favour, and hand helped me overcome anxiety and the uncertainty of life after university, taking me from a 9-5 job in London, to living, loving and breathing Sri Lanka all day, every day to be a vessel for God to help others receive salvation of their own.

Salvation is the match that ignites us and a relationship with God is the oxygen that keeps us bright.

Salvation may only be three syllables and nine letters, but it has the POWER to break chains and release captives into a place of freedom. Salvation is but undoubtedly the greatest thing that could ever be obtained.

Charlotte Boulton



I was brought up in a Christian family so church attendance was the norm for me. However, that did not mean that I had made my own personal decision to follow Christ and give my life to Him.

That actually happened at a Soul Survivor event when I was sixteen. That's when it went from my "head" to my "heart." It was an evening service where I watched people's lives changing in front of my eyes; wheelchairs were being left discarded and there was such a sense of the power of God in the room that I could not deny the need to respond myself.

Today, my faith is everything to me every day. I cannot imagine doing life without the Creator who made us being in the middle of it and with me constantly.

Ed Wells



I can't remember a time when I haven't thought of myself as a Christian: brought up in a church-going family, my father a deacon and my mother a member of the choir – church three times on Sunday, but no family prayer.

I was taught a formal faith. Nevertheless, I continued to attend church and found myself a church warden and a member of the local synod.

It all changed when my ten-year-old daughter was found to suffer from cancer. I then found that my faith was just that: 'formal'. By God's grace I was led to a group of Spirit-filled Christians who supported me through bereavement and eventually through divorce.

I found that there is a whole other world of faith – a fresh way of prayer and praise. Christian family camps served for many years as my MOT on my Christian journey. Mine has been an adventurous journey of faith, and I pray that I am still growing in faith as I continue on that journey.

Peter Stratfold



Believing in God seemed a natural thing to do as a child. I kept a picture in my room of Jesus with a lantern standing at the door and knocking. I remember being intrigued and thinking that the door knob was on the inside so it was up to me to answer.

As I grew up, I got myself into quite a lot of trouble and went my own way in life. I became a selfish, unpredictable person and unsurprisingly that contributed to relationships breaking down over the years. I let myself down again and again and every time I struggled, I prayed that God would help me and I lost count of the times I promised to follow Him if He just got me out of one problem or another.

It reached a climax a few years ago when my debts meant that I needed help from CAP, and Sam and Wendy in particular. When they offered to pray and then invite me to church it just felt like it was my moment to surrender after all the years of running. I could not carry on like that and it felt like God was drawing me to Him like a magnet.

As someone who knows about being in debt, I can say that I actually owe God everything. He has changed me completely and Jesus is everything that the Bible says He is.

He comforts me, He is my best friend and becoming a Christian is the best thing I have ever done. I praise and thank Him for all He is doing. For me to open the door to Jesus was better late than never.

Jan Farrow



Amazing Grace

Amazing Grace is my favourite hymn because I feel it speaks to me and has a spiritual quality which brings me closer to God.

I wondered if the writer, John Newton, English poet, abolitionist and clergyman had an epiphany of some sort and I found out something of his story.

John was captain of a slave trading ship in the 1700s and was involved in a huge storm at sea endangering the lives of his crew and cargo of slaves. He strapped himself to the steering wheel and prayed to God for salvation.

After many hours of prayer the storm abated,

John felt God had been his salvation and gave his life to helping abolish the slave trade and with his gift of words wrote many poems/hymns in praise of the Lord from his own experience, becoming a clergyman and spreading the word. Amazing Grace was the most famous of his hymns.

From Disgrace to Amazing Grace John's hymn remains popular and is sung by many popular artists spreading the word of God's grace.



from
Molly Glendenning

Postcard from...

Joseph Mustoe started at Moorlands Bible College in October this year and lets us know how he has settled in...

Sopley is near Bournemouth so it's a great place to be living. I'm having a great time and learning about God and about myself too. I am studying Applied Theology because I feel God is calling me into ministry, probably youth work. In my Foundation year I am on placement at a church called Bransgore Community Church. I work there three days a week and also have two days studying at college.

The first term has gone really quickly. I'm learning lots about God, especially understanding the Old Testament better. I've made some good friends already and once a week we go to the beach, watch the sunset and even have a swim sometimes! One of the highlights is our Saturday night outreach programme which means we go out and work directly with the homeless. That's challenging but very rewarding.

Another highlight was being invited to Caroline Keightley's new church to preach. I came up with my new friends and also met up with my old ones from Christ Church. I'm home now until January so hope to catch up with everyone and to try out the new church.

Please pray:

- For peace and courage to step out of the boat more and more
- That I can be more and more radical for Jesus and that I can keep my heart open to the lost who need Jesus
- That I can keep my room tidy!



Magnificent SEVEN



from
Kay Hanney

For some time now, the Seven service has taken place on the second and fourth Sunday evening each month. In September, Mark took over the leadership – supported by Rachel, Christian, Kay and Josh. There is worship, usually for an extended time to allow us to focus on Jesus and give space to hear from God. There will always be a word and we are praying for prophetic teaching to speak to and challenge us. We prioritize time for reflection, response and ministry in every service. The team share a passion and vision and are so grateful to see God powerfully at work...

Mark

I love the morning services at Christ Church, but I often find that at 12.15, I am wanting more - more time in worship, and more time to rest in the presence of God and receive from Him. Since the beginning of this summer,

Kay

For me, SEVEN is a community of believers who are reaching out to Jesus. My hope is that we can begin to take hold of the truth and wonder of all that Paul is longing for the church in those verses in Ephesians.

We want to be open to “the immeasurably more of God” through the work and power of his Holy Spirit in us, transforming our lives. Just imagine how amazing it would be to be living in that reality, to be part of a church that reflects that perfect love and power - through all generations.

My personal goal is to be filled with ‘ALL’ the fullness of God. Imagine! ‘All’ not an occasional glimpse, or just on a Sunday at church. How does it happen? There is no formula or human expert, we are a group of lovely random people learning on a journey together completely dependent on the mercy and grace of God. It’s about desire and willingness to be open to God and His work through the Spirit.

Rachel

This term has been really exciting as we have tried to bring alive elements of the Lords prayer using Pete Grieg’s book. Through the Holy Spirit God has been speaking prophetically into our lives and the teaching has been great – really thought provoking as we have challenged some bold responses which people have engaged in.

We have seen the love of Jesus ministering to people and witnessed the impact of the ‘immeasurably more than we ask or imagine’.

We are looking forward next term asking God to reveal Himself to us in a deeper way as we teach on the Apostles creed.

Josh

SEVEN has provided me with a place to encounter God and learn more about Him and His love for us. To be able to stand in His presence but also learn about who we are because of Him. It has been a space to develop leadership skills and a place I can grow and also talk openly about my beliefs with others. We allow people to create their



I feel that God has been speaking clearly and repeatedly to me, about the SEVEN Service. My vision for the service is to build on the legacy left by Caroline, and to develop that space for us to enter, and spend a longer time in the Father’s presence. A time where we can meet Him afresh, worship Him, and be transformed by His Spirit, both through challenging preaching, and in times of worship and ministry.

The vision and hope for SEVEN mirrors the beautiful verses that Paul wrote in Ephesians 3 v14 – 21 which speak of each of us being strengthened by His Spirit so that we can know God’s love and power deeply in our lives. As a team, we hold those verses at the heart of everything that we do at SEVEN – I encourage everyone to read them.

SEVEN has provided me with a place to encounter God and learn more about Him and His love for us. To be able to stand in His presence but also learn about who we are because of Him.

My Playlist

Sam picks the tunes for the playlist of his life...

My first track: The Scottish composer Donald Sprinck, was a close friend of my father, and composed a piece dedicated to me for my 1st Birthday. Sian and I had it played (by Dad, on the organ) as the exit music at our wedding. It's very cool to have your own "theme tune" – it's a very jolly piece!

The first cassette-tape single which I purchased was "**Let the Flame Burn Brighter**" by Graham Kendrick. Friends in the schoolyard were somewhat bemused, as they assumed that Christian music was most likely to be about the dialogue between God and Moses.

Worship Song: At uni my flatmates included several worship-leaders (we had a band, **Magnetic Cathedral**). Amongst the memorable songs was one about worshipping God in all situations, even whilst cleaning the U-Bend, and one extolling the Creator for making chicken so tasty.

Karaoke Song: Having spent a lot of time in foreign cities for work I developed a bit of a taste for karaoke, to relax. In the bars of Shanghai or Singapore, safely away from anyone who knows me, I would always start with "**Copacabanna**" by Barry Manilow, as it's something you have to really perform, rather than just sing. The night would continue with Elton, Elvis and Sinatra.

Guilty Pleasure Song: I love the genre of comedy songs, particularly those with clever lyrics such as Stilgoe and Skellern, Tim Minchin, Tom Lehrer, or Jonathan Coulton. Some of which most definitely can't be played in polite company!

Special Moment Song: There are a few pieces of music which instantly transport me to past experiences. Any part of Mozart's "**Die Zauberfloete**", which I sung professionally with Glyndebourne opera as a treble (a long time ago!), instantly takes me back to memories of those formative years. Likewise Queen's "**Fat Bottom Girls**" was the pre-show track for a pop stadiums-tour I worked on, doing pyrotechnics, in 2001.

Last Song: Sian already has instructions that the last "song" to be played at my funeral should be the great hymn "**The Day Thou Gavest Lord is Over**", but I'm hoping for tympanies and trumpets, at least in the last verse. The words of old hymns are frequently glorious, packed with theology, and remind me of many Cathedral evensongs as a young choirister.



from
Sam Woodward

...I developed a bit of a taste for karaoke, to relax. In the bars of Shanghai or Singapore, safely away from anyone who knows me...



own space within the service, which has led to times of artistic ministry and spoken word as people explore their relationship with Jesus and grow in intimacy in a safe place.

SEVEN is for everyone - it is not a youth service or only for mature Christians but a place for all ages, for people who want to reach out to God, have a deeper understanding of Jesus' love and open to the transformational work of the Holy spirit making us more like Christ.

'To Him be the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations forever and ever Amen'

Come and join us!





MISSION NEWS

FUTUREhope



from
Tim Simmonds

FUTUREhope has been greatly blessed by its long association with Christ Church, through its generous giving in personnel, finance and prayer. For example, our Chair is Dave Abbott, one of our own congregation. We asked Tim, their youth work co-ordinator, to update us on their work...

Over the past 16 years we have had the privilege to serve local young people and work alongside them to provide the following services: confidential one-to-one mentoring, weekly drop-in sessions in our mobile youth



centre, drug and alcohol awareness, group work (smoking cessation, anger management), parent courses, school sessions and training.

Please pray:



- for all the young people we work with - that they will have a growing sense of self-worth and that they will live healthy lives, finding peace and fulfilment.
- for our volunteers on the mobile centre and our mentors that God may give them wisdom and insight into the needs of the young people they meet. Pray for funds for another youth worker to support and expand our work.
- for peace and wellbeing in families of our local community and that we make real connections with those in need.

A growing number of young people today are facing substance abuse/misuse, problems at home, anxiety and school pressures. Referrals come from schools, GPs, parents and teenagers themselves. Our trained volunteers mentor them one-to-one for a year supporting and walking alongside them through whatever personal circumstances they find themselves.

We have discovered a growing need amongst parents for support and help through the teenage years. Our recent 'Time Out for Parents' courses have proved invaluable and more are planned. We also support schools in their PSHE programmes and seek to be involved with any parent work they do.

If you want to know more about our work or how to get involved, then please get in touch. We would love to hear from you. FUTUREhope is financed by contributions from local churches like Christchurch and their respective membership. info@future-hope.org.uk - 01992 534915



Ware in the World

According to some quick back-of-the-Google calculations, this particular Christ Church magazine has travelled over 23,000 miles. Pictures taken in Kuala Lumpur, Singapore, Tokyo, Seoul, inset (no I didn't dance into the hotel singing "Heyyy .. pretty lady!"), and the Algarve, below.



Martin's wife Sam, in the Algarve.

Although it might look like quite a holiday, only one of those locations was actually for pleasure. (I'll let you figure it out). I run a not-for-profit organisation called Future-Fit Foundation and our work focuses on helping global corporations and investors to improve their environmental and social impacts. My trip around SE Asia involved speaking at conferences and numerous meetings with business folks trying, or at least thinking about, how their company can become a force for good in the world. (And don't worry, we will be carbon offsetting).

It's an exciting and enjoyable, if somewhat exhausting, task meeting so many people from different cultures and seeking the common ground on which we can build together. The good news is that the urgency of issues like climate change and social poverty (in its broadest sense) are becoming widely understood. And whilst my organisation is not faith-based per se, I believe God has called me to a type of prophetic witness, seeking to demonstrate that business – a central pillar to modern society – can be done well and right, benefitting society as a whole and not just a privileged few. That, to me, is one way of bringing Kingdom values to the here-and-now, and ultimately to His glory.

Martin Rich

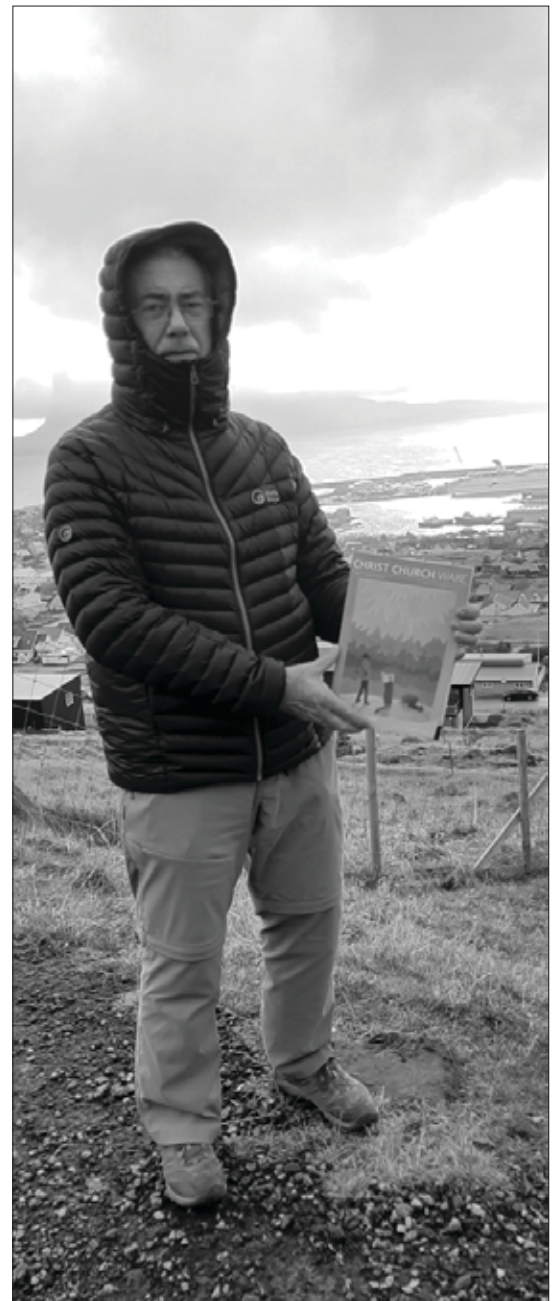
Please pray for:

- wisdom as I seek to grow the business around the world
- energy to keep going
- Sam and I as a couple with my being away travelling so much



This was our first cruise, supposedly to see the northern lights. We were on a ship called the Marco Polo along with about 800 other passengers. Marco Polo made the news headlines recently as two seventy year olds were convicted of having about a million pounds were of illegal drugs in their cabin. Cruising is basically an eating fest with the occasional stop somewhere to take a little exercise, not for the faint hearted. We stopped at the Faroe Islands before going onto Akureyri and Reykjavik in Iceland and finally Kirkwall in Orkney and just managed to avoid an outbreak of Norovirus

Richard and Heather Clayden





If the CAP fits.....

When non believer John Kirby attended a church barbeque over 20 years ago, he was a man who found himself living in chronic debt despite, ironically, being employed in the Financial Services industry. Through the warmth and support of his local vicar, John got help and ultimately found faith too. He vowed that no-one should face similar challenges alone and so set up Christians Against Poverty aka CAP. Fast forward to Christ Church Ware today and CAP has become a central part of our community support. We sat down with Sam to find out how that happened and what the future might hold...



from
Sam Rich

Q. How did CAP become part of our ministry to Ware?

I have worked in the Investment banking sector for 24 years. However, I had long felt a desire to use my financial skills to help others. That led to a conversation with John Hookway about seven years ago. He knew about CAP, I wanted to be part of Kingdom building and so the seed was sown. To be precise, in 2013 we opened as a CAP Debt Centre and I now mix my banking work with two days a week volunteering here as Centre Manager.

Q. How is it structured here?

As an organisation, CAP is based in Bradford and employs 300 people who are particularly expert in the financial side of things. When someone calls the CAP Freephone number for help, it is Bradford that they get through to. For us as a local church, we are a type of franchise. We receive the initial appointment from CAP head office and then make contact with the potential client and visit them in their home.

I also have a co-worker in the form of Debs Thompson from Hertford Baptist Church, with whom we work in partnership to cover the local area. We also have a mini-army of volunteers that we could not do without!

CAP Cafe



Q: You mean church members?

Yes, I'd imagine we have over 30 people volunteering right now. CAP calls them supporters or befrienders and one of them will accompany me when we go to visit a client and will commit to praying for that person throughout the process and perhaps meeting up from time to time. It often develops into more than that – and occasionally less depending on the circumstances! Most often, help is very much welcomed and we have seen lots of wonderful things happen in the name of God.

Q. Is there a danger that the befrienders get dragged in to other people's crisis?

Not really. CAP is not so much about "crisis", but more empowering people to be able to plan for the future.

Q. How have things changed over the last six years?

In the last 18 months, all debt charities have seen a massive increase in calls for help. I think we have helped over 150 families in the last six years with perhaps 40 clients on our register now. That's pushing us to the limit where we meet five new clients a month between Debs and I.

Q. What is the ultimate goal?

Helping people to help themselves – empowerment - is the aim. We do not pay

off people's debts, we help them plan a way forward and ease the burden by negotiating with creditors on their behalf. That means it takes time for people to escape the slavery of debt.

CAP is clear that Jesus is central to and the reason why we help people. When we visit clients we always offer to pray with them there and then. The best news I have to offer is the Good News! Our offer of prayer is almost always accepted and the invitation to come to church is frequently taken up because we live out the gospel by "loving one another as God has loved us"

Q. What if we our readers are interested in getting involved?

That would be great, come and talk to me! Supporters tell me that it's an incredibly humbling and rewarding thing to hear someone else's story and realise that "there but for the grace of God go I." Jesus would be amongst the vulnerable and marginalised so it's right that we are. People in debt easily become isolated and feel defeated so support – even simple human kindness such as a smile and a listening ear - can make a real difference.



Soon after Jim and Joan moved to Ware two years ago, Sam invited them to help with the CAP cafe which meets every Thursday from 11.30am to 1:00pm in the Youth Centre. They readily agreed and now they run it, with other willing volunteers. We asked them to tell us more about it...



Jim, can you tell us what happens at the CAP cafe?

Well, there's plenty of free tea and coffee and delicious home-made cakes for a start, plus the healthy option of fresh fruit which the kids really seem to go for. It's a chance for our clients to just sit and chat, to socialise in a relaxed atmosphere. We have plenty of toys to keep them happy, though. Some come regularly, others drop in from time to time, and we can get anything from 4 to 10 people. If anyone wants to share about their situation we are there to listen but we never ask them. Anything they share also 'stays in the room', so we keep it confidential.

Joan, can you explain why you were so willing to be involved?

For the free tea and cake, of course! No, seriously, we did it because Sam asked us and now we really feel part of the family and we enjoy it. I should mention that we had come across CAP in our former church in east London where we had done the training course in budgeting so we knew how good it was. Some years ago we were also in a hard place financially so we know what it's like to struggle to make ends meet.

What are the highlights?

When a child asks "Can we come here every day?" When a client becomes debt-free and we have a big celebration! When we see the burden of debt lifted and God at work in people's lives and circumstances. We don't want people to suffer with debt and struggle on alone; we are here to help.

Please pray for us:

- For me to be refreshed as I take a short sabbatical and for Debs as she shoulders the extra burden
- For clients to be able to stick to their budgets and to go debt free
- For our clients to come know Jesus for themselves



If you, or someone else you know, are struggling with debt, phone

0800 328 0006
to make an appointment

The Last Word



from
Christian Cole

I have been the Youth Pastor for six years now and it's been brilliant. The young people at our church are an amazing group and it is so exciting to meet with young people from the wider community, offering support and building them a home here at Christ Church. I have loved journeying with a generation as they have gone through secondary school and teenage years and there is nothing better than seeing young people meet with the goodness and love of Christ.

Our main youth groups meet on Wednesday and Thursday evenings and are a mix of young people who hang out together, support each other and explore faith. We also do loads of other events throughout the year. This term, our big overnight trip was to a converted mediaeval church near Bedford for a 24hr prayer retreat.

Things are about to change for me though; I will be stepping down as the Youth Pastor in the middle of January and taking up a

new post as the Youth Missioner for the Diocese, supporting and encouraging youth-work in churches all over Hertfordshire and Bedfordshire.

I have recently felt nudged by the Lord that it was time for this change, confident that God has a great plan to take our youth work to the next level, with someone new at the helm. But I do have mixed feelings about it, sad to step back from leading the youth work and our young people. They are a great bunch and have blessed me so much. It's also tough to think I won't be spending so much time with the youth leaders. I have learned so much from them, they are so fun and hardworking, giving their all to God. I'll still be around, you'll see me at the Seven Service and on some Sunday mornings, it will be lovely to catch up with you all then, especially in our new surroundings!

Thank you for all your support, prayers and encouragement, it's brilliant to be part of this incredible church!



Please pray:

- For the young people – Thank you for all your prayers. Please keep praying for our young people, that they would continue to grow in God together, supporting each other with all the challenges and pressures they face.
- For the youth team – For our plans for next term. For enough leaders in our weekly meetings and the other youth events that we are planning for Spring.
- For Jos and I – It's going to be a new season for us both. Please pray that Jos would find a new job as she is looking to make a move at the moment.



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Associate Minister: Revd Norman Richards (01763 289720)

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