

CHRIST CHURCH WARE

Issue 64 THE ART OF WORSHIP

Christ Church Ware Magazine Autumn 2019



See page 13



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

www.christchurchware.co.uk

John's Journal



from
Rev. John Hookway

Welcome to the Autumn magazine. It is that time where seasons gently change on the calendar – and thermometer! It's absolutely the case for us as a congregation too and as we compiled the magazine I am reminded how much our Creator is doing among us. I hope you are inspired by what's contained in this issue.

Preparing in Prayer

We are very close to returning from our mini exodus. The new building brings with it a whole range of possibilities so we are going to be careful to dedicate it to the Lord in prayer. In the second half of November we will provide opportunities for you to pray in the building and of course we will communicate that nearer the time.

The building has not been in use for some time and we want to get in there and fill it with prayer, worship and love. The verse that springs to mind is found in 2 Chronicles 7:14

Then my eyes will be
open and my ears
attentive to the prayers
offered in this place

2 CHRONICLES 7:15

and says that *"if my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and I will forgive their sin and will heal their land."*

What God does next in that passage is what we want to have happen – *"Then my eyes will be open and my ears attentive to the prayers offered in this place."*

Once every 161 years

I wonder what it was like for the community back in 1858 when the church opened its doors for the first time. How did local Christians get to feel at home and then invite local people in to see the new facility? Perhaps in the year 2180 people will be asking the same questions and thinking of us! Regardless, the opportunity is here for us to make sure

friends, family and community feel that Christ Church is here for them as well as for us. With the immediate opening, Christmas services and even the February 2020 official event, we have a great chance to "open the door" to everyone.

A Healthy Community

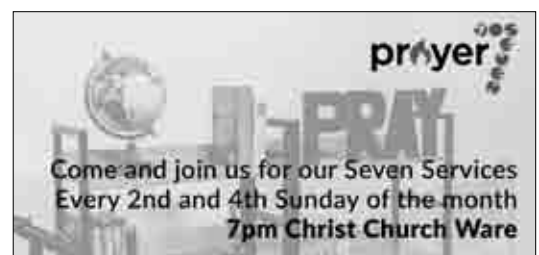
Becoming a Healthy Community is the title of the sermon series through September and October. It's really important that we connect with one another be that through Life Groups, Prayer partnership or some other way. Firstly, we want our own church community to move together in faith and to really feel part of a team rather than walking alone.

I think and pray carefully about what the right kinds of sermon series are appropriate for where we are. You might recall that at the start of this year, we focussed on the Exodus which reflected our own circumstance at the time. Looking ahead, in November our series will be around Joshua's story and touch on people of courage, consecration, faithful promises and how God's people moving forward together.

I could explain about the Christmas series, but I am sure you do not want to think about particular season just yet!

Seven

Seven has restarted with renewed vigour as the team look to springboard on from the summer term where we looked again at the Holy Spirit, and the many powerful experiences that members of Christ Church had at New Wine, Soul Survivor and other summer conferences this year. We were reminded that our intense and powerful encounters with God are not just for these big summer camps, but are something that God longs for us to experience daily, here in Ware. SEVEN seeks to be a service where we



all, irrespective of age, can push deeply into the presence of God, as we make space for Him with an extended time of worship and ministry. In addition to our powerful times of worship, we will be looking this term at how to develop and deepen our prayer life, using Pete Grieg's wonderful book of the same title as inspiration see review on page 19. SEVEN happens at 7 on the 2nd and 4th Sundays of the month if you would like to be refreshed on a Sunday evening before the new week!

Thanksgiving Time

We are building up to the traditional Harvest Festival season. On October 6th, we will recognise that in a number of ways. There will be a chance to bring physical offerings as usual but we will also be giving time over to hear testimonies of God's faithfulness. If you want to do that, speak to me in advance and we can have a chat about your story.

At the same time, thinking of thankfulness and offerings, we have also made October 6th another of our Gift Days.

Festival of Light

On October 31st, we will be running another of our events for young people. These have been a great success over recent years and I am sure it will be the same this time round. Jess is heading that up and I know she would love some help.



A word of thanks

As I write this, we have just a few more weeks in the school hall. I want to say a huge thank you to everyone for being so gracious and supportive throughout our temporary arrangements. People have helped out so faithfully be it through setting up and clearing away, teas and coffees, welcoming – it's a long, long list. Reflecting on it, you have all accepted "change" so well and I know that many feel it has been a period of growth rather than simply standing still.

Back in January, I wondered how we would cope. Almost immediately, people started telling me that they liked the new set up so much that they hoped we could carry on like this! That absolutely can happen – because if we are honest, it is actually us that have changed alongside the facilities. We have sat in new places, spoken to more people and shared and supported each other in new ways.

Let's remember that there inevitably will be teething troubles when we move back in; there will be lots of things to adapt to. Let's endeavour to take the best of all that we have learnt this year into our new facility; after all, it is the people that are truly the church.

Your Magazine

This issue has more contributors than ever – several for the first time – and that feels like a huge measure of success for us as Editors. Above all else, we want the magazine to reflect how we, as a community of Christians, are loving our God and how He is loving us right back!

We want to produce page after page of how God is blessing, inspiring and working in us so please drop us a line if you have a story that you think might bless the congregation. Have a look at one of our regular features – Chapter & Verse or My Playlist for example and you might feel like having a go at one of them. Contact us before you start and we can give some guidance or even meet for a chat to help you along.

We have a series called "Postcards from..." Perhaps you know someone who has left us for a while who would like to update the church on how they are doing? Same message; contact us and we will help make it happen.

And a special plea – we would love to have an enthusiastic photographer or two who could provide the photos that we commission for various stories.

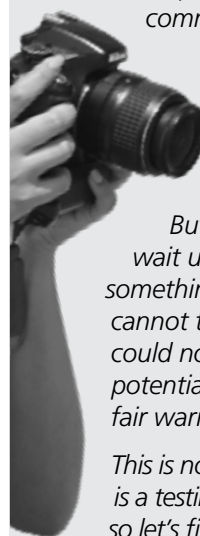
The next issue will be coming out around the 1st of December which means we have a deadline of 15th November for contributors.

But we do not really want to wait until then to find out you have something for consideration – you cannot tell us too soon! In truth, we could not actually squeeze every potential contribution in this time so fair warning!

This is not merely a church magazine – it is a testimony of God's grace and power so let's fill the pages with just that!

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

*Next Magazine deadline is early November, but the earlier we receive your input the better!
Publication Date: Sunday 1st December.*



Soul Wine



from
Dave Illott

I've been to New Wine for 20 years and love it rain or shine! I spent mornings and evenings in the "Arena". It's uplifting to worship with hundreds of people. I found the music accessible and I'm still enjoying it on the "This is Love" CD.

I went to some good talks, notably "Leadership and Every Member Ministry" (Chloe Lynch) and "Natural and Supernatural" (Christopher Bird). This talk reminded me that natural gifts and abilities have a place in kingdom ministry, however we are not to discount the supernatural gifts that God gives. My faith increased with stories shared of modern-day miracles in everyday situations and how they point people to God. I saw the practical application during prayer ministry times, when I had the privilege of praying for others to be healed and in one case seeing burdens being physically lifted.

Mark and Claire did a fantastic job as our village hosts bringing us all together for two barbeques and a hog roast. It was great to get to spend time with the people I see every week at church but at New Wine, you get time to really catch up and find out what's going on in their lives. It was good to share the experience with people who haven't been to New Wine before and encourage them.

Aside from all the spiritual stuff, there was the more serious side – back, playing football, alongside Neil Greaves, in the winning team!



from
Katy & Jessica Cole

'New Wine is not a holiday, it's an experience' spoke my wise mother as I tried to make sense of our decision to live on a muddy field for a week. As a church we jovially coped with the first two days of continuous rain and talked of how we can learn through suffering (including literally attending more seminars to find a warm, dry place!). Thankfully, the rain did stop and more of a holiday feel entered the camp. However, even if the rain had continued, I would 'consider that nothing' compared to the gain of hearing Jordan Seng talking about discipleship and the children accessing all that camp life had to offer. Here is a taster of what we learnt.

Katy's learning (Jordan Seng)

I took copious notes but Darran has forced me to be brief so here are the headlines:

- We are called to partner with God to bring about the kingdom of heaven on earth. Jesus shows us how to address those things that are out of order such as sickness (bringing healing), demons (casting out), poverty (providing) and lies (bringing truth).
- We need to have a faith mindset which trusts in the goodness of God's character. We can exercise our faith muscles by being a community of try (try-fail-try again)
- We should be intentional in establishing order over our days, building in time for connection, prayer, discipleship and prophecy.
- We can be agents of God showing up by ministering His presence. Baptism of the spirit is important to make God's presence known to unbelievers.
- We can work to flow in the spirit to increase the power of God at work. This includes acting on the authority of Christ, using our gifts in the church, working in faith, and being consecrated through prayer, fasting and sacrifice.
- We should build in space to listen to God as individuals and as a community. Prophecy involves perceiving (recognising the voice of God), interpreting (using Biblical knowledge and further seeking of God) and applying (testing out and supporting each other).

Listening to this has made me more expectant about seeing God's kingdom come and more passionate about being a part of it.

Jessica's learning (Rock Solid):

At New Wine you learn many new things, including grownups. I learnt many new things too: how to pray, I will never be alone, and how to talk to God because if Jesus was at your house you wouldn't say dear god please pass me the glass of water Amen, you would ask. Ask pray wait check.



For Heather, New Wine/Soul Survivor is more than a holiday. God has made it something else....

I was working for our Christians against Poverty Debt Centre then left that role to be Conference Manager for Soul Survivor, visiting Scotland, Stafford and Peterborough seeing 25,000 young people worshipping and getting to know God more. Whilst I really enjoyed what I was doing I REALLY missed not being with family and finished at Soul Survivor in February to have a rest. God gave me the gift of some personal time as well as to support friends in all sorts of different ways.

Out of the blue I received a peculiar phone call! I was asked whether I would be interested in being a Project Manager for a new youth initiative for New Wine. As many of you are aware New Wine has been a big part of our life; John is Regional Director and I've met with God there and learnt so much. The opportunity to work for the organization I go on holiday for was God given.

Luminosity is the youth event at New Wine United. The grownups go to United and the

young people go to Luminosity all at the same time. To be offered the opportunity to be a part of this was like a tea tray floating down from heaven with a rather lovely cream tea and strawberries and a perfect cup of earl grey tea!

God does have a plan for us. I was overwhelmed by how exciting this opportunity was. There have been times when I became like a rabbit in the headlights but I took a deep breath and said very simply "OK God I'll be obedient and do what you say!"

Please pray: That I stay obedient and faithful to what God wants me to do



That as I seek out how God wants Luminosity to be and that the team and myself get it right.



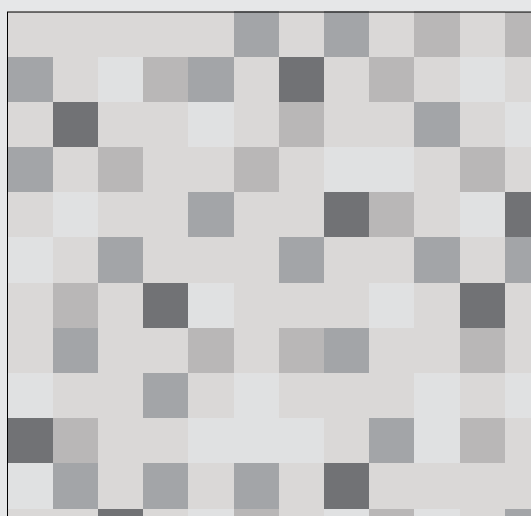
from
Heather Hookway

Hello! I'm Holly; I have been part of the cell youth group at Christ church since September 2017.

This summer I have been lucky enough to go Soul Survivor with the youth groups. It was an amazing experience! Every morning and evening there were big meetings and the all the youth groups gathered together in the big top for worship sessions and inspirational talks by many different people.

Also, there were times during the meetings where people would have the opportunity to ask for prayer. It was incredible to see how different people reacted to the Holy Spirit working through them. We all had the opportunity to either receive prayer or pray for someone else. When we worshipped it felt amazing to do it alongside so many other people! All in all Soul Survivor was a really fun experience for me and a great way to get to know God more. It was also really good fun camping with the youth group and it was the perfect way to round off my summer.

Please pray: To help me to stay filled with the Holy Spirit and to remember what I learned from the talks.



from
Holly

25-31 JUL
WEEK ONE
2020

UNITED



New Wine 2020 (with Luminosity) is not far away!

We are going on Week 1 (25-31 July) and would love to have as many of our congregation as possible to join us. Over 100 of us attended in 2019, so let's try and beat that number next year.

There are also opportunities to go on team – talk to Heather or John.

A Day in the life of Geoff Madge



from
Geoff Madge

We thought that we invited Geoff to tell us about his life. He might argue that he was pressganged...

So, after a Sunday morning service I was standing in the corner quietly drinking my tea as usual and enjoying my usual inconspicuous comfortable chair right at the back of the school hall, having merged into the crowd of worshippers. I like to leave it to the spirit filled bouncy Christians to fill up the stage with all that charisma (Let's hope nobody falls off this week.)

Then the nightmare starts when Darran corners me and I hear myself agreeing to write a profile of myself for the church magazine! I try not to let this spoil my holiday, even when I get a reminder email as I sip my Belgian raspberry beer. As I write it's now late Sunday evening and the deadline looms.

What can I say about myself? I am just your average middle aged Brit who slogs away at an average local government job and tries to stop the measurement around his paunch exceeding his age. I have a wonderful family who put up with my corny jokes and dreadful dad style dancing. Nothing special really so sorry, bit of a low point in the magazine I guess.

The mag editor tells me that he has asked me to write this article because I am considered to be a fiercely faithful prayer warrior when I reluctantly take my turn leading the intercessions. Actually I think that perhaps I am a bit too blunt and shouty when I do this. People are very polite I have noticed

afterwards and feel relieved I didn't get lost for words because of nervousness. Actually I always get a peculiar feeling when I lead prayers which may mean that words are being put into my mouth.

Do you know what I mean? Like one of those times when you are talking to a friend and you say or do just the right thing for their situation and you wonder how you thought of it. Now John Hookway would

declare that I was being prophetic but this is just ridiculous as I am nothing special. I just read the Bible every day, pray awkwardly and trust that God will protect me from doing anything against His will if I stay humble.



Oh yes, I nearly forgot. I've been "advised" that people might be interested to know how I manage as a blind person and how that affects my Christian faith. This also seems odd to me as my disability is just one of those smacks in the face that life hands out randomly to us all. No different from all the other disappointments, problems and heartaches that we all have to cope with -my visual impairment is just more obvious than most. Yes I could be very bitter about it but so could so many others about the rubbish that they have to cope with in their lives too.

For me the best approach is to get up each day, thank God that you are still alive and then make the most of what God has given you. None of us needs to cope on our own as we have Jesus as our friend and Saviour, and you can always find help and friendship with other Christians if you are not too proud to look for it. Good chocolate really helps too.

The serious point is that ordinary people are used by the Holy Spirit and not because they do extraordinary or difficult things, but just are faithful despite hobbling along in life.

Geoff's other job.



Postcard from...

I'm Nicole Eccles – daughter of Dave and Sue Ilott for those who might not know! I grew up in Christ Church – from being baptised as a baby, to getting married last year – it is a community I still feel a part of - despite moving away from Ware eight years ago.

I now live in Byfleet, Surrey with my husband, Joe, who I met at King's Church, Kingston. I work for an urban youth work charity, XLP (the Excel Project), where I oversee a literacy and numeracy programme. Day to day I am training teachers, youth workers and volunteers and working with young people in inner city London schools.

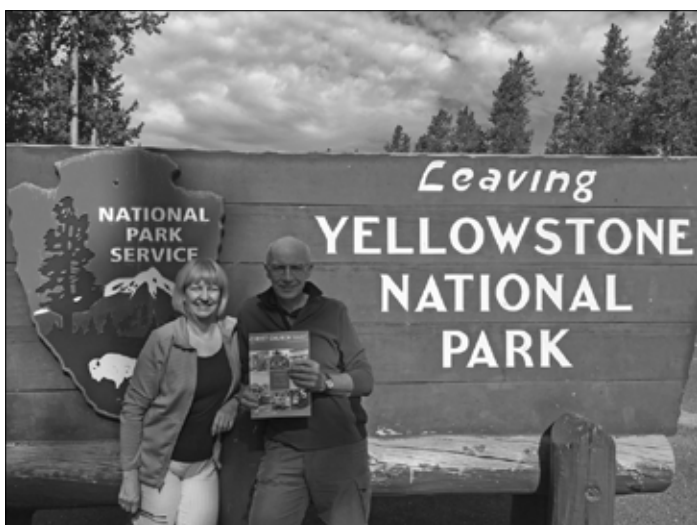
XLP is a Christian charity so it's a privilege to start the week on a Monday morning in prayer and worship. I see God working through a number of the young people I work with but there is one young lady in particular who has made great progress this past year. When I began to work with her, her self-esteem was really low, as she struggled to read basic words and refused to join in the literacy sessions. Now the teachers say her reading age is improving rapidly, she chooses to spend time in the library, and whenever I go into the school, she asks for more work to do at home, as she wants to help her sister learn to read! I am so excited by her story and thank God for all He is doing in her life. There's so many young people I'd love to see realise their potential and know how much they are loved.

Please pray:

- The young people XLP work with – that they would know their worth and value and make positive choices
- For Joe and I as we look to find a more local church – that God would use us to serve our community and glorify Him



Ware in the World



Bob & Sue Barker in the USA



The team in Rwanda - see page 9

Chair Ministry



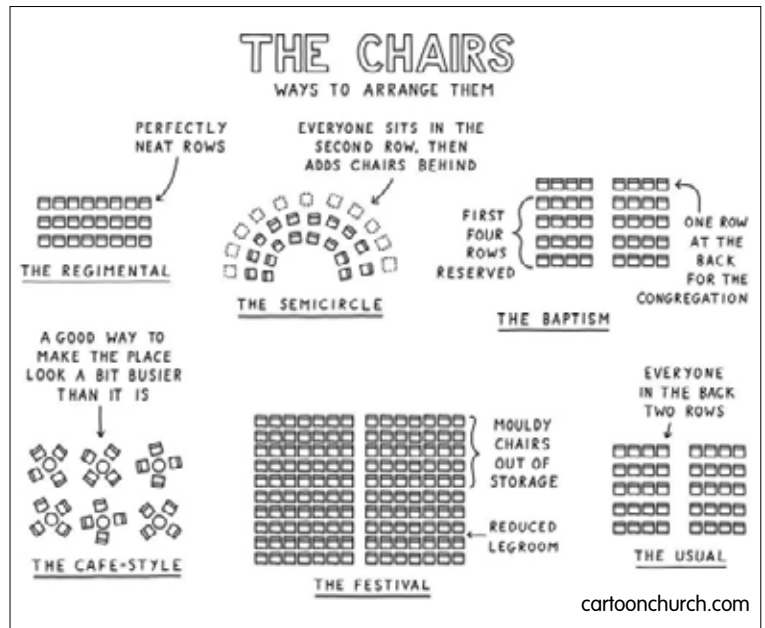
from
Neil Pearce

In the near future we will be arranging our new chairs in the refurbished church. Maybe you're wondering how they will be set out?

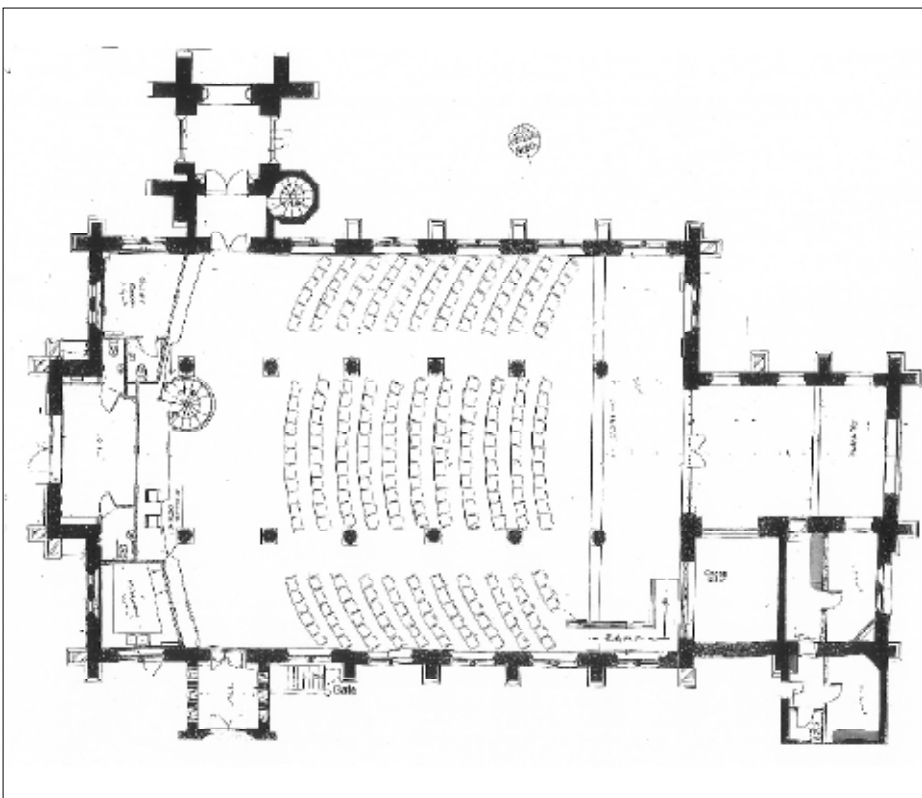
We considered the options to the right and as you can see, there are lots of variations!

But seriously, we want to use the space we now have, in the best possible way and are hoping to incorporate some of the positive things we have learnt from the chair set-up in the school hall (and church centre?). There will obviously be more leg room than we have been experiencing recently and we will use a similar arrangement as in the school hall, i.e. no centre aisle but two side aisles which will enable the congregation to focus more on the person leading the worship and bring people nearer the front.

You will notice from the diagram below (which shows 250 chairs) that the layout will be curved so that all will be facing the front in comfort. There will be no seating behind



pillars and there will be plenty of room in the side aisles as there will be extra space between the pillars. The new chairs will be securely linked together and movement of chairs will be limited because the carpet should prevent slippage. There will be plenty of room at the rear of the church for people to gather and for placing extra chairs if necessary.



People like Graham have faithfully set out and removed chairs in the hall every week.

Rwanda Diary

"Some Christians came to my house and invited me to church. There I met Jesus and my life was transformed, particularly with the help of Tearfund. I no longer feel like I live in poverty."

Those were the words of one man who we met in Rwanda back in July. A team of eight of us from Christ Church went out there for



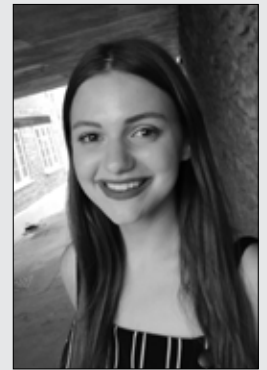
ten days with Tearfund to see many projects set up in the local church and communities. On our first day we visited Kigali Genocide Memorial, which taught us about Rwanda's history, and Kigali Theological College. Our second day was the first time we'd been out into the communities. Many of us had never seen mud huts before and wouldn't have dreamed of seeing children collecting water from a muddy puddle at the edge of a farmer's field. It was here that we heard testimonies of the impact of Tearfund's self-help groups, including visiting the farmer's fields.

The following day was one of my favourite days. We split into three groups and visited individual families. My group met a lady called Mama Tresu who was a seamstress. She showed us her workshop before taking us to her house and teaching us how to cook. We were also privileged to hear her testimony of how she converted to Christianity from Islam after hearing a preacher on the radio. Her family disowned her for it and her husband regularly abused her. Some nights she would hide with her children in the church for safety. After joining a self-help group within the



church and learning how to sew, she has been able to save some money to build another house for when it is not safe in her own house. She still lives with her husband and forgives him despite the fact that he continues to abuse her.

The next day we worked on a banana plantation (below left) with one of the local churches. The worship leader asked me to sing and so I sang the chorus of '10,000 Reasons' to him and the children of the church who eagerly listened. The next day we went to a leadership conference where Norman and my Dad did some teaching. The next day was our rest day which we decided to spend shopping and going to the Liberation Museum which is within the Rwandan Parliament. On Sunday we went to Kigali Cathedral where my Dad preached.



from
Talitha Hookway



Our final day in Rwanda was spent listening to testimonies of girls who had been sexually abused. Many of our team were impacted by these girls who cried whilst sharing their testimony. After visiting them we helped build a mud house for a lady who was badly affected by the genocide. Our job involved throwing mud at the walls which was a lot of fun (above)!

As a team we all learnt so much whilst out in Rwanda.

My Playlist



from
Abi Richardson

Abi picks the tunes for the playlist of her life...

My first song: One of my earliest memories is listening with my Dad on a Saturday morning to his record collection. The first song I remember hearing was 'Matchstalk Men and Matchstalk Cats and Dogs' by the imaginatively named 70s duo 'Brian and Michael'. It's a song about the painter Lowry.

Worship Song: I love the song 'How Great Thou Art'. It talks about God's amazing creation, and love for us shown ultimately through Jesus. I also like that it is a song familiar to all generations.

Dance Floor Song: Anything by Abba. Very cheesy I know; Dancing Queen is my favourite followed by 'Take a Chance on Me'.

Guilty Pleasure Song: 'Stuck in the Middle with You' by Stealers Wheel. I used to play bass in a band at University. This song was often on the set list and brings back many happy memories!

Special Moment Song: 'Thankyou' by Dido. Not long after we first met, my husband James and I spent a couple of months travelling around New Zealand in 2001. We bought a



cassette tape of Dido's album for the hire car and played it on repeat as we drove through that beautiful country. I would love to go back one day.

Last Song: Something celebratory and uplifting: 'What a wonderful world' by Louis Armstrong.

Chapter & Verse



from
Yelena Wells

Romans 12 v6 - During the summer I was privileged to help out with the holiday club. The memory verse for the week was: the human body has many parts and the many parts make up one whole body and so it is with the body of Christ.

A familiar idea I'm sure to many but it got me thinking about how often this comes up in the Bible in varying ways. Such as in Romans 12 v6. "We have different gifts, according to the grace given to each of us. If your gift is prophesying, then prophesy in accordance with your faith; if it is serving, then serve; if it is teaching, then teach; "if it is to encourage, then give encouragement; if it is giving, then give generously; if it is to lead, do it diligently; if it is to show mercy, do it cheerfully."

Of course you have to glean from this that God has given everyone their own part to play and they are equally important. Whatever gift God has given you then do it! We are all needed. But it really focussed me on the fact that I shouldn't expect to be able to do everything. I can't do it all on my own.

I've never been a fan of thinking there's something I can't do. I'm terrible at accepting help and am notorious for insisting I can manage (especially if it's a show of strength then I'm all about trying to be stronger than I am.)

But this verse has reminded me to be humble, to remember my strengths (and my weaknesses), to remember I can't do it all, to play my part in the Church family (not everyone else's part too!) and that TOGETHER we can share God's love with our community- no man is an island. I am not an island.

What's the point of Eco Church?

I have asked this question ever since we launched Eco Church. Why am I so convinced?

At the Greenbelt Festival this year, many speakers referred to aspects of climate change: plastic pollution, deforestation, fossil fuel exploration, personal and national carbon footprints - all of which are embraced in Eco Church concerns. In Genesis, God gives a Biblical mandate to mankind to exercise care for our world. Consider the potential of Britain's 50,000 churches acting as a lobby group to motivate community action or influence government policy. We could influence local, national and even international communities!

This is a fast-changing world. But have enough of us yet grasped the speed of that change? We are in the grip of a climate emergency: melting polar ice-caps, Amazonian forest fires, hurricanes in the Gulf Coast, flooding in Bangladesh, drought in Southern Africa, our record temperatures this year.

Sadly, we, the rich nations, have been slow to respond and now we have little time left to stem the process of climate change; only 11 years to change our lifestyles to reduce greenhouse gas emissions to manageable limits. And while our government recognises the climate emergency in words, it doesn't yet show leadership in action. Our children are taking a lead. Greta Thunberg (the remarkable 16-yr-old from Sweden, see twitter.com/gretathunberg) is an international inspiration to young and old alike, calling the youth to stand up and demonstrate to bring attention to the crisis facing us.



It is not just down to our national government to enact appropriate policies. Eco Church calls ME to restrict my lifestyle choices to reduce MY personal carbon footprint. "You'll die of old age, I'll die of climate change" read a recent banner. It's my grandchildren and great grandchildren it is talking about. Can I look them in the eyes in ten years and admit I did nothing?

So I joined Christian Aid and others in supporting the young people's Global Climate Strike on 20 September; I have become an activist because this is a crisis. I joined with people of all faiths and none to challenge the governments of the world to protect this fragile and beautiful world before it is too late. 'This is the biggest challenge we face. But together we can restore God's Earth.' *Christian Aid*.

It is such actions that Eco Church embodies. As well as being an umbrella movement to bring a proper reverence for God's world into the worshipping community, Eco Church



from
Paul Watson



exists to inspire and encourage Christians to become active and effective in our own lives. So, I have begun to tread more lightly in my lifestyle, and I'm an activist out of my love for God and his world, to draw attention to the crisis facing us all. "No action is too small" as another banner reads! Together Christians can be an inspiration and hold the hope in the world, stemming from trusting our God and his promise to us, and our faith in action. This is the point of Eco Church.

'When Christians take the world seriously then the world will take the Christian Church seriously'. *Rob Frost*

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LIGHT PARTY

5-7pm Thursday 31st October
Christ Church Centre

£2 per child (£5 for family of 3+ children)

For more info contact:
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**FOOD, MUSIC, FUN, GAMES, CRAFT &
ENTERTAINMENT.**

**5-11yr
olds**

**Wear bright
colourful clothes.**
This isn't a halloween
party, so please no
scary costumes.

Be a Star, Sponsor a Chair...

We are in the final stage of our time out of the church building. All being well we will be moving home in November. However there is a snag, there are no chairs. Could you sponsor a chair and gift the church the cost?

Each chair sponsored is £80 and our target is to have 250 chairs.

If you would like to sponsor a chair (or several) contact Martin on
01920 487267 or manager@christchurchware.co.uk



The Art of Worship

Expressions of worship come in many forms. It can be sung, it can be silent, whispered or shouted. It can be danced or in stillness. It can be acts of service. More and more of our congregation are using their God given creative gifts as part of their personal worship and we asked some of them to share their story.

Creativity and Christian Service

From a small child I always loved to draw and paint, but as a young Christian in the sixties, there seemed to be little opportunity to use artistic skills in God's service. I thought it was rather selfish just to draw and paint for my own pleasure. However, when I read about how God used Bezaleel and Aholiab in Exodus 31, I realised that God does not waste the gifts He gives us. Since then He has given me opportunities to use my creative gifts in many different ways.

Having taught art for many years, I have particularly enjoyed encouraging folk of all ages to develop their own creative gifts. After retiring from teaching, I led a puppet team for many years, taking assemblies in 18 primary schools in Herefordshire and Gloucestershire, which involved making scenery and props and writing scripts. I have also done line illustrations for Shell Books for Wycliffe, which are used in 3rd World countries to teach Bible stories or practical life skills.

In recent years, as a member of Hertford Art Society, I have made a large painting to illustrate the religious work performed by Hertford Choral Society in their annual concert at All Saints Church. These hang for several weeks on the pillars in the church for anyone to see.

As a member of the Christian Arts Society I was involved in organising an exhibition in Worcester Cathedral this summer. Our theme was the Holy Spirit and we filled the Dean's Chapel with over thirty paintings and mixed media work plus many verses of scripture. A large number of visitors saw these during the three weeks of the exhibition. **The image on the cover of this magazine was my contribution, based on Romans 8:26-27**

I believe that creativity is a God-given gift and as Christians we need to be available for God to use our gifts in His service. It gives me joy to be able to express the beauty of His creation and to serve Him.



from
Jenny Stratford



from
Charlie Abbott

Fully Alive

I've always loved stories both listening to them and telling them, the colourful way they can bring information to life and communicate it in a way that goes straight to the heart.

My background is varied and messy working many years as an actor and a hundred other roles to pay my rent when I was in between doing the thing I loved.

God then amazingly, after a gut wrenching pray, provided me with a job with TBN Europe that brought together all the things I'm passionate about.

It enabled me to research amazing ministries and tell their stories through a documentary aired every few weeks on the channel.

During this time, I met some truly inspirational people who were living their lives serving and caring for others in the most remarkable way.

A drug rehabilitation project and an outreach programme for women in prostitution were just a couple of the projects and people I had the privilege of meeting.

During this time God kept whispering to me about the importance of our own personal story and his song of redemption over all our lives.

Ten years later my heart a little bruised by life, but my desire and hope in God still the same, I long for my own restoration and for those around me. I long to sing, to dance and create in the way I was made to do so, when I do, I feel Gods presence. I have always loved the way the arts unlock us and give us an expression where sometimes it's hard to speak, this to me is my worship.

My desire is to have an adventurous creative journey and to be the best version of me for those around.

'Calling' is not about what the world needs, it's about what you need to be fully alive, cause that is what the world needs, for YOU to be fully alive!

My journey is now taking me on an Arts in Therapy Course, buckling up for the ride!!



from
Colin Mercer

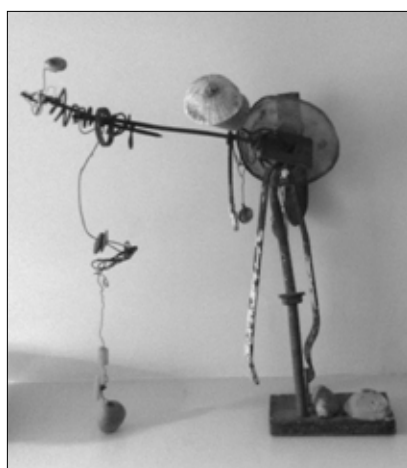
Beauty in the Natural

For as long as I can remember, God has given me an insatiable need to create.

I have spent hours in the pottery room after school and I made little abstract sculptures from anything I could find; old buttons, rusty wire, pieces of glass, stones, shells, and that is to name but a few. I still make sculptures, but it was when I started painting and getting inspiration from the colours and patterns in nature, that I realised that this was how I needed to create. Whether it's on paper or wood, I paint almost every day.

God's creation is truly amazing! For example, you could look at a shell and just observe the colour and shape, but if you look deeper, really study it, you can see subtle variations in colour. There is texture, tone and pattern. This is what excites me and what I endeavour to express when I set out my paper and carefully select the colours to use.

I never give my works a title so that they can be considered and enjoyed without any influence. They are just as you see them.



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The gift of music

If I'm asked the question "what is my passion?", I normally answer "music", and perhaps more specifically "music and worship".



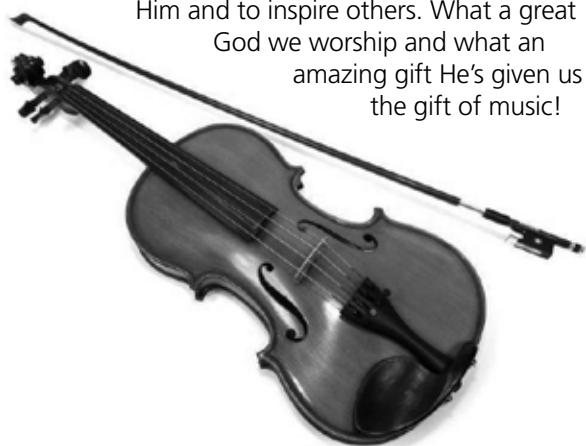
from
Chris Woodrow

Many people reading this will know that I can strum a guitar and am often seen at the front of church in the 11am service, with my guitar and the rest of the band, helping to facilitate our corporate worship. I love it when we draw close to God in praise and worship and consider it a privilege to be involved in this way.

I'm guessing that fewer people will know how much I also love to play my violin in worship. I was "classically trained" (from the age of 7!) and play regularly with a local orchestra, but it's great to be able to ignore the notes on the page and to play freely and creatively in worship. I do this at home sometimes as a personal worship offering, and have had the opportunity to play creatively in Encounter over the last few years.

I've also been in situations where I've been given space to play as led by the Spirit with nothing else to guide me. It can be quite scary to start playing not knowing quite what you're about to play and what's going to happen! It's a bit like someone bringing a word from God but only knowing how the message starts and having to trust God to give the rest as they step out in faith. But as I've done so I've experienced the Lord speaking and working through my playing to touch hearts and lives as we open ourselves to Him. God speaks to us in so many different ways and music can often help us to draw close to Him. It's such a privilege to be able to use the gifts He has given to worship

Him and to inspire others. What a great God we worship and what an amazing gift He's given us in the gift of music!



A poem about worship

Not the most obvious choice maybe but for me, such moments as those I witnessed that summer day - we got splashed too! - 'Aha moments', I call them - are my praise offering to God of my joy at encountering him in the ordinary. Less often, in the extraordinary.

'Show me your face' like Moses, I may pray, but then, I, for my part must be ready to recognise that 'tremor of his breath'*. Then comes the compulsion to use the wordsmith gifts I believe he has given me and freeze-frame the moment in offering to my Creator God. Sometimes the poem comes readymade, as it were,. Other poems require gentle chiselling or even copious deletions 'Benedictions' fell into the second category.

Mostly I write for God and me, but I hope this one blesses you too...



from
Rosie Watson

Benedictions

(A phrase from Pope John Paul II's millennium 'Letter to Artists: the Creator Spirit and Artistic inspiration)

Muscles
complaining
from the long
hot
pull-up from the village,
he turns off the road,
free-
wheeling down the track,
bike jolting over the rutted earth
as he approaches the ford-
more accurately a water splash
on this hot, hot day.

Huge cow parsley heads tremble in the heat
on either side
as he gathers speed,
flings out his legs,
sandalled toes upwards.

Water drops catch
the light,
baptising his hot skin,
releasing him into joy,
proof to the strenuous climb
to reach the blessed coolness
of the woods ahead.

Rosie Watson





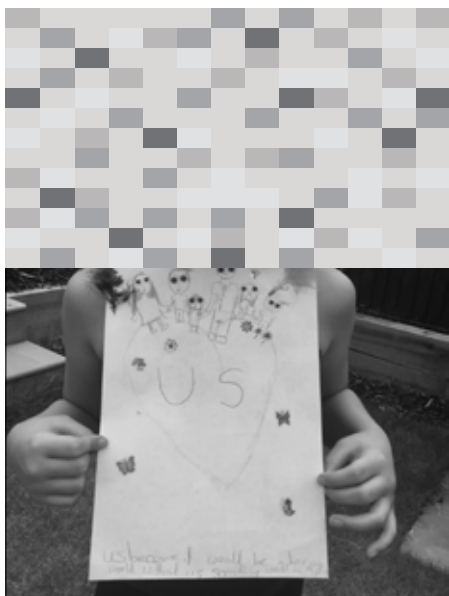
from
Jess Cole

Creative God - The Great Creator

I love those moments when you pause and take a moment to appreciate the world around you. For me being at the coast and watching the waves crashing in and the expanse of sea is one of the times I stop and say wow! I then look at the cliffs and how they are formed and then see the beautiful, delicate flowers growing there too and am amazed to think God made it all, the big crashing waves and the delicate petals. God is in the detail.

When was the last time you took time to stop and just think about how amazing our God is? Recently in our group we spent time thinking about our amazing God who created the world. He expresses himself and his love for us through creation. We have also thought about how special we are, God created just one of us!

After watching a video set to the song 'Indescribable' (give it a listen!) with pictures of creation I asked the children what their favourite thing was that God created. What moments made them stand in awe. We then spent some time drawing these. Here are some pictures the children have done.



Jess- "Us. Because it would be a boring world without us, something would be missing"



Tilly - "I love how turtles move" - Turtle in the sea at sunset



Emily "Sunsets are pretty"

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from
Ann Mustoe

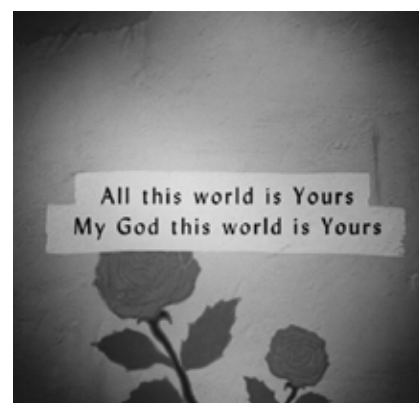
Valentine - Hillsong Worship

I have chosen 'Valentine' by Hillsong Worship as my song of choice for a number of reasons.

I think this song could be played in the secular charts and therefore be accessible to a wider non-Christian audience, the song speaks of God's love for his creation. The chorus is:

*This world is Yours
My God this world is Yours
All You made to be Yours
I know You love us all*

It's very simple but this song reminds me that firstly God made the world and that secondly we are his creation. This song especially makes me think of the pupils in my secondary school, how God loves them so much. Every time I hear the chorus I think of the pupils in my school and God's love for them, God's heart for them and how almighty He is.

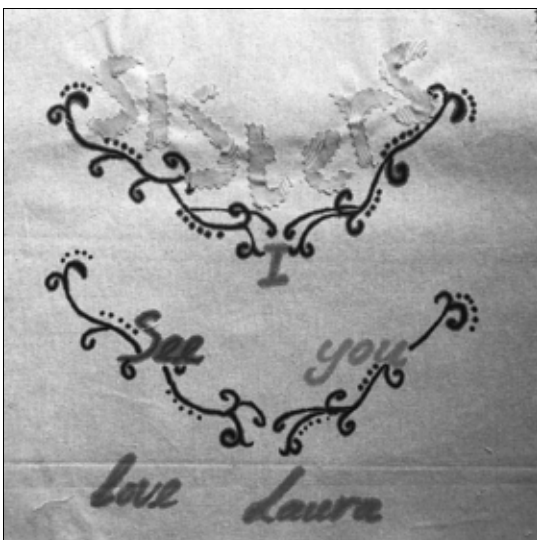


Creating Change

Back in May I met a lady called Izzy, an Advocacy Campaigns Officer for Open Doors UK. She told me about the Handmade Petition project, a handmade banner that will be presented to the UK government in November during a conference on preventing sexual violence in conflict.



So much more than signing a bit of paper, this is an opportunity to decorate a piece of fabric that will be sewn together with thousands of others. The only rules are, it needs to say I SEE YOU and include your name (it's a petition after all). I SEE YOU means, we stand with our persecuted sisters across the globe. But so much more than a petition, this activity is creative! Something I read at New Wine this year - "Our God is a creator God, we are made in His image. When we are creative something happens in our spirits..." and during a chat with Izzy in May, she said "Creativity is so important. The enemy cannot create, he can only distort and destroy. Creativity is a reflection



of the divine in us and is therefore SO powerful. Powerful in communication, in making change, in touching hearts". The Handmade Petition is an opportunity for so much more than just 'relaying information', it's a way of communicating to the soul, because art, music, poetry, sculpture, all of the creative disciplines, touch the emotions in a deeper way. Our prayer is that the government would recognise the vulnerability of Christian women and this would be reflected in policy.



from
Catriona Baker



Midweek, Christ Church's Wednesday morning ladies' Bible study group, had a go at this back in July, during a series on prayer. We prayed while we decorated using pens, paints and fabrics. Some are illustrated here.

It's not too late to join in. Go to www.opendoorsyouth.org/do-something/see-change/sign-the-handmade-petition/ for instructions.

Or chat with me, I might have a few squares left....

The enemy cannot create, he can only distort and destroy. Creativity is a reflection of the divine in us and is therefore SO powerful.

See all these in fabulous colour on the website - www.christchurchware.co.uk

Mission I'm Possible



from
Andrew du Boulay

I had always had a secret desire to be a missionary but without ever quite knowing what one was. It was based on a rather romantic 19th century image of the explorer David Livingstone ministering to the unreached people of Central and Southern Africa. The truth about mission today is somewhat different but no less remarkable. Five years ago I joined the Christ Church Mission Advisory Committee (MAC) to find out more.

There is no universal definition of mission but the one adopted by the Committee is as follows: "Mission activities are those activities resulting from ministries exercised by Christians in the power of the Holy Spirit, which facilitate evangelism, church planting, social action, teaching and discipling".

In its widest sense, this definition of mission means most outreach activities could be described as mission activities. However, for the purposes of MAC, it primarily refers to supported mission activities outside of Christ Church. Notice that the definition makes no mention of where these mission activities take place. They might be abroad but they could equally be in the UK. Sadly there is a growing generation of people living in our country who have never heard the good news of Jesus Christ. This is why Christ Church supports mission because we want to be able to reach out beyond our parish boundaries, to be part of UK and global outreach and obey the Great Commission to "go and make disciples of all nations" (Matthew 28).

Did you know that 10% of the money you give to Christ Church (as part of "general giving") goes to support our mission partners? MAC is responsible for advising the PCC on how to spend this money, with the PCC making the final decision. With a total annual mission budget of just under £25,000, and with so many deserving causes, the money has to be spread thinly, and it is difficult to choose between "the good and the good".

What our mission partners say:

"We completely trust in the Lord's continued provision for us in our ministry, but without Christ Church's support it is likely that we would need to review the sustainability of our full-time work."



These remarkable people need our money because they have to fund raise for all that they need to live and work, including supporting their families. This is not an easy thing to do. It's uncomfortable to ask and doesn't come naturally to them. What is more, they have to step out in faith each year, because Christ Church can only make funding decisions based on one year at a time, since we cannot promise money we do not yet have ... and, in any case, Christ Church only provides a small fraction of their funding needs. This is the hard reality of mission today. Our mission partners really are giving their lives to Jesus. They are an inspiration and deserve our prayers and support.

As well as our long term mission partners, we also support Tearfund Connected Church in Rwanda; Street Pastors of Hertford and Ware;

Future Hope in Hertford and CPAS our patrons. The Committee really wish to raise the awareness and importance of mission, leading to greater involvement of the wider church family, including the nurture of individual calling. That is why you will see regular articles from our mission partners in the church magazine and why we also actively support and encourage short term mission trips by members of Christ Church. We hope to use the Christ Church website for mission news in the future, too.

We are also very fortunate in having All Nations Christian College on our doorstep. Why not find out more about the courses that they run or invite an All Nations student to give their testimony or be part of your Life Group for a term?

The members of MAC (Gary Parkes, Mary Salter, Caroline Tiffen, Judith Swindell, Geoff Madge, David Briggs and myself) are all passionate about mission. Please talk to us if you would like to know more. If you want to follow our mission partners, you can sign up to their newsletters, and if you wish to make an individual donation through Christ Church, please do so.



Please pray for us:

- That we, as a church, support, nurture and encourage our mission partners and those thinking about embarking on mission.
- We cannot all be missionaries but God calls on each one of us to help share the Good News. Let Him show us the way, and let us heed His calling.



How to Pray

When the vicar asked me to review 'How to Pray' by Pete Greig, my first thought was that I don't really need help in praying as I've been doing it for so many years. Boy was I wrong! This book has taught me so much and I could fill several pages with what I've learnt. I'm not allowed to so here are a few of my highlights...

The first thing is where I pray and my attitude to prayer. When I was a little girl, I spent precious times on my mum's lap, being close to her feeling safe and so loved. Surely, this is what we want by spending time with Jesus- a safe place; a place where we can be in His presence.

In the summer I have breakfast in my garden and that is my time with my very special Father. In the winter, it is a chair in my lounge. Each of us can find that special place and time. He is always waiting for us and is always pleased to welcome us in. Perhaps we feel He is fearful and grumpy? Not so.

The book covers different types of prayers – petitions, intercession, unanswered prayers, contemplation -how to pray without words.

That was a big reminder for me about listening. God talks to each of us in different ways. For me God often talks to me in my dreams. Those of you that know me, will know I like talking, so it is probably the only way that God can get a word in edgeways!

This book has reminded me not to make my prayer life too complicated. Our trouble is that we worry too much about how we sound. Is our voice posh enough? Are we using the right grammar? Just be you! Say what is in your heart.

I encourage you to read it because your life will be transformed. It has given me a new depth of prayer and a much deeper relationship with my Heavenly Father.



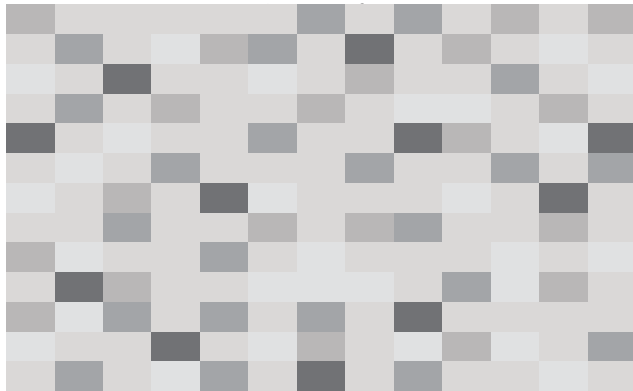
from
Jan Young



Postcard from...

The Lapworth family in Reading...

Greetings from Reading! We wanted to write to thank all of you at Christ Church for supporting us as



And so now we find ourselves in Reading where Paul is to be Associate Pastor of Wycliffe Baptist Church. We have lived in Reading before and been involved with this church for many years, so in some ways it is like coming home. Not so for the kids, however, as they were tiny when we left. Also, being a pastor is an entirely new challenge for Paul!

Please pray for:

- For Paul to quickly get the hang of his new role and be a blessing to the church
- For Ruth to find part time work and for working out her involvement at the church
- For the kids to adapt to their new situations – new school in Reading for Lucy, Emma continuing with 6th form in Coventry and Simeon starting at Lancaster University.



from
Ron Porter

Ron's Reflections

Life is like a book and we are all at different chapters. We can mark significant events like using bookmarks so that we can go back and remember. Also like bookmarks, which can be moved, we can go back and remove those memories that we may find painful. We can then move forward to the next chapter of our lives.

Remember that God has plans for us: Look at Jeremiah 29:11 in your Bible and use a bookmark to help you remember it, especially if you are going through tough times. God's plans are ultimately better than any plans we may have.

If you are going through a difficult time, KEEP ON GOING! With God's help you will get through it. Read, mark, and move on to the next chapter.

The best is yet to be!

A note from a parent at Holiday Club:
"I was also so encouraged to see the multi-generational team all ready to welcome the children and serve refreshments to the adults. There is something truly special about holiday clubs and all the work and prayer that goes in to them and I felt it as soon as I approached the building. It was wonderful to see people helping who had helped on the various holiday clubs I'd been to as a child at Christ Church - in fact I became a christian at one 'Trackers' in 1992. It was also special to see so many people who had been adults when I was a child at Christ Church still helping and being involved - so it wasn't just my kids who were encouraged by the holiday club - I was too."

Bargain Hunt

Two of our congregation appeared on lunchtime TV earlier in the summer. Admittedly it was a repeat programme, but we asked Wendy to give us exclusive behind the scenes access...

"Whenever we are home at lunchtimes, Bargain Hunt is compulsive viewing so on mad impulse, we decided to apply to be contestants on the show, not thinking we would actually get accepted. The rigmarole started with a telephone interview, followed by mock performance auditions at a London Hotel. We were delighted and flabbergasted to be shortlisted and then selected as candidates.

It was an unforgettable experience. Seeing how the programme is produced by an amazing team of producers, camera and sound technicians and fantastic presenters—plus the camaraderie between contestants was fantastic. They made you feel so relaxed, it just took your mind off the cameras and onto having a fun shopping experience, especially with someone else's money!

Our purchases were from an antique shop in Kingston, our old home town. The auction then took place a month later at Newbury. The added highlight to our day was an extra

recorded programme for Children in Need, the guest participants were two radio presenters, one being a great favourite of ours Nick Robinson. Peter of course had to have his photograph taken with him! (Below)

No! We didn't win! Yes! it was an amazing enjoyable experience with laughter from start to finish."



from
Peter & Wendy Wall



Please pray:

- That God is always at the centre of our marriage and that he blesses us with the fruit of the Holy Spirit as we adjust to our new life together
- That our house will be a house of prayer, fellowship and Christ-like hospitality
- That our precious children grow in the love of Christ and that they grow up to be his true and faithful followers.



Thank you

We would like to express our deepest thanks to all our brothers and sisters in Christ who helped to make our Wedding day so special, we both felt very blessed to be surrounded by so much love and happiness.

We would also like to extend a special thank you those who helped with the wedding and reception in practical ways. There are too many of you to mention but thank you so much and may God bless your kindness.

We were most amazed by the power of prayer and fellowship. a fair few things things tried to go wrong in preparation for the wedding but by the grace of God, every obstacle was overcome and we proceeded to have a perfect day.

Isaac and Laura Baker

2020 Vision



from
Rev. John Hookway

*...to be transformed
we need
His Spirit to
empower us to
be all that He
calls us to be.*

In 1961 JF Kennedy said "before this decade is out, we will land a man on the moon and return him safely to the earth" – easily understood. Tesco say "every little helps"- we get their message loud and clear. At Christ Church our banner statement is "Jesus led. Spirit empowered. Grace based." As we contemplate returning from our "exodus" we asked John what our vision really means, where it came from and how we practically do it...

Q. You've been vicar here for nearly nine years. We have many new people with us now so let's start by remembering how you were led to Ware?

I was well aware of Christ Church years before there was a vacancy. I felt God lay a burden upon me for this place a couple of years earlier so I regularly followed your progress, listened to on line sermons and prayed for you from a distance. Around Easter 2010, I read that there was to be a vacancy and I became increasingly excited about the prospect of applying. That materialised in the October and I felt God lay a particular verse on my heart- "may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in Him."

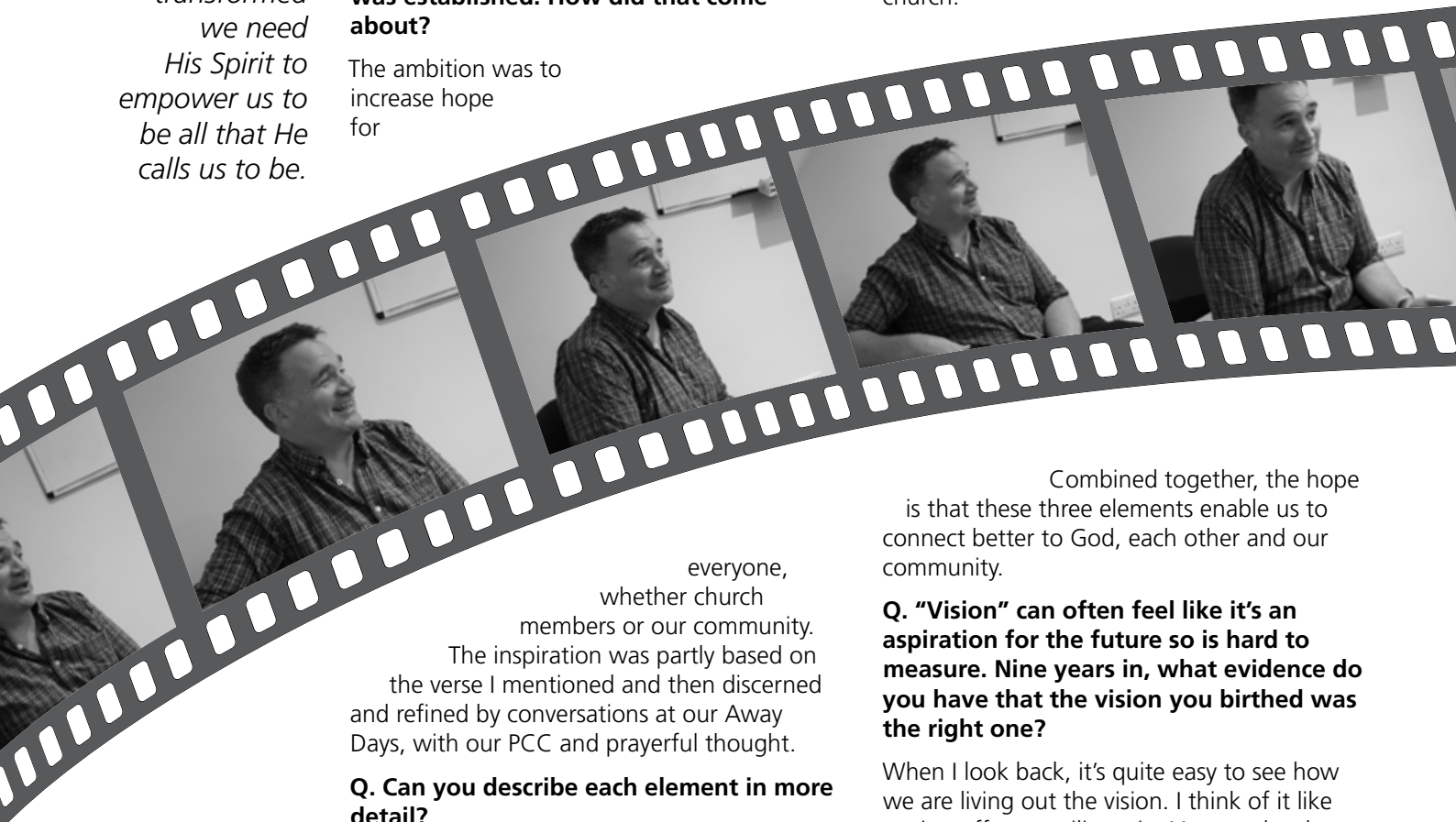
Q. Soon after you joined, the new vision was established. How did that come about?

The ambition was to increase hope for

things that I hold dear in my own walk with God is the idea that we should first be led more by Jesus so that we can lead more like Jesus and lead more to Jesus.

The second thing is that we can achieve nothing without the Spirit of God. Admittedly, we can create a schedule and run events but to be transformed we need His Spirit to empower us to be all that He calls us to be.

Those first two elements became very clear to me as I prayed and sought God. "Grace based" was inspired by our first Away Day where Grace emerged as the key theme and resonated with us all. As the leadership team reflected on the idea of receiving God's grace in order to show it to others, we all felt it complemented the ambition of the church.



everyone,
whether church
members or our community.
The inspiration was partly based on
the verse I mentioned and then discerned
and refined by conversations at our Away
Days, with our PCC and prayerful thought.

Q. Can you describe each element in more detail?

Well, Jesus led; my fundamental belief is that the clue is in the name- this is Christ's Church and so it is vital that He is central to everything we do. Personally as a leader, one of the

Combined together, the hope is that these three elements enable us to connect better to God, each other and our community.

Q. "Vision" can often feel like it's an aspiration for the future so is hard to measure. Nine years in, what evidence do you have that the vision you birthed was the right one?

When I look back, it's quite easy to see how we are living out the vision. I think of it like setting off on a sailing trip. You need a clear destination in mind and then you use the right skills or tactics to get there. For example, we have arrived at a point where we just took 35 young people to Soul Survivor whereas

five years ago we took three. That change has occurred for many reasons and all kinds of effort – we have employed people for example - but all point to being led by Jesus, empowered by His Spirit and showing grace to each other.

You can say the same for CAP where we are reaching our community at the very point of greatest need. This church was originally founded on the ambition to help the poor and marginalised and to help set people free. So creating a Debt Centre is another great example.

Q. It is easy to imagine that the development of the church facility is the actual vision....

I can understand why we could make that mistake. It's not, it's a resource to help us carry out our vision. Remember, part of the

series themes for example. I pray for the strength to keep pressing in to what God has for us.

Q. What can each of us do to support the vision?

Being the custodian of the vision is a big responsibility. I have to give an account for my leadership and the people that He gave to my care. That's sobering! So the fundamental answer to your question is easy- pray for me and my family. If I can have one other thing? Everyone likes to be encouraged and I am no different. Keep telling me how God is working in your life so that we can



reason for the development was simply that we could not do everything we want to do to serve our community.

Q. As leader, how do you personally live out the vision day to day?

My hope is that I never stop learning; that's crucial in being a leader I think. If I do not keep the vision alive in my own life, then I'm going to struggle to make others do it! My prayer life, my personal reading and being connected to God myself are crucial. So is my willingness to be challenged by God and by others – I hope that I live like that. I am well aware that I need to grow and develop.

I ask God to come and lead me, to show us what we need to learn as a church. I often take time alone to contemplate the sermon

celebrate and give thanks together.

If you see me changing or growing, I'd love you to tell me. I make loads of mistakes and being a vicar is not easy; I really want to be open to God, to be transformed and anointed as a man, a husband and father and vicar.

Q. Finally, if we were to interview you again in, say, three years, what would you hope would have happened in church to further fulfil the vision?

We will have been able to have welcomed many more groups of people than we have been able to so far. Imagine what Holiday Club could be like for instance. The real "evidence" will be the people who can say "in this place I encountered the Lord, in this place I received help and ministry, in this place I saw my child baptized." I believe we will see significant moments of faith happen. I can't wait.

I believe we will see significant moments of faith happen. I can't wait.

The Last Word



from
Alison McNeill

Alison was a familiar face over the last three years as she was regularly part of worship teams at services right across our church. In the summer, she returned home to Ireland to start a new chapter in her life. Here's her last word to us...

I came to England in June 2016 to start working as a History teacher in John Warner. I was looking for a church to help me settle into a community of Christians in the area, thinking I would probably need a bit of support in the year to come! When I walked into Christ Church, I got a lovely welcome, being introduced to people my age and being invited to tea and chat after the evening service in my first week. I decided this was the place for me!

When I first came to Christ Church, I thought it was very similar to my church in Belfast, which gave me an opportunity to feel at home very quickly. However, I have been challenged more throughout my three years in terms of expressing my faith and seeking more of God every day. Encounter has been a huge part of that journey, and I hope to build more of the heart behind Encounter in my church in Belfast. I will also miss Life Group meetings on a Wednesday night, when I subjected the group to all my frustrations of the week, as well as joining in worship, prayer and discipleship.

I moved back to Belfast in July, ready to enjoy the greatest perk of teaching – summer!



Enjoying the scenery on the North Coast of Ireland

I moved back to Belfast in July, ready to enjoy the greatest perk of teaching – summer! Despite the wonderful hospitality of England over the last few years, the desire to be back home with family was too much! My plan for the year is to do a Masters in Politics in Queen's University, balanced with part-time work teaching. In the longer term, I hope to get full-time work next year, teaching History and Politics, and hopefully inspiring some change in the politics of Northern Ireland!



A beach walk with friends from Fitzroy Presbyterian Church, my home church in Belfast.

I loved being involved in Christ Church during my time in England – you were the most difficult part of leaving! The genuine desire for more of God and eagerness to develop a deeper and more spirit-filled faith have inspired me in my personal faith journey. I will pray for you all in the year ahead – particularly that your move back into the church building will be a blessing to you and the wider community in Ware.

Please pray:

- For a hunger for more of God in my church, and that there will be a greater openness to the spirit taking over!
- For me as I try to balance work and study, that I will get the balance right and not burn myself out.



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