

Christ Church and People

40p



February

Parish Magazine of
Christ Church Stone

2008

PARISH DIRECTORY

SUNDAY SERVICES

Details of our services are given on pages 2 and 3.

Young people's activities take place in the Centre at 9.15 am
(see page 17 for details)

THE PARISH TEAM

Vicar	Paul Kingman The Vicarage, Bromfield Court	812669
Curate	Tim Vasby-Burnie, 1 Navigation Loop	814244
Electoral Roll Officer	Irene Gassor	814871
Parish Office	Christ Church Centre, Christ Church Way, Stone, Staffs ST15 8ZB Email christchurch.centre1@btinternet.com	811990
Deaconess (Retired)	Ann Butler	818160
Readers	David Bell John Butterworth Margaret Massey David Rowlands Michael Thompson Cecilia Wilding	815775 817465 813403 816713 813712 817987
Music Co-ordinators	Peter Mason Jeff Challinor	815854 819665
Wardens	Phil Tunstall David Rowlands	817028 816713
Deputy Wardens	Shirley Hallam, Arthur Foulkes	
Prayer Request List	Barbara Thornicroft	818700

CHRIST CHURCH CENTRE

Booking Secretary	Carole or Irene	(Office)	811990
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CHURCH SCHOOLS

Christ Church C.E.(Controlled) First School, Northesk Street.

Head: Mrs Lynne Croxall B.Ed.(Hons) 354125

Christ Church C.E.(Aided) Middle School, Old Road

Head: C. Waghorn B.Ed(Hons),DPSE,ACP,FRSA 354047

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Christ Church



and People

Please get your
contributions for
the March
magazine to us
by 15th
February

Cover Story: Jerry Cooper drew lots of wonderful pictures for this magazine, all of them buildings in our parish. This month the picture is of Albert Terrace

February 2008

Fri	1	1:10pm	Alleyes year 10 assembly
Sat	2	8:30am 9:00am	Prayer meeting in church Breakfast in the Centre
Sun	3	9:15am 6:00pm	Communion. Luke 23:32-49 "The cross of Christ" Evening Prayer at Christ Church Joshua 4 "The stones at Gilgal"
Mon	4	2:45pm 7:00pm	Oulton First School assembly Cornerstone for teenagers
Tue	5	9:30am 10:30am 12:30pm 7:30pm	Christ Church First School assembly Midweek service Seekers Club at Christ Church Middle School Youth Club in the Centre
Wed	6	9:00am 7:45pm	Prayers for schools and young people Ash Wednesday Holy Communion
Thu	7	1:20pm	Christ Church Middle School assembly
Fri	8		
Sat	9		
Sun	10	9:15am 6:00pm	Morning Prayer. Mark 7:1-23 "The heart of the problem" Communion at Christ Church Joshua 5:13-6:27 "The fall of Jericho"
Mon	11	7:00pm	Cornerstone for teenagers
Tue	12	10:30am 7:30pm	Midweek service Youth Club in the Centre
Wed	13	9:00am 7:45pm	Prayers for schools and young people Lent Course (1)
Thu	14		
Fri	15		

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Sat	16		
Sun	17	9:15am 6:00pm	Communion. John 8:31-41 "The key to freedom" Evening Prayer at Christ Church Joshua 7 "A losing formula"
Mon	18	7:00pm	Cornerstone for teenagers
Tue	19	9:30am 10:30am 12:30pm 7:30pm	Christ Church First School assembly Midweek service Seekers Club at Christ Church Middle School Youth Club in the Centre
Wed	20	9:00am 9:30am 7:45pm	Prayers for schools and young people Men's meeting Lent Course (2)
Thu	21	1:20pm	Christ Church Middle School assembly
Fri	22		
Sat	23		
Sun	24	9:15am 6:00pm	Family Service. John 10:1-10 "The fullness of life" Communion at Christ Church Joshua 9 "A defensive ploy"
Mon	25	7:00pm 7:30pm	Cornerstone for teenagers Standing Committee meeting
Tue	26	9:30am 10:30am 12:30pm 7:30pm	Christ Church First School assembly Midweek service Seekers Club at Christ Church Middle School Youth Club in the Centre
Wed	27	9:00am 7:45pm	Prayers for schools and young people Lent Course (2)
Thu	28	1:20pm	Christ Church Middle School assembly
Fri	29		

Christ Church on the Internet

Parish website

www.churches.lichfield.anglican.org/stone/stonecc

Parish office email

christchurch.centre1@btinternet.com

Magazine contributions

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Uncertain awards, secure awards.

Movies, stars, fashion and glamour – that’s Hollywood’s 80th Academy Awards this February. The Academy Award of Merit (or ‘Oscar’) was instituted in 1928. Each statuette is a knight holding a crusader’s sword standing on a reel of film with 5 spokes representing Actors, Writers, Directors, Producers and Technicians. The statuettes are made of gold plated bronze, stand 13.5 inches tall and weigh 8.5 lb. The Oscar is not just a mantelpiece decoration, but valued for recognising talent. To suggest that it is just a bit of mutual backslapping and self-congratulation is cynical. It’s good to celebrate human creativity and artistic expression, which are to be considered as gifts from God to the world.

However, there’s been turmoil in the run up to this year’s Oscars. The awards are due to be presented at a special ceremony on 24th February. A number of actors have already taken a principled stand to not cross picket lines of the Golden Globe awards out of sympathy for the screenwriters who are striking for more pay. The rising tide of protest has overshadowed the forthcoming Oscars ceremony. As the awards are perhaps the most prestigious for the acting world a failure to turn up may be a serious career mistake. But then again, there’s no guarantee of receiving an award, even if you are on the short list.

How different life is as a follower of Christ! Here we find an award that’s sure and certain as it has been won by Jesus Christ and is a gift to his followers. The award is a result of his work on the cross, not our work in life. All who trust in Jesus’ work on the cross discover that they are on track for an award kept secure in heaven. To help us understand this the apostle Paul contrasts athletes who compete before crowds of spectators with Christian disciples running the race of faith: *“everyone who competes in the games goes into strict training. They do it to get a crown that will not last; but we do it to get a crown that will last forever”* (I Cor 9v25). The crowns awarded at the Isthmian games were made from celery (or similar) and soon wilted and died, whereas the crown of life is for eternity.

Enjoy the Oscar award ceremony: it’s a good bit of fun and recognises talent. But invest in the crown of life as the only secure award and one that outstrips all others.

Paul Kingman.



Everyone A Warrior

The local church (the people, not the building!) is sometimes described as a body. Just as a body is made up of many limbs and organs, each with a different role to play but each needing the other, so also a local church family will have many different members, each with different gifts and roles, but working together as a whole.

It can be a great relief to know we are not called to be omni-competent! Some will be better at praying, others at teaching the faith, others at planning and administration. When a body of believers is working well, everyone should know how their involvement contributes to God's mission.

But there is sometimes a danger of laziness, of an attitude that says, "Well, that isn't my gift so I won't do it."

Last month I mentioned General Tony Zinni and his list of qualities that, in his opinion, make the US Marines a force to be admired. Number 2 is this: "Every Marine has to be qualified as a rifleman. Every Marine is a fighter. We have no rear area types. All of us are warriors."

A warrior has a different mindset from that of a rear area type. A warrior knows that his or her home turf is on the front line, waging war against the enemy. A warrior is trained for the front line, even if daily routine is elsewhere.

All Christians are warriors, soldiers of Jesus Christ, and we need to be trained for the front line.

How is your swordmanship?

A Marine has a rifle; we have the word of God which is the sword of the Spirit (Ephesians 6:17). All believers need to be honing their skills at applying the Bible, using the message about Jesus to fight against enemies such as unbelief, doubt, temptation and grumbling, whether in ourselves or others.

Are your comms working?

The battlefield needs good communications with HQ. We sometimes treat prayer as room service in a hotel, rather than the means for sending field reports back to our Captain of Salvation, asking him for urgent reinforcements (Ephesians 6:18, Matthew 9:38).

Every baptised person wears the badge of membership in God's army. Some have gone AWOL and need to return – in which case pardon is immediate. The rest of us may use our gifts in different ways, but always remembering that we have a fighting Spirit.

Tim Vasby-Burnie

6 Epiphany Message from the Bishop of Lichfield

When Jesus was baptized by John, heaven opened to him, he saw the Spirit descending like a dove and God said: 'This is my Beloved Son with whom I am well pleased'. It's one of the most astonishing bits of the Good News that, before Jesus got stuck into his life's work, before he did anything much for God, his heavenly Father did something for him and told him how much he loved him. In the same way, long before we start to serve and do things for God, our heavenly Father shows us that he loves us. Jesus himself is the definitive sign of how much we are loved, of course, and wherever Jesus is, in our churches for instance, there are signs for anyone who cares to look, that God loves us first.

Sometimes this happens in quite concrete ways and last year we had a rather exciting turn-around in our diocese. In 2002 we found that we were heading for bankruptcy. Particularly our larger churches had seen decline and children's work was in free-fall. We had to take drastic action to cut clergy posts and reduce the budget by £800,000. Alongside that we focussed on a Strategy for Growth: praying that God would halt the decline and restore our church. Well, five years later, we can thank God for a wonderful confirmation of his love.

- v Last autumn we licensed the largest number of Lay Ministers that we can remember. Back to Church Sunday produced several thousand returnees in church.
- v Parishes have appointed almost as many children's workers as the number of clergy posts we have cut.
- v All those churches which have attended the Larger Churches course have stopped declining and started growing again.
- v Growth is happening in a large proportion of our parishes, including some of the poorest in the land.
- v We have been able to balance the budget, and strengthen our reserves.
- v We've decided to:
 - a) increase the number of stipendiary curates from 9 to 11 and
 - b) not to cut the last remaining three clergy posts of the 50 cuts agreed five years ago. We aim to stabilize the number of clergy and then pray for a gradual increase again.
 - c) We will reduce the annual increase in the Share Formula for the first time for many years.
- v We've even been able to offer stipendiary clergy health check-ups and we've begun a big programme so that every vicarage can have cavity wall insulation.

(continued on pages 7 and 8)

It is not all good news of course. Some parishes are struggling. But for every apparently insoluble problem we face there are encouragements and exciting opportunities. So I hope you will join with me at the beginning of a new year in giving thanks. Thank you to God for all the signs of his amazing grace, and thank you to all the faithful parishes where people have upped their giving and their commitment.

After Jesus was baptized and God confirmed his love for him he was ready to face the challenge of the next few years. And when we've been particularly loved by God, as we have, it helps strengthen us for what lies ahead.

Now there is a particular challenge coming for which I would value your prayers and your action.

We are going to need more clergy and especially more ordinands. We are just coming to the point over the next five years when the baby-boomer cohort of clergy is planning for retirement. Numbers of ordinands are up, but not yet enough to compensate for the expected number of retirements. Please pray that some of our clergy will retire a little later than at 65. And that we will be able to support more new ordinands each year, paid and voluntary.

It's also important to pray for the increase in the number of Lay Readers and other voluntary lay ministers to be maintained.

And of course I'm praying for the money to train and pay for clergy and lay workers.

Jesus didn't exactly know all the details of his coming ministry. But he knew he was loved and entrusted with the Good News. We don't exactly know how things will be for our Diocese. But as we receive strength from God we will continue proclaiming the Kingdom, making new disciples, encouraging the ministry of the whole people of God, calling out ministries and using gifts, and increasing the number of ministers, lay and ordained.

I believe our aim should be to produce enough paid and voluntary clergy to staff as many parishes as possible. We should aim for high quality clergy, capable of forging ahead and giving leadership for different kinds of parish. Of course, we have to raise the money to pay for them. But a good stipendiary priest will soon pay for him/herself in all but the poorest parishes. Given the chance of a new vicar, most parishes will rise to the challenge of paying for him or her.

(continued on page 8)

So the challenge this year, if we are continue the turn-around and provide for our churches, is not merely to do with the numbers of people coming through the doors of our churches but what happens to us as we walk out of the doors. All beloved sons and daughters have a ministry. My hope is that every parish will be encouraging every member to consider their calling and their ministry, because everyone is a beloved son or daughter. And out of all those callings my hope is that there will be some more from each place who will be given the gifts for ordained and lay ministry so that together we can be a sign of God's love and grace.

For the last few years I have invited parishes to set aside Ash Wednesday or another suitable day as a day for concerted prayer and fasting for the Diocese. This year I invite you to do the same: first and most important to celebrate and thank the Lord for wonderfully giving us the security of his love; secondly to pray that the turn-around will become a steady growth, particularly in children and young people; and thirdly in prayer to the Lord of the harvest to provide the increase in ordinands, clergy and lay leaders we need for these next years.

And a joyful Epiphany to you all!

Jonathan Gledhill

(This message can also be viewed on YouTube)

Website of the Month

www.christthetruth.org.uk

Christ The Truth is the website of one of my best friends (now a curate in Eastbourne), and although I'm biased I think it's brilliant! Here you will find outstanding theology, grace-filled articles on counselling and depression, and links to some great sermons to download onto that mp3 player you got for Christmas.

But for now, here is a poem (written by my friend) to enjoy. Perhaps you could use it during Lent to focus your heart on Jesus?

Tim Vasby-Burnie

(The poem is shown on page 9)

“Thorns” by Glen Scrivener

All but cursed, the men of dust,
 From garden'd bliss dejected thrust.
 Cast down to blood and tangling thorn,
 Flat-faced in mud, bereft, forlorn.

Unmoved as ages droned along,
 Resigned to sighing pity's song.
 To mouth their sadness with each breath,
 In love with self and sin and death.

Then glancing back, a glimmering sight,
 Through gnarling weeds, a shaft of light.
 The tree untouched, of matchless type,
 Engorged with life, effulgent, ripe.

It lay beyond the thorny wall,
 A tantalizing siren's call.
 All wrong reversed, all tears made good,
 All hunger filled with holy food.

New drive possessed the men of dust,
 They set to work with primal thrust.
 To have the fruit at any cost,
 If failing this then all is lost.

And so they pressed against the wall
 Of thorns and blades and jagged sprawl.
 Their eyes aglow with mad intent,
 Their bodies pierced and torn and rent.

Their flesh sliced through by razor wire,
 Could not abate their one desire.
 No hurt could halt their desperate zeal.
 “Once through, the tree alone will heal!”

Their bodies strewn along the route,
 Their hands outstretched to reach the fruit.
 Yet none would cross this death-divide,
 Their hope lay on the thorny side.

Behind them in the other way,
 Another tree for sinners lay.
 It stood apart and unacquired,
 Gnarled and grim and undesired.

It did not catch the eye of men,
 Who sought a ripeness there and then.
 Yet this one pledged a golden yield,
 To all who ceased and turned and kneeled.

For hanging lone across its form,
 The Lord of Life enthroned in scorn,
 Was off'ring all a bloodied balm,
 With up-raised voice and out-stretched arm.

Thus from the midst of cursèd death,
 Is raised His call with rasping breath.
 “Come every man, leave off your quest
 Find life within my piercèd breast.”

“He lies!” they shrieked through raging tears,
 They scoffed and mocked with angry jeers.
 “What life could this cadaver give?
 What guarantee that we shall live?”

“Just this” He said with pity's call,
 “I've come direct from o'er the wall.
 All bliss that moves your frenzied glee,
 Such fountains first begin in Me.”

At once they spluttered daft disdain,
 “No wounded Man or tree of pain,
 Will be our well or way of life.
 We're free! You pledge us only strife!”

“Dear friends!” He pleas, “regard your plight,
 “Your freedom bonds you, blinds your sight.
 Your wounds for self, for self are loss,
 Come lose them in my wounded cross.

“Your life is death, My death is gain,
 Now trust the word of Paschal slain.
 Come hide in Me through darkest night,
 Soon heaven's dawns shine fresh delight.”

Just so His promise stands above
 All men, inquiring which they love:
 To seek the fruit and Him defy,
 Or heed Life's call to “Come and die!”

A good time was had by all, truly, old, young, new faces, old faces shy, confident, everyone enjoyed our Christingle celebrations. Estella worked her usual magic with the crafts; all activities were very busy, children filling their bags with their creations.

Over 60 Christingles were made with children remembering what each part represented, working with enthusiasm to create their Christingle.

Then into church for the service, which was very well supported, making a wonderful atmosphere. The music was lead by Jim and the young musicians and Tim, (who dressed up for the occasion) told us a story. Then it was time to light the Christingle candles and everyone joined in singing 'Away in a Manger'.

There were refreshments in the centre afterwards, a big thank you to all the ladies who served them to us.

Over £70 was given at the service, so thank you to everyone for their generosity. The money will go to the Children's Society to help with their tremendous work with disadvantaged children.

Sandra Morray

Children's Society House Boxes

Yes it's that time of year again. Please can you let me have your Children's Society Box. If you bring it to church please hand it to me or to one of the wardens, don't leave it at the back of church. If you would like me to collect your box that's fine, just let me know. House boxes raise over £2million a year for the Society's work.

You may be interested in having a box yourself, I would be happy to organise that for you. Every penny counts in giving a child a new start.

Sandra Morray

Mornings at Christ Church and Oulton: *Why I'm a Christian – the compelling evidence of Christianity.* This series looks at what the New Testament writers record about Jesus: his person, his claims, and how we are to respond to him in the right way.

Moddershall and evening service: *Joshua - the success of an unlikely soldier.* This is a great book in which we learn the encouraging truth that every one of God's promises holds good for His people. This is seen as the people of Israel follow Joshua into the Promised Land.

Paul Kingman.

More about the hymn “How Great Thou Art”

I was interested to read in the January magazine that George Holden chose the hymn How Great Thou Art as his favourite. George mentioned that the hymn was translated into the English in the 20's and it is at this point that I feel I can add a little more about the origin of this beautiful hymn.

The hymn was discovered in Russia by an evangelist and missionary to the Communist world, Stuart K Hine who sang it with his wife as a duet in Russian, in the 20's during the course of their missionary work. He began his translation of the hymn into English after the second world war, but was surprised that there was no mention of 'lofty mountains', as he and his wife had seen so many in Russia, so added that particular verse himself.

Later he was to discover a Swedish poem which clearly was the source of the Russian hymn. This explained why the hymn contained no verse about mountains. Another Englishman, James Leese had uncovered this original version.

The original version was written as a nine verse poem called 'O store Gud' by a preacher named Carl Gustaf Boberg in 1885. The following four verses are those most similar to those that we are familiar with and yet they are different. However the same sentiments of awe, worship, praise and gratitude are to be found within them.

Diana Tunstall

(see page 12 for the words)

“Almighty God”

1. Almighty God, when all around I see
 The wondrous world that tells me how You feel
 For humble folk, among them even me,
 To give You thanks I, at your table, kneel.

Refrain for verses 1,2 & 3

Then from my soul bursts forth a song of praise
 Almighty God! Almighty God!
 Then from my soul bursts forth a song of praise
 Almighty God! All loving God!

2. The cooling breeze, the scent of summer flowers,
 The birdsong of dark woods and meadows fair,
 The peace of dusk, the hush of night-times hours
 Each prove to me that you are ev'rywhere.

Refrain

3. And when I read the Holy Bible's story
 Of mercy shown since first the world began,
 I know that I can be with Christ in glory
 By trusting in Your promise made to man.

Refrain

4. And when my time upon this world is ending
 Your constant love that guided me through life
 Will take my soul, its heavenward way ascending,
 Into a realm devoid of earthly strife.

Refrain

Then from my soul will burst a song of praise
 Almighty God! Almighty God!
 Then from my soul will burst a song of praise
 All loving God! All loving God!

Tim & Kate LEE, Rebekah, James & Grace – Philippines

We received a Christmas letter from Tim & Kate (*copy in red folder under Overseas Mission notice board*) written when they were in the midst of Christmas parties for the kids' clubs. They told of the wonderful time they had had with the older basketball project young people. The family were excited at the prospect of going on holiday for Christmas to Kota Kinabalu in Sabah, paid for by Kate's parents.

We received this e-mail from Kate:

'HI everyone,

Just like to say thanks for all your prayers - we had a FANTASTIC Christmas holiday and saw so much of God's wonderful creation. The highlight was seeing wild elephants. This is just a quick email to say thanks to everyone that send cards and parcels.

We are away in Nepal for 8 days from tomorrow - and won't have email probably. So don't think we are being rude. CMS is holding a three yearly conference for mission partners in Asia and so we are heading off to a place I have always wanted to go to - we feel very fortunate.

Please pray for Jigsaw while we are away. We have found just today a great place to hold the kids work in Batasan - more on that later. (*This is where the old Jigsaw Centre and many homes were demolished in September to make room for a new road*)

Tim's dad is really not good - he is very confused mentally and he doesn't want any medical intervention for his cancer which is advanced so its not looking good. Please pray for Tim for wisdom as to when he should go to see his dad. His memory is failing fast and Tim doesn't want to leave it too late (so his dad doesn't recognise him)

Rebecca – UK & Pakistan

Rebecca is now back in the UK for Home Assignment for a few months. She is planning to come to a meeting of the Oulton Missionary Fellowship on Thursday 13th March 2008. This is to be an open meeting to which we are all invited to hear about Rebecca's life and work in North Pakistan – more information nearer the time.

(continued on page 14)

Ralph & Dagmar Baron with Helen, Sarah & Simon – South India

The Barons live and work at Hebron School in South India, a Christian coeducational boarding school. We received recently the following news:

- The family planned to all be together in India for Christmas and New Year. No news yet as to whether the plans worked out.
- The dispute between a staff member and the School, which had gone to court, had still not been resolved.
- They will be in England for a short Home Assignment from mid-June to early August this summer and asked us to contact them if we would like a visit. *(We have made contact but no response yet)*
- As Hebron is the only mission school offering A Levels, there is increasing demand for places at the top end of the School. As planning permission for any building project is very difficult, we are asked to pray about what action should be taken.

The family are on their winter break now. Term begins at the end of January

Stephen and Tabita Bell - Croatia

Stephen will be speaking at an ECM conference at Elmwood Church, Eccles Old Road, in Salford on February 9th, giving an overview of work in the Balkans (www.ecmbritain.org).

In March, Stephen will be visiting sponsor churches in the UK

Drive a Beetle

Saturday 9th February, Beetle Drive in church centre at 5.00pm. There will be a shared tea - see Phil or Diana for details.

The beginning of February already! The month which also brings Half-term and the beginning of Lent. How time is speeding by!

Because of the short half-terms, we have already begun practising songs which we will be singing in the Pyramid Music Festival, to be held at the Victoria Hall in Hanley in March. This is always an exciting occasion, when we sing alongside all the other First Schools, the two Middle Schools and Alleynes High School. In the early stages of rehearsal, it is already promising to be a memorable occasion, as Alleynes School is celebrating its 450th anniversary and a lot of the content pays tribute to this. Children in all the schools are working very hard to produce their usual high standard at this biennial Concert.

Again, we have been asked to take part in "Celebrating Music," an annual event, sponsored by the Staffordshire Newsletter and held at The Gatehouse Theatre, Stafford. Here, we hope to include some items which will be performed by our Handbell Ringers. We were fortunate to be loaned a magnificent (and very expensive!) set of handbells, by The Handbell Ringers of Great Britain Group who are based in Sheffield. They were loaned to us very kindly for a period of 12 months, which sadly ends on the day following the "Celebrating Music" concert. We have had great fun learning to play them, developing many skills along the way—two which spring to mind are team-work and timing! One memorable occasion was a demonstration by our children, following which they could nominate a member of staff to ring their bell. To the great amusement of the children, the performance of the staff was—well—less than perfect to put it politely! Definitely a great leveller! We are hoping to be able to afford to buy a set of bell plates which are very similar but designed with children in mind.

Meanwhile on February 24th we are taking part in the morning service to celebrate Education Sunday. Here we plan to sing and to play the bells. Our children are fortunate in having so many opportunities available to them.

Janet Booth --- Early Years Coordinator

Demonstrating God's love Through practical action

Bishop of Lichfield's Lent Appeal

(Abroad) I invite you to support the Church of the Province of Myanmar with its work to tackle poverty through advances in agriculture. Burma is a country rich in natural resources and its land has the potential to provide enough food for everyone. But people face two problems: a lack of farming skills and the ongoing conflict.

The Anglican Church is working to improve the lives of Christians and Buddhists alike through environmental and agricultural projects. The Bishop of Toungoo, the Rt Revd John Wilme, tells me that many of his parishes are underdeveloped in economy, health, education and living standards and the people have little knowledge of modern farming methods. He believes that living standards can be improved. Toungoo Diocese sent one of its clergy for training at the Asian Rural Institute in Japan; on his return, the Revd Saw Stylo was able to pass his new skills in organic farming and other agricultural techniques on to other people.

He has also developed a fish farming co-operative. Now, local people are not only able to grow food for themselves; but also make a profit from the fish farm. These profits are used to fund the Daniel Centre - a hostel set up to look after orphans and destitute children.

(At home) More than £60 million has been distributed to nearly 5,000 faith-based projects in the poorest areas of England (including many in our own diocese) since the Church Urban Fund was set up by the Church of England in 1987. The CUF is committed to working for the least advantaged in our society to see their lives transformed. And while many of the projects it supports are Church of England based, they also support the work of our ecumenical partners.

Today, its work is as urgent as ever.

(continued on page 17)

In 1985 a small order of Roman Catholic nuns, the Infant Jesus Sisters, arrived on the Heath Town estate in Wolverhampton. They were moved by the desperate plight of local residents, which included many who were lonely, full of fear and forgotten by the community and the church. They set up the Hope Community as a mission to serve marginalised and isolated individuals and families. The Hope Family Centre still works with old people, children and vulnerable families; but is expanding to meet the changing needs facing the area.

Wolstanton is a former mining village in Newcastle-under-Lyme. At the heart of local life is Wolstanton Methodist Church, which acts as a community hub providing a base for a range of services for local people of all ages. Health visitors use the building to run parenting classes for mothers and babies and Age Concern runs a lunch club for local pensioners. The building is also used by a mothers and toddlers group, a youth club and a "gentle exercise" group. The national CUF is supporting proposals to modernise the "tired" buildings and provide additional accessibility for the 1,000 people a week who use the facilities.

The Walsall Community Church is based near the town's red light district and for nearly 20 years has been working to befriend those involved in the sex industry through the Walsall Street Teams. The national CUF has provided funding for preventative sessional work with vulnerable children at risk of exploitation. The charity currently works with between 50 and 70 children a year to restore self esteem, confidence and life skills; and to help them return to education.

So this year I ask you to support my Lent Appeal so that together we can help USPG and the Anglican Province of Myanmar transform more local communities in Burma through the development of Agriculture; and help the CUF as it works with more churches here in Lichfield Diocese.

Jonathan Lichfield

Leaflets are available through the church office, with more details and information on how to give to the appeal.

More than we ask or imagine

A 60-year-old couple was celebrating their 40th year of marriage. During the celebration, a genie appeared and said, "Because you have been such a loving couple all those years, I would like to give you each one wish."

The wife quickly chimed in, "I want to travel around the world." The genie waved his arms and, KERPOW!, she had the tickets in her hand. Next, it was the husband's turn. He paused for a moment, then said shyly, "Well, I'd like to have a wife 30 years younger than me." The genie waved his arms and, ZAPPO!, he was 90 years old.

We seem to be fascinated by stories of magic genies granting wishes (why is it usually three wishes?). Which of us hasn't sat and wondered at some point in time, "If a genie granted me three wishes, what would I wish for?"

God is not, as some imagine Him, a magic genie waiting at our beck and call to give us everything we ask for (see James 4:3). But there is certainly that level of power and ability at His disposal. Listen to these words of Paul:

"Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen." (Ephesians 3:20-21, NIV)

God is able to do more than we ask of Him. That's pretty amazing, considering that we have some pretty difficult requests. Furthermore (and this is really mind-boggling), God is able to do more than we can even imagine!. Yet Paul assures us that God is not only able to do all that we ask or imagine -- he is able to do more, immeasurably more!

When things in life are beyond our control, we find comfort in knowing that God has such power -- not the power of an imaginary genie but the power of a living awesome Father. Sometimes we offer to pray for others saying, "It's the least we can do." How wrong we are. Considering the power of God, it's the most we can do!

Lent Course: The Church in the Power of the Spirit.

This year we will dig deeper into what is true Christian spirituality. Lessons will be drawn from Paul's first letter to the church at Corinth: a church which was founded 20 years after the resurrection of Jesus Christ, set in a cosmopolitan Greek port full of philosophers, a plurality of religions and prostitutes! The city was dedicated to pleasure, fascinated by rhetoric and knowledge, but wonderfully responded to the good news of Jesus Christ. We will get to grips with what was written to this dynamic but also chaotic church, which Paul loved with passion and exasperation in equal measures!

The letter helps us to learn about the vitality and spiritual gifts of the early church while re-examining some of our assumptions about modern church life. The letter will help us to learn from how Paul handles various hot issues without inhibiting vitality or compromising the truth.

Information cards will be available for all the churches in the benefice. The course will be on Wednesday evenings from 7.45 p.m. starting on 13th Feb using a series of DVD recorded talks.

I hope that you will plan to attend the course so that we will increasingly be a church that lives in the power of the Spirit.

Paul Kingman.

AN EVENING WITH PHIL & ARTHUR

SATURDAY 8th MARCH AT 7.00 PM
IN THE CENTRE

<p>Something for everyone Sale of plants and pots of spring bulbs Guessing games to play with great prizes to win Be part of a team in a light-hearted quiz Refreshments</p>
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Proceeds to the church general fund

Tickets £1 from Phil & Arthur and from Irene & Carole in the Office

FROM THE REGISTERS

FUNERAL

10th January

Philip Kent

Aged 62 years

THANKSGIVING

13th January

Joseph Alsbury

SIDESPERSIONS ROTA

AM

PM

3rd Feb

B.Hutchinson, M.Hutchinson
A.Greer, I.Gassor

D. Shemilt

10th Feb

G.Holden. J.Abrahams
S.Hallam, D. Pickles

P. Tunstall

17th Feb

A. West, D. Davies
V. Ledward, T. MacFarlane

D. Shemilt

24th Feb

P.Hipkiss, I. Gassor
D. Wilson, J. Rowlands

P. Tunstall

FLOWER ROTA

3rd February

Mrs M. Hillman

10th February

Lent

17th February

Lent

24th February

Lent



ROADS FOR PRAYER

3rd February

Oulton Road
Oulton Mews
Princes Street
Queens Square, York Street

6th February

Navigation Loop
Rangeley View
Barnton Edge
Anderton Way/View

10th February

Bentley Close
Rendel Grove
Brindley Close
Rudyard Close

17th February

Cressey Close
Joules Drive
Cauldon Way
Harecastle Bank

24th February

Saltersford Rise
Rolt Close
Millenium Way
Cameron Wharf

Deanery Synod Reps	Mrs S Hallam, Mr I Hawley, Mr D. Rowlands
P.C.C. Members	Mrs I Gassor, Mrs M Hillman, Mrs E Mason, Mr P Mason Mrs D Wilson, Mrs E Woodhead, Mrs J. Rowlands Mrs S. Morray, Mrs J. Abrahams, Mr K. Reynolds Mr A. Stone, Mr G. Holden, Mrs A. Greer
Secretary	Jacqueline Abrahams.....817020
Treasurer	Kevin Reynolds.....851595
Envelopes, Gift Aid	Nesta Challinor

GROUPS AND ACTIVITIES

Climbers 3-7 years	Sandra Morray.....286093
Explorers 7-11 years	Estella Woodhead.....761659
Pathfinders 11-14 years	Enid Bell.....815775
Banner Group	Jeanette Rowlands.....816713
Church Missionary Boxes	Cecilia Wilding.....817987
Flower Guild	Marylyn Hillman.....815936
Men's Fellowship	Mike Thompson.....813712
Missions Secretary	Cecilia Wilding.....817987
Prayer Group	Jeanette Rowlands.....816713
Parents & Toddlers (Mon 9.30 – 11.15am)	Sandra Morray.....286093
Friday "Little Fishes" (Fri 11am – 1.30pm)	Cecilia Wilding.....817987

Young People's Activities take place in the Centre during the Sunday morning service except on the fourth Sunday in the month, which is the family service.

Climbers 3-7 years **Explorers** 7-11 years **Pathfinders** 11-14 years

The following activities take place every week in the Centre during term time.

Monday Toddlers 9.30 am **Friday Little Fishes** 11.00 am

THE MAGAZINE TEAM

Mission News & Prayer Diary Cecilia Wilding 817987

Please send material for the magazine to

Dave Bell, c/o Christ Church Parish Office, Christ Church Way,
Staffs ST15 8ZB or by email to christchurch_mag@yahoo.co.uk

Christ Church welcomes you!

Whether you are new to the Stone area or have been living here for some time you are welcome to come to this church. The church is made up of adults and children who want to know more about the living God, who has supremely revealed Himself in Jesus Christ and continues to speak to us through His Spirit-inspired word, the Holy Bible (which can be read online at www.biblegateway.com and we recommend a modern translation e.g. the New International Version or English Standard Version).

We are a Christian church, because at the heart of what we believe is the fact that to know God personally we must put our trust in Jesus' death for our forgiveness so that we can be reconciled to God. We are part of the Anglican church, the basis of its Trinitarian belief is summarised in the Book of Common Prayer with its 39 articles, though we unite in Christ irrespective of denomination. We are an Evangelical church, as we see that the Bible is God's word for us and so is to inspire all that we do. This church was established with the help of the renowned Charles Simeon.

Our church meetings help us to grow in our understanding of what the Bible tells us about God, and this is something that we encourage others to investigate especially through our *Christianity Explored* course (see details on the national website www.christianityexplored.com). If you would like details of when the next local course is starting then please contact the church office.

We have children's and youth activities running during the Sunday meetings and also during the week, such as our Tuesday evening youth club. Adults may be further involved through small groups which meet for Bible study and prayer, a midweek communion service and a monthly prayer meeting.

Our community involvement includes links with the local schools: Christ Church First, Oulton First, Christ Church Middle and Alleyne's High.

We also have links with the Church in India, The Philippines, Croatia, Botswana and Pakistan.

This magazine and the church website concern Christ Church in Stone, but we are linked with the churches in Oulton and Moddershall (see separate magazine and website).

Subscriptions

If you would like this magazine delivered to you regularly, please contact:
Mrs Marylyn Hillman, Park Lodge, Beech Court, Stone. Tel 815936