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Please get your contributions for the April magazine to the editor by Friday 11th March.

Christ Church on the Internet

Visit our website at www.lichfield.anglican.org/stoke/stone/stonecc

E-mail the Parish Office at christchurchcentre@pgen.net

Send your contributions for this magazine to christchurch_mag@yahoo.co.uk

March

- Tu 1 11.30 am Churches Together Fraternal Meeting in the Centre
We 2 2.00 pm No Mothers' Union meeting – see 17th March
7.45 pm **Lent Course – 10 Commandments “How to keep peace with your parents (No. 5)”**
Fr 4 7.00 pm Rock Café for young people
7.45 pm Women's World Day of Prayer at St Michael's
“Let our light shine” – Speaker: Sue Prinold.
Sa 5 8.30 am Prayer Breakfast

- Su 6 LENT 4 (MOTHERING SUNDAY)**
9.15 am **Parish Communion**
Sermon Text John 3v22-36 “God’s Messenger”
6.00 pm **Evening Prayer at Christ Church**
10 Commandments (No. 4) - “How to stop driving yourself crazy”

- Mo 7 9.00 am Prayer Group in Christ Church to pray for children and young people
1.10 pm Assembly at Alleyne's – Year 11
7.30 pm **Parochial Church Council Meeting - note change of day**
We 9 9.10 am Assembly at Oulton First School
7.45 pm **Lent Course – 10 Commandments “How to take God seriously” (No. 3)**
Th 10 9.20 am Assembly at Christ Church First School
10.30 am Holy Communion in church
11.30 am Holy Communion at St Mary's Home
Fr 11 7.00 pm Rock Café for young people

- Su 13 LENT 5**
9.15 am **Morning Prayer (Tear Fund Sunday)**
Sermon Text – Jn 4v1-26 & 39-42 “God’s saviour”
6.00 pm **Parish Communion at Christ Church**
10 Commandments (No. 2) “How to know the real God”

- Mo 14 9.00 am Prayer Group in Christ Church to pray for children and young people
1.10 pm Assembly at Alleyne's – Year 9
Tu 15 11.00 am Causeway Prospects in the Annexe Room
We 16 10.00 am Men's Fellowship “Aeromodelling” in the Centre
12.00 Chapter meeting at Swynnerton
7.45 pm **Lent Course in the Christ Church Centre**
“How to live by the right priorities”(No. 1)

- Th 17 2.00 pm Mothers' Union Joint Benefice Holy Communion service at Oulton
7.30 pm Boaters Christian Fellowship open meeting in the Church Centre – Speaker Peter Atwell (see page 12)
- Fr 18 7.00 pm Rock Café for young people
-

Su 20 PALM SUNDAY

- 9.15 am **Family Service (note change of service)**
Baptism of Sophie Louise Brock
Sermon text: Jn 4: 43-54 "God's Messiah"
- 6.00 pm **Parish Communion in Christ Church**
Sermon text: Psalms 3 & 4
-

- Mo 21 9.00 am Prayer Group in Christ Church to pray for children and young people
1.10 pm Assembly at Alleyne's – year 10
- Tu 22 9.20 am Assembly at Christ Church First School
- We 23 10.30 am **Holy Communion Service in church - note change of day**
11.30 am Holy Communion at Oulton Abbey
1.30pm Oulton First School Easter Service

Th 24 MAUNDY THURSDAY

- 11.00 am Christ Church Middle School Easter Service in Church
2.00 pm Christ Church First School Easter service in church
7.45 pm Joint Benefice Holy Communion service at Oulton

Fr 25 GOOD FRIDAY

- 10.00 am **Procession of Witness begins at St Michael's church ending at St John's Church, Stone**
7.45-8.45 pm **Meditation: "Christ's passion" in Christ Church Centre**
-

Su 27 EASTER DAY

- 9.15 am **Parish Communion**
Sermon Text: Jn 5 v16-30 "God's Life"
- 6.00 pm **Evening Prayer at Christ Church**
Sermon Text: Psalm 5

Advance notice for April

- We 13 7.30 pm The Annual Parochial Church meeting followed by
8.30 pm Shared Supper
9.15 pm Praise and Prayer

Wise Words...

He was pierced....

It once was daring to have an ear pierced. Multiple ear, nose, face or 'bio' piercing have now eclipsed the single piercing of an ear. It may be teenage rebellion or, taken to its extremes, it can express self-hatred since it is a form of self-harm. But it can't be for this reason alone that people want to pierce their bodies. Many who have long since left their youth also indulge in a stud or six as **decoration**: to beautify and adorn.

At Easter we remember a body piercing that was for none of these reasons. The death of Jesus Christ was by crucifixion: huge nails were hammered through his wrists and feet to maximise the pain and duration of death. A crucifix is nowadays often found as a piece of jewellery, but its significance is that it is a **declaration**, not just a decoration. Crucifixion was so humiliating and awful that it was reserved for criminals. Yet Jesus' crucifixion was unique because it wasn't a punishment that he deserved. An Old Testament prophet announced this several centuries ahead of the event: *'Surely he took up our infirmities and carried our sorrows, yet we considered him stricken by God, smitten by him, and afflicted. But **he was pierced for our transgressions**, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed'* (Isa 53v4-5). Jesus' death was a sacrifice for sin. His death atoned for our wrongdoing. Through Jesus' death the repentant can be forgiven. His resurrection confirmed this.

The cross is a declaration that we can be put right with God and so enter heaven when we die. It is this that Easter celebrates and a wonderful gift that we may receive by faith alone.

I hope that have a wonderful Easter as you remember that he was pierced so that we can enjoy new life and have a future hope.

Paul Kinaman



Women's World Day of Prayer

"Let Our Light Shine"

Prepared by Christian women of Poland

Friday 4th March 2005

7.45 pm

St Michael's Church, Stone

Everyone is very welcome

Youth Work Development

We are pleased to say that we were able to take the next step of submitting an advert for a youth worker. This is the result of the generosity of the three congregations in the benefice. However, these pledges will need to be augmented by further fundraising efforts if we are to make an appointment. We hope to produce more information for you soon, but the intention is to interview in mid May for a September start. A separate account will be set up to deal with the finances needed for this project.

In the short term the account details for this project is as follows: HSBC Christ Church Development Fund - sort code 40-11-12 - Account No. 11188666. This is a holding account. An account specifically for the Youth Worker will be set up in due course and the money transferred

Paul Kingman

Christ Church First School News

February - the shortest month, but it is proving to be one of the busiest, as I write.

We began the season of Lent as always by encouraging the children to think about others and to help in a practical way. This year we are supporting The National Children's Home after hearing about their work during a visit from Mrs. Louise Devany, one of the support workers. Each week during Lent the children are thinking about the many blessings, which they enjoy, and as a 'thank you' they are putting some money into a small moneybox, which they have made. These will be taken to Church for our Easter Service to remind us that we are Jesus' disciples today - doing his work.

Closely following the launch of this project we marked the beginning of the Chinese New Year - the year of the Rooster - by enjoying an extremely lively morning together learning something about China from each class. The high point of the morning was an exciting parade involving 6 fearsome dragons! WE continued the celebrations into the afternoon, as the lunchtime menu had a Chinese theme - sweet and sour turkey, rice and prawn crackers. Following this Year 4 treated the staff to all sorts of Chinese delicacies to taste! I think the children will remember the music and colour of the event for a long time.

On 24th February our Choir are taking part in 'Celebrating Music 2005' at the Gatehouse Theatre Stafford. This is an annual event organised by the Newsletter to showcase the musical talent of local schools. We are looking forward to participating in this prestigious event.

Our newly formed Art Club was the focus of the 'Schools' page' in the Newsletter, this month. The photographer spent an hour with the children and managed to capture their enjoyment and enthusiasm in each picture. Their finished work is displayed in the Resource Room, and is certainly enhancing the area.

At the time of writing we are about to close for our half-term break - happy holiday to teachers and children!

Janet Booth

FOOLISH MISTAKES

Judy, the editor of a trivia publication, was having trouble with her computer. So she called Dave, the computer person, over to her desk. Dave clicked the mouse and a couple of keys and solved the problem.

As he was walking away, Judy called after him, "So, what was wrong?" He replied, "It was an ID ten T error." A puzzled expression ran over Judy's face. "An ID ten T error? What's that, in case I need to fix it again?"

He gave her a smile, "Haven't you heard of an ID ten T error before?" "No," replied Judy. "Write it down," he said, "and I think you'll figure it out."

She wrote: ID10T

We can sympathize with Judy. We've been there, often in our spiritual walk. We look back at some of the stupid mistakes we've made, some of the foolish decisions over the years and can explain in no other way - they were ID ten T errors!

We tend to make those errors most when we get distracted, when we take our eyes off of God. We focus on what we want, when we want it; nothing else matters. Or we get fascinated and caught up in the material things around us, forgetting the more important matters of spiritual importance. Or we start comparing ourselves with others, alternating between jealousy (of those who are "better" than we are) and pride (in light of those who are "not as good" as we are). When our eyes are set in the wrong direction, it doesn't take long to commit an ID ten T error.

In Colossians 3, Paul writes at length about all sorts of sin that we need to "put to death" (vs. 5-9). It is significant to me, though, that he begins this chapter talking about where our focus needs to be:

"If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth." (vs 1-2)

Heavenly Father, we humbly seek your forgiveness of those times we have become "distracted" and sinned. We have no excuses, we offer no "explanation", we merely acknowledge our foolishness. Please bless our efforts to keep our eyes firmly focused on You and Your will for our lives this day and always. In the name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

TEARFUND

As a church, we are supporters of Tearfund. 83% of the charity's income comes from Christians in the UK and Ireland – from churches and individuals. Only 10% is spent on administration and fund raising so our support goes where it is most needed – in the poor communities of the world.

Tearfund works through local churches and Christian agencies – 'their partners' - to create brighter futures for the world's poorest communities. In 2003-4 Tearfund worked with local partners in more than 70 countries around the world. Communities are encouraged to think of their own ideas to improve their futures. It could be, for example, health care, literacy programmes, clean water and sanitation, HIV/AIDS programmes, or food security programmes.

In Tangaye, a village in Burkino Faso, West Africa, the initiative came from the local church, supported by Tearfund partner AEAD. Oxen were provided to help to plough more land for crops. When the oxen are mature, they can be sold so that more animals can be bought and put back into the project. Most of the villagers are Muslim - not a problem; to quote the local church leaders "if we only give to Christians, we're not obeying God's word."

When disaster strikes – flood, famine, earthquake or war, it's the poor who suffer most and Tearfund is on standby to provide emergency relief. In the recent tsunami disaster, Tearfund partner Leads was able, immediately, to offer relief packs for 9,000 families. A volunteer training programme was organised to care for the bereaved and traumatised. The government asked Leads to set up these programmes in 9 camps.

In Dafur, Tearfund relief teams have been working in the camps providing health education, building toilets and helping malnourished children. They have also been supporting the local churches in Chad, providing tents, toilets and wells for the Sudanese who fled across the border during the crisis.

Tearfund does not just help when disaster strikes, it is aiming to prevent disaster before it happens. There is an ongoing programme to help those in vulnerable places to find better ways to cope with the unexpected. Tearfund led a session at the World Conference on Disaster Reduction in Japan in January entitled 'Turning Policy into Practice'. To quote Alex Joseph from Tearfund partner, the Discipleship Centre in South India,

who has been working with tsunami victims "We work with vulnerable communities in flood prone areas; simple effective measures such as early warning systems, evacuation and rescue training and first aid save hundreds of lives each year".

Tearfund also speaks on behalf of the world's poor, taking Proverbs 31:8 as its Biblical mandate: "Speak up for those who cannot speak up for themselves." It is part of the 'Make poverty history' campaign; the three issues at the heart of the campaign being repaying debt, unjust trading rules and inadequate and ineffective aid. A first step towards this was achieved at last month's G7 meeting (group of 7 wealthy nations), when they pledged to look at cancelling all the debts owed by poor countries to international institutions on a case-by-case basis.

I hope this has given you a 'snap shot' of Tearfund's work. Do pray about their concerns using the pull-out section in the magazine, and have a look at their magazine 'Tear Times' in the Centre. Perhaps you may be encouraged to become an individual supporter!

Sheila Hawley

Supporting vulnerable children and their parents because

families matter

Each year the Bishop of Lichfield's Lent Appeal supports projects within the diocese and overseas (the 2004 Appeal raised around £50,000).

This year's appeal will be supporting vulnerable children and their parents, because *families matter*. A Christian Aid partner, the Copperbelt Health Education Project in Zambia, uses football to teach young people about HIV/AIDS and other health issues and is the overseas beneficiary of this year's appeal. Four projects within the diocese: The Living Springs project at Stourton near Kinver; the Shrewsbury Community Support project at Harlescott; Home Start in Hanley; and Home Start in Lichfield and district will all benefit.

Further information about the projects and a prayer card are available from Shirley Hallam, who also has gift aid envelopes and will collect money and cheques (payable to "Christ Church PCC") as soon as possible after Easter.

“Rule nothing out... imagine wildly... pray always... experiment in everything but sin!” - great advice given to me personally, but it could be a motto for youth work...

The Rock (drop-in café for young people) is off to a strong start, our numbers are small but we have a steady stream of young people coming along including a handful of regulars. I really believe this project is going to grow and strengthen, it's really crucial to our future work with young people as we're getting connections with teenagers that would not normally come near a church!! We've got a great team working on the café but we really need more helpers so some of us can have the odd night off! Please consider seriously if you could come along one Friday night a month, it's always an enjoyable time and you get free access to our snooker table and dance mat!! Contact myself or Lol Barnes if you think you could help.

Please pray that more people will volunteer help, and that we will continue forming positive connections with teenagers.

Paul now has regular assembly dates at Alleyne's High and I also recently took an assembly there. We feel we're building positive, trusting relationships with staff at the school and hope this will be a foundation for future development of work in the school.

Praise God for the opportunities, pray that Paul and myself would be able to connect with and inspire the young people through assemblies and start to stir their minds towards God.

Although a number of pupils at the school have expressed interest in a **Christian Union**, there has been little attendance at a lunchtime meeting and I think the 'traditional' format of a Christian Union may not be right for this particular school. It's time for me to 'imagine wildly' how a Christian Union could look in this setting.

Please pray that I will be guided by God as I imagine and search for the best way forward in setting up a group.

At the time of writing we are one week before the next meeting of the '**Prospects Friends Together Club**' - a Christian group for people of all ages with learning disabilities. We have a great team working together to lead the meetings of this group and we're really excited about the possibility of taking the gospel to people with learning disabilities in a way that they can understand and connect with.

Please pray that there will be continued interest in this group with the right people coming along.

We have so many opportunities to work with young people in our area, I'm excited about it and I hope you are too!!

- Libby Cooper

libby@northstaffsYFC.co.uk

Re:act

An exciting event for children across North Staffordshire!!

Re:act is an event for children aged 7-11 using games, videos, puppets, music, drama and more to find out more about Jesus. The event is run by an enthusiastic and talented team of childrens' workers from North Staffs Youth for Christ and Church Army in association with local churches in Stoke-on-Trent. Re:act has run twice before and has so far proved popular with kids across the city of Stoke-on-Trent. The third Re:act is taking place on Sunday 24th April (3:15 - 5:30pm) at Queen's Theatre in Burslem and this time it is open to children from churches, schools and community-based clubs throughout North Staffordshire.

Christian and non-Christian children are all welcome to this event which is a brilliant chance for them to learn more about God and connect with their Creator in a fun, exciting and relevant way. There will also be a tuck shop and bookstall with resources for both children and adults.

As our benefice heads towards partnership with NSYFC in the appointment of a new youth worker, this is a great chance to see the work that NSYFC do with children and to show our support for their work by bringing some children along to the event. Children can come alone to this event if parents give consent, but groups of children (four or more) must be accompanied by an adult (at least one adult per eight children). Tickets are £3 and can be purchased on the door or booked in advance. Booking forms are available from Libby Cooper (01785 816590) or book directly by calling Jayne or Maxine at NSYFC (01782 255676).

"We really hope you'll join us for what has already proven to be a great time where children can connect with God, be inspired in worship of their Creator and be encouraged in their walk with Him within a loving, safe community. We as a Re:act team are excited about this event and all that it can achieve for God's Kingdom by gathering a large group of children together to worship and grow with God. Please join us."

- Jayne McAvoy, Children's work leader at NSYFC

For more information on this event or other work NSYFC does with children and young people in the area, please contact Libby Cooper.

Eternity (An Ode To North Wales)

Vast mountains towering over me,
Waves crashing on the rocks below.
The sky so blue that meets the sea,
As do the bubbling brooks that flow.

Crisp coldness in the air each day,
Clear stars up in the skies by night.
The pier that juts out in the bay,
It truly is a gorgeous sight.

What better place to praise the Lord,
Breathtaking place of his creation,
He made each river; every ford –
Because of him, the ocean roared.

The Earth is filled with land and sea,
Lush valleys where the mountains tear.
Someone knew just what goes where,
Before us, God was always there.

-mim

Open Meeting: Boater's Christian Fellowship

The *Boater's Christian Fellowship* are travelling along the Trent and Mersey Canal in September. They will start on 10th September from Trent Bridge, Nottingham and end up at China Garden, Stoke on 24th. We are pleased that they can call in at **Stone on Tuesday 20th September**. The venture is described as being '*a flotilla of narrow boats bringing the good news of Jesus Christ to the heart of England and to the hearts of people.*'

We are having an **OPEN MEETING** from **7.30 p.m. on Thursday 17th March** at Christ Church Centre with Revd Peter Atwill from BCF. Please come to find out what we could do together when they stop in Stone. Further information about the organisation is found on the BCF website: www.boaterschristianfellowship.org.uk

The event is for the Stone Deanery and Churches Together in Stone.

Paul Kingman.

Who are those missionaries...?

Baiju Gavit

Baiju is the Bishop of Mumbai (Bombay) and he has a heart for the orphans and street children. In the past he has had a leading part in feeding the under 8 year old children. This is still ongoing. This is his message for this year and it surely applies to us here in Stone as well.

Baiju's message; "This year I had the joy and privilege of visiting the Holy land as a pilgrim. It was truly a moving experience being in the midst of such historically Biblical places, and to acknowledge the reality of life in Christ. I would like to share some practical dimensions of Christ centred life for us to practice.

Should we not make our hearts available for Jesus by getting involved in the lives of the cities children, the hungry and naked, the lonely, the orphans, the homeless, those in prison and under bondages of different evils of this society?

Should we not bring to this city the good news of God's love, peace and joy even as we live in this troublesome world of hatred, greed, lust, impurity and immorality?

Should we not worship Christ by giving Him our precious gifts the worth of Gold etc. It is more blessed to give to this needy world than to revive and enjoy ourselves.

Should we not set aside time to worship Jesus, to praise, adore, exalt and extol this Almighty God who came in human form for each one of us. Lets understand God's will for us by spending more time in prayer, and meditating on His Scripture.

Should we not practice God's spirit of making peace, removing hatred, extending love and reconciliation to people we hate or have differences with?

Should we not become God's messengers of His saving Grace, which is free to all who believe. Let us become slaves to serve, be humble, and poor in spirit, by becoming peacemakers. Lets reach out to the masses of our towns and cities?

Should we not take God's mission seriously by serving, loving, caring and healing humanity?"

May we here in Stone follow Baiju's example

Teenagers: The Parents Survival Guide!
[*goingpublic* in association with *Care for the Family*].

An evening for parents, teachers and youth workers involved with 10-18 year olds. Monday 14th March at Walsall Evangelical Church, from 7.30-10.00 p.m. and cost of £5 (suggested donation).

Speaker: Paul Francis (author of 'Teenagers...the Parents' One Hour Survival Guide' and 'Help Your Kids Stay Drug Free').

Call (029) 2033 7880 or book online www.goingpublic.org.uk

This event is being held at various other locations too.

Many other useful articles, publications and information on other events are available from *Care for the Family*, PO Box 488, Cardiff CF15 7YY (T: 029 2081 0800) www.careforthefamily.org.uk

EASTER FLOWERS

The Flower Guild would be most grateful for donations towards the cost of Easter Flowers. There will be a plate at the back of church on Sunday 13th March and Sunday 20th March.

If you wish to have the name of a loved one entered in the book of remembrance which will be open in the church over Easter, please give this to Barbara Thornicroft or to any other member of the Guild (preferably not later than March). Please print the name in block capitals.

Can you help?

We are recording our morning services for the benefit of Sunday School leaders and others who can't be present for all or part of the time. We need someone to make copies of the tapes. We have all the necessary equipment at church, or you could use your own, we just need man - or woman - power!

If you could help, please contact Jeremy Cooper, Mike Thompson or Phil Tunstall.

Thank you... to all our friends at Christ Church for your concern and prayers for us and our family. Mum's death was very unexpected and my sister and I were sittin by her chair when she told us 'I've had enough' and she just closed her eyes and slipped away so peacefully. What a shock for us, but now Thank God for taking her to his own, she was ready to be with her Lord.

Thank you once again,
Marylyn and Geoff

Ascensiontide Course

We intend to run a short course of studies under the title ‘What on earth are we here for?’ This will be between Easter and Pentecost. It is hoped that we can run study groups in each of the parishes to look further at topics addressed on Sunday mornings. More information will be available next month.

Paul Kingman.

Please pray...

Each week at Christ Church we pray for people living in various streets in our parish. This month we will be praying for people living in;

Saltersford Rise	The Crescent
Rolt Close	End of Granville
Terrace	
Millennium Way	Millers Gate
Cameron Wharf	Harley Drive
Albert Street	Chestnut Grove
Alexandra Street	Edward Street
Arthur Street	Field Terrace
Berkeley Street	Field House Court
	Kent Grove

And don't forget the **prayer breakfast** in the centre:

Saturday 5th March at 8.30 am

