

# Christ Church and People

40p



# January 2020

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## Christ Church



## and People

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

Cover Picture

Bromfield Court

The magazine costs 40p per issue or £4 for a full year

### Subscriptions

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**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

## January 2020

Wed	1		
Thu	2		
Fri	3		
Sat	4	8:30 am	Prayer meeting followed by breakfast
Sun	5	11:00 am 5:00 pm	Joint service. John 1:29-34 Speaker Mike Duff “This is the Son of God” —————Bring and Share Lunch————— Introduction to John
Mon	6		
Tue	7	10:00 am	Coffee before midweek service: service at 10:30
Wed	8	7:30 pm	Standing Committee
Thu	9	10:30 am 11:00 am 1:20 pm	Open prayer time in church St Mary’s Home Christ Church Academy assembly
Fri	10	10:00 am	Bible study group
Sat	11		
Sun	12	9:15 am 4:00 pm	Morning Prayer; John 1:35-42 “Look! The Lamb of God!” Confirmation service with Bishop of Lichfield
Mon	13	9:30 am	Toddler group
Tue	14	10:00 am 12:30 pm 3:00 pm 7:30 pm	Coffee before midweek service; service at 10:30 Pursuit Club St Mary’s Home “Hope Explored” at the vicarage
Wed	15	9:00 am	Christ Church First School assembly

There will be a Fair Trade Goods stall after the service on January 26th

Thu	16	10:30 am 1:20 pm	Open prayer time in church Christ Church Academy assembly
Fri	17	10:00 am	Bible study group
Sat	18	8:30 am	Churches Together prayer meeting + breakfast
Sun	19	9:15 am 6:00 pm	Communion; John 1:43-51 “You are the Son of God” Churches Together service, Walton Community Centre
Mon	20	9:30 am	Toddler group
Tue	21	10:00 am 12:30 pm 7:30 pm	Coffee before midweek service; service at 10:30 Pursuit Club “Hope Explored” at the vicarage
Wed	22	9:00 am 7:30 pm	Christ Church First School assembly PCC Meeting
Thu	23	10:30 am 1:20 pm	Open prayer time in church Christ Church Academy assembly
Fri	24	10:00 am	Bible study group
Sat	25		
Sun	26	9:15 am 6:00 pm	Family service; John 2:1-11 “You have saved the best until now” The Mystery of the Trinity (4)
Mon	27	9:30 am	Toddler group
Tue	28	10:00 am 12:30 pm 7:30 pm	Coffee before midweek service; service at 10:30 Pursuit Club “Hope Explored” at the vicarage
Wed	29	9:00 am	Christ Church First School assembly
Thu	30	10:30 am 1:20 pm	Open prayer time in church Christ Church Academy assembly
Fri	31	10:00 am	Bible study group

## Firm foundations

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What a year 2019 has been with its eleventh hour General Election. Debates over who to vote for generated a lot more heat than light. Many decisions in life had been put on hold or even thrown into turmoil by the storms of politics.

Storms at sea are dangerous. The huge waves crash against all vessels that dare to sail and then pound the coastline. As the wind blows it whips up the sea and forces boats to take evasive action so as to not to be driven off course. Tides surge with extra energy. Destruction is likely and even death can be near. When a storm hits the coast, it feels like the sea is threatening to engulf the land. But, reassuringly, it never does for one good reason: "Our Lord assigned to the sea its limit, so that the waters might not transgress His command" (Prov. 8:29).

As our society sees frequent and rapid changes it may feel overwhelming. Many argue that the church must move with the times, for fear of being left behind or being washed out to sea like a battered boat. If the culture that washes over us is king, then we are to humbly bow the knee and serve its purposes.

The Christian Church doesn't float around on the sea of cultural ideas like a buoy, but stands like a lighthouse. Buoys drift with the waves, rising and falling with the tide. The church, however, is set firmly on the shore, built on the strong foundation of God's unchanging word. There is no drifting, only standing on the truth and shining out to the watching world. It provides revelation, since its light tells us how things really are as the storms rage. It gives inspiration even when we may despair, since the Almighty God oversees our lives. It leads to a dedication in pursuing His good and perfect will, knowing that His eternal kingdom is eternal and what is done to extend it is of lasting value.



May I invite readers of this article to join us in our regular weekly worship? Join us to commit to being guided by the light of Jesus Christ who alone can guide us safe to shore so that we can go home.

*Paul Kingman*

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### **Bishops' Letter**

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,  
We are writing to you ahead of Thursday's General Election to encourage you to pray for all those standing as candidates, and in particular for those who on Friday will find themselves elected as MPs for constituencies in our diocese. In our current political climate, serving in Parliament is a demanding responsibility, and can for some be personally costly or even dangerous. Whatever their or our political allegiance, we believe that those chosen to represent us need and deserve our prayers.

In the days following the election, we ask you to consider both writing to your MP yourself, and also encouraging your people to write, simply to assure him or her of your prayers. We suggest people post a hand-written letter to this effect to [NAME] MP, House of Commons, London SW1A 0AA.

In this season of Advent, our scriptures remind us of the hope of the Kingdom which God offers to his people, through the prophets and in the coming of his Son. It is our prayer that, whatever the outcome of this election, we may together be able to point people towards signs of hope as we seek the common good, in our local communities and in the life of our nation.

Yours,

*The Rt Revd Dr Michael Ipgrave, Bishop of Lichfield*

*The Rt Revd Clive Gregory, Bishop of Wolverhampton*

*The Rt Revd Sarah Bullock, Bishop of Shrewsbury*

*(Position of Bishop of Stafford is currently vacant)*

It was 7 years ago this month when I moved into Stone. It was a dark, drizzly December day and the forecasters were talking about the possibility of some light snow. As a newish widow, I was still struggling to feel any sense of excitement or Christmas cheer.

Then the following day, while walking along the High Street, I couldn't help noticing several shops with hand decorated art work, all portraying the true meaning of Christmas. I slowly started to feel lifted and was surprised to be suddenly overtaken by tears - tears of joy.

We can only wonder how many other people over the last nine Christmas seasons have been touched by what they saw or heard at a Window Opening ceremony. And as the days of December moved on with more windows lit up with the Christmas message of the Baby Jesus, it's hard to think that there wasn't anyone who had not been touched by what they saw.

BUT what about the people who do not know what to believe, people without faith or people trapped into following false gods and the opinions of others. Perhaps they were moved? We'll never know for sure.

But I'm guessing that most of the people who have been involved with putting together the Advent Windows over the years - the organisers, the volunteers, the schools, the businesses and traders - they will have known in some way that they were FOR SURE witnessing God's presence in today's world.



*Anne Smith*

## **Advent Windows - Year 10**

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It was the first rainy advent window this year, but that didn't deter the 30+ people and dog who gathered outside Vantage Point Creative for the unveiling of the sixth advent window.

It was started off with a reading by two pupils from St Dominic's Priory School, telling of Joseph being called to Bethlehem for the census. The window was revealed and we sang the carol '*In the Bleak Midwinter*'. The attractive window display was created by year 8 pupils and depicted scenes and words from the first verse, in detailed miniature paintings.

After admiring the window we were treated to mulled wine and refreshments in the shop. It is wonderful to be part of this event around the town which serves to remind us, the shopkeepers, the window decorators and the passers by, just why we celebrate this season of Christmas. *Estella*

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## **Advent Windows 2019**

The tenth year of the Advent Windows started at Christ Church with a beautiful window designed and created by Oulton Church. We started with a joint service for the whole benefice where we shared communion together. With so many people attending the one service it was difficult to coordinate the service finish time. Despite this we were only about 5 minutes late opening the window. The joint congregation gathered at the centre entrance and joined in joyful voice singing O Come Emmanuel. This year we have a beautiful banner to cover the window before it's great revealing but it still needs a tall person to help unveil it!

The Town Mayor and his consort were in attendance and led the countdown. Then we all went back into the church centre to share a delicious cake with our tea and coffee.

*Jacqueline*

## Advent Windows

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I've been excited for these advent windows for some time, having never spent an advent period in Stone before.

I have not been disappointed. Despite the uninviting weather, many have braved the harsh conditions to sing and pray at 11am as a window depicting an aspect of the Christmas story is revealed, tying into the theme of following the Star.

Although I haven't been able to make it to every opening, I have been blown away by the ones I have attended. It is so lovely to see different stores and community groups in stone coming together to reveal something of the truth of the Christmas story. People's creativity in their window displays stands out as well: one particular notable piece was the creation of a donkey made out of plant pots!

What's also been lovely to see is the different groups of children from the schools in the area come down, and lend their voices to the singing as we open their advent windows. These windows have shown how wonderful it is to have all generations come together at Christmas time.

At this time of year we think about the coming of Jesus into the world, and what his birth means for us. Hopefully these windows have sparked an interest in Jesus in those who have taken part. The journey to Bethlehem would have been an arduous trek for Joseph and a pregnant Mary, and yet Jesus' birth has made all the difference to our world. Hopefully it will remind people throughout Stone of the amazing truth that 'God so loved the world that he gave his only son, so that all who believe may not perish but have eternal life.' (John 3:16). Out of love God sent Jesus to save us from what we've done wrong: and hopefully these advent windows have met the community of Stone with that love.

These windows have been an amazing way to see the community of Stone connect with the real truth of the Christmas story. Do come down to all the ones you can make! I am especially looking forward to the Christmas Eve round up where we will see them all from beginning to end!

*Peter Cuthbert*

	<b>Mission Prayer Diary</b>
	<i>Scripture Union are working with children and young people all over the UK and worldwide. Their new programme is called “Rooted” and aims to develop strong faith foundations</i>
1st	Pray that churches large and small will catch the vision of “Rooted” and be eager to use it.
2nd	Pray for the development of “Rooted” hubs in the Anfield area, in conjunction with the Eden bus project
3rd	“Rooted” retreat days will be happening in Blackpool and Stockport this month
4th	“Rooted” gets its name from Ephesians 3:17-19. Read these verses and use it as a prayer for young people you know
	<i>Stephen and Tabita Bell help run a new church in Zagreb</i>
5th	The new full-time pastor has begun work in the Dubrava church– pray for him as he leads Sunday services in January
6th	Pray for the young people of Dubrava church, who meet monthly on Saturdays
7th	Pray for the new churches in Dugo Sela and Vrbovec– they have no building of their own and meet in houses belonging to church members
8th	Pray for Nada, a mother of nine children, who would like to join the church but has many difficulties in her life. Some of her children have attended the Kids’ Bible Club in Dubrava
	<i>Tear Fund works in many countries to support poor people and show God’s love in practical ways.</i>
9th	Please continue to pray for the Rohingya people, many of whom still live in terrible conditions. It has been over two years since nearly 800,000 people fled from Myanmar into Bangladesh. Pray for safety, provision and hope

10th	Aid and health workers responding to Ebola in the Democratic Republic of Congo are still facing violent attacks. Please pray for God's hand of protection over them. Pray that the attacks will stop, and that those looking to help – including Tearfund staff and partners – will be able to reach people in need.
11th	Locusts have destroyed up to 40 per cent of crops across Pakistan in the country's worst infestation this century. Farming communities have been left without food and a source of income. Pray that they are able to recover from this significant loss.
12th	More than 120,000 toilets have been twinned through Tear-Fund. Have you twinned your toilet yet?
	<i>Tim and Kate Lee helped to set up JigSaw Kids Ministries n Manila (Philippines). They are our CMS Link Missionaries</i>
13th	The Lees are now in Kuala Lumpur. Tim's work is going well and Kate is happy at her new school job, but Grace is finding school in KL very difficult
14th	Thank you for your prayers for Jigsaw's youth ministry and for Solid Rock and Agape youth clubs. Aaron the youth leader says there has been many opportunities to share Jesus with the many young people and they are following this up with prayer and 'Jigsaw Life groups.
15th	Please pray for Mrs Mae who has been paralysed down one side by a stroke: Jogie who is back at work after 3 months of illness, but she is still weak; Alfred awaiting an operation
16th	all 10 children in the 'Accelerated Learning' have against many odds passed their high school exams. Praise God.

	<i>Jonathan and Robinah Beesigomwe live in Gabarone, Botswana. Their organisation is “Bows and Arrows Ministry”, and they work with older schoolchildren and young adults.</i>
17th	Jonathan has been given a plot of land to use for Foundations for Farming training but needs more funding to make this useful
18th	Jonathan has put together a plan to use the 3 hectare plot in FfF training, helping farmers to plant and care for crops in this drought-ridden country. Government is sympathetic but has no cash to hand out to projects. Pray that the project will get started
19th	J&R are planning a schools project focussing on helping victims of child abuse, and also to work with the abusers.
20th	Pray that schools and government will back the project and that it will bring hope to children suffering from abuse
	<i>Mission Aviation Fellowship fly medical personnel, supplies and missionaries to far-flung, often inaccessible settlements</i>
21st	2020 is MAF’s 75th year! Operations began in 1945 in Sudan. Give thanks for hundreds of MAF staff members who have served God in this way over 75 years
22nd	In 2019 we prayed for trial flights to provide healthcare in PNG. Now the “Aerial Health Care” project is up and running in western PNG
23rd	Pray for MAF flights in Angola, bringing in fistula, obstetric and general patients to a hospital in Lubango. Without MAF flights, many more people would die.
24th	Pray for MAF flights world-wide, delivering Bibles containing God’s Good News.

	<i>The Bible Society's Bible-a-month club is delivering Bibles in Eswatini (previously known as Swaziland), an enclave in South Africa. 1.2 million people live in Eswatini</i>
25th	Eswatini has been devastated by HIV and 24% of children are orphans. Pray that God's Word may help them
26th	Pray for those receiving spiritual support and trauma healing
27th	Thank God for the sign language videos which are being used to teach Bible stories to deaf children like Thandolwethu
28th	Pray that Bible translations into sign language will transform the lives of "hearers" among the deaf community
	<i>Ralph and Dagmar Baron help to run the Murree Christian School in Northern Pakistan. They sent prayer requests</i>
29th	In terms of praise and prayer, we are thankful that our student numbers have started to grow; children of national Christian full-time workers are increasingly joining our school.
30th	We need men and women, young or old, who would value the opportunity to disciple and mentor teenagers in a boarding situation, sharing life with our teens and shaping them for future service and leadership.
31st	Mircea Peston is working in Romania among poor communities, especially gypsies. Pray for him and the 21 small churches of Maranatha Ministries

## Hope Explored

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There are few emotions more powerful than hope. It's a spark inside you that brings a smile to your lips; a light that shows on your face; a feeling that lifts your head and pulls you forward. Hope is what keeps us alive. But these days it hope often feels hard to come by. Yet real hope is what the Christian faith claims to offer: a joyful expectation for the future, based on true events in the past, which changes everything about my present.

**Hope Explored** is a new three-week discipleship course developed by *Christianity Explored Ministries*. It looks at the four titles that are found in Isaiah 9—Mighty God, Prince of Peace, Everlasting Father and Wonderful Counsellor—before showing how these were fulfilled in Jesus' life, death and resurrection. It shows the Bible's story of "promise and fulfilment" in history, and invites us to put our hope in the promises of Jesus that are yet to be fulfilled.

Each week's topic touches on a real "hope" that we're all looking for, and which Jesus meets. The three sessions being:

- Session 1: Hope / Mighty God.
- Session 2: Peace / Prince of Peace.
- Session 3: Purpose / Everlasting Father and Wonderful Counsellor.

Each session will involve:

- A short, 5 minute introduction to the theme.
- An opening discussion question.
- A 10-15 minute Bible talk on video.
- A simple Bible study in Luke's Gospel.

This will be held at The Vicarage, Bromfield Court, Stone ST15 8ED from 7.30-9.00 p.m. on Tuesday 14th, 21st and 28th January 2020.

RSVP by Sunday 12th February to me for the purpose of having enough study guides.

Thanks

*Paul Kingman*

## Roger writes about the time he really put his foot in it

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My father was a disciplinarian of few words, and I always tried to heed his sharp commands. However underneath Dad's gruff exterior was a sensitive and loving man. When walking together he would sometimes say "Watch where you are putting your feet, Son," and then with a sinister whisper, as if the matter was almost unspeakable he would add ...."Dog muck".

One day, out with my mates on our bikes, I jumped off and put my foot right in the middle of a large pile! In the desperate attempt to clean my shoe, I transferred some to the other shoe. Bruce and Richard rode off, laughing. I jumped back on my bike to follow them, transferring the offending material onto the pedals of my bike.

Dad had just finished mowing the lawn when I arrived home and of course he noticed the unwelcome addition to my shoes and bike. I expected a good telling off probably starting with the phrase "How many times have I told you...." Instead he just said "Wait here". I was rooted to the spot.

He returned with a bucket of very hot water, disinfectant and cleaning materials. Without a word he knelt down and cleaned my shoes and the bike until they were pristine again. Then he smiled and walked away, leaving me to put my bike in the shed.

Had he told me off, I would probably have forgotten this moment in my childhood. It was his kind silent action that made it so memorable.

Our loving Heavenly Father constantly warns us about the ways we can go wrong in our lives. But when we do get it wrong, and "put our foot in it" (to say the least!) our Heavenly Father does what my dad did for me, he gets rid of the mess.

*(continued)*

## Roger put his foot in it (cont)

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Paul writes to readers who have not been sinless in the past. (I Cor 6:11) *"But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God".* (I Cor 6:11)

So when we step into trouble we should remember what the writer to the Hebrews reminds us to do. *"let us draw near to God with a sincere heart and with the full assurance that faith brings, having our hearts sprinkled to cleanse us from a guilty conscience and having our bodies washed with pure water".*

I will never forget what my dad did for me that day, and as a result I was even more careful of where I stepped in the future! As I think about what God, our Heavenly Father, did for us through Jesus, I am encouraged to walk as carefully as I can in His clean ways.

*Roger*

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## Sunday 5th January

Our visiting preacher for Sunday 5th January is Rev Canon Mike Duff who works for CPAS (one of the home mission agencies who we support). He will be kicking off our new Spring series for the mornings in the Gospel of John.

### Readers, Home group leaders and SS teachers

I thought that I'd experiment with holding a special introduction to John's Gospel to give more background enable us to have a better feel for the book as a whole. Some will be preaching and teaching John in the weeks to come. This will be on Sunday 5th January from 4.45p.m. for a cuppa and then from 5pm take a look at the whole book. Venue: Christ Church Centre.

So, I hope that you are available and that it will be helpful to you in your own preparation.

*Thanks, Paul*

## Churches Together in Stone

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### Week of Prayer for Christian Unity

Saturday 18th to Friday 24th January 2020

**Saturday 18th** Christ Church at 8:30am  
Ecumenical Prayer Meeting followed by Breakfast

**Sunday 19th** 6:00pm in Walton Community Centre  
United Service Hosted by St Johns Church

**Monday 20th** 12 Noon St Saviour's Church, Aston  
Short act of worship together followed by simple lunch

**Tuesday 21st** 10:00 am Christ Church  
Coffee followed at 10.30am by Holy Communion

**Wednesday 22nd** 7:30 pm St Dominic's Church  
"Call to Kindness" Worship

**Thursday 23rd** 10:30 am St Michael's Church  
Holy Communion followed by Coffee

**Thursday 23rd** 2:00 pm Walton Community Centre  
CAMEO (come and meet each other) 2pm to 4pm  
Tea, Coffee and Cakes

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### Jigsaw Kids' Ministries has a New Director

Tim Lee writes: 'Jigsaw's employment vision is for God to raise up His people for the work and leadership of Jigsaw from within Jigsaw. However, we kind of forgot this as we were praying and looking for a new Jigsaw Director who was an experienced, trained, social worker/director, who could develop programs and implement a monitoring strategy etc. But, through prayers and revelations God clearly said NO I don't need a program, strategy person to lead Jigsaw I need a committed spiritual leader. A shepherd leader dedicated to lead Jigsaw by fixing their eyes and heart on me, a person who has integrity, walks with Jesus and has immense faith and love for me.'

**Pastor Jolly** is 'a person who knows Jigsaw inside out, a spiritual leader dedicated to be the long term leadership of Jigsaw and God's person was right in front of our eyes...

God has been raising Jolly up into this position for many years and now Jigsaw is looking to plan training, mentoring and nurture for Jolly to grow into this very important role that God has given him. It is so exciting, thank you so much for your prayers which released God's revelation and wisdom to know God's clear guidance for Pastor Jolly to become Director of Jigsaw. Praise God.'

*Lee Family News – extracted from an update received in December 2019*

Kate Lee writes: 'Thank you so much for your continued love and prayers for our family. Things are still very difficult but we know that God is working in all of our lives to renew us and build us up in His spirit and we really do praise God for how he works in all circumstances for the good of those who love him. Grace continues to be schooled at home by Tim which is a temporary solution while we investigate other schools and educational options. Life continues to be challenging for her on a day to day basis but in the last week God has begun to open doors as Grace had her first maths tuition session on Monday with a teacher from my school and really loved it and then on Friday she went with Tim to spend some time with a young mum (whose husband works at the school) who will do cooking and sewing with her each week. These small steps give us hope that Grace is feeling more confident to branch out of the family unit. However, the big question of her schooling dominates as it seems impossible for there to be a solution, so please pray that God will reveal his plans for schooling soon.

God is answering our prayers for a community and friendships to grow for our family. Firstly, a teaching assistant's son (from my school) was ill in hospital so I offered to look after her 2 girls for the day. They came to our house and played and although Grace found this hard we have now started a friendship with this family. We are also beginning to get to know a young family that live in our apartment block.

James' football is building relationships in the church and Tim has joined the 'Sparklers' toddler church Sunday school group as they were needing helpers and is making connections there.

Rebekah continues to enjoy university life and spends her weekends either taking part in sailing races, going to church or visiting FACT. She is doing well in her studies and somehow seems to fit in her work in amongst her busy social life.

God is working mightily with Tim's work with Jigsaw, I am building good relationships at school and James is now known in KL as either, 'Coach James' or 'The' James Lee, the footballer. (we are now famous for being His parents.) Thank you everyone for all your prayers, support and encouragement, they bring such love and power to our lives, ministry and mission here in Malaysia.

Thank you all so much. *Kate'*

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## **Goodbye from Bishop Geoff**

The Bishop of Stafford, the Rt Revd Geoff Annas, and his wife Ann said goodbye to the diocese by celebrating unsung work by local churches. The couple came to the Diocese of Lichfield in 2010 to join the episcopal team led by the Bishop of Lichfield. As Area Bishop of Stafford, Bishop Geoff has overseen a region that includes Stoke-on-Trent, Stafford, Newcastle-under-Lyme, Burton-on-Trent and many rural communities across North Staffordshire. He announced in July that he was to leave shortly before his 66<sup>th</sup> birthday and that he and Ann would return to live in Southampton, where he previously served, close to their family.

A packed Stoke Minster hosted an emotional and uplifting 'Good News from Staffordshire' service yesterday which featured 12 short first-hand stories of work across the Stafford episcopal area, including a school uniform project in Chell, a foodbank in rural Waterhouses, links between Barlaston Church and Kenya and the Night Church outreach to clubbers in Hanley.

Bishop Geoff said: "We have heard a dozen stories from Churches in every one of the Deaneries across North and East Staffordshire – and we have listed over 30 other examples in our Worship Booklet. These are Good News stories that reminds us that most of our churches are vibrant worshipping communities that are confident in living out what Jesus has taught us and love the Community they serve.

"As a diocese we have a clear vision and our Direction of Travel is a journey that will take us much further as we focus on the key areas of discipleship, vocation and evangelism. Ann and I have enjoyed being part of this journey thus far but now believe it is right to step aside and allow a new Bishop to lead this episcopal area into the new decade.

The Bishop of Lichfield, the Rt Revd Dr Michael Igrave, praised Bishop Geoff's "passion, wisdom and kindness."

"There's something about Bishop Geoff that always reaches out to the lonely, that's patient with the slow and is always ready to give somebody a second chance," he added.

The Lord-Lieutenant of Stafford Ian Dudson highlighted Bishop Geoff's contribution to "communities and civic structures" including his work to tackle the challenges and causes of poverty in Stoke-on-Trent as Chair of its Hardship Commission along with his commitment to Staffordshire's rural community.

After the event, Bishop Geoff said: "It was a wonderful day and we were overwhelmed by the number of people who filled Stoke Minster. We are also grateful for the many cards and emails we have received wishing us well for the future. The gifts from individuals, parishes and of course the wider diocese have made both Ann and I feel very humbled as it has been a pleasure to serve in this exciting diocese and we have already felt rewarded by the warmth and love that you have shown us.

"As we prepare to begin a new chapter in our lives we wish you all well and will continue to pray for you all. With our thanks, our love and every blessing,

*+Geoff and Ann."*

Dave and Enid would like to thank everyone for their practical help and kind wishes since Elsie died.

Elsie (born Elsie Holden) came to know Jesus as her Lord while growing up in Blackburn. By the end of the Second World War she had left school and was working as a clerk in Blackburn Town Hall. Her desire was to be a nurse and she trained and then worked at Blackburn Royal Infirmary. She was known for her calmness under pressure and when a careless surgeon demanded to know where his scalpel was, she simply said "In my foot".

Elsie met and married Jack at the Saviour Church, Blackburn, and they went to live in Chadderton (Oldham) where he was a curate, and then to Ardwick (central Manchester). Here she supported church work in many ways, providing Sunday meals for several who stayed all day at church, and her chocolate cake was renowned. In fact, at different times, two church workers came to live at the rectory and were looked after and fed. Elsie ran the Women's Fellowship and led the meetings. Sunday evening meetings for young people were held in the Rectory, on one occasion 99 people were in the front room for the meeting, also generating a lot of work and washing-up. In 1969 they moved to Mosley Common, on the outskirts of Manchester, and with her two boys growing up, she was able to work as a doctor's receptionist.

After retirement, Jack and Elsie moved to Kendal and then latterly to Stone. Even in The Chimes Care Home during her last two years, they maintained a regular prayer ministry every morning and sometimes a carer would join them for a few minutes. She will be missed greatly but we rejoice that she has gone to a better place.

Here is a prayer that Elsie kept in her purse:-

Help me to live this day Quietly, Easily,  
To lean on Thy great strength  
Trustfully, Restfully,  
To await the unfolding of Thy will  
Patiently, Serenely, To meet others  
Peacefully, Joyously, To face tomorrow  
Confidently, Courageously