

Christ Church and People



August 2020

IN THIS ISSUE

Church services	3
The open (faced) church	4, 5
Ralph and Dagmar Baron	5-6
Roger wonders about wonder	7
Tearfund	8
Mission Prayer Diary	9-12
In church again	13
A wet Thursday in 1933	14
We will go into the house of the Lord	15-17
Jigsaw at Home	17-18
Church website	19
Rotas, Roads for prayer	20

Christ Church



and People

Please get your contributions for the September magazine to us by 15th August

Cover Picture
Corner of King's
Avenue

PARISH DIRECTORY

CHURCH SCHOOLS

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

Headteacher Mrs A. Graham BA(Hons) NPQH 01785 336545

Christ Church Academy, Old Road

Principal: Mr C. Wright MAEd 01785 334900

Christ Church on the Internet

Parish website	www.christchurchstone.org
Parish office email	office@christchurchstone.org
Magazine contributions	christchurch_mag@yahoo.co.uk

Church Services (by Zoom) 10:30 am each Sunday

July 26th	1 Pet 1v10-12: Privileged
Aug 2nd	I Pet 1v13-2v3: Be holy.
Aug 9th	I Pet 2v4-12: Rock and roll.
Aug 16th	I Pet 2v13-25: Live as God's servants.
Aug 23rd	I Pet 3v1-12: Harmony at home and away.
Aug 30th	I Pet 3v13-22: Be prepared to answer.
Sept 6th	I Pet 4v1-11: Living for God.

Other activities will be announced by email

The open (faced) church

"I hear you're reopening the church?"

"So, it's back to having services then?"

The easing of the lockdown in July has led to doors being unbolted to reinstate public worship in our buildings. But the church did not take a break. It just changed how it met.

The shift was to hold services on conference call and/or to through social media. This involved the embracing of more technology than usual, although many churches had been doing this for some time. I'm thankful to the local technical talent that has enabled our benefice to not miss a Sunday except when all Britain was blanked out!

It has increased our awareness of interest. The technology that enabled congregations to continue to meet has also turned us to be more outward facing. The restrictions we've worked around opened the window for many to watch and listen. So, for those who had to work they can tune in another time; for the frail it provided a new and welcome opportunity to reconnect; for those who've been hesitant to turn up at a building it's been a look-see. My hope is that in the coming months people will move from looking to discovery.



This is the pattern seen when people met Jesus tentatively at first: 'Now there was a man of the Pharisees named Nicodemus, a member of the Jewish ruling council. He came to see Jesus at night' (John 3v1).

(continued)

The open (faced) church

The curiosity about Jesus the teacher from God resulted in a visit 'at night' to avoid being too public. But it didn't end there. Nicodemus heard about how we must be born again – we need new spiritual birth – if we are to see the Kingdom of God. Jesus later met a woman all alone by a well. She had an empty life. As a Samaritan her people were at odds with the Jews, although both groups expected the coming of the Messiah. Jesus transforms her life when he said: 'I who speak to you am he' (John 4v26). A royal official was desperately anxious for his dying son and begged Jesus for help: 'You may go. Your son will live' (John 4v50). Back home he learnt that his son recovered at the exact hour he'd met Jesus – 'so he and all his household believed' (v53).

Three different people. All three heard from Jesus more than they'd expected. We hope that being more open (faced) church will help you to move from looking to discovery.

Paul Kingman

Latest news from Ralph and Dagmar Baron – *(received 25th June 2020)*

After several weeks of frustrating delays due to 'lockdown' in Pakistan, they arrived back in England on 22nd April. Working from an airB&B in Brighton, they have completed the school year using the internet, including end of year exams and reports. Their last task for the term was a 'virtual' graduation service to be held on June 29th, for 5 final-year students. The new, and final, MCS school year, is due to start on 12th August for a limited number of older students, and will begin with online teaching for at least the first 4-5 weeks. Ralph and Dagmar hope to be able to return to Pakistan in early-mid September, with the 9 or 10 students back in 'normal' classes and boarding life. They are hoping to be able to form a Covid-19 secure 'bubble' at the school, with 4-5 members of staff and the students (and one cat!) to enable them to remain isolated from the rest of the population.

(continued)

In mid-July they are hoping to move in with their daughter and son-in-law, who live near Brighton, until they are able to return to Pakistan - or find out that is not going to be possible to reopen the school.

Ralph & Dagmar ask for prayer for:

1. Clarity about Ralph's health. He has lost some weight and has struggled with severe coughing on and off for over a year. An x-ray suggested lung cancer and we had an anxious 3 weeks until the results of a CT scan showed no sign of a tumour but that he had pneumonia or TB. He is feeling fine now and the cough is a lot better, but it would be good to get a clear diagnosis. He speaks to the consultant again on Monday 29th and may have more tests after that as so far TB has not been detected despite tests.

2. People of Pakistan, where Covid-19 is running free and the health services are unable to cope. July and August could be even more difficult months. Please pray for the authorities to have wisdom and for our Interserve and Murree Christian School (MCS) friends and colleagues who are still there; many of whom are in their 60s or even 70s.

3. The 5 school graduates hoping to start university in Canada, UK, Australia, Italy and Korea! Also for the younger students having to find new schools in uncertain times. And for a good start online for those of us continuing to teach and study online and complete GCSE and A Level courses.

4. Ralph's visa has been granted in Pakistan and normally we take his passport to an office there to have it stamped in. Pray that we will find a way to have it processed in the UK.

5. Last but not least, we are also taking the opportunity to think and pray about our next area of service. We are considering looking for a new ministry opportunity in Pakistan or returning to the UK and working with a focus on diaspora or migrant peoples here. Interserve has about 70 people involved in such ministry across Britain and we are exploring whether that is where the Lord is leading for September 2021 onwards.

6. Give thanks that Dagmar's mother, aged 85, is doing well in her nursing home in Herefordshire.

Roger wonders about wonder

In December 1991, Sally and I were standing in the foothills of New Zealand's Southern Alps, relaxing after a three month teaching tour. The midsummer night was still, and perfectly clear as we gazed up at the incredible starlit sky.

The Milky Way looked like a cosmic bridal veil shimmering across the sky. We were filled with wonder. "O Lord, our God, how majestic is your name in all the earth! You have set your glory in the heavens. (Psalm 8:1)

Moments of wonder often take us by surprise. They have the power to take us out of ourselves, and beyond ourselves and our limited understanding. Whether it is the vastness of the universe, or the beautiful complex delicacy of a dragon fly's wings, we are stopped in our tracks and for a precious few moments nothing else is important.

But wonder also raises profound questions. As we look at the heavens we wonder "where does it end... and, if it does, what is beyond it!?" A beautiful flower or insect in our hand can bring us face to face with questions about how they evolved and why we are so moved by them.

Isaiah prophesied about a child who would be called "wonderful" A great word at the start of a great passage (Isaiah 9:1-7). The child to be born, would indeed be wonderful...full of wonder....filling us with wonder,...stopping us in our tracks and taking us beyond ourselves.

There will always be questions which no one can answer absolutely. But there is something we can do...Like Sally and I on that momentous evening in New Zealand, we can be still and gaze in silence and awe, and experience the infinite love, power and beauty of God who created all things. "Be still and know that I am God" (Psalm 46:10).

Perhaps that's true wonder.

Roger

Tearfund

'Following Jesus where the need is greatest' - during the Coronavirus Pandemic

Brazil is the epicentre of the virus in S America with 1.6 million cases. Half the population have no sewage collection. In the city of Manaus, partners have delivered food & hygiene kits to 400 families living in urban slums.

In remote rural areas, they have been giving advice to farmers to keep them going during the pandemic

DRC (Democratic Republic of Congo) In DRC it is difficult to access public health information. Tearfund have launched a campaign 'Nakata Coronavirus' (I refuse Corona) to prevent the spread of the virus. So far prevention & prayer messages have been accessed by 200,000 people on social media & tens of thousands more on WhatsApp & radio. Church partners have also been spreading the message in their communities.

South Sudan has many problems – bitter conflict, flooding, water borne diseases, famine, & now Covid. 1.3 million children under 5 are suffering from malnutrition.

Tearfund are the only aid agency running a feeding programme in 3 counties.

Yemen It is estimated that there are 1 million infections in the country. 24 million people need urgent aid – safe water, sanitation & food. They also need seed & tools to grow their own vegetables. There are Emergency Appeals for Coronavirus, also South Sudan & Yemen. More information on the Tearfund website (www.tearfund.org)

Please Pray

For all people around the world

- who are facing fear, illness or loss at this time.
- who are worrying about where their next meal is coming from & whether they will have enough to eat.
- to have good sanitation & the accurate information to help them stay safe.
- and for world leaders to increase their support to tackle the virus & save lives.

Give Thanks

Bless, encourage & protect all Tearfund partners & local churches at this time, as they work on the front line to help the most vulnerable.

Mission Prayer Diary	
	<i>Scripture Union—Pray for Summer Online</i>
1st	Camps have been cancelled this summer but work continues online. Sutton on Sea virtual Beach Mission begins today!
2nd	Port St Mary Mission begins today!
3rd	Nefyn Mission begins today!
4th	All online activities will be free of charge to young people. Pray that these will reach as many young people as possible. Each mission runs for 7 days. As “campers” will not be paying any money, we are asked to consider contributing towards costs as well as praying
	<i>Stephen and Tabita Bell are planting churches in Croatia</i>
5th	Pray for new pastor Teofil as he takes over running of the Dubrava church. The church building has been completed after several years work and the congregation is now paying the wages of the new pastor. These are the signs that Stephen and Tabita can move to a new work in Varaždin
6th	Stephen, Tabita and Benjamin will come to Capernwray Bible College (Lancashire) in September. We pray that Bible College activities will be possible this year despite the pandemic
7th	Varaždin – We are moving Sept 2021 to this town 50 miles north of Zagreb and we already have a great relationship with Pastor Jonatan (Tabita's cousin)
8th	There are 2 small churchplants in Varaždin and the aim is to open 3 other towns for the Gospel
	<i>The Salvation Army is working to help people at this difficult time</i>
9th	Our foodbanks are expanding and we are using our local networks to reach people who can no longer feed themselves or their families and are cut off from other sources of help.

10th	We are opening our buildings to become safe night shelters for homeless people, with space for healthy separation. (the government may end their scheme using empty hotels)
11th	Homeless day centres are now offering doorstep health advice and offering food parcels while night time soup runs are delivering hot food at a safe distance from our emergency response vehicles.
12th	At a time when thousands have lost their job overnight, our Employability service, Employment Plus continues to offer telephone and online support. Our Debt Advice Service is helping people work out how to pay their next bill.
	<i>Our CMS Link Missionaries Tim and Kate Lee helped to set up JigSaw Kids Ministries in Manila (Philippines).</i>
13th	Please especially pray for Jigsaw's new initiative with 60 street and rubbish collecting families. Jigsaw is giving each family a food package each week which is truly good news for each of them as well as seeking to build relationships and develop further initiatives for these extremely poor, abused and isolated families.
14th	Please pray for Jigsaw staff as they continue to work in high risk covid19 communities; for their safety and protection from the virus and for God's power to be with them to undertake all that he has for them to do in mighty ways.
15th	Please Pray for Ramil Bongolto a young man from Jigsaw's youth ministry who was imprisoned because he was not wearing a facemask. We heard that he will be imprisoned for 6 months
16th	Please pray for the family of Michelle who died this month of TB leaving her 5 week old baby. Please pray for peace for the family and a secure and loving future for baby Keith.

	<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	A farming project has begun, multiplying seed of Safflower. Petals have been harvested for tea. Pray for this project as 2 Hectares of seed planting was lost in the drought
18th	Pray that school work will be possible now that Lockdown has ended in Gabarone. The country has so far been spared the worst of the virus with only a single death.
19th	Pray for the new pastor in Jonathan’s local church, as the church tries to reach people now that churches are open, but with stringent precautions
20th	Over 350 elephants have been found dead in the Okavanga delta. It seems that the cause was not poaching but a mysterious illness. Coronavirus has not been ruled out but is considered unlikely
	<i>Mission Aviation Fellowship fly medical personnel, supplies and missionaries to far-flung, often inaccessible settlements</i>
21st	Coronavirus lockdowns have made the delivery of medical supplies difficult. In Bagladesh MAF is flying doctors in and out of remote areas
22nd	In Timor-Laste, MAF is delivering medical supplies. 430 kg of anti-bacterial soap supplied by Oxfam was delivered
23rd	Papua New Guinea has not had many virus cases but MAF are on standby to support Aerial Health Patrols by delivering doctors and medical supplies
24th	MAF operations have closed down in Mongolia after 19 years of service. While partly due to high costs, MAF has contributed to the establishment of over 600 churches which are now self-sufficient so the work has been a success

	<i>The Bible Society's Bible-a-month club is delivering Bible resources in the Niger</i>
25th	Bible work in Niger is very tough. The population is 95% Muslim and there have been threats to churches from Islamic extremists
26th	Communities have now been hit by Coronavirus
27th	Pray for God's protection for Bible Society staff in Niger, that they will remain healthy and safe
28th	Bible-a-Month club contributions are keeping open the Bible Society office and bookshop, giving access to Bibles and teaching materials in local languages
	<i>Tearfund works with poor people across the world, combining the Gospel with practical help.</i>
29th	Heavy rainfall has led to flooding and landslides across Nepal. At the time of writing, fifty-four people have lost their lives, and many are still reported missing. Pray comfort over people who are mourning, and that those who are missing will be found safe
30th	Hundreds of people have lost their lives over the last few weeks due to violence and protests across Ethiopia. The internet has been switched off and methods of communication remain limited. Pray for the safety of the communities we serve
31st	Tearfund's partner, Anglican Church Diocese of Rift Valley, identified villages in greatest need and started to work with them to install solar panels – helping people lift themselves out of energy poverty... and out of poverty full stop.

In Church again

A Communion service took place in Christ Church (the building) on 19th July; church again, but not as we know it. No music, no singing, and wide spacing of the congregation according to ticks and crosses pasted on the pews.



About 18 of us were present, "filling" most of the central two blocks of pews. We are still allowed to pray and to have a Bible reading, but Communion wine is still forbidden. Although the government has encouraged us to "get on with" any activities as quickly as possible, Paul managed to fit in a short talk. We entered through the back door of the church and left through the new doors at the front. Coffee and biscuits needless to say are also forbidden.

Apparently the capacity is 36 under this system, though I think that people from the same household are allowed to sit closer together which would increase the capacity.

It was good to see fellow church members again without using a webcam, and also to see the work that has been done on the garden.

Dave Bell

A wet Thursday in 1933

Garden Fete & American Tea. Christ Church, June 22

If I were to describe this event in my best journalistic style, I should say that " a most successful Garden Party was held in the Vicarage on June 22nd, which, in spite of the thundery weather, raised an excellent total of £33 for the Organ Repair Fund." In the more exact—if vulgar—rendering of colloquial speech, I should say that it was literally a complete " wash-out." To mention the bare fact that a thunderstorm broke over Stone about 3-15 p.m. is to give an utterly inadequate idea of what really took place. There was a deluge of rain and the " bottles of heaven " emptied themselves over us without a moment's relief for about four hours.

All the preparations which had been made in the Vicarage Garden were abandoned at the last minute. The hardy adventurers who presented themselves at the gate were huddled into the house for a picnic tea in dining-room, study, kitchen and hall. The contents of the stalls were carried laboriously to the Parish Room, where an impromptu programme was provided by the Guides and Brownies and a Sale took place. To cut a long story short, everyone made the best of a bad job. It speaks volumes for the energy and keenness of the workers that so large a sum was raised, and had it not been for the weather at least another £25 to £30 might well have resulted. It was a great disappointment that we were unable to enjoy the Maypole Dance by the Stonefield Infants as had been originally intended.

In conclusion, we must express our thanks to all the helpers, and to those who gave so liberally to stock the stalls. Possibly some of our friends who were unable to join us will send in some contribution to compensate us for their disappointment and ours.

I was glad when they said unto me, 'We will go into the house of the Lord'.

The Psalmist's words have rung poignantly in my ears over the last weeks, as we have been unable to enter our churches to worship together. At the time I am writing (9th July), the timetable for our re-entry into church buildings is not yet clear, as it will be dependent on the government's gradual easing of restrictions, which in turn is contingent upon the effectiveness of those restrictions in containing the spread of the coronavirus. We do know, though, that we will have to move through different phases in taking up again the use of our churches, that many precautions will need to be taken to ensure that our churches are safe and clean, and that some limitations (on singing, on numbers, on distancing) will remain in place.

Nevertheless, there will be a time when 'our feet shall stand within the gates' of our churches together, and I look forward to that with eager anticipation. The closure of our buildings has been the right decision to help protect the common good of our society's health, but it has not been easy: we have been missing these places we love, hallowed by the prayers of generations; we have been missing the real fellowship of one another, fellow members of the body of Christ; and we have been missing sharing together in that body and blood in communion. When we meet again we will indeed be glad; and it will be for our churches collectively a time of restoration, a return from exile.

In the Bible, times of exile are of course full of longing for restoration; but they are also times of re-imagination. God's people during their years in Babylon learned so much more about the purposes of their God that they were able to shape their life in a new way when they returned to Jerusalem. And our own, much shorter, exile has been a time of re-imagination for us too. We have learned new ways of being together in virtual reality; we have found new patterns of worship; we have discovered in a new way what it means to serve our communities. *(continued)*

We will go into the house of the Lord

While our buildings have been closed, our churches have been very much alive and learning. And it is vital that we should take that new learning into our restored life together as we re-enter our churches. Here are a few points of learning, taken from an evangelical website, which I have found helpful. The writer suggests that in our experience of this lockdown, God has been training us:

- as we are unable to gather physically as churches, to appreciate the vital importance of meeting together;
- as we feel our individual weakness and vulnerability, to repent of our self-dependence;
- as the vulnerable are in self-isolation for a long period, to care for others and put their needs ahead of our own; as we find ourselves restricted in our homes and communities, to gain a renewed evangelistic heart for our neighbours;
- if we find ourselves confined at home with family, to deepen our relationships;
- as we find ourselves unable to do many of the things we have taken for granted, to value what really matters in life; as we find ourselves threatened by something affecting the whole of society, to value good government;
- as we find ourselves with time on our hands, to regain a habit of daily prayer and bible reading;
- as we find ourselves in awe of healthcare workers and those performing essential jobs, to free us from our adulation of over-paid celebrities and sports stars;
- as we feel the fear of death and frailty of life, to appreciate the gospel hope of resurrection with joyful confidence in the future that awaits us;
- as we sense that the lock-down is going to last longer than we first imagined, to value the virtues of patience and long-suffering;
- as we begin to understand the devastating impact that the virus will have in less developed countries, to regain our passion for world mission and to care for our poorer brothers and sisters around the world. *(continued)*

These are things for us to take to heart in our own individual lives and in our local churches. We will also need to shape new ways of planning our mission and ministry at a diocesan and at a national level, and work is already beginning on that. In all that we do, as individuals or as churches, we will need to hold together the twin themes of restoration and re-imagination. So we pray, in the words of the eucharistic prayer for Lent that we were using at the beginning of all this, that through a pilgrimage of prayer and discipline we may grow in grace and learn to be your people once again.

+Michael, Bishop of Lichfield

Jigsaw at Home

Tim & Kate Lee have recently started monthly Zoom Prayer meetings with Jigsaw leaders in Manila and supporters here in the UK. Before each meeting Tim sends out a Prayer Letter. The July letter included encouraging news about the ways in which Jigsaw has been enabled to work during 'lockdown'.

In places like Batasan slum area, which has been under severe lockdown for 2 months, with no-one being allowed in or out of the area, the news is encouraging. Over the last two weeks virus numbers have significantly gone down and much of the huge slum areas have been opened up. Jigsaw has visited the area. There is much grief and suffering but people are relieved that the area is open. The dedicated and hard-working Jigsaw team have now prepared and delivered food package relief parcels to 300 families in most need in Batasan. Some specific streets are still locked down so not all families can be reached as yet.

(continued)

Jigsaw at Home

In addition to supplying thousands of food parcels and delivering oxygen cylinders to families living in the slum areas of Manila, Jigsaw has developed several 'Jigsaw at Home' initiatives, including:

- Kids and youth club activity packs and literacy skills booklets
- Literacy classes at home
- Education sponsorship
- Baby and infant nutrition
- Home therapy for children with disabilities
- Weekly food packages for people living on the street and scavenging rubbish heaps

More than 1000 of the poorest children and young people, in more than 700 households, have been given a 'Jigsaw at Home' pack containing a booklet, pencils, pens, scissors, crayons and glue. Each week they receive another pack with bible stories, maths and writing challenges, a craft kit, and a snack. All of which costs money and takes time to prepare and distribute. This wonderful, very dedicated team of Jigsaw workers, led by Pastor Jolly and Jenalyn, need ongoing financial support, as well as our prayers.

With the easing of lockdown Tim and family have been able to go out more, and have booked a holiday, in the Philippines, for later this month. However, there are still major challenges for them; they are unsure of what to do next year. Grace is still very unhappy; James is hoping to work with the local church for a year (Covid permitting) before starting university; Rebekah is due to return to the UK in August after being locked-down in Germany since March. Tim & Kate won't be allowed to return to Kuala Lumpur if they travel to the UK and Rebekah can't visit them.

Tim writes: 'We are amazed by what God is doing and have never seen ministries so relevant and so significant as those which God is building and growing right now' in answer to your prayers. Please continue to pray for the amazing Jigsaw team workers on the frontline in Manila, and for God's guidance and peace of mind for the Lee family.

There is a lot on the church website! But where to find it? Here are some links. If you are reading the website version of the magazine, you can click on these links. First, the website home page!

<http://christchurchstone.org/>

Here you will find "Ebenezer" for children

<http://christchurchstone.org/ebenezer/>

Next, Latest news

<http://christchurchstone.org/latest-news/>

Video services that have been recorded

<http://christchurchstone.org/video-services/>

Facebook page

<https://www.facebook.com/ChristChurchStone/>

Twitter

[@CChurchStone](https://twitter.com/CChurchStone)

Where to find the magazine

<http://christchurchstone.org/magazines-2020/>

Paul's series on prayer

<http://christchurchstone.org/how-to-pray-video-series/>

Since this is an internet magazine, names, addresses and telephone numbers have been omitted

FLOWER ROTA

2nd August	Miss B. Sutcliffe
9th August	Mrs B. Boote
16th August	Mrs D. Wilson
23rd August	Mrs M. Hutchinson
30th August	Mrs V. Ledward

ROADS FOR PRAYER

2nd August
 Stonefield Court
 Stonefield Square
 Victor Street
 Victoria Street

9th August
 Whitebridge Lane
 Alma Street
 Bromfield Court
 Dominic Court



16th August
 Nicholls Lane
 Old Road
 Old Road Close
 Oulton Cross

23rd August
 Navigation Loop
 Rangeley View
 Barnton Edge
 Anderton Way/View

30th August
 Oulton Road
 Oulton Mews
 Princes Street
 Queens Square

Subscriptions

If you would like this magazine delivered to you regularly, please contact:
Church Office 01785 811990

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