

Christ Church and People



January 2021

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Christ Church



and People

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

Cover Picture
Berkeley St

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

Vicar Paul Kingman 812669

The Vicarage, Bromfield Court

Children & Families Worker Peter Cuthbert 07733 042205

peter.j.cuthbert@btinternet.com

Church Services January 2021

All Zoom meetings at 10:30 am unless stated otherwise on church website

January 3rd Covenant service
 Luke 1:67-80
 Great thanksgiving

January 10th
 Titus 1
 Who brought his word to light

January 17th
 Titus 2
 His grace that brings salvation

January 24th
 Titus 3
 When his kindness and love appear

January 31st
 1 John 3:1-10
 He appeared in order to destroy the devil

If government rules allow, there may also be services in Christ Church on Sundays and services in St John's or All Saints at 3pm. The Prime Minister has just imposed new rules for Christmas so everything in January is unpredictable.

Please see website or contact other church members to find out what is happening.

The reason the Son of God appeared

The arrival of a baby brings celebration. What a joy to hold a new-born baby! What promise for the future! What fascination with their development! What sleepless nights! All this and more surrounded the birth the son born to Joseph and Mary who they named Jesus.

The arrival of Jesus would have a highly dramatic impact. It is summed up by John in one of his letters to the early church. John talks about Christmas twice in just a few lines of his letter. He sets Jesus' birth on the larger stage of history. It was Jesus' appearing (*epiphany*) which is so important. He has two things to say.

John first begins with a reminder: '*You know that he appeared in order to take away sins, and in him there is no sin*' (I John 3v5). Jesus came to make reconciliation with God a reality. We are born as rebels who are living as enemies of God and unresponsive to His love. Yet when Jesus laid down his love, for the sins of the world, he provided a new way of approach to God. The dire situation that existed required extreme measures at great cost to bring us back to God. The cross made this possible so that we can become children of God.

His second idea is also important: '*The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the works of the devil*' (I John 3v8). The works of the devil that Jesus came to destroy are the works of sin. Jesus is at work in his followers to draw us away from leading a lawless life and inspire us to live the new looking-more-like-Christ life. There is a divine discontent in the heart of every believer so that they want to grow in their own Christ-likeness. We increasingly see things the way He does and want to follow his ways rather than our own or those of the world.

May I encourage you to make 2021 count? Dedicate yourself to following Jesus more closely, to read the Bible each day and pray about what you read. To be following Jesus is the right response to the celebrations at the end of last year. His birth means we have life.



Paul Kingman

Ian Morgan

It is with sadness that we pass on the news that Ian Morgan died on Monday 30th November. Ian grew up in Leicestershire but moved to Stone after qualifying as a teacher. He was a Reader for 40 years, 20 of which were spent serving at Christ Church and in the benefice from 1980 to 2000. Ian was a teacher at (then) Christ Church Middle School for many years beginning in the 1970's, where he taught Woodwork (Design Technology etc later on) and was Head of Year 8. He gained his degree via the Open University. In fact he was one of the original members of staff when the school became a Middle School in 1974. When the Middle School started, for the first time girls as well as boys were allowed to do Woodwork and this made news in local newspapers at the time. Other teachers from the time remember that Ian was very caring towards any child with problems and did his best to help them.

While in Stone he demonstrated the skills he was teaching by building his own house extension. He also taught evening classes in Eccleshall.

Ian had a distinctive sermon-preaching style; he never spoke for long but always left his hearers wanting more, and asking him questions afterwards.

After leaving Stone he moved to the south of England and then to Grange-over-Sands. Our thoughts and prayers at this time are with his wife Heather and daughters Frances, Hilary and Alison.

Jam for the Youth Fund

PEAR CHUTNEY, APPLE CHUTNEY, BLACKBERRY AND APPLE JELLY and DAMSON JAM, all £2 per jar. I also still have: redcurrant jelly, redcurrant and mint jelly (both £1 for an 8oz jar), Shooting Party chutney, raspberry and rhubarb jam, Victoria plum jam, fig jam, vanilla fig jam, fig chutney, summer fruits jelly, blackcurrant jam, loganberry jam, blackcurrant and loganberry jelly, gooseberry jam and jostaberry jam (all £2 a jar). All proceeds to the benefice Youth Fund as usual. Contact Sue Kingman on 812669 or suekingman@hotmail.co.uk. We can deliver if necessary.

New Year Messages

Compassion Childcare have selected Bible passages for the new year.

There's lots of wisdom about blessings in the Bible. At the start of a new year, these Bible verses help us remember that every good gift comes from God our Heavenly Father.

- James 1:17 Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows.
- Philippians 4:19 And my God will meet all your needs according to the riches of his glory in Christ Jesus.
- Psalm 1:1-3 Blessed is the one who does not walk in step with the wicked or stand in the way that sinners take or sit in the company of mockers, but whose delight is in the law of the Lord, and who meditates on his law day and night.
- 2 Corinthians 9:8 And God is able to bless you abundantly, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work.
- Jeremiah 17:7 But blessed is the one who trusts in the Lord, whose confidence is in him. James 1:17 Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows.
- Lamentations 3:22-24 Because of the Lord's great love we are not consumed, for his compassions never fail. They are new every morning; great is your faithfulness.
- Jeremiah 29:11 For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.
- 2 Corinthians 4:17-18 For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. 18 So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen, since what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal.
- Ecclesiastes 3:1 There is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under the heavens.

Mission Prayer Diary	
	<i>Church Mission Society</i>
1st	Azaria Spencer works with Street Kids Direct, a charity offering street children and young people at risk mentoring and helping them to make positive life choices. Pray about plans to open a short-term refuge for children at risk
2nd	Pray for the chaplaincy team at Colegio San Andreas, Paraguay, where Bev Richardson works with schools, speaking at assemblies and leading staff devotions.
3rd	Mateo Alto is an auxiliary bishop working with churches in northern Argentina, where church members are 90% from indigenous peoples– Wichí, Toba and Chorote. Most Argentinians are of European descent. Mateo himself is from the Toba community. Pray for Mateo as he travels through this large area
4th	Amanda Borges is part of New Wine Discipleship Year project in Brazil which focusses on equipping people to work with the church. Pray that this project will bring forth new church leaders
	<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 are now at Capernwray Bible College (Lancashire). We pray that Bible College activities will be possible this year despite the pandemic. Numbers attending courses have been reduced to permit social distancing
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>Scripture Union provides Bible notes and runs activities for young people. Their online game “Guardians of Ancora” takes the gospel to gamers</i>
9th	Latest resource for “Guardians of Ancora” is a 24-session programme on the life of Jesus based on Bible stories in the app. Pray that this will reach young people who join in the game
10th	Children may have received the “Book of Wonders” or “God became like me?” over Christmas. Pray that these will be read.
11th	In Papua New Guinea, SU have launched Scripture memory videos called “WORDoutLOUD”, which have gone down well on social media. Pray that more people will watch these
12th	The outlook for SU camps is still uncertain in 2021. Pray that conditions will improve and camps will be possible in some way or other. Pray for leaders as they think about this, and potential campers who need a boost to their faith
	<i>Our CMS Link Missionaries Tim and Kate Lee helped to set up JigSaw Kids Ministries in Manila (Philippines)</i>
13th	As Jigsaw is now visiting hundreds of families where they live to deliver regular parcels containing Bible materials and sewing materials and activity packs for children, pray that God’s word will reach people even in lockdown
14th	Pray for the new ministry in Quezon City Manila, in a community of rubbish collectors. Many of these people cannot read and Jigsaw is organising literacy classes
15th	Disabled children are suffering more than normal during the pandemic, being unable to come to central groups. Pray that Jigsaw will be able to visit disabled children in their homes and take necessary materials and medicines to them

16th	Please continue to pray for all the funds required for Jigsaw’s ministry. Please pray for extra funds and resources to come from the Philippines, Asia and from the UK. Funds needed for, increased emergency response, medical supplies, health care, food and wellbeing, ongoing operational costs, IT resources and educational support
	<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	Pray that Covid will go away and for those infected and affected. And that the impact of Covid 19 will draw us and the world closer to God.
18th	Pray we catch up with the 2020 Ministry Goals even through Scripture Union. That plans for our return to Uganda will get clearer soon.
19th	Praise the Lord for the National Month of Prayer that unites churches. Pray God for economic recovery of many nations.
20th	Pray against increasing Gender Based Violence.
	<i>Mission Aviation Fellowship fly medical personnel, supplies and missionaries to far-flung, often inaccessible settlements</i>
21st	Pray for the work of Tutapona, a NGO working with traumatised children in South Sudan. MAF fly resources and staff to Ugandan refugee camps where children are helped to have hope for the future
22nd	Pray for the Oksapmin school in Papua New Guinea, where MAF have been involved from the start in 2007 when MAF flew in building materials. Since then MAF has flown in staff, books, food and other necessities. This year the school was closed for weeks because of the virus, and MAF suggested that pupils could write about MAF as a project to do at home.

23rd	MAF serves many communities decimated by war. Pray for peace and a revelation of God for the many South Sudanese refugees living in Uganda
24th	John and Sara Sheppard work for Christian agency SIM in a remote part of Liberia, often cut off by heavy rains from the rest of the country. MAF fly in vital supplies and are on standby for medical emergency flights. Pray that MAF can continue supporting the Sheppards and other church workers
	<i>The Bible Society's Bible-a-month club is delivering Bible resources in China where an estimated 1 million people come to faith each year</i>
25th	Every year, many pastors leave the ministry due to pressure from the government. Bible Society provides resources for new pastors to come forward
26th	Although huge numbers of Bibles are printed in China, they don't get to rural churches. Bible Society is working to provide scriptures to churches
27th	Give thanks for the many, many new converts and pray that they will be able to persevere in their faith despite great difficulties
28th	Rural churches can't pay their pastors so they must earn what they can working as farm labourers and being supported by their families. Pray for God's support
	<i>Ralph and Dagmar Baron work in the Murree Christian School in Pakistan</i>
29th	Ralph must apply for an extension to his visa to stay in Pakistan, please pray that this will be granted. Dagmar also needs a visa extension soon
30th	After the Murree School closes in 2022, Ralph and Dagmar will be seeking God's will for the future. Pray that they will be able to use their skills in other work for Him
31st	In December when this was written, the re-opening of the school after Christmas was still in doubt because of possible virus restrictions. Pray that the last few months of the school will be possible and students will leave with qualifications and faith in God

Confession

When the word "Acts" is used to help us understand parts of prayer, the letter "C" stands for Confession.

Tom had just retrieved his football from his dad's greenhouse and now he and his two friends stood glumly looking at the glass they had broken by playing football on the lawn which Tom's dad had expressly forbidden. "Dad will kill me", said Tom, as his friends left the scene. Tom thought it best to tell his dad as soon as possible and face the consequences. After the confession father and son looked at the damage together. Then Dad just said "OK son we'll get it fixed tomorrow...oh...and thanks for telling me". Both father and son felt good. The father knows how much his son trusts him, and Tom is even more aware of his dad's love.

Confession is not a punishment - it's a therapy. St James writes about this at the end of his practical letter. Having given instructions about elders of the church anointing sick people for healing, he goes on to link confession and healing. (Chapter 5:16a)

Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed.

As a relationship between two people deepens, it is not uncommon for one of them to say "before we go any further there are some things I need to get off my chest" (Remember our heart, is in our chest!). The person knows that the loving relationship can only develop where there is heartfelt openness and frankness.

Our prayer relationship with God is no different. God is all knowing. Confession actually starts with a loving act of God. In John 16:7 Jesus describes the Holy Spirit is "another Counsellor". A good human counsellor initiates a conversation that will help their client give voice about how and why they behave in the way they do and to understand its consequences. The Holy Spirit helps us see our actions from God's point of view and our confession is agreeing with what He has told us in our minds.

(continued)

Many find accepting the forgiveness even more difficult than confession. We know that sin is not a trivial matter. We can't fix it like replacing a greenhouse window. Mending our sinful brokenness can only be done by God, with an infinite act of love. This, of course, takes place on the cross. It is here that Jesus shows us the full extent of God's love and forgiveness for us. He cries out.

**"Father, forgive them,
for they do not know what they are doing"**

Holding on to the sin after confessing it, is like saying to God "I believe my sin is greater than all the love you showed us through the crucifixion and resurrection of your only Son Our Lord Jesus Christ".

The Cross shows us the cost of forgiveness, and the Resurrection shows us how wonderfully possible it is.

Sin infects the whole of humanity. Yes God loves me as a Father loves his child. But in today's individualistic "me culture" we must never forget that

"God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life". (John 3:16)

Not only do I need the personal one to one relationship that confession and forgiveness brings, but I also need to remember my part in an infected humanity. That's why Jesus taught us to pray as a community of faith

**Forgive us our sins,
as we forgive those who sin against us.**

Roger Vaughan

His coming
Celebrated at
The darkest time of year
Before the earth unfolds
Its miracle of reflowering
And the shadows linger
Longest fingers over the strangled days

He chose
To live our darkness
For us –
The Creator
Confined
In the constrictions of the womb.
He who spoke the world
Into being –
Silenced –
Listening to another's heartbeat

He lived
With those in darkness
The untouchables
Disfigured by disease,
The possessed
Cast out,
The poor, the lame, the blind,
Brought
Good News –
To those few who'd hear

He died
In darkness
Quite alone
Having suffered alone
Taken his last solitary breath alone,
His tomb
Shuttered in darkness.

And
If he chose
The darkness
For our sake
How certain we can be
His Promised Presence with us
Our Emmanuel
In times of
Longest Night.

Canon Jack Bell

Jack Bell was born in 1923 in Blackburn, his parents were mill workers at the time but later they owned and ran a grocery store. He attended Queen Elizabeth Grammar School and left in 1941 with Higher School Certificate in science subjects. He applied to join the RAF but failed the medical- he never knew why exactly as he was a keen footballer. He got a job in a local chemicals factory so when summoned to do war work, told them he was a Pharmacist. The authorities told him that was a reserved profession, so he should continue in it. Later he heard that the official had written down that he was a Farm Assistant! He spent the rest of the war working in chemical production needed for the war effort in Runcorn and Springfields (now part of UKAEA). In 1945 he studied at night school and obtained a B.Sc in chemistry in 1949. Now working for ICI, he gave up a promising career in chemistry to join China Inland Mission (Hudson Taylor's mission society) and attended their college in London for a year, learning Mandarin. I remember he told me that the worst thing about CIM was that they had to go to a Chinese restaurant once a week- in 1949, many people would have thought that the highlight of the week! Dad never ate Chinese food again after leaving the college! He would have gone out to China in 1950 but the revolution in China intervened, all British missionaries were expelled and soon CIM halted field placements. After a short time on the staff of St. Mark's Haydock, he felt called to the ministry and was accepted into Oak Hill Theological College in 1951.

CIM had told all members of the mission that they could not marry as it was not safe to take a family to China, so Dad entertained no romantic thoughts. But now free of that, he asked Elsie Holden to marry him and they were married in 1955 just before Dad took up a curacy in Oldham. His first parish as Rector was St. Jerome and St. Silas, Ardwick, Manchester. This was a parish of terraced houses and a lot of poverty. Dad helped run a tramp shelter under a railway arch and on Saturdays would call at local shops to collect leftover food for the shelter. The church had a very large but rather dilapidated hall, built in 1912 to accommodate 800 Sunday School children but I remember that I was one of about 90 Sunday School children in the 1960's, so we had plenty of space. Most of the parish of St Jerome's has now been demolished and rebuilt, and the old 19th century street names are gone.

(continued)

In 1969 we moved to St. John's Mosley Common where Dad was vicar of St. John's church until he retired in 1989, that was his longest period at a church. In Mosley Common there is a church school and Dad was on very good terms with the headteacher Geoff Swift, some of whose relatives are members of Christ Church Stone. He started Sunday School during morning services. At St. John's he also started house groups which helped many in their faith. After retiring from Mosley Common my parents moved to Kendal where he helped lead services in rural churches in Ings, Crook and Helsington, and then spent six years in Stone where they attended Christ Church until 2017 when their health declined. My parents' last years were spent in The Chimes care home in Penkull where they were well looked after. *Dave Bell*

The Worn Step

As a teenager I attended a beautiful old Norfolk church. It had the traditional round tower covered in flintstones. Parts of the church dated from Norman times and the ornate woodwork was Jacobean. There were many interesting and unusual features of the church but what always made the most impression on me was the step.

As you entered the church through the south porch and opened the ancient door you needed to take care because the stone step into church was hollowed away with the passage of feet over the centuries.

I marvelled at how such a solid piece of stone could be so worn away and I marvelled at the number of people who had gone through that door. Thousands of people had, over time, made their way into that church to worship our saviour.

The verses in Hebrews 12 say it all:

Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles, and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us. Let us fix our eyes on Jesus...

Hebrews talks of the great patriarchs and their faith, a faith that has continued throughout time as the step reminded me. When we are tempted to give up, we need to remind ourselves of all those who have gone before us trusting in our Lord. *Enid*

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

FLOWER ROTA

3rd January	Flower Guild
10th January	Flower Guild
17th January	Flower Guild
24th January	Flower Guild
31st January	Flower Guild



ROADS FOR PRAYER

3rd January

Princes Street
Queens Square
York Street
Navigation Loop

10th January

Rangeley View
Barnton Edge
Anderton Way/View
Bentley Close

17th January

Rendel Grove
Albert Street
Arthur Street
Alexandra Street

24th January

Berkeley Street
Chestnut Grove
Edward Street
Field Terrace



31st January

Field House Court
Kent Grove
Meaford Avenue
Mount Avenue

Christ Church on the Internet

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

Subscriptions

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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