

Christ Church Magazine

December 2023



PARISH DIRECTORY

SUNDAY SERVICES

Details of our services are given on page 4.

THE PARISH TEAM

Vicar	Paul Kingman	812669
	The Vicarage, Bromfield Court	
Children & Families Worker	Peter Cuthbert	07733 042205
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CHRIST CHURCH CENTRE

Booking Secretary	Parish Office	811990
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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

In This Issue

December Calendar	4, 5
Love came down at Christmas	6, 7
The Greatest Story, Christ Church Academy Christmas Concert	7
Reaching unreached people groups	8
Take Time to Pray	9-11
Tales from the Towpath 2 and 3	12-14
Christ Church First School update	14, 15
Thank-you	15
Watch and Pray	16, 17
Harvest Gifts from our Benefice	17, 18
Transform Trade update	18, 19
Hospital Notes 45	19
Rotas, Roads for Prayer	20

Christ Church Magazine



Please send your articles for the January magazine to us by 15th December

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Christmas banner in
Christ Church

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month or £4 each year.
Money may be given to
your magazine deliverer
or handed in to the
Church office

Christ Church on the Internet

Parish website	www.christchurchstone.org
Parish office email	office@christchurchstone.org
Magazine contributions	magazine@christchurchstone.org

December 2023

	Date	Time	Events (Zoom codes in weekly email)
Fri	1st	7.00 pm	Fashion Show - all welcome (Guides fundraiser)
Sat	2nd	8.30 am	Prayer meeting followed by breakfast
Sun	3rd	9.15 am	Communion; Luke 1: 2-25 "Get ready"
Mon	4th	9.30 am	Toddler group
Tue	5th	10.30 am 12.30 pm	Communion; Matthew 18: 21-35 "Wicked" Pursuit Club Christ Church Academy
Wed	6th	9.00 am 3.30 pm	Christ Church First School assembly Trekks
Thu	7th	1.10 pm	Christ Church Academy assembly
Fri	8th		
Sat	9th		
Sun	10th	9.15 am	Morning Prayer; Luke 1: 26-38 "King in waiting"
Mon	11th	9.30 am	Toddler group
Tue	12th	10.30 am 12.30 pm 2.00 pm 6.30 pm	Communion; Matthew 20: 1-16 "Workers" Pursuit Club Christ Church Academy Autumn House service Christ Church First School Christmas concert
Wed	13th	9.00 am 2.00 pm 3.30 pm	Christ Church First School assembly Oulton Abbey Nursing Home service Trekks
Thu	14th	1.10 pm	Christ Church Academy assembly
Fri	15th		
Sat	16th		

December 2023

	Date	Time	Events
Sun	17th	9.15 am 5.00 pm	Communion; Luke 1: 39-56 "My Lord. My Saviour" Carol Service
Mon	18th	9.30 am	Toddler group
Tue	19th	10.30 am 1.30 pm	Communion; Matthew 21: 28-32 "Willing" Christ Church First School Christmas service
Wed	20th		
Thu	21st	11.00 am 6.30 pm	St Mary's Home service Christ Church Academy Christmas concert
Fri	22nd	10.45 am	Christ Church Academy Christmas service
Sat	23rd	9.30 am 4.00 pm	Advent Window trail (start at Lock Keepers) Christingle crafts and short service
Sun	24th	9.15 am 11.00 pm	Morning Prayer; Luke 1: 57-80 "Benedictus" Late night Carols and Holy Communion
Mon	25th	9.15 am	Christmas Day All Age Communion; Luke 2: 8-20 "A Saviour is born!"
Tue	26th		
Wed	27th		
Thu	28th		
Fri	29th		
Sat	30th		
Sun	31st	11.00 am	United benefice service at St. John's, Oulton Morning Prayer; Luke 2: 21-40 "Nunc dimittis"

6 Love came down at Christmas. And then what?

Cards (old fashioned, but still good to receive!). Lights. Trees. New sofa. Baubles. Food. Drink. Family. Redecorate that room? Nativity plays. Choirs. Office parties. Carol singers. Church services (almost forgot that one!). Exchanging presents. Wearing silly Christmas jumpers. Candles. All these things are seen around Christmas.

The retail world has traditionally seen a big upturn in sales to make the year end a high point in its sales. But, at the heart of Christmas is the birth of Jesus Christ. He was begotten, not made, he came in the flesh as both Lord and Christ, to be the Saviour for the world. His life of service and self-sacrificial death made the new covenant in His blood (as promised at the Last Supper). Jesus has therefore opened the way to forgiveness so that we can know fellowship with God and are guaranteed a future in heaven with Him for all who believe. Yes, certainly worth celebrating with all the enthusiasm that we can!

So, now what? One essential is that this is the reason we forgive: *'Be kind to one another, tender hearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you'* (Ephesians 4v32).

Our willingness to forgive is directly related to our willingness to take God at His word.

When we rely on Christ's blood to cleanse us from sin, humbly admitting our guilt and need for forgiveness, then we can trust in God's amazing promise, *'I will remember their sins no more'* (Hebrews 10v17). This is the model of how to forgive others: to no longer bring the matter up with the person who did wrong, to no longer talk about it with others and to stop ruminating on



it. It is not easy, but it is possible. This very tall order can only happen when we have first grasped the depth of God's gracious forgiveness toward us, even though we don't deserve it. If we celebrate when love came down, then it should lead to love going out to others.

Let's make this Christmas a time when we renew our dedication to the Saviour, Jesus Christ.

I look forward to seeing you at our services celebrating Jesus' birth and the new life He brings. Details are found in this magazine and being posted out on special Christmas greeting cards in our parish or on our website.

Paul Kingman

Will you Play Your Part in THE GREATEST STORY?



Christmas is the time when we celebrate the story of the birth of Jesus Christ. It's a story the whole world needs to hear. The 24 days of Advent provide us with a great opportunity to share this wonderful story with people in our local community.

Will you play your part, encouraging the creators of each window and supporting the shopkeepers who allow us to use their window space? If so, come along each morning at 11am, throughout December to listen to ***The Greatest Story*** and sing a carol. Bring a friend with you, if you can.

A printed map is available to show you where the window displays are, who created them, and when they will be 'opened'. All the displays will be in place by the 1st of December, so everyone will have an opportunity to see the whole story whenever they are walking through town. Please play your part in this church initiative and opportunity to share ***The Greatest Story***, by praying and walking through Advent with us. Thank you.

The Advent Windows team

Christ Church Academy Christmas Concert

Thursday 21st December at 6.30 pm in Christ Church. All are welcome to come and see the talent of the pupils on display. Enjoy Carols, the Orchestra and Choir. A lovely way to end the term and get ready for Christmas.

African Inland Mission (AIM) workers, Paul and Elizabeth Makau wrote the following words of gratitude in their latest newsletter: *‘We are glad to inform you that the launch of the non-academic Missional Discipleship Preparation programme, which we requested you to pray for in the previous update went well on 21-10-2023. Although it was delayed for a short while, it was for the good of all of us. Our sending church pastors were able to attend alongside other AIM missionaries. We are looking at preparing a good number of local pastors and missionaries to take the gospel to Unreached People Groups in the North of Kenya. It is a two-year programme, meeting once a month for about 3 hours; as well as going out to share the gospel during and after the training period.’*

Paul was instrumental in the preparation of this training course that aims to equip local pastors and church leaders with skills and knowledge to share the gospel with Unreached People Groups in North Kenya and beyond. One of the objectives for this course is to mobilise local missionaries who are conversant with the different cultures and faiths prevalent in local people groups that have not heard the Gospel – these are the so called ‘unreached People Groups’. Paul also wants to encourage believers within local church congregations to undertake this training course, so that they too can share the gospel with other people.

Please pray for:

- Commitment by trainees to complete the course and share the Gospel with Unreached People groups in North Kenya and beyond
- Provision of resources for students undertaking these training programmes
- Encouragement and guidance for Paul as he continues to develop these training courses.

Elizabeth

"Therefore I tell you, whatever you ask in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours". Mark 11:24



WEEK ONE: Our Mission Partners: Ralph & Dagmar Baron (Interserve)

In June 2023, Ralph & Dagmar returned to the U.K. after many years teaching the children of other Mission Field Workers, in South Asia. Now they are taking 'time out' to discover, train, and prepare for what the Lord wants them to do next.

Please pray for

- * God's guidance and provision as they settle into life in the U.K.
- * Good medical care and healing for their various health issues
- * A clear indication of what the Lord wants them to do next
- * Quality time with their young grandchildren and family



WEEK TWO: Advent Windows

This is the 14th year that we have been allowed to display the Christmas story throughout town. The theme this year is 'THE GREATEST STORY'.

Please pray for:

- * A good turnout every day for each Window opening
- * Opportunities to speak to people about the true meaning of Christmas
- * People to follow the trail and read the story for themselves
- * Lots of people to join the carol singing walk through town on December 23rd

**Week Three: Children's Society U.K.**

The Society believes that *'Every young person deserves a good childhood'*. As well as supporting young people in times of crisis, the Society campaigns for legislation to deal with abuse (both physical and on-line), exploitation, poverty and neglect, of children and young people.

Please pray for:

- * Hope and happiness for every young person who feels threatened or abandoned
- * The #ProtectEveryChildhood campaign to achieve long-lasting changes in the way children are looked after by their own families, foster carers, or care agencies
- * A good financial response to the Christingle service and other fund-raising events
- * Lots of children to come to the Christingle service at Christ Church this year

**Week Four: Christmas**

This is the time of the year when everyone wants to enjoy parties and meals together, but how many people remember, or even know, the true meaning Christmas? *The angel said, "Don't be afraid, Mary. God is honouring you. Look! You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you will name him Jesus."*

Luke 1:30-31:

Please pray for:

- * Opportunities to share the Good News of Christmas with people outside of church

Please pray for...

- * A warm welcome when people come to our Christingle, Carols, and Christmas Day services
- * Paul, our Vicar, and Peter, our Families & Children's worker, as they prepare their talks for the various Christmas services, including the schools' Christmas presentations.
- * Unity, joy and peace, for people in every household and care home in our area



Week Five: Mission Aviation Fellowship (M.A.F.)

M.A.F. works in partnership with hundreds of other Mission agencies; flying personnel and cargo to remote and hard to access areas; they also provide Medivac flights for ill or injured people. M.A.F. believes that every person should have access to education, clean water, healthcare, as well as hearing the Gospel and owning a Bible.

Please pray for:

- * Wisdom and protection for pilots and maintenance staff, and safety for passengers
- * More young people to become trainee engineers or pilots
- * Encouragement for ground staff and their families, often living in a foreign country
- * Effective witness and sharing of the Gospel

The information provided and points for prayer are intended for use week by week during the month. These can be used by an individual, or a group of people meeting for prayer and fellowship.

I am now settling into my role as a Waterways Chaplain and getting to know many interesting people from Aston Marina up to Barlaston. I decided to use a combination of



walking and biking along the towpath so that I can walk when near boats and people but bike where there are none allowing me to get further in the time available, so now I can go right through to Barlaston as well as being here in Stone.

Praying for the boaters and other canal network users is a large part of this ministry, so I thought I would share with you the boater's prayer that we can give out to boaters to help support them – they are on printed onto fridge magnets so they can be available to them all the time:-

Heavenly Father, Your Son Jesus Christ stilled the storm bringing peace and safety to those in the boat. We ask that this boat may be a place of safety and peace and that by your Spirit we may bring Your peace to others. Amen.

A few weeks ago you may remember that Gill and John, two other Waterways Chaplains, were passing through Stone and visited us at Christ Church. While they were in this area they spoke to Catherine Cowell who writes podcasts for a website called 'Loved, Called, Gifted' and it is well worth listening to – here is the website:- www.lovedcalledgifted.com – if you click on the Podcasts option, then you will see the episode called Waterways Chaplains. You can find out all about WWC that way!

In November I will be attending a day of celebration and thanksgiving, where all the Waterways Chaplains can get together, in Rugby, so I am looking forward to that already.

The range of issues that boaters may face are many and varied – things I have been learning about are:

Tales from the Towpath... (cont)

- the Government Energy Support Scheme for Continuous Cruisers
- applying for Winter Moorings
- Towpath access for people with disabilities
- Boat licence fees.
- Smokeless zones and the impact on boaters.

I continue to have much to learn!

Helen September 2023

Tales from the Towpath (3)

One Sunday in October

Now I am getting into this role I am learning that you never quite know what will crop up!

After church a couple of Sundays ago I thought I would just wander along the towpath to see how everyone was after the storms the week before. Just about to go past one moored boat where a man with his dog was looking quite perturbed. A fire alarm was going off on the boat – there was no smoke and no one was aboard when we checked – the boat was all locked up. The man was a retained firefighter and could feel a great heat at the rear end of the boat so he decided to call his mates in the fire brigade – Stone and Stafford crews attended – gained entry to the boat – all was fortunately well and it was a faulty fire alarm, nothing more serious. The sun had heated the metal plate at the rear of the boat which fooled the firefighter! None of the other boaters knew who the owners were or where they were. I had met the owner a few days before when he was having some engine problems but did not know where he would have gone off to or for how long. Having gained access to the boat the fire fighters had to then change the lock so they could leave it all secure so I undertook to look after the new keys. Being a weekend I could not gain any information through the Canals and River Trust (CRT) or get a message through to the boat owners so had to leave a note tied to the door of the boat telling them the situation for when they returned. Fortunately, communication was

made on Monday and I returned the keys to the owners who lived in Stone anyway! They were impressed by the WWC service and promised to spread the word. The fire crew were glad to have my support too. Prayers for them in their work please.

On the same day I was contacted by another Waterways Chaplain up in Nantwich who had received information about a live aboard boater in my area who had had a bad accident – he had fallen from a lock down 10feet onto his boat and fractured 4 vertebrae – he was back out of hospital but needed some support. He was now moored at Great Haywood Marina – so I went off to visit him and am now supporting him while he recovers enough to continue life as a continuous cruiser. Please pray for him while he recovers.

I wonder what will happen next???????????

Helen

Christ Church First School Update

Autumn Term 1

Over the course of the summer break, the perimeter wall of the school was repaired. This has been a cause for concerns for a number of years, but we managed to secure the funding. The wall and fencing are now safe and it all looks very smart.

A lot has been going on at Christ Church First this half term and we have certainly been busy.



Firstly, we welcomed our school therapy dog into the school team. He is a miniature labradoodle called Rusty and is a real hit with the children. He is only 13 weeks old so is not taking up full duties yet but is listening to pupils read and he is a great support for children who are struggling emotionally. We have no doubt he will be a real asset to the wellbeing work we do in school.

After school clubs have all started up again and children have been taking part in construction club, multi-sports, football, gymnastics, guitar club, choir and Trekkers in church.

Some pupils in Years 2, 3 and 4 have visited the British Ceramics Biennial in Stoke and have taken part in workshops to create "plantable" clay tiles, which have been made with a mix of clay and straw and sprinkled with wildflowers. These will be planted as part of an art installation at the end of the festival and we look forward to seeing how they grow.

Our Year 3 class joined Oulton First School on a trip to the Derby Open Centre to take part in their Faith Trail. The children visited a mosque, a Hindu temple and a Gurdwara where they visited the Langar Kitchen and sampled dhal and chapati. It was an interesting and informative day out for all.

We held our Open Morning for prospective parents on Saturday 14th October, which was well attended. The children showed families around and were a credit to the school, as always.

On 19th October, we held our Harvest Festival in church and the children gave donations to Stone Food Bank. These have been delivered and gratefully received by the Hub. The last event of the half term is the Bonfire Disco and we have a non-uniform day on Friday. Both events are raising money for our school dog to ensure he remains cost-neutral to the school.

THANK-YOU

To everybody who has sent me cards, prayers and "get well soon" wishes, both after my fall (way back in May) and during the subsequent lengthy recovery. It has been a great encouragement to me, especially to be told that my walking is continuing to improve as time progresses - thankyou.

(It sometimes seems to be taking a long time - so I have been having a lesson in patience too, as well as my family too I suspect).

Thankyou, Sally

Television news items today are frequently preceded with the presenter saying, “Some viewers may find parts of this report distressing”.

Can you bear to look yet again into the tear filled eyes of a frightened wounded child? Or listen to the sobs of bereaved adults sifting through rubble that only a few hours ago was their precious home, and has now become a grave for loved ones? We feel so helpless. It’s tempting to reach for the remote control and switch off.

Watching other peoples’ grief, when we are seemingly able to do nothing, is emotionally and even physically exhausting. The disciples experienced this when their beloved master, Jesus, was agonizing in prayer in the Garden of Gethsemane. They switched off by going to sleep.

When Jesus came back to them he asked Peter, *“Couldn’t you men keep watch with me for one hour... “Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak. (Matthew 26:40-41).*

Whilst we are able to pray for the needs of people we know and love, praying about things like wars, global warming, or the refugee crisis, which are such huge problems, tempt us to give up. We wonder “what difference can my prayers make”?

St. Paul must have faced this problem for he writes

“In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us through wordless groans”. (Romans 8:26)

This gives us a clue to one way in which some of us can “watch and pray” about the big issues facing us all. Many of us find ourselves sighing or even groaning as one disturbing report follows another. Some scenes may even move us to tears.

We may not be able to pray in words, but the Holy Spirit understands and prays in us through those non verbal groans. So as you feel so much

despair, and sigh at what is happening it may help you to make this a conscious act of prayer by thinking “my helplessness and distress has to be my prayer, and the Lord is sharing in it, and understands how I feel”.

Timothy Rees in his hymn “God is love” puts it like this

*And when human hearts are breaking,
under sorrow's iron rod
then they find that selfsame aching,
deep within the heart of God*

Think of what our Lord went through in Gethsemane and on the Cross for the whole world. God is no stranger to human suffering and misery. As individuals we have to struggle through the distressing and disturbing events of each day in our own way. We all approach our individual personal prayer differently. However whatever way is right for each one of us, we should heed the Lord's loving instruction to all his disciples,

“Watch..... and Pray”

Roger

Harvest Gifts from our Benefice

Tearfund—We have sent £605.60 to Tearfund in support of their Harvest Appeal, This was raised at the Harvest Festival Service (8th October) and The Big Quiz Night the previous evening. This year the Appeal focussed on their work in Zimbabwe, a country which has many problems:

- The changing climate which has led to years of drought & flooding, leaving thousands hungry.
- It also has major economic problems - severe inflation & deflation has led to industry crumbling.
- A current outbreak of cholera.
- HIV – Zimbabwe has the highest percentage of orphaned children in the world.

Tearfund works with Christian partner ZOE (Zimbabwe Orphans Through

18 **Harvest Gifts from our Benefice... (cont)**

Extended Hands) to support orphans & vulnerable people through a network of local churches. Before she met people from ZOE, Kester & her family lived in total poverty. She had to look for jobs on other people's farms to survive. After receiving training, she has expanded her farming including maize, goats & poultry. Kester can now feed her family & earn money. She has also joined a self help group.

Food. gives (Barnabas Aid). We filled 9 boxes of specific dried goods to send to needy & hungry Christians in other countries. Thank you to Phil who took them to our local collection point at Burslem Christian Centre, who arrange transport to the depot in Swindon. Since the scheme began 2 years ago, 68 million servings of food have been sent from 10 sending countries to 23 receiving countries. These include

- Zimbabwe who received a container of lentils from Australia. Barnabas Aid continues to supply epap (a nutritious maize based porridge).
- South Sudan A container sent from UK included food.gives boxes for refugees escaping the unrest over the border in Sudan.
- Jordan received a food container from USA, including pasta, tomato paste & other foods. This also fed Christian refugees from Iraq, Syria & Yemen

Thank you all for giving generously to our Harvest Projects this year

Transform Trade Update

Thank you for supporting the Coffee Morning at Oulton Village Hall on Monday, 16th October, which raised £80 for the work of Transform Trade . Christmas cards were on sale to buy or order. This was the charity's 1st venture since it took over the Traidcraft name. It has been successful as most designs were sold out when Ruth placed the order! The proceeds from the sale of the cards will support farmers, workers & artisans to seek a fair deal in trade, to improve their incomes and make a better life for their families.

Unseen Appeal Transform Trade launched their Christmas Appeal at the beginning of November. It focuses on the rights of home workers in

the Fast Fashion industry. Fast fashion is one of the areas in which the charity works. (The others are Tea & Farming). The home workers are demanding fair pay & access to basic workers rights e.g. sick pay, maternity pay & pensions. Transform Trade is also working to put pressure on the UK clothing companies who refuse to acknowledge the contribution of home workers. For more information on Transform Trade visit transform-trade.org . For the Unseen Appeal visit [transform-trade.org /christmas](http://transform-trade.org/christmas)

Hospital Notes 45... "AT LAST"

At last, as life returns to normal for me, I have been able to resume Volunteering at RSUH starting back on 24th October. This was one week later than I intended as I was called last minute for a hospital appointment on the 17th! As has always been the case it was immediately rewarding. In my first duties I have seen a wide variety of people ranging from

- a young adult who was about to be discharged home after 11 weeks
- a very elderly gentleman who was quite frail
- a man I already knew from U3A in Stone
- a person who walked into the chapel as I was arriving asking to talk and pray about difficult family circumstances.

At last we have another Fellowship and Training time for Chaplaincy Volunteers which is scheduled for 21st November and on which I will report in due course.

And **at last** we are able to **sing Carols a little more freely at RSUH** (although this is still subject to restrictions in place on the day). This will be on

***** Monday 11th December starting at 6.00pm *****

assembling at 5.30pm in the Chapel which is in the Main Building on floor LG2. As things stand at the time of writing we expect to be in **The Atrium**, the entrance to **The Lyme Building**, outside **Wards** and in **Corridors**.

Lifts can be arranged – so please ask for more information if you would like to join in this wonderful and much appreciated event.

Dave Rowlands

Deanery Synod Reps	Helen Bowes, Dave Rowlands
P.C.C. Members	Pete Kelly, Estella Woodhead, Jacqueline Abrahams, Shirley Hallam, Gary Williams Marylyn Hillman, Diane Aspey, Liz Mason Phil Tunstall, Andy Stone, Shelagh Sanders Lynne Bakker-Collier
Secretary	Shelagh Sanders
Treasurer	Pete Kelly
Envelopes, Gift Aid	Steve Taylor

FLOWER ROTA

3rd December: Flower Guild
 10th December: Flower Guild
 17th December: Flower Guild
 24th December: Flower Guild

SIDESPERSONS

Judith Kelt
 Dave Rowlands
 Marilyn Overall
 Jeanette Rowlands

ROADS FOR PRAYER

3rd December

The Crescent
 End Granville Terr
 Millers Gate
 Hartley Drive

10th December

Regent Street
 Harding Grove
 Oulton Grove
 Elmhurst Way

17th December

Darwin Close
 Sawyer Way
 Goodall Close
 Chandler Drive

24th December

Chandler's Way
 Albert Street
 Arthur Street
 Alexandra Street

