**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 SIDESPERSONS

7th January: Flower Guild Jeanette Rowlands 14th January: Flower Guild Jacqueline Abrahams

21st January: Flower Guild Pete Kelly 28th January: Flower Guild Judith Kelt

# **ROADS FOR PRAYER**

**7th January**Berkeley Street **14th January**Field House Court

Chestnut Grove Kent Grove

Edward Street Meaford Avenue Field Terrace Mount Avenue

21st January 28th January

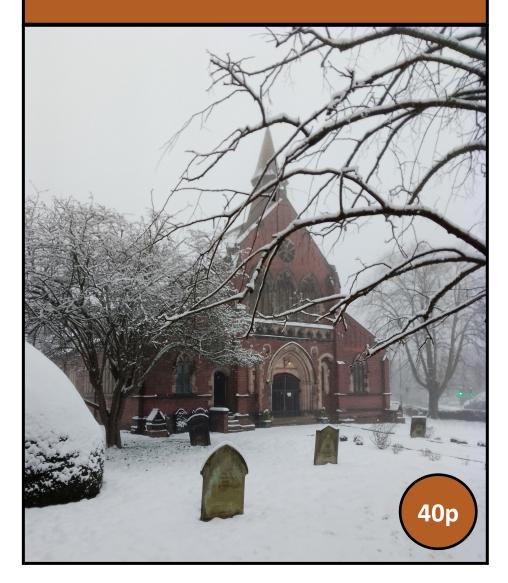
Mount Crescent Stonefield Court Mount Road Stonefield Square

Mount Street Victor Street

Old Road Victoria Street



# Christ Church Magazine January 2024



# 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

peter.j.cuthbert@btinternet.com

**Electoral Roll Officer** Parish Office 811990

Parish Office Christ Church Centre, Christ Church Way, Stone, Staffs ST15 8ZB Email office@christchurchstone.org 811990

# **CHRIST CHURCH CENTRE**

**Booking Secretary** Parish Office 811990

## **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

# <sup>9</sup> Carol singing at Royal Stoke Hospital

A small group of us from Christ Church met together in the hospital chaplaincy at about 5:30pm on Monday 11th December.

There were singers who came from other churches there too., whom we chatted to and explained which church we were from. We were all divided up into 3 or 4 groups and introduced to the chaplain that would lead us around the relevant parts of the hospital to sing. Before we left for the wards, the chaplain lead us in prayer, and we committed the singing to God, and our prayer was that those listening to the singing would hear the Word of God.

We sang for two hours from 6-8pm and visited several wards. We sang all the favourites, including O Come All Ye Faithful, O Little Town, The Holly & the Ivy, Away in a Manger, Silent Night and many more!

The singing was well received by the hospital staff and the patients, some patients and hospital staff joined in which was lovely. Some patients just listened intently, and some patients that were very ill, we still sang to them and hoped that they could hear us.

After we had finished singing at 8pm we were all met with mince pies and hot drinks in the chaplaincy!!

If you haven't had the privilege of singing at the hospital before, I'd encourage you to have a go at singing there next year! If you do decide to come next year, it can be very warm around the wards, so wear layers, comfy shoes (there's quite a bit of walking) and bring some water with you, as your throat gets dry with all the singing!!

Thanks to all who came to sing this year and a big thanks to Dave Rowlands for organizing us to go, we missed you Dave sorry you couldn't be there.

Louise

At the end of September, we received a very touching gift from the congregation of Christ Church to mark our 20 years in the parish – a framed picture. It was a lovely surprise, and although we said thank you to the congregation in the service, we thought we'd note it here too.

The picture is a front view of Christ Church from the main gateway on Radford Street, drawn by the local artist Emma Joustra, whose inimitable style (almost cartoon like) gives an amusing take on everyday scenes, and it includes us as a family standing outside. It is a delightful picture and we hung it up on our wall straight away.

It is strange to face up to having been in post for two decades. The service of institution and induction as vicar of the Benefice was held at Christ Church, Stone at 7.30 p.m. on 12<sup>th</sup> September 2003. A group of kind well-wishers from our last post had travelled from London but their coach had broken down on the M1, so they didn't get here until about 10 minutes before the end of the service! We'd arrived in an extremely hot summer and so we appreciated having a safe garden to enjoy and getting to know the area. I remember the Bishop of Stafford on first meeting him said, "Staffordshire is a somewhat unknown county, but very beautiful". We agree wholeheartedly and have enjoyed getting to know the people and the area. We were struck by a sign saying: "Welcome to Staffordshire – the creative county". How very true.

We are very grateful for the thoughtful gift to mark the passage of time. There have been many activities over the last 20 years, and all of these have depended for their success on the willing hands who have helped. We share our ministry, and our prayer is for the congregations to continue to follow the Lord Jesus and for many more to discover how Jesus is the Good Shepherd.

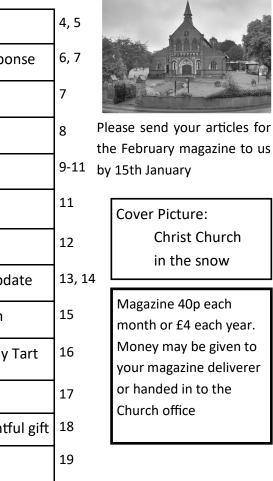
Thank you again for the kind gift.

Paul and Sue Kingman

# In This Issue

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# **Christ Church Magazine**



# **Christ Church on the Internet**

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

	Date	Time	Events (Zoom codes in weekly email)
Mon	1st		
Tue	2nd	10.30 am	Communion; Matthew 22: 1-14 "Wedding"
Wed	3rd		
Thu	4th		
Fri	5th		
Sat	6th	8.30 am	Prayer meeting followed by breakfast
Sun	7th	11.00 am	Joint Benefice Service of Communion; Luke 5: 1-11 "An astonishing catch"
Mon	8th	9.30 am	Start of Schools Spring Term Toddler group
Tue	9th	10.30 am 12.30 pm 7.30 pm	Communion; Matthew 25: 1-3 "Waiting" Pursuit Club Christ Church Academy Hope Explored (session 1) at the Vicarage
Wed	10th	9.00 am 3.30 pm 7.30 pm	Christ Church First School assembly Trekkers Standing Committee
Thu	11th	1.10 pm	Christ Church Academy assembly
Fri	12th		
Sat	13th		
Sun	14th	9.15 am	Morning Prayer; Luke 5: 12-26 "The power to cleanse"
Mon	15th	9.30 am	Toddler group
Tue	16th	10.30 am 12.30 pm 2.00 pm 7.30 pm	Communion; Romans 12: 1-5  "Wholly consecrated for service"  Pursuit Club Christ Church Academy  Autumn House service  Hope Explored (session 2) at the Vicarage

#### **UPDATE! UPDATE! UPDATE!**

17

Over recent months there have been changes in the chaplaincy team – staff leaving and being recruited – and a résumé of these changes was given at the 'Volunteers Fellowship Day' on 21<sup>st</sup> November.

Alongside that, the 20 or so present spent the time together in a wonderful mix of fellowship, training and worship.

We thought about working together and our need for one another across boundaries and our differences as we reflected on a true story from the late 19<sup>th</sup> century considering that...

#### "...the heart of the matter is that it is a matter of the heart..."

Muhammad and Semir were orphans and best friends with very different disabilities but they were able to function by relying on each other.

Muhammad was a blind Muslim and he carried Semir, who was paralysed and a Christian with dwarfism on his back. Muhammad provided the transport and Semir the directions.\*\*\*

We were updated with the latest changes and requirements for fire safety within the hospital.

Rachael, one of the hospital chaplains, led us in singing '10,000 Reasons'.

I have registered an interest in training to be able to visit patients receiving palliative care and to support them and their families.

I am not able to report on the carol singing around the wards as I was unwell on the day and could not attend it. However, I am told it went well and, with luck, you might read about it elsewhere in this magazine!

#### Dave Rowlands

<sup>\*\*\*</sup>Online you will find the full and moving account of Muhammad and Semir with photographs.

Hard on the heels of the Bake off Nativity came the CCFS Carol Concert, yet more lovely carols and songs learned and sung with gusto. We were treated to Silent Night and Jingle Bells with verses sung in German and French AND signed!! Wow. Peter asked the children to choose the (predicted by John Lewis) most popular toy this year. From the four, the only one I recognised was Scalextric, which, to my surprise, was very popular with a lot of children. I think the Furby was the No1, but I can't be sure!! Peter then talked about the gifts the Wise Men gave and their significance to the Birth,

Another lovely presentation. Well Done (again) CCFS.

Phil Tunstall

# **Epiphany Tart**

Victorian housewives used to vie with each other to produce the most complicated designs, using the greatest number of different jams, and winning the competition at Church Suppers became a point of honour!

8oz/225g shortcrust pastry

Life and Death of Jesus.

Approx. 4oz/100g jam, in various types and colours (the more the better)

Oven: 200°C/400°F/GAS 6

Roll out the pastry and line a 9 inch/23cm tart tin.

With the pastry trimmings make a lattice pattern across the tart base.

Warm the jams slightly and spread into the spaces in the lattice-work.

Bake for about 25-30 minutes, until the pastry is cooked.

Serve with custard or single cream.

Extract from, Cattern Cakes and Lace by Julia Jones and Barbara Deer

# January 2024

	Date	Time	Events
Wed	17th	9.00 am 2.00 pm 3.30 pm	Christ Church First School assembly Oulton Abbey Care Home service Trekkers
Thu	18th	11.00 am 1.10 pm	St Mary's Home service Christ Church Academy assembly
Fri	19th		
Sat	20th		
Sun	21st	9.15 am 6.30 pm	Communion; Luke 5: 27-39  "The joy in knowing Jesus"  Dean Licensing service (TBC)
Mon	22nd	9.30 am	Toddler group
Tue	23rd	10.30 am 12.30 pm 7.30 pm	Communion; Romans 12: 6-15 "Gifts and fruits" Pursuit Club Christ Church Academy Hope Explored (session 3) at the Vicarage
Wed	24th	9.00 am 3.30 pm 7.30 pm	Christ Church First School assembly Trekkers PCC Meeting
Thu	25th	1.10 pm	Christ Church Academy assembly
Fri	26th		
Sat	27th		
Sun	28th	9.15 am TBC	All Age; Luke 6: 1-11 "Lord of the Sabbath" Week of prayer - Christian unity at Baptist church
Mon	29th		
Tue	30th	10.30 am 12.30 pm	Communion; Romans 12: 16-21 "Overcome evil with good" Pursuit Club Christ Church Academy
Wed	31st	9.00 am 3.30 pm	,

Words spoken at the start of a New Year can be powerful when carried through. There may be a change of intention and plans. Who hasn't pledged to slim down by cutting the calories, or to beef up by spending time at the gym? Once you say it then the spoken word can be energising. Also, others might hear you say it and hold you to account!

The Holy Bible has truly wonderful words from God to us. They have inspired many generations. We read of courageous endeavours against the odds to bring the good news of Jesus to other people. Just think of missionaries sailing to Africa or China unsure if they'd last the journey and with a short lifespan once on land. We see it in action when huge sacrifices are made to serve the needs of others helping with health care, tackling addiction, or caring for orphans, all motivated by a love of the Lord. Think also of the many Christian emergency aid programmes that spring into action to relieve people facing natural disasters or those that result from war, showing mercy and enabling others to survive and thrive.

Simeon's words are inspiring for the year ahead. Now old he'd been praying for the people of God to be liberated. He bumped into Joseph and Mary at the temple. As he held Jesus in his arms he said: "Sovereign Lord, as you have promised, you may now dismiss your servant in peace. For my eyes have seen your salvation, which you have prepared in the sight of all nations: a light for revelation to the Gentiles, and the glory of your people Israel." (Luke 2:29-32). Simeon had now seen the greatest wonder of the world, so was ready to die. For Jesus would bring light and life to all who believe and trust in him, changing hearts at a deep level and able to unite

Jew and Gentile. It is good news for those who wholeheartedly respond with faith and so receive him as Lord and Saviour.

Yet, this same Jesus reveals what is deep down in our hearts. Simeon added: "This child is destined to cause the falling and rising of many in Israel,

Christmas starts early in schools, or at least preparation for any forthcoming production does, in October parts are chosen, lines learned and dance moves run through and, come early December, in a very cold church, the cast are ready for their first rehearsal in, well, almost!! Obviously being on the church stage is quite different to being in the school hall where you're in everyday surroundings and, being up on the stage in church can be quite daunting, even for an for an adult.

What has become a familiar pattern for me over the years begins, confusion, mistakes, not paying attention.....and that's just me!! But, as always, we stumble, laugh and cry our way through 3 rehearsals and gradually, nerves on edge, the moment comes when all the hard work of those involved is about to pay off, families and friends are eagerly waiting to see the children perform, and for all the lines and 6 songs they've been rehearsing at home to slot in to place. Costumes are on and everyone is ready to begin.

This year's production was called Bethlehem Bake Off, the usual characters of any Nativity play feature of course, with a few extras. There were angel bakers, judges, golden stars, talking camels.... What's a camel's favourite nursery rhyme? Humpty Dumpty of course... What do you call a camel with no hump? Humpfree!! The shepherds too had their part to play, as well as coming to pay their respects to Mary, Joseph and their baby... What do you call a sheep with no legs? A Cloud!!.. What make of car does a shepherd drive? A Lambaageeni. The Wise Men, as befits their status I suppose, were more serious but even they took part in the bake off...and Balthazar got a Bethlehem Handshake for his unleavened bread.

All good fun and as always, everything ran like clockwork, well almost, it wouldn't be a proper school play otherwise would it? And, as always, the real Christmas message always shines through. The show ended with an enthusiastic rendition from the children of Shakin Stevens' Merry Christmas Everybody. Well Done CCFS.

Phil Tunstall.

# 14 Christ Church First School... (cont)

During the week commencing the 4<sup>th</sup> December, the children all took part in a RE activity week, thinking about the true meaning of Christmas and exploring the Christmas story. They also designed the decorations for the Christmas tree competition which took place at the Winter Wonderland Christmas event on the evening of Friday 8<sup>th</sup> December. This was another PTFA fundraiser. The winning Christmas tree was designed by pupils in Year 4 and the Year 2 tree won Headteacher's favourite!

The following week was Christmas performance week. Year 1 and 2 kicked things off with their productions of Whoops-a-Daisy Angel on Tuesday 12<sup>th</sup> December. That evening, Year 3 and 4 performed "Bethlehem Bake-Off" in church. Finally Reception performed "A Miracle in Town" on Wednesday. The choir were also on the road, performing at St Mary's Nursing Home on the Thursday and University Hospital North Midlands on Friday.

We finished the term with a trip to Cannock Chase Museum for Reception and Year 1 to see Mrs Claus and take part in a range of Christmas-themed activities. They all had a fabulous time. Finally, we held our Christmas Carol Service in church on Tuesday 19<sup>th</sup> December. This was a lovely family event and saw Year 3 and Year 4 showcase their talents, singing in 5 different languages – English, German, French, British Sign Language and LSF (Langue des Signes Française). They sang Silent Night and a rendition of Jungle Bells. The whole school sang beautifully and we were so pleased to share this event with the wider school community.

Amy Graham

Executive Headteacher

Christ Church First School

# 7 Heartfelt words and our response... (cont)

and to be a sign that will be spoken against, so that the thoughts of many hearts will be revealed. And a sword will pierce your own soul too." (Lk 2:34-35). The proud and all who oppose Jesus will fall.

Has Jesus been consigned to the nativity scene which we return to the loft on 12<sup>th</sup> night? The reality of his appearing, is that only a heartfelt response is acceptable. He is Lord and Saviour. How will this change 2024 for you? Join our services learn more of this good news. Come to 'Hope Explored' (see article) to find out how ancient promises have come true.

Happy New Year!

Paul Kingman

# **Advent Windows**

What a wonderful time and a fantastic opportunity once again this year, to get out in the community spreading the good news about our Lord Jesus Christ.

Each window has been well attended with some old faces and new people and it's been a delight to participate in.

There has been a lot of thought and hardwork gone into the construction of the windows by the schools and various groups. Local businesses have been very generous with their provision of the window space and refreshments.

It has been a total joy to hear the readings, carols and prayers in our streets.

Many thanks must go to Helen and everyone involved in creating this event.

I pray that the advent windows have touched many lives and hearts.

Looking forward to Advent Windows 2024!!

ALL GLORY BE TO GOD.

Diane Aspey.

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 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 p.m. on Tuesday 9<sup>th</sup>, 16<sup>th</sup>, and 23<sup>rd</sup> January 2024.

#### **Thanks**

Paul Kingman



I attended the Day of Celebration for WWC in Rugby on 11<sup>th</sup> Nov which was great to meet lots of other WWCs from all around the country. I am pleased to say that I met up with my mentor yesterday who has now 'signed me off' in terms of being Probationary WWC so hopefully in the New Year we will be able to have a licencing and commissioning service at CC to become fully fledged!!!

Many blessings - Helen

# **Christ Church First School Update**

#### Autumn Term 2

The second half of the Autumn Term always seems really long but the children have been busy. When we returned after October half term, we welcomed Ali from Youthnet into school to run a Sacred Spaces workshop on the theme of Remembrance for children in Years 3 and 4. This was a fabulous afternoon full of reflection. The children really enjoyed all the activities which were well designed and engaging. In the same week, staff and pupils from CCA visited the school as part of their "Arts on Tour" initiative. The children made clay figurines and got to try their hand at African drumming. This was a really enjoyable afternoon for all. On 11<sup>th</sup> November, children from school took part in the Remembrance Day Parade in town, laying a wreath for Christ Church and Oulton First Schools.

On Saturday 18<sup>th</sup> October, the PTFA arranged a "bag packing" event at Morrisons in Stone. This was to raise funds for Rusty (the school dog). Parents, pupils and staff turned out to take turns as packing or running a stall and we raised valuable funds to ensure that Rusty remains cost-neutral to the school.

The choir took part in the Stone Lights Switch-On on 23<sup>rd</sup> November. This is always a lovely community event (even if it does always rain!) We thoroughly enjoyed singing with all the schools in Stone.

# **Take Time to Pray**

## November 2023

The days are getting colder so its gloves and scarves as I cycle and walk along the towpath. I am certainly getting to know the route



from Aston to Wedgwood well and recognise boats that are permanently moored and those that come and go. Mostly the leisure boaters have gone now and the stoic live-aboards are stopping at winter moorings as the weather gets colder and stoppages prevent so much travel.

I continue to support J down at Great Haywood Marina as he slowly recovers from his accident — very frustrating for him as he is a nomad by heart and being stuck in one place does not feel right for him. I supported him to find a temporary GP and took him to have his COVID jab. Please pray for him and for P, P, S and G who all have varying difficulties.

Queries have been around benefits and licence fees, cost of living allowances and worries about health and finance. I am getting good at signposting the boaters to the right places and we are very blessed in Stone to have the CAB experts, the Community Hub and Food Bank to support people.

Also please pray for the boaters to be safe – the cold and dangers of slippery towpaths, especially around locks, are many, especially for those who live on board alone.

You never know who you will meet - I met a fellow, very active, Christian on the towpath up at Wedgwood last week who was full of praise for the WWC but was also involved a lot with Stoke City FC, Christians-in-Sport and sharing the gospel with young people — he suggested we might collaborate on something so who knows what may happen! He was currently arranging an event with 'Nello' and Lou McCari so obviously has good connections!

"Continue steadfastly in prayer, being watchful in it, with thanksgiving"

Colossians 4:2

### **Week ONE: Christian Witness**

Jesus said: "Go and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you." Matthew 28:19-20

Witnessing to others is not something to be left to Mission Workers and Church leaders alone. Everyone who claims Jesus as their Lord and Saviour is commissioned to share their belief with other people.

#### Please pray for ourselves to:

- Be better equipped to help others come to know Jesus
- Be bold when talking with close friends, family members, or coworkers
- Find effective ways for us, as a church, to impact our community
- Seize every opportunity to proclaim 'Jesus is our Lord and Saviour'

## Week TWO: Our Mission Partners: Stephen & Tabita Bell

Stephen and Tabita are based in Croatia, working with European Christian Mission (ECM) since 1986. They are currently helping to establish a new church in the Zagreb area. They also encourage existing churches to engage in evangelism, teaching and discipleship, with the help of Christians from other countries.

# Please pray for...

#### Please pray for God's guidance for Stephen and Tabita:

- As they work to establish a new church fellowship in Varaždin
- For effective outreach to local Roma children and their families
- Providing hospitality and witnessing to Ukrainian refugees

#### Give thanks to God for:

- The team of Belgians planning to visit regularly over the next 7 years to help with evangelistic events and camps
- Brazilian football players who use their sporting skills to organise games and witness to young people in Croatia each summer.

# Week THREE: Midlands Gospel Partnership



Primarily, this organisation is a partnership of Midlands churches, all subscribing to the same Doctrinal basis and shape of gospel ministry. The aim of this partnership is to maintain healthy local churches in every Midlands community by offering training in biblical ministry; co-operating in evangelism; and encouraging church planting initiatives

# Please pray for:

- Local churches to commit to studying and sharing the Gospel more effectively
- Prayerful and effective teaching of the Bible, by church leaders and theologians
- Bold witness and proclamation of Christ crucified, in every church
- Church 'plants' in areas such as new housing estates or regenerated localities
- Unbelievers to come to faith in Christ, and believers to be strengthened in their faith, through the work of Midlands Gospel Partnership.

## **Week FOUR: Simeon's Trustees**



A Church of England patronage trust, founded in 1836, the Charles Simeon Trust holds interest in 165 benefices across 33 dioceses in the U.K. Primarily, the Trust adheres to the evangelical tradition. On-line and traditional teaching methods are used to train new expositors of the Bible. Christ Church was built with financial help from the Charles Simeon Trust.

#### Please pray for:

- Effective evangelical teaching and guidance for ordained and lay church leaders
- Support and guidance for churches seeking a new Vicar or church worker
- Good working relationships between benefices within the patronage of the Charles Simeon Trust,
- Wisdom and guidance for the people making Parochial appointments
- Sufficient funds to enable the Trustees to continue their work.

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.

# **United Benefice Service—7th January**

On Sunday 7th January at 11.00 a.m. we are hosting a Joint Benefice Service of Holy Communion here at Christ Church, Stone.

This will be followed by a bring and share lunch in the church centre.

As is customary we suggest that members of Christ Church, Stone bring the savoury dishes and Oulton & Moddershall bring desserts.

All are welcome to come along. We look forward to seeing you there.