

Christ Church Magazine

February 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
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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

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Christ Church Magazine



Please send your articles for the March magazine to us by 15th February

Cover Picture:
Christ Church
spring awakening

Magazine 40p each 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

February 2024

	Date	Time	Events (Zoom codes in weekly email)
Thu	1st		
Fri	2nd		
Sat	3rd	8.30 am	Prayer meeting followed by breakfast
Sun	4th	11.00 am 3.00 pm	Communion; Luke 6: 17-26 "The good life" Holiday Club meeting at the Vicarage
Mon	5th	9.30 am 7.30 pm	Toddler group Stone Deanery Synod meeting
Tue	6th	10.30 am 12.30 pm	Communion; Romans 13: 1-17 "Citizens of heaven on earth" Pursuit Club Christ Church Academy
Wed	7th	9.00 am 3.30 pm	Christ Church First School assembly Trekks
Thu	8th	1.10 pm	Christ Church Academy assembly
Fri	9th		
Sat	10th		
Sun	11th	9.15 am	Morning Prayer; Luke 6: 27-36 "The power of love"
Mon	12th	9.30 am	Toddler group
Tue	13th	10.30 am 12.30 pm 2.00 pm	Communion; Romans 13: 8-14 "A change of armour" Pursuit Club Christ Church Academy Autumn House service
Wed	14th	9.00 am 2.00 pm 3.30 pm 6.30 pm	Christ Church First School assembly Oulton Abbey Care Home service Trekks Ash Wednesday service
Thu	15th	11.00 am 1.10 pm	St Mary's Home service Christ Church Academy assembly

February 2024

	Date	Time	Events
Fri	16th		
Sat	17th		
Sun	18th	9.15 am 5.00 pm	Communion; Luke 6: 37-45 "Wise judgement" Lent Course (session 1) at the Vicarage
Mon	19th	9.30 am	Toddler group
Tue	20th	10.30 am 12.30 pm	Communion; Mark 14: 32-42 "To the cross!" Pursuit Club Christ Church Academy
Wed	21st	9.00 am 3.30 pm 7.30 pm	Christ Church First School assembly Trekks Lent Course (session 1 repeat) in Centre
Thu	22nd	1.10 pm	Christ Church Academy assembly
Fri	23rd		
Sat	24th		
Sun	25th	9.15 am 5.00 pm	All Age; Luke 6: 46-49 "Wise and foolish builders" Lent Course (session 2) at the Vicarage
Mon	26th		
Tue	27th	10.30 am 12.30 pm	Communion; Mark 14: 43-51 "The kiss of death" Pursuit Club Christ Church Academy
Wed	28th	9.00 am 3.30 pm 7.30 pm	Christ Church First School assembly Trekks Lent Course (session 2 repeat) in Centre
Thu	29th	1.10 pm	Christ Church Academy assembly
Fri	30th		
Sat	31st		

Here's a danger warning: I'm going to quote some controversial words. These words come from some teaching by Jesus and it's risky to read what he says! For his words will always have consequences for my life and yours. Good consequences. Needful consequences.

During Lent, the six weeks leading to Easter, it's traditionally a penitential season. A time to reflect on life, on truths that are too easily avoided because of their consequences.

One example that is a common idea at present doesn't sit easily with Jesus' teaching. The compelling idea is that we can only find our identity through expressing ourselves. Yet, as we look at the words and life of Jesus, we realise that he gives very different instruction and example to follow: *Then he called the crowd to him along with his disciples and said: "Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. For whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me and for the gospel will save it. What good is it for someone to gain the whole world, yet forfeit their soul? Or what can anyone give in exchange for their soul?"* (Mark 8v34-38). Rather than asserting ourselves, we are called to deny ourselves! What sounds at first like a missed opportunity, or even a huge loss or deprivation, is in fact the very opposite. We must lose ourselves to find ourselves in serving God and others.

There is the story of how to catch a monkey with a nut. A small jar is placed at the base of a tree with nuts, or other items, which may attract the monkey's curiosity. The opening of the jar is big enough for the monkey to put its hand inside, but if it grabs a nut then it cannot withdraw its hand

unless it lets go of the nut.

We must let go of the things of this world. That's the loss to face which is called repentance. When we do so we are free to take hold of Jesus and all that he offers:



forgiveness, peace with God, his active presence in our loves, beginning to lead a new lifestyle, growing in our understanding of his way, joyful because of knowing the living God and having the hope of eternal life. It's a loss, that's for sure, but it is a discovery which is starkly different.

Join us in engaging with the way of Jesus. For I count everything as loss, compared to the great discovery of knowing Christ.

Paul Kingman

Lent Course

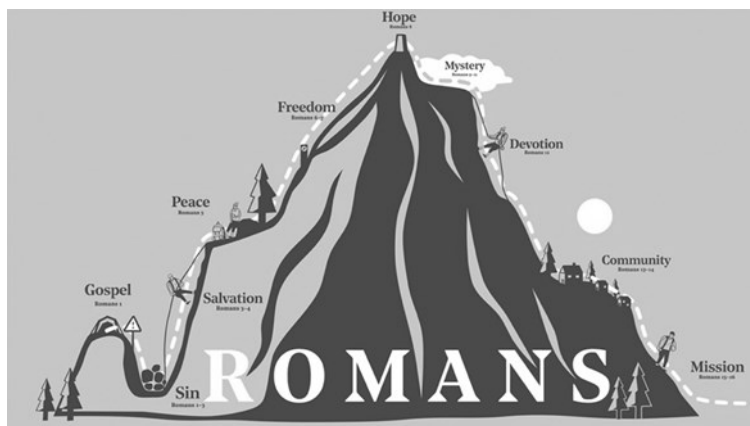


Romans - A Letter that makes sense of life

*Presented by Dr Andrew Ollerton
(author of 'The Bible Course' &
'The Bible – A Book that makes
sense of Life').*

With video teaching set against the stunning backdrop of Rome, Andrew Ollerton presents this inspiring ten-session course that explores Paul's letter to the Romans.

With the help of on location videos and a participants' guide, *The Romans Course* will take you on a deeper journey, helping you discover your place in God's story. These will be on Sunday afternoons (5.00 p.m.) at the Vicarage (places limited to 10) and repeated on Wednesdays (7.30 p.m.) in the church centre. Please register your interest through the office so that we can produce sufficient booklets.



Using the metaphor of a mountain climb, you'll be guided through the Letter to the Romans covering these key themes (*the last four will be after Easter*) to explore God's amazing grace and the wonder of our salvation through Jesus Christ.

Session 1: The Gospel	Sunday 18th February / Wednesday 21st February
Session 2: Sin	Sunday 25th February / Wednesday 28th February
Session 3: Salvation	Sunday 3rd March / Wednesday 6th March
Session 4: Peace	Sunday 10th March / Wednesday 13th March
Session 5: Freedom	Sunday 17th March / Wednesday 20th March
Session 6: Hope	Sunday 24th March / Wednesday 27th March

EASTER ACTIVITIES!

Session 7: Mystery	Sunday 28th April / Wednesday 1st May
Session 8: Devotion	Sunday 5th May / Wednesday 8th May
Session 9: Community	Sunday 12th May / Wednesday 15th May
Session 10: Mission	Sunday 19th May / Wednesday 22nd May

Paul Kingman

'Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God.'

Philippians 4:6



Week ONE: Our Mission Partner: Mathew Leung (UCCF)

Matthew is a Staff Worker in the West Midlands area, managing Keele, Staffordshire, and Harper Adams Universities' Christian Unions. He studied at Portsmouth University, where he was equipped by his own CU for evangelism, and as such has a huge passion to see other students equipped in a similar way.

Please pray for God's presence and help for:

- A good outcome from these upcoming events:
Aston/Birmingham CU Events Week: 5th-9th Feb (Matthew will be speaking at various meetings)
Keele University Events Week: 19th-23rd Feb (People from Aston/Birmingham CU will be helping)
- Stafford, and Harper Adams, CU committees to prepare and run evangelistic sessions for their own Events Week this term
- All 3 CU committees as they choose next year's leaders and committees, and hand over responsibilities.
- Inspiration and guidance for Matthew as he prepares talks for various Events Weeks



Week TWO: LENT 14th February – Maundy Thursday 28th March 2024

On February 14th this year, a lot of people will be celebrating St. Valentine's Day – a commercialised day of romance and red roses. For Christians, it is also Ash Wednesday, marking the beginning of 6 weeks of prayer and contemplation. Christians throughout the world use this time to prepare for Easter Day, when we celebrate the resurrection of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ .

Please pray for:

- Guidance and enlightenment for all who commit to prayer, and sacrifice of some sort, during Lent.
- Protection from harm for Christians who dare not reveal their faith, for fear of persecution.
- Churches to be united and supportive of work being done to build God's kingdom here. on earth.
- The real meaning of Easter to be broadcast far and wide through every available means of communication.

**Week THREE: St. Luke's Healthcare for Clergy**

St Luke's Healthcare offers expert, psychological wellbeing and mental health support to Anglican clergy, their spouses, and children up to age 18. The aim is to enable them to enjoy family life as well as a creative and fulfilling ministry. St Luke's is entirely dependent on voluntary giving; it does not receive any funding from the Church of England.

Please pray for:

- Better collaboration across Anglican dioceses, to ensure support for clergy from the beginning of their theological journey through to retirement
- God's guidance for the St Luke's team aiming to support more clergy over the next 3 years; and for the necessary finances to be made available.
- Alternative sources for physical health support for clergy and their families, now that St Luke's has decided to focus entirely on the increasing need for psychological and mental health support .

**Week FOUR: Jigsaw Kids Ministries**

Jigsaw's aim is to share God's Love in practical and strategic, life-giving and life-saving ways, with poverty stricken children and their families living in slum conditions in Metro Manila. They not only provide tangible help for these people, but also actively campaign for changes in Government policies to improve living conditions and security of tenure for thousands of families living in the 'slum' areas of Manila; also for protection from 'sexual cyber crime' and trafficking of vulnerable children.

Give thanks to God for:

- 21 Kids' clubs; 10 Solid Rock Youth Ministries (13-17 year-olds); 5 Agape Home Groups (18-25 year-olds)
- School sponsorship (70+ children) and Literacy & Numeracy classes (children and adults)
- Health & Well-being training and aid; Advocacy and support for children with disabilities
- Ladies' Bible study groups, sewing groups (generating income), and prayer gatherings.

Pray for:

- God's wisdom for the trustees, leaders and staff as they seek new ways to serve the needs of abandoned street children and poverty-stricken families
- Sufficient funds to enable Jigsaw's ministries to continue empowering the people they seek to love and serve
- Protection and guidance for all members of staff and their families (often living in the same poverty-stricken areas in which they work)
- Good relationships with Government agencies and business executives, leading to endorsement of Jigsaw's work, and more practical and financial support.

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.

December 2023



I feel very blessed when cycling and walking up and down the towpath as it is a joy to be close to nature –

seeing the swans, ducks, herons, moorhens, white egrets, geese and the two large black ducks who are resident along the canal. It is also a real joy to talk to the boaters and towpath users who are all very friendly and welcoming. This month has seen sunshine, snow and frozen canals, as well as torrential rain and winds. I had great fun the week before Christmas carrying a tin of chocolates in the bicycle basket to give out to all those I met along the way – a good ice breaker!

Although there are quite a few Waterways Chaplains around the country there are many places where there are none nearby so I found myself helping, via the telephone as best I could, a boating couple who were in a crisis moored at Shobnall Fields near Burton-on-Trent. This boating couple were continuous cruisers and boat traders making goods to sell. Usually they earn enough through their work and do not qualify for any benefits, but their trade had dried up over this season with the cost-of-living crisis and people generally having less money to spend, their own costs had gone up and their big batteries on the boat had all suddenly died so to generate electricity for heating etc they were using copious amounts of diesel. They did not have a wood or coal burner, could not afford new batteries and had run out of money for food and fuel. It was in a very cold week. They were scraping by trying to get enough money through doing odd cash in hand jobs but with the Christmas weekend coming it was all looking very bleak. I managed to get them an immediate hardship fund payment through the WWC to buy fuel that evening and get them information about food banks and other means of support for them. Another boater I have been helping offered to buy them Christmas dinner! Please pray for them as they negotiate their lives over the weeks ahead.

Many blessings – *Helen*

Book by Matt Searles

I wonder how you found this year's suggested advent devotions?

Every day was a blessing and here are some of my reflections.

Day 2 The immensity of the oceans – an amazing fact, page 12. That the God who holds the vast oceans in the palm of His hands holds us too
Is:49v16. A favourite verse.

Day 5 From His power to His gentleness. In Jesus the gentle servant who tenderly cares for His people as He exhorts us as a Church to be gentle, compassionate and kind. When times are hard it is a God who is mighty but gentle.

Day 6 How can I put in a few words this day because the whole devotion spoke volumes – re-read for yourself but here are my 2 points

- We are not defined by our achievements or lack of them
- I will be with you through all trials and tribulations

Day 7 told us that where a dry and dusty desert blooms in the rainy season that is what He can do for us too. No matter how barren we may feel He is at work in us to bring us to life and fruit.

Day 8 Looking at the worshipping of any idols, whatever they may be, there is the reassurance that only God can give us solid comfort, solid hope and solid joy – Hallelujah.

Day 9 I just loved the picture of being carried safe in His arms – strong and mighty arms from which no-one can snatch you

Day 11 as a person of older years (I don't often admit to that!!) Is: 46 v 4 is so very comforting.

Skipping to Day 24 and from Day 10 – The baby in the manger is also the King of Heaven. The man on the cross is also Lord of all and the invitation on **Day 24** is simple – **COME!**

Jeanette Rowlands

Christingle 2023

Thank you to everyone who helped to make the Christingle Service so successful.

We made almost 60 oranges into Christingles, children remembering what the symbols represent. There were a lot of adults and children enjoying the crafts, it was lovely to see so many old faces.



Then into church to enjoy singing, drama, a talk from Peter and the lighting of the Christingles while everyone sang Away in a manger. I say this every year it is so special.

The Christingle candle collection with the service collection was £103-09p which has been forwarded to The Childrens Society to help with their valuable work caring for vulnerable children in the UK.

Thank you to everyone for continuing to support The Childrens Society.

Sandra Morray

House Boxes 2024

Another year gone Wow!

It's that time again to let me have your house box for emptying, please.

If you could bring it to church and leave it in the Church Office, alternatively let me know and I will collect it from you!

Sandra Morray

Tel: 01785 286093

Mob: 07504 992 901

Double Commissioning

Sunday the 21st of January saw a double commissioning at Christ Church. Rev Paul Kingman was commissioned as the Rural Dean of Stone and Helen Bowes was commissioned as Waterways Chaplain.

The congregation of Christ Church was joined by the Bishop of Stafford Matthew Parker, Archdeacon Megan Smith, Howie Pickering the Senior Waterways Chaplain, members of Stone Deanery and Stone Mayor Jim Davies. A good turn out considering that Storm Isha was battering the area.

The bible reading was read by the Mayor from John 3 v 16-21. It was on this passage that Bishop Matthew gave his address, picking up on v16. He spoke about God's love for the world in all its' variety, beauty and brokenness. That's *what* God loves. God loves by giving his Son that's *how* God loves. The challenge to us is to love in the same way, to love as Jesus loves us.

Howie Pickering then gave an interesting talk about Waterways Chaplaincy and the role of a Waterways Chaplain. To reach out proactively to reach the people in need (whatever that might be) on our rivers and canals. The aim is to build and maintain relationships and offer help where needed. He pointed out that much of Jesus' teaching and ministry took place on or by water. Howie also explained the important role of local churches in supporting the Chaplain and those who use our waterways. He even suggested that one of the best ways to do this would be to offer laundry and shower facilities!

Helen was then commissioned as the first Waterways Chaplain for the Stone area. At the end of the commissioning, she was presented with a windlass, which I am reliably informed is essential if you want to get through a lock safely, inscribed with her name, date of her commissioning and Micah 6 v 8 'To act justly, to love mercy and walk humbly with your God'. A lovely and apt reminder of a very special service.

Double Commissioning... (cont)

Paul was then commissioned in his new role as Rural Dean of Stone Deanery. The Archdeacon lead the Oath of Allegiance and Paul swore the Oaths of Allegiance to the King and Bishop of Lichfield. Bishop Matthew then handed Paul his licence which listed all the duties pertaining to the office of Rural Dean and that was quite a list!

The whole service was uplifting and inspiring. The worship, lead by Pete Mason supported by singers and musicians raised the roof, especially when we sang Love Divine. We certainly drowned out Storm Isha!

Bishop Matthew was at pains to point out that the roles Paul and Helen have taken on are in addition to the duties that they already do. As they move into these new roles, we as a church can pray for them. That God may sustain them in all that they do, that they will inspire the love of Jesus in the hearts of the people that they meet, that they will reach out to those in need and that the Holy Spirit will be ever present in all that they do

Maryanne and Alan

The World Day of Prayer

The World Day of Prayer, in its present form, has been an annual event for over 100 years. This year's service was prepared by Christians in Palestine way back in 2017; so predates the current unrest but gives us an opportunity to pray for all affected by the destruction of lives, communities and property. The service takes about one hour and it is encouraging to think that from somewhere in the world we are joined in prayer every minute from midnight to midnight.

This year this ecumenical event will take place in Christ Church Centre on Friday 1st March at 2.00 p.m. You will be very welcome to join us.

Shirley Hallam

The P.C.C. held a meeting on 24th January 2024. During the meeting the following matters were discussed:

- The decision to cease the hire of the Church to external organisations, for concerts was discussed at length.

The matter has been under review for over a year, including extensive consultation with our liability insurers. The decision to cease hiring out the church was made in mid-December to ensure prospective hirers were aware of our decision before the start of the new year when they may begin advertising events.

After much discussion it was agreed that we must uphold the decision made in December 2023.

- It was agreed to make an urgent appeal for more helpers for church cleaning. Anyone interested should contact the church office.
- An urgent appeal is also being made for help in the production of the Parish magazine. People are needed to help collect articles, edit, and produce the monthly magazine. Anyone interested should contact the church office.
- Discussion was also given to the reintroduction of the common Chalice for communion. It is hoped that within the next few months we will be able to begin a phased reintroduction.
- Thanks were expressed to everyone who was involved in activities leading up to Christmas including Advent Windows, and Christmas services.

The next PCC meeting will be held on Monday 18th March at 7.30pm.

After a very well attended Christingle & Crafts event at the end of last year, we are now into a new year of Children & Families work!

My year started off with attending a Growing Young Disciples conference, which lasted for four days and focused on various kinds of youth work. It was a good opportunity to meet with others working with young people, though naturally our circumstances were different in many ways (we are lucky to have very strong links with the local schools, though we lack much of a young cohort for our Sunday services, for example). I attended sessions and seminars while there on youth ministry – some looking at intergenerational ministry for instance. It was a very full on week, and I think we were all quite tired by the end of it!

After that it was back to our usual work - toddlers has resumed on a Monday, the Open The Book (OTB) assemblies continue in the first schools on a Monday afternoon and Wednesday morning. We are going through our OTB materials looking at the early life and ministry of Jesus currently.

Also, our regular assemblies continue at Christ Church Academy (CCA) on a Thursday, and our new series is on Elijah.

The clubs are also going well. CCA's Pursuit lunchtime club has got off to a great start this year. We have moved into the dance and drama studio this term and had another push on advertising for the club at the school. It has proved a successful change as we had 40 children turn up one lunchtime! We are looking towards Easter, examining the Easter story by identifying the various objects involved in it (e.g. the crown of thorns, palm leaves, the towel used to clean the disciples' feet, etc). It's always encouraging to work with a group of children who are very eager and engaged in the material.

Trekkers is back on a Wednesday in the Christchurch centre, and a Thursday at Oulton First School. We have started looking at some of the earlier parts of the Old Testament beginning with Noah!

Sunday school also continues, though with a wide range of ages and a small cohort. We've been following along with the sermon series from the main service in Luke, as this means children can chat about it with their parents afterwards. It is always a challenge planning a session for children with very different ages, but the older ones have been very good at looking after the younger ones and making them feel included, which is nice to see.

In terms of events, we have a holiday club meeting at the start of February, and so Easter and Holiday Club are very much the next 'big' things on the horizon for Children and Families work! Do be praying!

Shrove Tuesday and Ash Wednesday

Shrove Tuesday is the last day before Lent which begins on Ash Wednesday. It was customary to make confession and be absolved by the priest on this day 'to shrive' means to absolve in Old English.

Nowadays, Shrove Tuesday is predominantly a day for making pancakes. This was originally intended to use up eggs and butter in the house before Lent began, but fasting for Lent is rarely practised now.

Lent begins on Ash Wednesday, a period of abstinence (excluding Sundays) commemorating Christ's forty days in the wilderness. The word Lent comes from the Anglo-Saxon 'lengentide', which means spring or lengthening of the days. Originally only one meal a day was eaten during Lent, and no meat, eggs or dairy produce consumed at all; nowadays we usually just try to give up one thing.

Ash Wednesday is so-named because, in medieval times, bishops used to sprinkle ashes over sack-clothed penitents' heads. Later, priests just made the sign of the cross on the forehead of each member of their congregation, using ashes from the palms from the previous year's Palm Sunday.

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

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

4th February:	Flower Guild
11th February:	Flower Guild
18th February:	Flower Guild
25th February:	Flower Guild

SIDESPERSONS

Marilyn Overall
Pam Roberts
Judith Kelt
Jeanette Rowlands

ROADS FOR PRAYER

4th February	11th February
Whitebridge Lane	Dominic Court
Alma Street	King's Avenue
Bromfield Court	Longton Road
Granville Terrace	Margaret Street

18th February	25th February
Newcastle Street	Radford Street
Newcastle Road	Station Road
Northesk Street	The Avenue
Radford Close	Trent Road

