

Christ Church Magazine

August 2025



PARISH DIRECTORY

SUNDAY SERVICES

Details of our services are given on page 5/6.

THE PARISH TEAM

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CHRIST CHURCH CENTRE

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CHURCH SCHOOLS

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Please send your
articles for the Sep-
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by the 15th September

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Stained glass window—
St Agnes Church,
Isles of Scilly

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From the Editor

Hi There,

This month you get a bumper edition of the magazine with 28 pages! Thanks to everyone who has contributed—keep those articles coming in!!

I hope you have been enjoying the beautiful summer we have been having—even though at times it has been a bit too warm!

This month we have our regular articles - News from the Vicarage, the Prayer Diary and Tales from the Towpath. Then we have feature articles— ‘Getting to Know you’, Mothers’ Union, Home Groups, Nefyn Camps and the Keswick convention, an update from Christ Church 1st School, a personal testimony from Stephen and an interesting article entitled ‘A Cataclysmic Event!’ Enjoy! Helen 15/7/25

From the Vicarage.....

Festivals, Community and Hope

August has a lot of festivals. Across the country are peppered various festivals that draw thousands to take part. The range is all encompassing. Performance opportunities at the Fringe festival in Edinburgh, sailing in Cowes Week, the balloon fiesta in Bristol, hearing rock bands play in Reading, dancing at the Notting Hill festival, picnic at Glyndebourne with opera lovers, or witness the rather eccentric world bog snorkelling championships in Llanwrtyd Wells, mid-Wales. There really is something for everyone!

These festivals are well organised and successful. They appeal to our desire to break out of the ordinary, get out of the rut of the hum drum of life, to experience something special. The big events must do things differently due to the sheer scale of the event, but also provide a social connection, opportunity to express yourself outside your usual context or have your horizons broadened by new

From the Vicarage.....

experiences. The genuine sense of belonging is a powerful attraction. For while live in a fragmented society, with many lines drawn, a common interest, activity, or commitment seems to unite.

So what's the point I'm going to make? Read on!

Christian events such as 'The Keswick Convention' (celebrating its 150th anniversary this year) fall into a similar category. We may attend (past or present) and find that we are blessed. But whether it is such a convention or a Sunday service in our local church it is the same church that Jesus established. Ordinarily we may meet in small groups for Bible study and prayer, or have a regular solitary time. A Sunday gathering is a slightly larger scale which is very encouraging as we meet with others and are inspired to live for Christ.

In the New Testament we read: *"Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful. And let us consider how we may spur one another on towards love and good deeds, not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another – and all the more as you see the Day approaching"* (Hebrews 10v23-25).

While we continue to meet we also wait for the great festival in heaven: there Jesus the Lamb of God will take centre stage, and all His people will gather singing His praises for His faithfulness, justice and mercy. Now that's inspiring!

Our Sunday services may be a modest gathering, but they anticipate this great future. So, we welcome visitors to join us during this holiday season and beyond.

Paul Kingman
August 2025



August 2025

	Date	Time	Events (Zoom codes in weekly email)
Fri	1st		
Sat	2nd	8.30 am 10.00 am	Prayer meeting followed by breakfast Everybody Welcome coffee morning
Sun	3rd	9.15 am	Communion; Hebrews 7: 1-28 "Jesus the eternal High Priest"
Mon	4th		
Tue	5th	10.30 am	Communion; Romans 10: "Feet ready to spread the Gospel"
Wed	6th		
Thu	7th		
Fri	8th		
Sat	9th		
Sun	10th	9.15 am	Morning Prayer; Hebrews 8: 1-13 "Jesus priest of the new covenant"
Mon	11th		
Tue	12th	10.30 am 2.00 pm	Communion; John 15: 1-15 "A heart ready to obey" Autumn House - Church at Home service
Wed	13th	2.00 pm	Oulton Abbey - Church at Home service
Thu	14th	11.00 am	St. Mary's - Church at Home service

August 2025

	Date	Time	Events
Fri	15th		
Sat	16th		
Sun	17th	9.15 am	Communion; Hebrews 9: 1-15 "Jesus priest of the heavenly sanctuary"
Mon	18th		
Tue	19th	10.30 am	Communion; Mark 2: 1-11 "Who can forgive sins?"
Wed	20th		
Thu	21st		
Fri	22nd		
Sat	23rd		
Sun	24th	9.15 am	Morning Prayer; Hebrews 10: 1-18 "Jesus, the once-for-all sacrifice"
Mon	25th		
Tue	26th	10.30 am	Communion; Mark 7: 1-23 "Are you so dull?"
Wed	27th		
Thu	28th		
Fri	29th		
Sat	30th		
Sun	31st	9.15 am	All Age; Hebrews 11: 1-16 "Now faith is..."

Please pray for.....

MISSION PRAYER DIARY

WEEK ONE: TEARFUND

FOCUS: TEARFUND'S LEADERS AROUND THE WORLD

Tearfund's work stretches across vast regions of the world – across languages, cultures, contexts and continents. But their faith and longing to follow Jesus where the need is greatest and to see an end to extreme poverty unites them in action. This week, they have prayer requests from some of their regional and country directors.

DAY	PRAYER POINT
01 Aug	<i>From Raymond Kwong, Country Director, East and South East Asia (ESEA)</i> 'Please pray for my effective leadership in building tight bonding within the team, and providing visional and strategic guidance'
02 Aug	<i>From Hebdavi Kyeya, Regional Director, East and Central Africa (ECA)</i> 'Please pray for me & my team as we navigate difficult emotions and questions following the 1yr anniversary of the death of our colleagues, Jonas and John, in the attacks last year'
03 Aug	<i>From Elizabeth Myendo, Interim Regional Director, Southern and Eastern Africa (SEA)</i> 'Praise God for his provision, love, mercies, good health and favour in my family. I am in awe of his goodness during this season!'
04 Aug	<i>From Judas Massingue, Country Director, Mozambique</i> 'I pray for God's wisdom as I am working to build a strong and motivated team in the Mozambique country office!'
05 Aug	<i>From Seid Zebe, Country Director, Chad</i> 'I've decided to learn how to grow maize, beans and groundnuts. Please pray for me to have a good harvest.'
06 Aug	<i>From Rana Gorges, Country Director, Iraq</i> 'Pray for me to have divine wisdom and understanding in all decisions, both big and small, that impact the organisation and the country.'
07 Aug	<i>From Safa Hijazeen, Regional Director, Eurasia and North Africa (ENA)</i> 'Pray for the protection of churches and communities amid conflict, hoping they remain secure havens of peace and hope, shielded from harm.'

Please pray for.....

MISSION PRAYER DIARY

WEEK TWO: CMS PARTNERS

FOCUS: E+R IN SE ASIA

Good theological training for pastors and other Christians is much rarer in SE Asian countries. But God has equipped E+R to help people get to know God and serve others better through Bible study, theological training, pastoral care and establishing links with CMS Asia.

DAY	PRAYER POINT
08 Aug	Thank God for quality time that E+R were able to spend in the UK with their children K+S and the blessing that was.
09 Aug	Thank God for E's 'Mark's Gospel' class and the encouragement of the students' lively end-of-year presentations sharing their interpretations of various passages in Mark.
10 Aug	Pray for E, who continues to recover after a stomach infection that lead to temporary kidney and heart failure, and thank God that the threat to his heart was miraculously healed by God.
11 Aug	Thank God that the lent course that E+R are running called 'Worth it' has been received well, and pray that it continues to be well received when they move onto the topic of the Second Coming.
12 Aug	Pray for the success of the two-day holiday club that will be run by a local language sister church in the local community and that lots of local children will get to know God better through it.
13 Aug	The hall that E+R's church meets in on Sundays is being sold very soon. Please pray that they might find a new venue to rent quickly and that it would serve the church's needs well.
14 Aug	Pray that E would be able to prepare properly for his upcoming teaching, especially the course on the New Testament which he has been given the privilege of leading for the first time.

Please pray for.....

MISSION PRAYER DIARY

WEEK THREE: JIGSAW KIDS MINISTRY
FOCUS: TIM & KATE LEE IN THE PHILIPPINES

In Manila, there are many children and families living in extreme need, poverty, vulnerability and harm. Manila is one of the world's largest centres for the sex industry which makes it one of the most 'at risk' places for children in the world. But God has been equipping Tim and Kate to bring the light of Jesus to so many in need and provide practical help to change peoples' lives.

DAY	PRAYER POINT
15 Aug	Pray for Tim and Kate's trip to Jigsaw. For safety during travel and in the Philippines; for wisdom, energy, & strength for Kate and Tim when leading various building, training and development projects.
16 Aug	Pray over the governance meetings with the Board of Trustees at Jigsaw, as well the time visiting programs and activities, that these would be productive and God glorifying times as a team.
17 Aug	Thank God for the hard work and dedication of the team at Jigsaw Philippines and pray for God to raise up new candidates for the vacant roles of CWD manager, education manager and social workers.
18 Aug	Praise God for the amazing and powerful support and partnership for the ministry, pray for continued growth of Jigsaws supporters and partners, and pray for God to open the door to new supporters.
19 Aug	Pray for guidance and wisdom for the builders that are working on the family centre in Angeles, that the resources and supplies needed can be bought in ethical and fair ways and for conducive weather.
20 Aug	Pray that God would use the family centre in Angeles to share His love for generations to come and that He would bring healing to this hurting city through it.
21 Aug	Pray for the students that are about to start the Education Sponsorship program, that God would protect them from violence and bullying and any circumstances that would force them to drop out

Please pray for.....

MISSION PRAYER DIARY

WEEK FOUR: FEBA RADIO
FOCUS: BROADCASTS IN IRAQ

Iraq FM produces community-focused programmes that address the everyday challenges faced by people in its broadcast areas. Offering practical advice from a Christian perspective, the station helps to build greater understanding between people of different faiths.

DAY	PRAYER POINT
22 Aug	Azad*, a listener, asked for prayer about a water problem in his home. Praise God that He answered Azad's prayer and that Azad would continue to see God working in his life and grow in faith.
23 Aug	Praise God for the appointment of a new male follow-up worker for Iraq FM after two months of prayer and searching. Pray that he would be a great encouragement to his colleagues and to listeners.
24 Aug	Please pray for the team as they wait patiently for approval to begin broadcasting in Basra. The licence application is still going through official channels, and the team is praying it will be granted soon.
25/26 Aug	Pray that God would remove any obstacles in the process and to open the way for the station to share the good news with many more people in this strategic port city where many are spiritually hungry.
27/28 Aug	Pray for Afraan*, who is currently searching for work and has asked for prayer as he looks for a role that will be fulfilling and use his skills.
29/30 Aug	Pray for Ahraz* , who's going through a hard time at home after his wife saw him reading the Bible. Ask God to provide for Afraan's needs and to bring peace and understanding into Ahraz's marriage.
31 Aug	Pray for a number of listeners who have stopped tuning in to Iraq FM, often because they've found it hard to get through to the station during live broadcasts, that God would make a way for them to hear it.

"So Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ." ~ Ephesians 4v11-13

Nefyn Camps

The below article was contributed to the Summer 2025 Newsletter of the Christian Residential Network (CORE).

Nestled in a field on the Llyn Peninsula in North Wales, Nefyn Camps have been transforming lives for over 60 years. What began in 1962 as a solution to a young Crusader's travel dilemma has grown into an established set of camps running each summer. With its mix of Christian teaching, outdoor adventure and community spirit, Nefyn has become a spiritual home for generations.

Originally established to provide a more accessible holiday experience for boys from the Manchester area, after one young Crusader told his Class Leader, "My mum won't let me go to Crusader Camps at St David's. I'd have to change trains twice and the journey takes 8 hours", the camps quickly grew in popularity. By 1963, the single camp expanded into two, then three and four, eventually catering to different age groups. A girls' camp was introduced in the 1970s, and the first mixed camp followed in 1978.

While the setup was basic in the early years — with bell tents, hurricane lamps, and earth latrines — the facilities have now vastly improved. Whilst still under canvas, the field now features frame tents, a large marquee, a fully equipped 5-star hygiene certificated cookhouse, and proper drainage, toilets, and showers.

Each week of the five camps held each year is for a slightly different age group and has a different team of leaders including activities team, tent leaders, cooks, a warden, a speaker and a camp leader. However, the format of camp life remains consistent throughout the weeks: daily quiet times, team games, beach trips, energetic activities like "hunt the leader" and "volcanoes," and evening gatherings to explore the Christian faith.

Leaders include former campers, many whom have returned year after year to serve and mentor the next generation — a testament to the camp's lasting impact.



of

Nefyn Camps (Cont.)

Over the decades, more than 10,000 young people have attended Nefyn Camps, each one hearing and experiencing the Christian message through teaching, being part of the Nefyn community, and through having fun. The field holds a very special place in many people's hearts – as the place where they first came to faith, or where their faith was strengthened. Now a charity in its own right, Nefyn camp trustees continue to be thankful to the Lord for His faithfulness to His camps over many years and for the excitement of seeing young lives changed each year. Inspired by Isaiah 55:11, we trust that the seeds planted at Nefyn will bear fruit in the lives of campers for years to come.

This year the camps are running from 19th July to 23rd August. We already have 180 campers booked and have places still available, particularly for 9-11 year olds and 16-18 year olds. To learn more or get involved, visit www.nefyncamps.co.uk — whether as a camper, leader, or supporter, you're warmly welcome to become part of the Nefyn story.

One of the Stone connections with the camp is Andy Stone, who went, as a youngster, to the first mixed camp in 1978.

He has attended in many of the following years as a camper, tent leader, activities leader, camp leader, and warden. This year, he accepted an invitation to become a Trustee for the Nefyn Camps Charity.

He is back again this year, first to get the camp ready (Advance Guard) over the weekend of 12 July, then on 'B' Camp between 26 July and 2 August, then back to break camp over the August Bank Holiday weekend.

Your prayer would be appreciated, with nearly 190 children booked, and many dozens more leaders, mini-campers and junior helpers, it will be a busy year. More information from Andy, especially if you are interested in helping in any way . **ANDY STONE**



Since our last update, the children at Christ Church have been really busy and so much has happened from sporting events, residentials, to trips and visitors.

Shortly before Easter, Year 4 spent 3 days at Laches Wood on a residential. They took part in a range of outdoor and adventurous activities from bush craft and shelter building to axe throwing and archery. All children enjoyed their time and learnt many new skills, including how to make their own bed!

Continuing with sports, all children took part in a cricket taster day and pupils in Year 3 took part in a cricket festival at Milford Hall CC where they came first in their group. We also held our sports day and family picnic at the Church at the Crossing. This was a lovely family event.

On VE day, we held a special worship and the children completed activities based on the celebration. One of our pupils, Lauren Goodman, won the bunting competition in town so we were able to display her winning bunting around school and Jill Hood visited to award her prize. In the afternoon, we had an extended break and enjoyed cakes from the PTFA.

More recently we have resumed our Family Worship, which have been well-attended. Year 4 shared their learning about Paris and the building they made from cardboard during British Science Week where the theme was up-cycling. Year 4 transformed everyday rubbish into the Parisian landmarks. Reception told parents all about the people who help us. They had been lucky enough to have several visitors –



Lauren and the Bunting—with kind permission of Christ Church 1st School.

a vet, a fireman, a policeman and doctors to tell them all about their jobs. Year 1 and 2 have been busy in the garden and have grown lots of plants, flowers and veg from seed. These have now been planted outside and they are being nurtured by the children. We have all sorts of wonderful things growing and they shared what they had learnt with their parents.



The choir have also been busy – they took part in the Eccleshall Music Festival and took part in the percussion and signing workshops alongside 5 other schools and with pupils from Christ Church Academy. In the afternoon, there was a short concert to showcase their learning from the morning session. This was a lovely event.

As we approach the end of the year, we have transition days and leavers' services to prepare and there is of course Stone Rocks to look forward to. It is always a bittersweet time of year and we say goodbye to our Year 4 but we wish them well on the next part of their journey.

Article provided by Mrs A. Graham, Executive Headteacher, Christ Church 1st School

A Prayer for Schools:-

Almighty God, our heavenly Father, you have committed to your holy Church the care and nurture of your children. Enlighten with your wisdom those who teach and those who learn, that rejoicing in the knowledge of your truth, they may worship you and serve you from generation to generation through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.



June/July 2025

Hi There,

I really enjoyed talking to the Mothers Union in June – they are a lovely bunch of women (see article on Page 20) – they are really interested in the work of the Waterways Chaplaincy and it gives me an opportunity to tell lots of stories!

I have now been invited to the Lichfield Diocesan Chaplains' gatherings so it is interesting to meet with Chaplains from other contexts – hospitals, prisons, schools and industry. We met in June at Shallowford and enjoyed a lovely evening meal, prayers, worship time and some reflection and discussion. Chaplaincy – going out to meet people where they are is such an enormous privilege and is so enjoyable.

June also saw a visit to the Armitage Floating Market – a small event but where I was able to catch up with the traders I now know well. Although I could not resist buying yet another picture from my favourite canal boat artist! Although the situation was not good it was great to be able to help one of the traders a couple of weeks later – she phoned me because she knows me – it is all about building relationships.

A new referral also came in from a boater in Rugeley and one in Stone who had both been recommended to contact WWC, so it is good to know the word is spreading. Diane and I enjoyed a towpath walk in Barlaston – it is such a great sport for nature there – a beautiful stretch of canal.

Please pray for all the boaters and everyone along the towpath in our lovely town of Stone and the village of Barlaston. 'Do justly, love mercy and walk humbly with your God' – Micah 6:8

God bless, Helen 10/7/25

Getting to Know you (2)

This week I would like to introduce you to one of our newer church members. Merope Capernaros arrived in Stone in 2022 after living for some years in retirement on the beautiful island of Crete. You can usually spot her wearing a big coat as she still misses the sunshine of the Mediterranean!

Merope is a woman with many interests particularly in the Arts – she loves painting, drama, writing, playing the guitar and singing, knitting, sewing and cooking for her family.

She also has a fascinating CV having worked as a project coordinator for Hospice of Hope, Parish and PCC Secretary and finally, Executive Admin Officer for the Diocese of Southwark where she coordinated the Bishop's Council, the Diocesan Synod and the Diocesan Board of Finance. And guess where her very first job was? PARIS where she worked for IBM.

But it has not been all excitement and travel for Merope. When her beloved husband Kimon died there was a total Covid lockdown in Crete. This must have been an unimaginably hard time for Merope and by way of therapy in what she calls her 'solitary confinement' she wrote down her feelings. This has led to her joining 'Stone Scribblers' which, she says, keeps her 'grey matter fizzing.'

Merope met her husband Kimon in a school play and their shared love of the theatre led to an interest in the development of the new Crown Wharf Theatre. In fact if ever you sit on Row B seat 15 you will find it is dedicated to Kimon. What a joyful and meaningful way to remember him!



I asked Merope what she likes best about coming to church, she told me, 'Prayerful folk, kind friends, being forgiven, singing and mingling.' Although 'annoying' health issues have cramped her style somewhat and early starts are challenging she is (cont...)

Getting to Know you (2) (cont)

still managing to stay fully involved at Christchurch and Oulton. The list of her activities includes Coffee making for mums and tots, being part of a house group and becoming a foundation Governor at Christchurch First School with particular responsibility for RE and worship and promoting Christian distinctiveness within the school. There is so much more I could tell you about Merope but if you want to know more catch her when she is 'mingling' at coffee!

I will let Merope have the last word:-

'Faith in God and prayer time has sustained me through some shaky times and belonging to a church family does spur us on, challenge us and help us to cope with the good times and bad. We are not sitting in the pews as goody-goodies; we are all there because we know how far we fall short - but God still loves and forgives us. I emerge from Church each Sunday washed clean and ready to start a new week'.

Fear not, for I have redeemed you, I have called you by name – you are mine

When you pass through waters, I will be with you; and when you pass through the rivers, they will not sweep over you.

When you walk through the fire, you will not be burned; the flames will not set you ablaze. Isaiah 43 v 2

Christine Pentland

From the Diocese — Redefining Rest

Apparently, Summer = Rest and relaxation. Two things most of us need more of. As we enjoy the blue skies and sunshine (obviously alongside the very British moaning about the weather, "it's a bit hot isn't it!") many people start thinking about holidays.

My experience is that holidays don't necessarily equate to rest and/or relaxation! Whether it's the anxiety of travelling, the cost, the kids (no we're not nearly there yet!) or simply the fact that even on holiday there's so much to do! (cont. p19)

From the Diocese (cont)

There is a wealth of information 'out there' that stresses the importance of rest and relaxation for our mental and physical wellbeing, and Jesus said we would find rest with him (Mt 11v28). But that's not always the easiest. I believe that Jesus was quite a fan of wellbeing—he wanted us to be ourselves, not strive to be someone we're not and he stressed the importance of resting.

I recently read an email that reminded me of the importance of looking after our own wellbeing and a specific line hit me "We are our own responsibility after all". The article continued by suggesting that if we don't look after our own wellbeing then our ability to truly embrace who we are, and to live that out, will reduce.

There is truth in this. Jesus commented that everything rests (excuse the pun!) on two things – Love the Lord your God and love your neighbour as yourself (Mt 22:37-39). If we focus on the last bit of that I believe it means that we need to be able to love ourselves—who we are – and to pay attention to how we look after ourselves; we need holistic rest (mental, physical, emotional, spiritual). Only then are we able to serve and love others.

Rest looks different for everyone, it's not just about stopping and sitting quietly (although that can be good), to me it's something that gives you chance to put aside work/life etc for a few minutes and focus on something that feeds your soul. This could be nature, exercise, art, coffee with friends, dancing, computer games etc etc.

and rest.....

For many of us the summer doesn't automatically equal holiday, rest and relaxation. Life goes on; churches have summer fete's and regular services need to function with various people on holiday; kids are off school and after two days are bored and searching for things to do – often whilst parents and carers are trying to juggle who has the kids whilst they try and juggle work! So yes, rest and relaxation can be a tall order to reach. (cont....p20)

From the Diocese (cont)

Jesus doesn't ask us to be perfect though (phew!) - he simply nudges us to find small nuggets here and there where we can rest – in whatever way helps us.

Helen Scheven works with those at the beginning of their vocational journey and with those interested in lay ministries as part of the diocese's Vocations and Training team. Helen supports those on Reader Training. lichfield.anglican.org/vocations-and-training



Did you know that our benefice of Churches has a Branch of the Mothers Union locally. The group meets at St Johns Church Room, Oulton, on the third Wednesday of every month starting at 2.30pm. The group prays and worships together and then usually there is a guest speaker, followed by refreshments.

The guest speakers for the next few meetings are:-

August 21st—Alan James on Fred Astaire "Steps in Time"

September 17th Steve Booth on "Clarice Cliffe"

October 15th—Allan Betts & Maryanne Lloyd on "Well Dressing".

Perhaps you could go along in September and join in! Come and find out and be part of a global movement!

The Mothers' Union Prayer

We thank you for your love so freely given to us all. We pray for families around the world. Bless the work of the Mothers' Union as we seek to share your love through the encouragement, strengthening and support of marriage and family life.

Empowered by your Spirit, may we be united in prayer and worship, and in love and service reach out as your hands across the world.

In Jesus' name. Amen



Mother's Union (cont...)

Vision:-

Our vision is a world where everyone prospers. We actively pursue this vision through prayer and action, helping to build confident people and resilient communities. Our movement seeks to bring about justice, challenge prejudice and advocate change.

Mission:-We aim to show our Christian faith by helping the sustainable transformation of communities worldwide. We do this by helping to nurture strong relationships at all levels, promoting peace and reconciliation locally, nationally and globally.

We aim to:-

Encourage parents in their role to develop the faith of their children. Maintain a worldwide fellowship of Christians united in prayer, worship and service.

Promote conditions in society favourable to stable family life and the protection of children.

Help those whose family life has met with adversity.

Promote and support married life.

A Global movement:- Present in 84 countries around the world, we are a diverse and inclusive community working together

for a future where everyone thrives. Our members are not all mothers, or even all women. They are single, married, parents, grandparents, or young adults just beginning to express their social conscience.

Mothers' Union provides a network through which they can serve Christ in their own community. This is done through prayer, financial support and actively working at the grassroots level in programmes that meet local needs.



Come and join in!!!

A brief history of the Keswick Convention celebrating its 150th Anniversary *[guest article]*

Keswick has always been about transformation. The Convention's founder Thomas Dundas Harford-Battersby, Vicar of St John's Keswick, was a man troubled by a lack of holiness in his own walk with God. It was whilst on holiday on the Cumbrian coast at Silloth that he was first introduced to a new teaching that would lead to a personal transformation by a work of God's Holy Spirit. In just three weeks, he and his friend Robert Wilson organised their own 'Holiness Convention' in June 1875 using a tent in the garden of Harford-Battersby's Keswick vicarage. Hundreds attended, and such was the success it was decided to hold another the following year, and so it has continued for 150 years.

Over those years, thousands of lives have been transformed. Some have simply returned home from the Convention changed, ready to live for and serve God in a new way in their daily lives. Countless others have heard the call to some form of vocational full-time service either at home in their own country or out on the worldwide mission field. Initially it was thought that the introduction of a call to service and mission would distract from the main purpose of the convention, however a natural reaction to the life transformations experienced at Keswick was a willingness and desire to serve. Hudson Taylor spoke at early Conventions and eventually missionary giving at the convention funded several Keswick Missionaries, the first, of course, being Amy Carmichael. Keswick archives contain many reports sent by Keswick Missionaries to the Missionary Committee reporting what God was doing in and through their work for Him. Such was the impact of Keswick's call for lives to be transformed, that many other Christian organisations and mission societies trace their roots back to Keswick.

Over the last 150 years Keswick itself has been transformed. In the early years of Keswick, the call to holiness was solely a personal transaction between an individual and God. Following the First World War, society was reeling from the sheer scale of what had just happened,

, which was anything *but* holy! People came to Keswick searching for answers. Regular convention speaker Graham Scroggie commented: “The war has widened our horizon, and increased our sympathies, and is leading us not to a new message, but to a proper adjustment of the old message to the new condition of things.”

Under the leadership of Stuart Holden in the 1920’s, Keswick responded. Holden’s aim was to press for a spiritual outlook which engaged with society, encompassed younger people and was genuinely interdenominational. He set up the very first youth meetings which contributed to the formation of the Inter Varsity Fellowship (now UCCF). Found-



er Norman Grubb said that “with Keswick came fire!” Holden also broadened the pool of speakers, which had previously been predominantly Anglican, to include many more non-conformists. By the time Holden stepped down in 1929 attendance at the convention had risen dramatically, and it was in a much healthier state.

The second major transformation came in the 1960’s. Over the 20th Century the theological understanding of holiness had developed within the Evangelical Church in the UK. Whilst the original call for personal transformation was still very clear, a more biblically robust understanding of how a person *became* holy was set by new, younger speakers such as Alec Motyer, Ken Prior and, in particular, John Stott.

The third transformation came in the 1980’s when there was serious talk amongst the leadership as to whether Keswick had ‘had its day.’ With the arrival of new bible gatherings, Keswick felt dated and was in danger of not connecting with a new generation. After a great deal of prayer, Philip Hacking led a major transformation which formed

the foundations of the Keswick Ministries we know today. He argued that “the message of holiness needs to be majored on today because it *isn't* being majored on today.” Alongside a reaffirmation to clear, biblically-based gospel teaching, he introduced major changes in the established weekly patterns of bible teaching.

The style and content of the meetings were modernised, and a clear future vision was set. Former Chair of Keswick, John Risbridger, commented: “It is hard to over-estimate the significance of Philip’s visionary leadership in Keswick, which helped transform the convention into the large contemporary, family event which it is today.”

As Keswick sets out on the next 150 years, the call to transformation remains at its core: hearing God’s Word, becoming like God’s Son and serving through mission, which, God willing, will lead to the transformation of His covenant people for many years to come.

Philip Sowerbutts

Vicar Of Castle Church, Stafford

& Archivist Of Keswick Ministries

Church Home Groups

Many churches have home groups, sometimes called house groups, life groups, connect groups that run regular meetings throughout the year. The purpose of such a group is to encourage people in their Christian Faith through Bible discussions, prayer, praise and social activities. They provide a safe space to share concerns and support those who are going through difficult times. As such they are a means of better getting to know people in the congregation. There is usually a code of conduct that everyone signs up to. As you can imagine each group is different depending on the mix of characters in the group and the group leader. At Christ Church there are several home groups that regularly meet throughout the year. **(cont on Page26).....**

My Experience of Coming to Faith and Healing

I have been a Christian for over 50 years now, having received the Holy Spirit into my life one lunch-time at my place of work. My coming to Christ was not through a word but was a visual thing, having seen in my brother a peace, a presence, something that I wanted for myself. His statement to me at the time – having been a Christian for a while was – “never turn back if you start on the Christian road”.

Good advice and I never have.

Having attended many lunch-time Christian gatherings, I was privileged to witness a healing from deafness of a work colleague. This occurred when all of us in the group held hands as a sign of unity as we prayed for healing.

Whilst attending the Beacon House of Prayer at Sandyford, I went out with a small group of spirit filled Christians onto the streets of Hanley under a flag with the emblem “Healing on the Streets”. Whilst I was conversing with a passer-by, two or three of my colleagues were praying with a gentleman who was walking with two hospital sticks. It turns out that the gentleman was due to go into hospital the next day to have an operation. He agreed to accept the prayers that were offered to him and all of a sudden this gentleman. with the two sticks. dropped them, or more likely threw them down and ran across the square shouting “does anyone want these!”. Who says healing was only for the apostolic period!

Stephen Pickstock.

A Prayer for Healing

Merciful Lord, I lift up all those in need of healing to you today. I pray for your healing touch to be upon their bodies, minds and spirits, for complete and swift restoration of health. I ask that you grant them peace and comfort in the midst of any pain or suffering they may be experiencing. I trust in your goodness and faithfulness, and give you all the glory. Amen.

(Continued from page 24) The home group I belong to is run by Helen Bowes and meets on ZOOM on Wednesdays once a fortnight at 8.00pm. The meeting usually lasts about 90 minutes. We used to meet at someone's home but since COVID it suited the group to continue meeting on ZOOM. Over the years we have covered an eclectic mix of studies from on-line courses such as the '321 Lent course' and 'Living in Love and Faith' to reviewing individual Books of the Bible in more depth or answering questions from the sermon notes on the Church notice sheet. Sometimes we simply share and pray and do Compline. We meet up for a meal a few times a year at some local hostelry.

I have found being part of a home group both supportive and challenging. I have learnt a lot about the Christian faith that has helped me on my journey with Christ in this life and would recommend.

Liz Mason

Safeguarding

The United Benefice is committed to Safeguarding and has adopted the National and Diocesan Safeguarding Policies for the welfare of everyone in our congregations. Anyone requiring any further information or raising concerns should contact the Safeguarding Coordinators: **Christ Church, Stone**: Andrew Stone on

Safeguarding2@christchurchstone.org

Oulton with Moddershall; Mary Gale on

Office@christchurchstone.org

Or contact the church office [01785 811990] to leave your details, and Andrew or Mary will ring you back.

The vicar, Rev Paul Kingman can also be contacted on 01785 812669.

If the matter is more urgent, or you feel uncomfortable contacting someone in our Benefice, you may contact the Diocesan Safeguarding Team at Lichfield <https://www.lichfield.anglican.org/safeguarding/>

A Cataclysmic Event!

The recent bombing of the Iranian nuclear sites put me in mind of a recent hike of mine around Central Staffordshire. This passed through the tiny hamlet of Fauld, a mile and a half from Tutbury. Here in November 1944, at an underground munitions storage depot, occurred one of the largest non-nuclear explosions in history and the largest to ever occur on UK soil. The statistics are incredible – 4,000 tons of ordnance exploded along with 500 million rounds of rifle ammunition. Upper Hayes Farm, which was located near the site, completely disappeared along with the six people living there, all blasted into the sky with millions of tons of earth and debris. Official figures put the casualty figures at 90, but nobody was too sure as incredibly there was no record of how many Italian POWs were working at the site. The explosion was thought to have released about one fifth of the force felt when the atom bomb was dropped on Hiroshima. Indeed only that explosion and those at Nagasaki and the New Mexico test site are thought to be greater. Incredibly, only about a third of the RAF dump actually exploded – some workers actually survived. Today, one can walk around the edge of the crater, but there are many signs around warning walkers not to stray into the site because of unexploded bombs – approximately 3,000 tons worth at the last count !! In actual fact there is not much to see of the crater as nature has totally taken over the area. In addition to the warning signs, there is also a memorial plaque listing those who lost their lives. Curious fact – the explosion happened at 11.11 am on 27th November, 1944, the same time as the Armistice Day which signified the end of the First World War ie the 11th hour of the 11th day of the 11th month.

John Bowes



Groups and Rotas

Deanery Synod Reps	Helen Bowes, Sue Kingman
P.C.C. Members	Lynne Collier, Maxine Garrington-Miller, Marylyn Hillman, George Holden, Pete Kelly, Liz Mason, Shelagh Sanders, Andy Stone, Gary Williams, Shirley Hallam,
Secretary	Shelagh Sanders
Treasurer	Pete Kelly
Envelopes, Gift Aid	Lynda Marenghi

FLOWER ROTA

3rd August:	
10th August:	
17th August:	Brenda Boote
24th August:	
31st August:	

WELCOMER

Pam Roberts
Jeanette Rowlands
Pete Kelly
Marilyn Overall
Jacqueline Abrahams

REGISTERS BAPTISM WEDDINGS FUNERALS

Roads for Prayer

4th August Airdale Grove Airdale Road Airdale Spinney Albert Street	11th August Alexandra St. Alma Street Ancestry Close Anderton View
18th August Arthur Street Barton Edge Bentley Close Berkeley St.	25th August Brindley Close Bromfield Court Caldon Way Cameron Wharf

