

Christ Church Magazine

February 2026



40p

PARISH DIRECTORY

SUNDAY SERVICES

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

THE PARISH TEAM

Vicar	Paul Kingman The Vicarage, Bromfield Court	812669
Children & Families Worker	Peter Cuthbert peter.j.cuthbert@btinternet.com	07733 042205
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: Mrs Tara Thorn 01785 334900

Christ Church Magazine

February 2026

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

Cover Picture:
Snow on the cut
January 2026 by Helen

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

From the Editor

Hello Everyone,
 I have today returned from a holiday in Fueteventura, one of the Canary Islands. It was good to have a break. It is a very dry, desert like, volcanic area—very different to green England! Always interesting to see new and different places. Because of the holiday I did not manage to write a ‘Tales from the Towpath’ this month—however there are some very interesting articles in this edition of the magazine. We have a guest article by Hannah Vasby-Burnie on ‘Pre-packaged prayer’ and thinking about prayer—a date for your diary—the ‘World day of Prayer’ on 6th March. Enjoy this edition and keep contributions coming in.
 God bless, Helen. January 21st 2026

From the Vicarage.....

Not the finished article.

Whatever your age consider this one question: what do you hope to become?

As the year rolls on we may have invested in many things in the hope of developing or reaching the new me goal that I have in mind. The January diet may have slackened off somewhat, but we may have got the bug for developing a new skill such as painting, writing, playing bridge, a new language or sport. It takes a large investment of time to develop in these areas, and we will trot out the line, “I’ve started to learn, but I’m not the finished article as yet!”

How are Jesus’ followers to see themselves? The answer is not “I’m better than everyone else”! Jesus’ followers have been changed by encountering him and deciding to follow him. Christian discipleship is all about progressive change: marching to a different drumbeat from the world. For we look forward to a significant future: *“Dear friends, we are God’s children now, and what we will be has not yet*

From the Vicarage.....cont.)

been made known. But we know that when Christ appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is" (1 John 3v2).

While believers in Jesus have been adopted to be God's children, a truly wonderful truth, their future form isn't fully revealed. John reassures his readers that they will one day become like Jesus Christ and see Him as He truly is on His return.

As one writer has put it: "What we are does not now appear to the world; what we shall be does not yet appear to us" (J. R. W. Stott). Just think about it. The heavenly prospect is something we long for those believers who have died ahead of us are the ones we will be reunited with. We may want also to meet the great heroes of faith who stood tall in history. We may be keen to see the pearly gates of heaven and its gold pavements. We may look forward to seeing the angelic host worshipping around the throne of God and join in with the thousands upon ten thousands (confident that we will all be in tune!). But none of these lovely ideas are the most precious thing about heaven. What comes out tops is that we will have unhindered access to being in the presence of the Lord and see Him as He is. This will mark the moment when we are transformed to be the finished article! We will not become clones, since our characters will continue and be perfected in the image of Christ.

During Lent we have another opportunity to reappraise our lives and focus on what matters most. Our walk with Christ is primary, for we will spend eternity with Him.

Paul Kingman
February 2026



February 2026

	Date	Time	Events (Zoom codes in weekly email)
Sun	1st	9.15 am 5.00 pm	Communion; John 6: 53-71 “Divisive teaching” ‘Jesus through Old Testament eyes’ group study (6 of 8)
Mon	2nd	9.30 am	Toddler group
Tue	3rd	10.30 am 12.30 pm	Communion; John 1: 35-42 “His call to discipleship” Pursuit Club Christ Church Academy
Wed	4th	9.00 am 2.00 pm	Christ Church First School assembly Trekks
Thu	5th	1.10 pm	Christ Church Academy assembly
Fri	6th		
Sat	7th	8.30 am	Prayer meeting followed by breakfast
Sun	8th	9.15 am 5.00 pm	Morning Prayer; Matthew 13: 24-30, 36-43 “Parable of the weeds” ‘Jesus through Old Testament eyes’ group study (7 of 8)
Mon	9th	9.30 am	Toddler group
Tue	10th	10.30 am 12.30 pm 2.00 pm	Communion; John 1: 43-51 “God’s Son and our King” Pursuit Club Christ Church Academy Autumn House — Church at Home service
Wed	11th	9.00 am 2.30 pm 3.30 pm	Christ Church First School assembly Oulton Abbey — Church at Home service Trekks
Thu	12th	11.00 am 1.10 pm	St. Mary’s Home — Church at Home service Christ Church Academy assembly
Fri	13th		
Sat	14th		

February 2026

	Date	Time	Events
Sun	15th	9.15 am 5.00 pm	Communion; Matthew 13: 31-33, 44-52 "The small, precious and good" 'Jesus through Old Testament eyes' group study (8 of 8)
Mon	16th		<i>Schools Half Term Week</i>
Tue	17th	10.30 am	Communion; Hebrews 1: 1-4 "Supreme word"
Wed	18th	7.00 pm	<i>Ash Wednesday</i> service including session 1 of Lent Course
Thu	19th		
Fri	20th		
Sat	21st		
Sun	22nd	9.15 am 5.00 pm	All age; Matthew 18: 10-14 "The lost sheep" Lent Course, session 2 at Vicarage
Mon	23rd	9.30 am	Toddler group
Tue	24th	10.30 am 12.30 pm	Communion; Hebrews 1: 5-2: 4 "Greater than angels" Pursuit Club Christ Church Academy
Wed	25th	9.00 am 3.30 pm 7.30 pm	Christ Church First School assembly Trekks Lent Course, session 2
Thu	26th	1.10 pm	Christ Church Academy assembly
Fri	27th		
Sat	28th		

MISSION PRAYER DIARY

WEEK ONE - Paul and Elizabeth Makau

The Makau family minister in Kenya as part of the African Inland Mission (AIM), teaching at the African International University in Nairobi.

PRAYER POINTS

Pray for Paul and Elizabeth and their family that God will continue to lead them and grant them good health as they continue to serve Him.

Continue to pray for Paul and Elizabeth as they teach mission courses at the African International University, equipping local pastors and church leaders to take the gospel to the unreached.

Pray for local church leaders who are also joining Paul and Elizabeth to assess how they can plant churches in surrounding villages.

Continue to pray for the use and funding of audio bibles that enables people to hear the bible in their own language.



**AFRICA
INLAND MISSION**

WEEK TWO

Mission Aviation Fellowship (MAF)

PRAYER POINTS

MAF operates in more than 25 countries, each with its own unique challenges. In Papua New Guinea, the humid air encourages corrosion. In South Sudan and the Democratic Republic of Congo, fine red dust seeps into every crevice, clogging filters and wearing down bearings. In Timor-Leste, constant heat and salt air place a strain on metal and wiring. Such environments demand both technical skill and creative problem-solving. MAF engineers are trained to the same standards as those in commercial aviation, yet the conditions they face when things don't go to plan can be different. Across the world's most remote regions, these engineers work quietly behind the scenes to keep every aircraft safe and ready to fly. There is little glamour in the job, but immense purpose. Every bolt checked and every filter replaced helps deliver vital care: a medical evacuation, a vaccine delivery, or a flight carrying teachers and supplies to a distant village.



Please pray for.....

It's been a year since MAF's amphibious aircraft began operating in Lake Murray – Papua New Guinea's largest lake.

From enabling healthcare to delivering school supplies, hundreds of lives have been transformed for the better. Before the P2-WET arrived, it would take up to five days by boat to access a hospital and essential supplies, but thanks to its water landing capabilities and speed, the floatplane can reach hospital in as little as ten minutes by air. More docking stations are being built in the coming months, it's hoped that P2-WET will eventually serve some 30 isolated water communities including Kushikino, Ushakov, Miwa, Magipopo and Maka, which don't have access to any airstrips.

Give thanks for all the engineers who work for and serve MAF faithfully, praying that they may continue to use their God given talents to enable planes to reach those in need and who have never heard the good news of Jesus Christ.

Pray for more docking stations to be built in Lake Murray to enable more communities to be reached and the gospel of Jesus to be spread, and lives to be changed.



WEEK THREE - Tearfund FOCUS - Afghanistan

PRAYERPOINTS

Following several major earthquakes hitting eastern Afghanistan killing more than 2,200 people and injuring over 3,600, the impact has been devastating. People have had to dig their relatives out of the rubble with bare hands, villages have been destroyed, roads have been blocked by landslides. Survivors desperately need shelter, food and safe sanitation. These earthquakes have been deadly and have devastated the region.

Pray for the people who have been affected by this disaster, that God will comfort those who mourn, heal the injured and provide shelter and essentials for the displaced

Pray that God gives Tearfund's local staff strength, safety, wisdom and the resources required to respond to these disasters

Pray that God will lay his loving hand over the areas affected and bring peace, hope and restoration where there is devastation.

The logo consists of a yellow square background. In the center, there is a blue rounded rectangle containing the word "tearfund" in white, lowercase, sans-serif font.

tearfund

WEEK FOUR - Simeons Trustees

Simeons trustees work hard to discern who God wants to place in different roles in their partner churches and help churches to organise themselves. They aim to carry the vision Charles Simoen had, "to place Christ centred gospel people in parishes across the country"

PRAYER POINTS

Pray for Guy Donegan-Cross, chair of Simeons trustees that he may continue to serve God faithfully in his role.

Thank God for all the trustees who give their time and serve faithfully, praying that they may be encouraged during 2026.

Pray for those who oversee filling vacancies in the patronage that God may give them wisdom and guidance.

Thank God for the continued financial and prayerful support from all the partner churches that allow Simeons trustees to continue their important work

Praise God for the good relationships that Simeons trustees have built with the PCC's in their partner churches and pray that this may continue.



Christingle 2025

Thank you to everyone who helped to make the Christingle Service so successful. We made almost 50 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, but it is so special.



I would like to say a special thank you to at Oulton First school for their continued support in taking a collecting candle home and filling it.

The Christingle candle collection with the service collection was £100 which has been forwarded to The Children's Society to help with their valuable work caring for vulnerable children in the UK.

Thank you to everyone for continuing to support The Children's Society.

Sandra Morray

House Boxes 2026

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

Mob 07504992901



**The
Children's
Society**

Hope Corner

We have recently re-landscaped the terrace of Christ Church, in Stone!

It was a plan that started as a conversation with Christ Church First School about their idea of having a dementia friendly garden. At Christ Church, a similar line of thought had been developing in parallel. So, we thought about a combined project since the front garden area of the church was already accessible, with the right sort of space to undertake the project.

We have now had a sturdy bench made locally, which we installed (thanks to Richard Cook ably assisted by one of our wardens Pete Mason). Extra tubs, kindly supplied by the school have been put in place with extra flowers thanks to the chief gardener Marilyn Hillman. We welcomed Andrew Best (Stone's deputy Mayor) to an official opening on Tuesday 11th November and thanks to Martin Robinson who kindly agreed to take some photographs so we could let the community know.

We have named the area 'Hope Corner'. Who is it for? It's for everybody! People today face many issues, so we think this will be a place for many to take time out in the day. The school pupils will be involved in maintaining the plants under the supervision of Marilyn as the garden develops.

Rev Paul Kingman

Vicar of Christ Church, Stone and Oulton with Moddershall.

Carol Singing on the Wards



Carol Singing on the wards

On the 9th December a group of us joined other churches in singing carols round the wards at Royal Stoke University Hospital. It is such a lovely rewarding occasion just brightening up the day for patients and staff singing carols of their choice.

Our group went into one ward where a lovely lady was so appreciative that she became quite emotional and the nurse who went to console her became emotional too. Some patients and staff joined in with the singing.

We all enjoyed our time there and look forward to next December.

Pam Roberts

Pre-packaged Prayer for the Weary Heart

Hannah Vasby-Burnie shares how praying Scripture helps when we are pressed for time or do not know what to say to God

I don't need to tell you that Christians believe that prayer is important. We pray in church and home groups, and we casually say 'I'll pray for you' when someone is having a hard day. And we see posts on Instagram of people with beautifully decorated prayer journals and strict 'quiet time' schedules where the world seems to pause around them and allows them to spend a good half an hour in reverent communication with our heavenly Father.

However, as a third-year nursing student who's soon to be entering the professional world, a lot of this type of prayer life can be unrealistic. I may have to miss church or home group due to shifts, missing out on experiencing precious communal prayer. If I'm honest, I don't always have time in the morning before a 13-hour shift to carefully highlight my favourite verses and weave them into a 30-minute prayer time. When confronted with extreme pain and suffering on a ward that seems never-ending, my mind often draws a blank at the right words to pray in the moment.

And that's the main issue. When you're busy and tired, working long hours and being amongst non-Christians and people who are in their darkest moments, prayer does not always come naturally. My foggy brain can only focus on the job at hand and can barely manage a quick arrow prayer of 'Dear God, please let me get this job done quickly so I can go on my lunch break', let alone setting aside time to really communicate and connect with the Lord of Lords. Not that there's anything wrong with arrow prayers, God loves even the smallest of voices, but when trying to develop and maintain a deep prayer life, we might want something meatier than what our stubborn, tired hearts can give us.

Prayer is beautiful when it is spontaneous and soulful, but Jesus knows that we don't always have the strength to pray from our sinful hearts. Wonderfully, he has given us pre-packaged prayers in the Bible that we can use and are filled with life-giving truth. These are like handy saline syringes filled with the salty water of deep biblical truths – just rip open the packaging, pop it in the cannula, and you're good to go!

The most famous of these prayers is the Lord's Prayer, but there are many prayers in the Bible we can use, especially in the Psalms. Here we have 150 songs and prayers that, according to church leader and reformer John Calvin, are 'an anatomy of all the parts of the soul'. The Spirit has also inspired Christians throughout history to write down prayers for everyone to use when we don't know what else to say.

Christians have always experienced joy and worry, tiredness and pain, and Christ has too. Instead of having to look inside ourselves and kick our anxious, caffeinated hearts into gear, we can receive the gift of words from outside ourselves to set our hearts on our Father and give him our praises and petitions.

To help you on your pre-packaged prayer journey, here's an example of when I used Psalm 134 on a night shift:

Praise the Lord, all you servants of the Lord, who minister by night in the house of the Lord.

Even on night shift I, a servant of the Most High, am called to praise him!

Lift up your hands in the sanctuary and praise the Lord.

Alone in the break room, I lift up my hands to praise you, Lord!

May the Lord bless you from Zion, he who is the Maker of heaven and earth.

I give thanks to the Maker of heaven and earth who blesses me even in the darkness of night, Amen.

Hannah Vasby-Burnie is a student nurse and serves as a rep on the CMF National Student Council.

Draw Near in Lent

Helen Emery, the diocese's Whole Life Discipleship Officer is excited about ways of adding meaning to Lent this year.

Opening the curtains each morning and seeing the light which floods the room as God flooding my day with His light of love.

Savouring the first sip of coffee I take, thanking God for the joyful flavour and asking to be shown joy in whatever the day has ahead.

Seeing my shower as a mini – baptism preparing me for the day ahead.

Using my commute to work or my drive to the supermarket as an opportunity to pray for those I will encounter there.

Asking God to take away any rubbish which is not helpful in my life as I take the bins out each week.

These are all ways of infusing our everyday habits with deeper, life-giving meaning. It is nothing new – these are all suggestions I have heard over the years from fellow disciples on the faith journey. I am sure you have similar habits which can turn into tiny yet significant rituals.

The challenges for me – as a disciple and in my role as Whole life Discipleship officer for Lichfield Diocese – is to take the big picture of what I believe about the life, death and resurrection of Jesus, the mind-blowing, eternal significance of it, the heart-swelling enormity of it – and ensure it makes a difference to the tiny detail of my every day, ordinary, here and now life. However you do that – whether it be through actions and re-actions, prayers and practicalities – I believe it is the essence of lent. Self-examination, repentance and sacrifice.



From the Diocese (1) cont...

For Lent 2026, resources published from Church House will be under the banner of “Draw Near: Life-giving habits for Lent”. So this theme of building our ‘rhythms of life’ – habits and patterns which help us grow as disciples of Christ day by day – is particularly current.

The booklet and app will focus on 6 aspects - worshipping together, praying, exploring the Bible, sharing communion, offering service and sharing the good news with others.

So I invite you this lent to join me in striving to bring our discipleship that little bit more into the ‘whole of life’ - and seeing the transformation it can bring to our relationship with God, ourselves and each other.

Look out for the ‘Draw Near’ resources on the Church of England’s various channels: www.cofe.io/DrawNear and join in individually or as small groups on social media channels (@thechurchofengland and the ‘Everyday Faith’ app on smartphones.

If you’re considering running a small group during lent and want ideas, do talk to Helen who has scoped out a large number of options and can make suggestions appropriate to your setting: hel-en.emery@lichfield.anglican.org

Shallowford House retreats, Stone, Staffs

- **Quiet Mondays at Shallowford House**, once a month starting on **9 February**. £27 incl lunch. More info on our website.
- **Living with Loss** - creative grief workshop for those who have lost a spouse or partner, child or other close family/friends. **21 & 28 February**
- Shallowford House needs volunteers! Whether you can help in the grounds, with maintenance or any other areas, please get in touch. Or come along to our first **Volunteer Party** of the year; **23 – 26 March**. [Contact the office](#) for more information.

Find these and more opportunities at your diocesan retreat centre at shallowfordhouse.org

Spring Messenger

As winter starts to draw to a close and the days are getting noticeably longer we all start to search for signs of spring. One of the first spring flowers is the Lesser Celandine. This little plant, often viewed as a garden weed, lights up our churchyards with bright, shiny, yellow stars set off beautifully by the surrounding dark green heart-shaped leaves. An old name for Lesser Celandine was 'Spring Messenger' and, like the Snowdrop, it can lift the spirits with the message that spring is coming.

Another old name is Pilewort, suggesting that this plant was used to treat haemorrhoids. Richard Maybey in his *Flora Britannica* considers this prescription to have been due to the Doctrine of Signatures, a belief that similar shaped plants could cure specific ills. In the case of Lesser Celandine it is the knobbly tubers that were thought to resemble piles!

Lesser Celandine is a common plant which can spread fast and likes shady damp areas, but it is not fussy and can be found in grassland, at the base of walls or monuments, on banks, verges and along path edges and is always to be found within churchyards, chapel yards and cemeteries. The cheerful yellow flowers can carpet the ground offering an important early nectar supply to emerging insects such as queen bumblebees, beetles and other pollinators.

Although small, the Lesser Celandine has attracted the attention of the famous. Wordsworth wrote three poems about it and the naturalist Gilbert White of Selborne in Hampshire recorded when he saw his first Lesser Celandine each year, the average date being the 21st February. This date has been known as Celandine Day since 1795. Now, due to climate change, the flowers can be seen earlier in the year with some coming into bloom in late January.

From the Diocese (2) cont...

Enjoy the Lesser Celandine in February, its flowers and leaves both die back in late spring so please make a record of it using iNaturalist, as anyone looking at plants later in the year may not find any remaining traces of it so it can easily go unrecorded. Although a common plant it is an important one and one on which our early pollinators rely.

All the best, Harriet

Harriet Carty, *Diocesan Churchyard Environmental Advisor*,
harriet@cfga.org.uk,

www.caringforgodsacre.org.uk - individuals and groups in the diocese receive 20% members discount on all CfGA materials.

Use the discount code diomem22

A prayer for the environment from the Rt Revd Graham Usher, Bishop of Norwich and Lead Bishop on the Environment

God of life,

*we praise you for the beauty of creation,
its richness and variety;*

*yet, through greed and ignorance,
we scar your world with plastic waste
and throw so much away.*

Make us more like Jesus,

*treading gently on our common home,
and breathe your Spirit on us,*

that we may care more deeply for your Earth.

We ask this through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

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 Beautiful Rainbow over Christ Church—photo by Colette Pearce.



WORLD DAY OF PRAYER

A service for everyone!

Friday 6 March

I will give you rest, come

World Day of Prayer

Nigeria 2026

This year's World Day of Prayer has been prepared by Christians in Nigeria. An ecumenical group in Stone will lead this service **at St Dominic's Church on Friday 6 March starting at 2 o'clock.**

As we take part in the service we join a great wave of prayer which encircles the globe. This begins in Samoa ending, 146 countries later, in American Samoa.

Shirley Hallam



INFORMED PRAYER PRAYERFUL ACTION

24-7 365 Days a year Prayer movement Ecumenical International Women-led
wwdp.org.uk

Registered Charity Number 233242

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		WELCOMER	
1st Feb	Flower Guild	1st Feb	Marilyn Overall
8th Feb	Flower Guild	8th Feb	Jacqueline Abrahams
15th Feb	Flower Guild	15th Feb	Pam Roberts
22nd Feb	Flower Guild	22nd Feb	Jeanette Rowlands

CHURCH REGISTERS	BAPTISMS
	WEDDINGS
	FUNERALS

Roads for Prayer

2nd Feb Darwin Close Dixon Close Dominic Court Edward Street	9th Feb Elmhurst Way Field House Court Field Terrace Goodall Close
16th Feb Granville Terrace Harding Grove Harecastle Bank Hartley Drive	23rd Feb Joules Drive Kent Grove King's Avenue Longton Road

