

# Christ Church Magazine

October 2026



40p

# PARISH DIRECTORY

## SUNDAY SERVICES

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

## THE PARISH TEAM

|                                           |                                                                                      |        |
|-------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------|
| <b>Vicar</b>                              | Paul Kingman                                                                         | 812669 |
|                                           | The Vicarage, Bromfield Court                                                        |        |
| <b>Children &amp; Families<br/>Worker</b> | Vacant                                                                               |        |
| <b>Electoral Roll Officer</b>             | Parish Office                                                                        | 811990 |
| <b>Parish Office</b>                      | Christ Church Centre, Christ Church Way, Stone,<br>Staffs ST15 8ZB                   | 811990 |
|                                           | Email <a href="mailto:office@christchurchstone.org">office@christchurchstone.org</a> |        |

## CHRIST CHURCH CENTRE

|                          |               |        |
|--------------------------|---------------|--------|
| <b>Booking Secretary</b> | 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

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**Committed to following Jesus. Commissioned to make Disciples**



Front Cover –  
Along the towpath – by  
Helen

Please send your articles  
for the November  
magazine to us by the  
15th October

Magazine 40p each month  
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office.



## Christ Church on the Internet

|                        |                                                                                    |
|------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Parish website         | <a href="http://www.christchurchstone.org">www.christchurchstone.org</a>           |
| Parish office email    | <a href="mailto:office@christchurchstone.org">office@christchurchstone.org</a>     |
| Magazine contributions | <a href="mailto:magazine@christchurchstone.org">magazine@christchurchstone.org</a> |

## From the Editor

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Hello there,

Greetings to you all. Autumn is making its mark, and I am looking forward to all the Autumnal colours. I am sure the shops will be full of pumpkins this coming month – it's evidently a bumper year for them! And this is a bumper magazine thanks to some super articles you have provided for our interest. We have a final Children and Families Report from Peter Cuthbert who has moved onto new exciting pastures following his call to ordination training after 7 years with us. We pray for a new worker to come forward soon. We also have a great piece by Alan – a revised version of a sermon he delivered at Hilderstone – a good read! You should enjoy reading about the 'Man with the Clarinet' and the usual regular articles are included so I hope you enjoy this edition.

I am looking forward to the Harvest Quiz on October 2<sup>nd</sup> with proceeds to Tearfund. The Advent Windows planning is well underway so look out for news about that soon. Please send in your interesting articles for the next month. God bless, Helen.

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## From the Vicarage.....

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### **Chill, thrill or brill? October and all that.**

Finally, rain! We've all sensed a change in the air as daily temperatures have taken a dip. The long summer that left everything parched but now the autumnal rains have revived the flowers, shrubs and grass which has been a sight for sore eyes.

Yet October is so often associated with some rather darker elements at the end of the month as Halloween approaches. It's become the third largest retail event of the year after Christmas and Easter. An eye-watering £800M a year is the sort of figure we see for consumer spending on costumes, decorations and food. The event has its

primitive roots in the lighting of bonfires and wearing of costumes to ward off ghosts (and the idea of souls travelling from purgatory to heaven that the protestant European Reformation knocked on the head as being misleading).

Celebrations at Halloween are all mixed up with Christian practices of remembering those Christian disciples who have gone before us, many martyred for their faith and giving thanks for the saints of old (hence All Saints Day). But the popular cultural event we now see has led to a huge growth of merchandise for sale in the supermarkets, has more to do with a celebration of horror, the macabre and the supernatural. We may find the contemporary event gives us either a chill (I put my hand up) or a thrill.

By the end of the month Christians can legitimately celebrate three positive (and related) truths which are absolutely brill! The first is that Jesus came to disarm powers: when he died on the cross Jesus stripped spiritual rulers and authorities of their power, making a public spectacle of them (Colossians 2v15). Secondly, Jesus' dying and rising again broke the power of death and removed the fear of mortality that holds humans in bondage because of the great resurrection hope for all who trust in Jesus (Hebrews 2v14-15). Thirdly, the cross of Jesus paid the penalty for our sin, leaving no basis for Satan to bring accusations against the believer (Rev 12v10-11).

These are marvellous truths to dwell on. Even if we decide to offer treats to those who come door knocking at our homes, we have something sweeter to the taste for it is both precious and everlasting.

Paul Kingman

October 2026



# Church Diary October 2026

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|     | Date | Time                                       | Events (Zoom codes in weekly email)                                                                                                                             |
|-----|------|--------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Thu | 1st  |                                            |                                                                                                                                                                 |
| Fri | 2nd  | 1.15 pm<br>7.00 pm                         | Christ Church Academy assembly<br>The Big Quiz in church centre<br>(Harvest event raising funds for Tearfund)                                                   |
| Sat | 3rd  | 8.30 am                                    | Prayer meeting followed by breakfast                                                                                                                            |
| Sun | 4th  | 9.15 am<br>5.00 pm                         | Communion; Nehemiah 1 “A passion for God”<br>Christianity Explored course in the church centre<br>(2 of 7)                                                      |
| Mon | 5th  | 9.30 am                                    | Toddler group                                                                                                                                                   |
| Tue | 6th  | 9.15 am<br>10.30 am<br>12.30 pm            | Christ Church First School assembly<br>Communion; 1 Peter 5: 1-13 “Chosen to stand firm”<br>Pursuit Club Christ Church Academy                                  |
| Wed | 7th  |                                            |                                                                                                                                                                 |
| Thu | 8th  |                                            |                                                                                                                                                                 |
| Fri | 9th  | 10.45 am                                   | Christ Church Academy Harvest service in church                                                                                                                 |
| Sat | 10th |                                            |                                                                                                                                                                 |
| Sun | 11th | 9.15 am<br>5.00 pm                         | Morning Prayer; Nehemiah 2 “Praying and planning”<br>Christianity Explored course in the church centre<br>(3 of 7)                                              |
| Mon | 12th | 9.30 am                                    | Toddler group                                                                                                                                                   |
| Tue | 13th | 9.15 am<br>10.30 am<br>12.30 pm<br>2.30 pm | Christ Church First School assembly<br>Communion; Luke 12: 13-21 “The rich fool”<br>Pursuit Club Christ Church Academy<br>Autumn House — Church at Home service |
| Wed | 14th | 11.00 am<br>2.30 pm                        | St. Mary’s Home — Church at Home service<br>Oulton Abbey – Church at Home service                                                                               |
| Thu | 15th |                                            |                                                                                                                                                                 |
| Fri | 16th | 1.15 pm                                    | Christ Church Academy assembly                                                                                                                                  |
| Sat | 17th |                                            |                                                                                                                                                                 |

# Church Diary October 2026

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|     | Date | Time                            | Events (Zoom codes in weekly email)                                                                                                 |
|-----|------|---------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Sun | 18th | 9.15 am<br>5.00 pm              | Communion; Nehemiah 4: 1-14, 5: 1-13<br>“Threats to God’s kingdom”<br>Christianity Explored course in the church centre<br>(4 of 7) |
| Mon | 19th | 9.30 am<br>7.30 pm              | Toddler group<br>Standing Committee meeting                                                                                         |
| Tue | 20th | 9.15 am<br>10.30 am<br>12.30 pm | Christ Church First School assembly<br>Communion; Luke 13: 18-19<br>“Mustard seed and yeast”<br>Pursuit Club Christ Church Academy  |
| Wed | 21st |                                 |                                                                                                                                     |
| Thu | 22nd |                                 |                                                                                                                                     |
| Fri | 23rd | 1.15 pm                         | Christ Church Academy assembly                                                                                                      |
| Sat | 24th |                                 |                                                                                                                                     |
| Sun | 25th | 9.15 am                         | <b>NOTE: Clocks change</b><br>All age; Nehemiah 6: 15- 7: 4, 8: 1-12<br>“The completed project”                                     |
| Mon | 26th |                                 | <b><i>Schools Half Term Holiday all week</i></b>                                                                                    |
| Tue | 27th | 10.30 am                        | Communion; Luke 14: 15-24 “The banquet”                                                                                             |
| Wed | 28th |                                 |                                                                                                                                     |
| Thu | 29th |                                 |                                                                                                                                     |
| Fri | 30th |                                 |                                                                                                                                     |
| Sat | 31st |                                 |                                                                                                                                     |

# Take Time to Pray

Mission Prayer Diary 4<sup>th</sup> to 10<sup>th</sup> October

Midlands Gospel Partnership

The Midlands Gospel Partnership exists to see healthy local churches in every Midlands community by:

- training in biblical ministry
- co-operating in evangelism
- partnering in church planting initiatives

The means of gospel ministry is prayerful teaching of the Bible.

- *Pray that God's voice is heard as the Bible is taught, in the power of the Spirit.*

The heart of gospel ministry is the proclamation of Christ crucified.

- *Pray that people hear that the message of the cross is God's way of saving people from his coming wrath.*

The focus for gospel ministry is the local church. It is primarily through the local church that unbelievers are brought to faith in Christ and believers are built up in him.

- *Pray that more people will hear the word of God.*

The Midlands Women's Convention is taking place in October in Nottingham and Solihull – Strong in the Lord. The Midlands Men's Convention is taking place in November in Nottingham – Living and Action, building your life on the word of God.

- *Please pray for the leaders of the convention and all attending, that they find strength in the Lord, and take away a renewed vigour for their life with God*

# Take Time to Pray

Mission Prayer Diary 11<sup>th</sup> to 17<sup>th</sup> October

Church Mission Society Tim & Kate Lee - Jigsaw

Jigsaw, a Filipino-led charity supported remotely by founder Tim Lee in the UK, runs eight children and family centres across the capital, providing education, healthcare and more for some of the poorest families.

Over the last three years, God has been revealing important developments for Jigsaw's work, including a new assessment system which focuses on individual's needs, and works to prevent the pathways that can lead into sexual exploitation, human trafficking and modern slavery, both in the Philippines and overseas.

It feels like tunnelling through stone to create new and lifegiving pathways but we firmly believe these developments could bring long-term safety and new futures for many hundreds of children and young people and become an important part of Jigsaw's model for generations to come.

- *Please pray for God's wisdom as we seek his leading to turn ideas into practical programmes and strategies, and against the evil that does not want this work to happen.*

Jigsaw continues to respond to serious flooding in the communities where we work in Metro Manila, especially the Forestry squatter area.

- *Please continue to pray for the communities and households most affected. Thank you for standing with us.*

# Take Time to Pray

Mission Prayer Diary 18<sup>th</sup> to 24<sup>th</sup> October

African Inland Mission – The Makau's

Paul and Elizabeth began serving with AIM at Africa International University (AIU) in Nairobi, Kenya in 2022. AIU is a private Christian university that offers Christ-centred leadership training to church leaders so that they can transform their communities. Both Paul and Elizabeth were involved in training, discipling and mentoring church leaders in the UK for a long time.

In the months of April to July, Paul and Elizabeth spent time in Tanzania, engaging church leaders in various parts of the country by facilitating mission awareness.

- *Please pray that God will use their efforts to raise up more workers from within East Africa, so that many may have the opportunity to hear and respond to the good news.*

Paul and Elizabeth teach mission courses at Africa International University (AIU) in Nairobi and mobilise local church leaders to serve as missionaries among Unreached People Groups.

- *Thank God for increased mission awareness among local churches and their involvement in mission to UPGs.*

A local congregation in Nairobi has now developed a 10-year plan to support the outreach going on among nomadic groups in the North of Kenya, and many more church denominations are partnering with AIM to send workers to the mission field. Paul and Elizabeth are currently involved in developing and delivering a missions course in partnership with All Nations College UK for training local missionaries, who will be sent to share the gospel among UPGs.

- *Please pray for them as they are planning the International Mission Conference on 23rd-25th Feb 2027 at AIU.'*

# Take Time to Pray

Mission Prayer Diary 25<sup>th</sup> to 30<sup>th</sup> October

Barnabas Aid

Barnabas Aid is an international Christian ministry that provides hope and practical support to suffering and persecuted Christians.

Cuba has been facing critical shortages of fuel and extensive blackouts that have affected millions of people.

- *Thank the Lord that Barnabas Aid supporters have funded the provision of solar panels for Cuban churches that will help Christian communities through the present crisis.*

Indian church leaders have written to the chief minister of the north-eastern state of Manipur asking for more to be done to resolve a grave and escalating humanitarian crisis.

- *Ask the Lord to bring peace and provision to Manipur, especially for our brothers and sisters in Christ. Pray that the displaced will be able to return to their homes and begin to rebuild their lives.*

Christians are treated with hostility and suspicion in many parts of Indonesia, and are often among the most impoverished people.

- *Please pray for the success of a Barnabas Aid project to meet the urgent needs of 500 families with essential food packages.*

Chickens and piglets were distributed among Christian families, along with training in animal health and welfare.

- *Pray for a sustainable chicken-farming project that will benefit at least 25 families.*

# Lex Orandi, Lex Credendi

*A revised version of the sermon delivered by Alan on Aug 30<sup>th</sup> at Hilderstone*

*Just, by way of introduction, a little background to what follows. In our house group sometime in July or August we reflected on a short passage from Paul's letter to the Romans. The same passage came in our daily readings. We shared this passage with those to whom Maryanne and I take home communion and they all found our reflections very helpful. To my amazement, the set lectionary reading for Sunday 30<sup>th</sup> August was the same passage. I often wonder when we receive the same scripture repeatedly, as we did, that God may be wanting to say something. Those who received this at home communion and those who heard this preached at Hilderstone all found it helpful. So I share this with you trusting that this will be a blessing to you who read this. Here goes...*

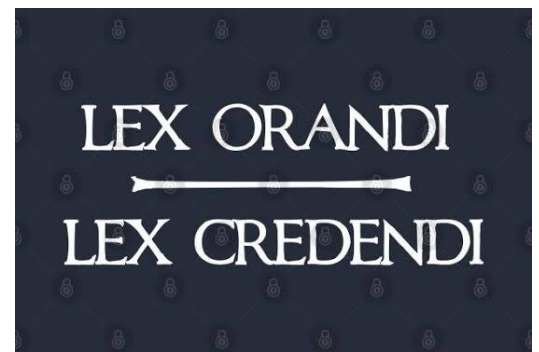
Reading Romans 12: 9 -21.

So Maryanne and I have been off skiing again earlier this year. Now many of you know that by skiing we mean spending kids inheritance. And we continued to do that with our first river cruise. It was in Portugal

and we cruised along the river Douro amongst all the vineyards that produce the wines and port that the region is famous for. The wine and food both on board and the places we visited were 5 star.

Every meal on board was a buffet and the wine flowed. It was a feast. Different dishes to choose from. So much choice – an abundance that you could feast on for hours if you weren't already satisfied!

And today our reading in Romans is not unlike that buffet – there is so much to feast on, so much to reflect on, a passage that offers a whole series of sermons. By way of example, the first verse in our reading ie v9 in itself may prompt two sermons. Look at this V9+11 'Love must be sincere, honour one another above yourselves' - there's a sermon there. Or v 9 + 21 'Hate what is evil and cling to what is good..overcome evil with good' – there's another sermon there.



The whole passage offers a richness and bounty on which we could feast. Given the richness of this passage I will be a little selective in what to consider. There are three short phrases on which we reflect. V12 be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer.

Three short phrases that hang together. *[It was this verse that had cropped up earlier – see the introduction]*

Be joyful in hope – find and take joy from the hope you have. We believe Jesus is risen from the dead, risen to a life immortal and eternal. We believe he will come again to judge the living and the dead. He will return and put right all the injustices of this world. He will return and usher in the resurrection for those who believe and trust in him. We will be raised with him to share in that eternal life. That is our hope. Rejoice in it.

And there is hope for this world. I guess all of us have been shocked by what we've seen in the last few months. Wildfires on a scale never seen before. Temperatures soaring. Widespread drought across the planet. And the devastation in Nepal by flood waters arising from glaciers that are melting due to rising temperatures. And the predictions are it will be worse next year.

What hope is there for this world that seems on fire and drowning at the same time? It is easy to fall into despair and feel that the problems are so big we can do little about it.

But there is hope for this world. In this same letter to the Romans Paul writes in chapter 8 verse 21: '...the creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the glorious freedom of the children of God'. Creation will be redeemed as we are redeemed. It will be made new as we are made new in the resurrection. There will be future glory for this world as we will share in future glory.

That's our hope – take joy in it. It is the antidote to all our despair.

Be patient in affliction. Patience is one of those virtues that I think has been eroded by our culture – a culture in which everything is so immediate, you don't have to wait for anything. When credit cards were first introduced this was the strap line that went with it. Access –

your flexible friend – take the waiting out of wanting. It's reflected in the one who prays God will you give me patience – and be quick about it.

We have to find a way of being comfortable with waiting for something that seems a long way off.

Be patient in affliction. In all our weaknesses, our illnesses, our health conditions – be patient, it won't always be like this. All that suffering and affliction will be gone when Jesus returns. We wait patiently for our redemption our healing our salvation. We wait patiently for his return and in waiting we take joy in that hope.

And in that waiting, we pray. Be faithful in prayer.

There is an ancient Christian tradition, so old it was written in Latin! Lex orandi, lex credendi. It means the law of prayer (lex orandi) is the law of belief (lex credendi). We pray what we believe.

If what has been said so far – about the hope we have, about what we believe regarding the resurrection of Christ, what we believe about our own future glory, what we believe about his coming again – all of which brings hope so we faithfully pray. We pray in line with what we believe. And that prayer sustains our hope and sustains our patience. We wait. We wait on God and we wait for God – we wait for him to fulfil all that is promised to us. That's what we believe, that's what we pray.

In all that you face, may you find joy in the hope you have, may you be patient in the circumstances you find yourselves in and may you be faithful in prayer. Amen.

*Revd Alan Betts*

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**Don't forget!!!!**

**Friday 2<sup>nd</sup> October for our Big Quiz Night in Christ Church Centre in aid of Tearfund.**



## **Final Children and Families Report for PCC and Magazine, September 2026**

---

Well, it has been quite the seven years! In September 2019 I didn't know what I had got myself in for!

I will structure this reflection in the same way I would my regular PCC report – looking at the different areas of ministry I am involved in and briefly describing what's happened. Only this time, I will describe an overview of change over seven years!

***Sunday School.*** I will start with what has been the most unpredictable area of the ministry. When I started, we had about 3 children in attendance regularly in the older children's group, but this soon was all curtailed due to covid! What followed was a transition to Ebenezer videos which could produce the same kinds of content albeit without that personal interaction. These were hard work! As we moved out of lockdown, we took to making packs of Sunday school material in envelopes to deliver to all the families we ministered to. This continued for a short time even after Sunday school returned as a way of trying to make sure families who couldn't make it were resourced. Some of those families I delivered to I never saw again, despite months of posted material! We have covered lots of books of the Bible during my time running the Sunday school. There was even a long stretch of time when I did 'Whole Church Curriculum' and we followed the sermon series. This worked quite well, and I think there is value in helping parents and children engage with the bible together by having looked at the same passage or story. When I discovered the saddleback kids' bible videos, these became a great supplementary resource to go alongside bible readings, games, and crafts. Over the years the children in attendance have changed a fair bit – but we have still averaged around 3 or 4 children. If all the families over all the years had come at the same time, we might have had quite the large cohort! I will still pray for more families to join Christ Church on a Sunday morning, even as I depart.

**Toddlers.** When I arrived in 2019 Sandra was in charge of toddlers, making sure everyone was welcome, and building great rapport with mums and tots. I am happy to report that this is still the case! However, I have seen some positive changes over the years – after the break during covid, we could reinvent the culture for the Storytime. I remember in 2019 a considerable number of parents on their phone, chatting away while their toddlers tried to listen or sing. There are still a few chatterboxes, but I am glad that almost no-one is on their phone during the Storytime anymore! We have made it through the play along bible storybook every year, and I hope the mums and dads as much as the children have benefited from that overview of stories in the Bible.

**Open the Book (OTB).** The assemblies in the first schools, acted out and performed with costumes and props have been a hit all the way through these seven years. We have always had a running curriculum that last 3 years, so we have managed 2 full sets of stories over the years I have been here! We even sent in videos (some animated and some live action!) during the pandemic terms. In 2023 Bible Society launched new stories and material (along with a subscription model to pay for them!), which we used at first, but then OTB told us we could return to the older, better stories. These stories have continued to be a great way to bring key moments from the Bible to life, and I haven't met a child at the first schools who didn't like them!



**Christ Church Academy assemblies.** These have evolved a fair bit over the course of my tenure. In the beginning, (or 2019), Paul and I would alternate assemblies and go through a series together. During Covid, I took on filming weekly assemblies that were watched by all classrooms in the schools. And then after Covid, I went back into the schools to

give these in the hall. A couple years ago we started using pupils in yr 8 to add a drama to these assemblies – using OTB scripts to bring the stories to life. The worship team of pupils has changed over the years, but they have always needed a microphone to be heard at the back of the hall! The engagement from pupils during these assemblies has usually been fantastic, with eager listeners engaging well with the quizzes I usually do at the beginning.

***School Services!*** These have been a regular end of term event, and it's been a challenge to come up with new ideas each time. I must confess to repeating my favourite Easter demonstration a couple times: when I bring up a child who agrees to sit in a chair, on the understanding that the schools' performance in a quiz determines whether they are rewarded or punished (with water being poured over them.) I then make the quiz impossible, and they start panicking, until I step in and let them pour the water on me instead. It's a good picture of what Jesus does for us, and it's one that the parents always mention to me as the one they remember most! It has always been a privilege to speak at these services, and I hope that our deep connections with the school will be maintained for many years to come.

***Pursuit club!*** This lunchtime club was always a highlight of the week. These older children from the academy were typically Christian themselves – and it was always encouraging to see them grow in the faith. There was one cohort that stayed part of the club through all 4 years at the academy – and I am sure that they remain committed even now in high school. We have seen a recent decline in numbers at this club (since that previous cohort departed) so the new term will need a big push for new members, especially boys! When I started the timings of CCA's school day looked a little different – and we noticeably took a hit when the lunch break was squeezed shorter. Nevertheless, we have always managed to fit in some good teaching and a game or a craft! The sessions have also been used as a vehicle for rehearsals for the

performances at the end of term, and planning and acting these out has always been fun and helps them participate in mission to the school too!

***Trekkers!*** Perhaps one of the biggest parts of my ministry, certainly the clubs with the most attendees! We actually started the trekkers clubs just before Covid – though only for a few weeks before the pandemic brought them to an end. When they returned afterwards, they went through a few iterations before I found the right rhythm for the groups! The saddleback kids' videos versions of the stories proved essential, though on occasion the pupils responded well to acting out the stories when technology failed. Hide and Seek was a staple on Wednesdays, and extended craft time was more desired on Thursdays. Different children have wanted different games, and we have had to keep on our toes. As the years went by the cohorts changed, but I will never forget the characters I encountered. We started with around 6 children on a Wednesday we ended with about 15 regulars on both days. There were often moments of difficult to manage behaviour, but there were nevertheless plenty of fruitful conversations. The question-and-answer sections often proved that no matter how loud some of them were being, they were taking in the stories really! I hope and pray that one day, when they're all grown up, some of these children might just think: 'those nice people from church really put up with me, despite my absolute madness, maybe it's worth going back!'

***Light Parties, Christingles, Good Friday Crafts!*** The events we have run have grown in popularity since the lows of the years just after the pandemic. The Light Party especially has changed in format over the years – with unpredictable numbers sometimes. One year we only had one child, after having about 20 the previous. In the end we switched the date last year, and that yielded positive results. All these events have been successful at attracting children and families, and I have always been thankful for the team of volunteers that helped.

Holiday Clubs! I have absolutely loved the holiday clubs we have run over the years. We even did 2 in one year to catch up with the missed years during the pandemic! From robots, to spaceships, to athletes, to knights, to superheroes, we have covered a lot of genres! I have loved playing Burt and Rick and running all the games. I have been pleased with solid attendance numbers throughout the years. We started using Churchsuite to track bookings, and I think Churchsuite is excellent for keeping track of important information for the children. The attendance of parents and families has been great for the Sunday holiday club morning service, and I think this route into church attendance is one that we should pursue more throughout the year - I think we are potentially planning a Holiday club reunion service in September or October, and I think this would be a great idea if we can get it off the ground.

There are a few other things I have probably forgotten over the seven years. I think I've given a few sermons. Certainly, there was a lot of training courses and conferences – I will particularly hold onto some of the exercises from Lead Academy as I think about going off to run my own church! It has been a privilege to be part of the ministry at Christ Church and Oulton, and I will miss both churches greatly.

I end with this – we have done a lot of good in these seven years. We couldn't have done it without Jesus strengthening us. But I also couldn't have done any of it without the committed and faithful fellow volunteers who worked alongside me. In a country where very few attend church, we have brought church to a huge number of children. But there is always more to do! I hope and pray that whoever is hired next, and indeed all of you who remain, will move this ministry even further on. That we will continue to be a church that is missional – who go out into the community, into the schools, into the world, to tell people God knows and loves them, and to bring them humbly to Christ.

***Peter Cuthbert***

# **The Man with the Clarinet**

---

Time to get to know one of our Churchwardens here at Christ Church. The road to the present day has twisted a bit and begins with his baptism as a bouncing baby in the church where his Mum was also a warden. It continues via Sunday school, Boys' Brigade, University, Confirmation in the Church in Wales until 1992 when David and his wife Rhiannon came with their baby daughter to make their home in Stone.



I asked David what he enjoys most about being part of the church family here and he answered “The friendly welcoming atmosphere, the Bible based teaching, the variety of music (though not quite so varied now the organ has packed up)... and the cake” (Author’s note: He’s right, you know – Christ Church cake is EXCEEDINGLY good!)

When reflecting on his career David must have wondered what he should do with a degree in music and physics and the knowledge that he didn’t want a career in either. He became a youth worker and then a social worker and then re-trained as a science teacher. He felt a call to ministry and applied twice for training but this was not to be his pathway. It was at times of disappointment and challenges that David found his faith kept him going. He found a listening ear and prayerful support within the church family.

David never made a secret of his faith and has found many opportunities to share his story of how God had been with him. He regularly led school assembly and prayers and tried to answer all those difficult questions from his charming pupils! Although this was challenging, he has seen some great answers to prayer.

I asked David about his favourite hymns and bible verses. He dodged that one and explained how he found different hymns spoke to him at

different times. Though he did confess that he really liked the story of the burning bush (we need to ask him about that one!)

Thank you, David, for answering my questions and thank you too for the music you bring to us Sunday by Sunday. The song of your clarinet lifts our hearts and points us to the Lord you love.

**CP**

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## **What is Church At Home?**

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If you hear some hymns being sung in one of the local care homes, then you may have stumbled across the church. A small team from our benefice of churches regularly visit three nursing homes to conduct a short service for the residents. That's why it is called 'Church At Home' as we meet in the residents' home for a monthly service. The staff are very good at rushing around collecting residents and getting them to the lounge in time, so we are grateful for their support and help. Over the years we have developed a service that seems to work well but always thinking about how to improve where we can. We have a regular format of starting with prayer, singing a hymn, a Bible reading and message, another hymn, the Lord's Supper and a concluding hymn. We keep the service short as it is around 30 minutes and long enough for some of the frailer residents. We use recorded music and this helps us to sing with great enthusiasm.

I'm grateful for those who help to bring this important ministry for others to be blessed by. The team is now Ruth Wilson, Jean Whitham and Jean Coulcher and until recently Gary Williams (now moved on to a placement in another church as part of his ordination training).

Do please pray for 'Church At Home' to be a blessing so that we may know Christ better and make him better known.

***Paul Kingman***

# Tales from the Towpath

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Hello Everyone,

This month has been a relatively quiet month on my stretch of canal as boaters are still not moving about much due to the water shortages. The Canal and River Trust extended the dispensation to allow 'continuous cruisers' to overstay at moorings (usually they have to move every two weeks) to the end of September to keep boat movements and thus lock movements to a minimum. The holiday hire boats are still moving around although I imagine there has been some impact on the canal holiday trade sadly.



I delivered talks at the URC Church in Longton and to Longton Probus Group – always good to share with others about the work we do and raise awareness of the canal community. I regularly visit the Stone Community Hub who are really great at helping boaters who are moored here in Stone – a big thank you to the staff their for their support.

Many of you will be aware of the new hourly bus service that started on September 1<sup>st</sup>, the 151, from Stone to Rugeley. This service is perfect for boaters using the Trent & Mersey Canal in our area. Stopping at Burston, Sandon, Weston, Great Haywood, Little Haywood, Colwich, Wolsley Bridge and Rugeley - they are all places that are popular mooring points for boaters and will be very helpful to enable boaters to get supplies from the shops in Stone and Rugeley. So, as a piece of research, John and I did try out the bus last week (using our bus passes!) – and it was a good run. I have to confess I had never been around Hixon before as a tour of Hixon is included! At least now I can give helpful information to boaters which will be useful.



Please do pray for all boaters and users of the canal network and towpaths, especially at this difficult time. God bless. **Helen 13/9/26**

## **Why Waxcaps?**

Imagine yourself in a gorgeous churchyard on the turn of Summer into Autumn. The days shorten, the air chills, the leaves crunch underfoot. Taking a deep breath, you smell the damp earth and rich soil beneath your feet. You walk through the grass and stumble across something small yet mighty, a sign that the meadow you're in is doing wonderful things to help safeguard species-rich grasslands for the future. You're looking at a Waxcap and we need your help to find them and record them!

Our friends at ***Plantlife*** are running their annual Waxcap Watch, a citizen science programme asking you to record what fungi you see in grasslands this Autumn. Among lots of other wondrous flora, Waxcaps are often found in churchyards and burial grounds. They favour low nutrient soils that are regularly managed for species rich grassland. The loss of traditional management elsewhere has meant that these pockets in managed churchyards are even more important for the survival of waxcaps.

Many of our grassland fungi species are common in the UK but are highly threatened globally. Some are even classed as vulnerable on the IUCN Red List; the same threat level as Giant Pandas and Snow leopards. There are around 50 species of waxcap, and the majority are recognisable for their bright colours, but are often small and can get lost in the sward.

### **So, how do you get involved in this year's Waxcap Watch survey?**

The survey season takes place between Sept and Nov, when all the fungi should be out and easily visible. You don't need any fungi ID skills or specialism to take part in these surveys.

All you need is a smartphone or access to a computer. Find out more on the Plantlife website with full [instructions](#).

**(Article sent from Lichfield Diocese)**



# Seeking the Kingdom: Listen, Run, Wait

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*I will stand at my watch and station myself on the ramparts;  
I will look to see what he will say to me, and what answer I am to give  
to this complaint. Then the LORD replied:*

*“Write down the revelation and make it plain on tablets  
so that a herald may run with it.*

*For the revelation awaits an appointed time; it speaks of the end  
and will not prove false Though it linger, wait for it;  
it will certainly come and will not delay.”*

*Habakkuk 2:1-3*

As we continue our journey together across the diocese, I have been reflecting on these remarkable words from the prophet Habakkuk. They were spoken in a time of uncertainty and change. Habakkuk looked around and saw a world that seemed troubled and unstable. His response was not complacency, but urgency. He longed to see God's purposes fulfilled and repeatedly cried out, "How long?"

God's answer offers a pattern that feels particularly relevant for us today: listen, run, wait.

First, Habakkuk listens.

Before action comes attention. Before planning comes prayer.

Habakkuk takes his place on the watchtower and waits to hear what God will say. As a Diocese, that commitment to listening has been at the heart of our journey through Shaping for Mission and now Seeking the Kingdom. We have sought not simply to make plans, but to discern where God is at work and how we are being called to join in.

But listening is only the beginning.

God tells Habakkuk to write the vision down clearly, "so that a herald may run with it". The vision is not given to be admired, discussed endlessly or filed away on a shelf. It is given so that people can act.

There is movement in this image. There is purpose. There is urgency.

That challenges us today. We know that we are called to make disciples, grow younger, serve our communities and become financially sustainable for the future. These are not aspirations for some distant

generation. They require action now. A clear and compelling vision should encourage prayer, shape decisions and inspire momentum. God's mission calls us not simply to think differently, but to live differently, serve differently and invite others into the life of Christ. Yet Habakkuk's message does not end with running.

God also says, "Though it linger, wait for it".

At first glance, that seems the opposite of urgency. In reality, it is a reminder that God's timing and God's purposes are not always the same as our own. We are called to act with energy and determination, but we cannot manufacture spiritual growth. We cannot force faith, renewal or transformation. Those gifts ultimately come from God. The challenge is to hold these truths together. We must resist the temptation either to rush ahead in our own strength or to become passive while waiting for God to act. Habakkuk calls us to a better way: to listen carefully, run courageously and wait trustingly.

As we continue Seeking the Kingdom together, Habakkuk offers a helpful pattern for the road ahead. Let us listen for God's voice, run with the vision he has given us, and trust that he will accomplish his purposes in his time. We need the urgency to act, the courage to change and the patience to persevere. Strategies matter because they help us focus our efforts on God's mission, but it is God who gives the growth. And because he is faithful, we can move forward with both urgency and hope.

*The Revd Canon Nick Smeeton  
Strategy Programme Director*

*Read more about the diocesan vision and plans to enable us realise it together at [lichfield.anglican.org/our-vision/](https://lichfield.anglican.org/our-vision/)*



# Safeguarding

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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](mailto:Safeguarding2@christchurchstone.org)

**Oulton with Moddershall**; Mary Gale on [Office@christchurchstone.org](mailto: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/>

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## Izaak Walton (1593 – 1683)

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Watching a recent edition of Bargain Hunt, what should suddenly appear but a five minute sketch of the life of Izaak Walton, whose quaint cottage can be found at Shallowford close to the C. of E. residential centre, much visited by Helen and doubtless others within Christ Church. Realising that we knew next to nothing about Izaak Walton and knowing that we had just booked a table at The Mill at Worston nearby, here is a brief summary of what was a very long life – 90 years.

Walton was born in Stafford in 1593 and moved to London in his teens where he worked as a linen draper. Showing an interest in religious affairs, he became verger and churchwarden of the local church. His first wife was Rachel Floud, great, great niece of Archbishop Cranmer. When she died in 1640, he married Anne Ken, stepsister of the Bishop of Bath and Wells. Walton was a devout Royalist throughout his life and it became dangerous to exhibit his feelings in the books he wrote.

After the Royalist defeat at Marston Moor in 1644, Walton retired from his London trade to become a full time writer and bought the farm at Shallowford by the River Meece. Here he collected information for his famous book, *The Compleat Angler*, published in 1653. In 1650 he was again reported to be living in London.

Following the Restoration of the Monarchy in 1660, it was disclosed that Walton, at great personal risk to himself, had managed to safeguard one of the Crown Jewels, Little George, following Charles II defeat at the Battle of Worcester. His second wife died in 1662 and he moved to Farnham Castle, home of the Bishop of Winchester. Walton died in 1683 and was buried in Winchester Cathedral. He bequeathed his Staffordshire cottage to the poor of the Staffordshire area.

*The Compleat Angler* remains his classical book, being written in a very cunning manner to shield his Royalist leanings without his enemies realising. Bargain Hunt considered that a first edition of this book would realise over a million pounds at auction today.

The Cottage is open on Sunday afternoons, but only in summer.



Being a Discourse of  
**FISH and FISHING,**  
Not unworthy the perusal of most *Anglers.*

*Simon Peter said, I go fishing: and they said, We also wil go with thee. John 21. 3.*

London, Printed by T. Moxey for RICH. MARRIOT, in  
St. Dunstons Church-yard Fleetstreet, 1653.



*John Bowes*

# Groups and Rotas

|                    |                                                                                                                                                      |
|--------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Deanery Synod reps | Gary Williams, Sue Kingman                                                                                                                           |
| PCC Members        | Lynne Collier, Maxine Garrington-Miller.<br>Marylyn Hillman, George Holden,<br>Pete Kelly, Liz Mason, Shelagh Saunders<br>Andy Stone, Shirley Hallam |
| Secretary          | Shelagh Saunders                                                                                                                                     |
| Treasurer          | Pete Kelly                                                                                                                                           |
| Envelopes.Gift Aid | Lynda Marengi                                                                                                                                        |

| FLOWER ROTA                 |             | WELCOMER                   |                       |
|-----------------------------|-------------|----------------------------|-----------------------|
| Oct 4th                     |             | Oct 4th                    | Anne Smith            |
| Oct 11th                    | Alison West | Oct 11th                   | Jacqueline Abrahams   |
| Oct 18th                    |             | Oct 18th                   | Pam Roberts           |
| Oct 25th                    | Liz Mason   | Oct 25th                   | Jeanette Rowlands     |
|                             |             |                            |                       |
| <b>CHURCH<br/>REGISTERS</b> | BAPTISMS    |                            |                       |
|                             | WEDDINGS    |                            |                       |
|                             | FUNERALS    | 4 <sup>th</sup> September  | Anne Rushton Age 77   |
|                             |             | 18 <sup>th</sup> September | Sheila Mawditt Age 91 |

| ROADS FOR PRAYER |                 |
|------------------|-----------------|
| <b>Oct 5th</b>   | <b>Oct 19th</b> |
| Whitebridge Lane | Ancestry Close  |
| York Street      | Anderton View   |
| Airdale Grove    | Arthur Street   |
| Airdale Road     | Barton Edge     |
| <b>Oct 12th</b>  | <b>Oct 26th</b> |
| Airdale Spinney  | Bentley Close   |
| Albert Street    | Berkeley Street |
| Alexandra Street | Brindley Close  |
| Alma Street      | Bromfield Court |

