



*A Happy and a Holy Christmas to all!*



# Christ Church *Link*

December 2016 ● Number 56 ● 50p where sold

## Christmas at Christ Church

### *What's happening this Advent and Christmastide*

There's a packed calendar of services at Christ Church this Christmas and leading up to it. Our traditional candle-lit Advent Carol Service takes place on Sunday 4 December at 6:30pm. Once again this year, this contemplative and atmospheric celebration of the season of Advent is a joint service with our neighbours from St Mary's Roman Catholic church.

The second of our Advent lunches with our friends at St Mary's will be held in St Mary's Parish Centre at midday on Thursday 8 December.

To prepare for Christmas, there will be Morning Prayer every weekday morning at 9am throughout Advent (that is, up to Friday 23 December). On every Thursday in Advent there will also be a said Eucharist at 11am, followed by coffee and an Advent Bible Study Group on the theme "The sceptical Christian takes a cool look at Christmas".

Then, our popular Christmas Carol Service is on Sunday 18 December at 6:30pm. Come and celebrate the coming of Jesus into our world with traditional music and readings.

On Christmas Eve, Saturday 24 December, our customary Crib Service is at 4:30pm. This is a short, relaxed service designed for families and children of all ages.

Our "Midnight Mass" that night at 11:30pm is the traditional start to Christmas. Then, our Family Eucharist is at 10am on Christmas Day, Sunday 25 December. Please note that there is *no* 8am service on Christmas Day.

You'll find a handy summary of all this year's Christmas services in our calendar on page 15. Once again this year, there are also postcards with the details of these services (again thanks to Hazel Boyd). If you can help distribute these to the local area, please sign up at the back of the church for the street(s) you can cover. This is one of the key ways we can reach out to our local community, and your help will be greatly appreciated!



Matthew Jones's photo of one of the stained glass windows in our apse features on our Christmas cards, available to buy now. They're ideal for giving!

# Advent preparation and “penitence”

## **Revd Lore Chumbley writes:**

Traditionally Advent is a time of penitence as we prepare to celebrate Christmas. In the Pilgrim study group we have been pondering whether it is necessary to repent in order to be forgiven. After all, according to the Bible, the only person we know is in paradise said simply, “Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom.” There is nothing there of penitence as it is commonly understood, regret for sins.

But let’s take a step back. Consider penitence not as regretting things we have done or not done, but as the act of turning away from all those things which separate us from God. They can be things done in the past or, even more dangerously, things on our private wish list. Is it perhaps in the act of repudiating those things, and instead refocusing on God, that we repent? It can be very difficult to do this once habits of self-regard, and disregard for the other, have become part of us. But even tiny acts of refocusing on God can help. That’s where the discipline of Advent comes in. Our glorious Advent and Christmas Carol

Services on Sunday 4th and Sunday 18th December are part of this process.

In addition, to help us to refocus on God, we will be starting each weekday morning in Advent with a short service of Morning Prayer at 9am in Christ Church. Everyone is welcome. It will last no longer than 20 minutes and if anyone wishes to lead one of the services please let us know.

Each Thursday morning at 11am we will continue to celebrate the Eucharist in church followed by coffee in the Lower Mews. In Advent, starting on 1st December, the group will carry on into a Bible study group from 12 noon until 1 o’clock in the Lower Mews. We plan to take a constructively sceptical look at Christmas. And for anyone who is still standing after all that, there will be a simple lunch of soup, bread and cheese at 1pm. The first session at 12 noon on December 1st will be titled: “Born of the Virgin Mary?”

You are welcome to get involved in as much or as little as you wish but somehow find yourself space to refocus on God.

## Christ Church reordering: your ideas are wanted!



*Our earliest experiments included a semicircular platform at the chancel step. Pop into the Lower Mews to view some photos of the east end of the church at various times over the last few years.*

Have you looked at the large noticeboard at the back of the church? On a large plan of the building, this displays the suggestions, feelings and ideas noted down by those who attended our discussion day on Saturday 29 October. Unsurprisingly, there’s no consensus about very much, and the process of discussion, listening and consideration needs to continue. Over a period of a few months, we hope to experiment and try out various ideas, as far as is possible without actual building work. Can you help with planning, moving things around, etc? Do you have any suggestions, or strong feelings about what should or should not happen? Everyone’s ideas are welcome, particularly if you weren’t there on the discussion day. Please talk to Lore, Mark or one of the Churchwardens and share your thoughts!

# Last month in Christ Church...



Above: Bishop Ruth presided and preached at our patronal festival service on the feast of Christ the King, Sunday 20 November. Right: after cutting the customary cake (with its splendid decoration by Jo Palmer), Bishop Ruth was presented with flowers and a pen made of Christ Church oak. Below, regulars and friends, including Cedar Tree founder Nicky Gladstone, enjoy the Cedar Tree café tenth anniversary party on Friday 11 November.





# Somerset Churches Trust

## **Margaret Heath writes:**

The final meeting of the Somerset Churches Trust for 2016 was held at Wells Museum on Friday evening 12 November. A friend and I, both keen members, were offered a lift by one of the committee and so able to go. A pleasant drive became a nightmare of flashing blue lights, three fire engines and ambulances and we were finally directed by the police into dark unknown country roads. (Although the accident looked so awful, there were no fatalities. A poor lady had to be cut from her car.) Map reading from a small scale map tested my navigation skills. Luckily my friend knows Wells thoroughly and we triumphantly arrived with four minutes in hand to hear a talk by Colin Shearer, Director of the Churches Conservation Trust in the south west of England, on "Hidden gems and a new lease of life".

Colin was formerly head of the west highland railways. He struck me as a networker par excellence. At a time when the National Trust is, I have heard, having to use audio guides or timed guided tours due to a shortage of volunteer guides in rooms, the CCT attract and inspire local groups to make exciting use of churches where there are no longer regular services. He talked about

people and their different ways of making constructive use of these historic places for the benefit of the community and visitors.

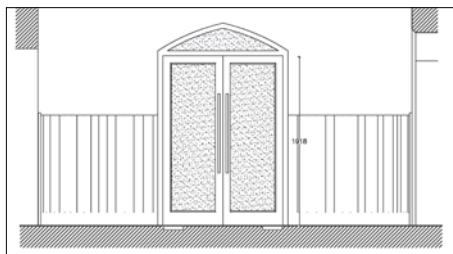
I have a personal interest as my elder son, Nicholas, is Chairman of the Friends of All Saints, Jesus Lane, Cambridge. He works closely with the theological college next door, Westcott House, and, with his committee, arranges concerts and talks, supplying wine.

Colin talked of other ideas including restaurants, a post office, history tours for adults and children, manning, restoring and keeping open places which are treasure houses to be preserved and cherished rather than allowed to decay. The old name for this lay charity was "The Redundant Church Fund" and the CCT sounds so much more positive.

Even better news is that now the CCT is getting far fewer "vestings" as it aims, whenever possible, to enable churches to continue to be for the purpose for which they were built, the worship of God. Parishes are encouraged to consider ways of fundraising and using their buildings to best advantage for all. Does this strike a note with Christ Church?

We were thanked for swelling a rather thin audience and came back uneventfully by a different route. The SCT 2017 programme will soon be out and I'll keep you informed.

## Building works update



*Our architects' drawing of the new oak-framed glass doors to be fitted in place of the present inner doors into the nave. The idea is to provide a view from the entrance through into the church.*

By the time you read this, work on our toilets should be all but completed, barring possibly a few final touches of finishing and decoration. Taking on board comments from our Church Council, the Buildings Committee is considering options for toilet paper dispensers, but otherwise the new toilets are up and running.

The Christ Church Trustees have agreed to proceed with the next phase, refurbishment of the entrance and lobby. All going well, work should begin in February and finish before Easter. It will include two sets of new glass doors, one at the main entrance and one in place of the present doors into the nave.

# Archbishop's visit to Bath & Wells

"Celebrate, do not fear." That is the message given to the diocese by the Most Revd Justin Welby, Archbishop of Canterbury, speaking at Bath Abbey at the end of his three-day visit in early November.

Reflecting on what he had seen, Archbishop Justin challenged the perception that the church is in decline. "In Langport, I found the church had taken over the local pub, conveniently called The Angel, and within it you find the foodbank, debt counselling, care for the lost, the marginal. You find the church being the Church.

"In Chard, a church hall with all the traditions of a church hall – including the heating not quite doing what it should have done yesterday – but also with midwifery, reaching out to expectant mothers and those with young children, offering a place of meeting for young mums, isolated from their communities.

"On Exmoor, a group of eight parishes with a priest who simply gives that sense of loving the people in his parishes and because that is a pretty contagious thing and he is very good in what he does – in loving them and sharing in their activities and taking part in the life of the community while demonstrating the love of Jesus Christ – churches are being looked after by small communities, more people are coming to Church and there's health and life slowly, gently growing."

"Underneath the Abbey, a centre for the homeless, for the rough sleepers, where people are finding their lives turned around. And we could repeat this again and again through this diocese."

During the three days he spent in the diocese, Archbishop Justin attended no less than 24 engagements. On the first day, he talked to educators and youth workers in Taunton on the Church of England's new Vision for Education, emphasising its focus on education as a whole, not just Church schools. Later he visited some more rural areas of the diocese.

Day two included a reflective walk up Glastonbury Tor with local clergy, school children, members of the local community and other faith groups to pray for the town

and the people of Somerset. That afternoon he addressed clergy and Readers from the diocese at Wells Cathedral. Speaking about the new vision for the diocese – "*In response to God's immense love for us, we seek to be God's people, living and telling the story of Jesus*" – Archbishop Justin said: "I can't tell you how exciting it is to see a diocesan vision like this – but vision doesn't make action. When we look out from the Church, and when mission and evangelism is at the heart of all we do, then every person in the Church becomes a witness to Jesus Christ. They seek to be out with those who are bruised and hurting as faithful Christian witnesses.

"Structures, groups, committees, management, training courses are all good things, but in the end they don't do it. It is our personal involvement in the action implied in the vision. And where that starts is being captured afresh by Jesus Christ."

Most of his final day was spent in Bath, including an address to the Annual General Meeting of BathCAN (Christian Action Network). "Social action and evangelism are two sides of the same coin," he said.

In concluding his sermon to the Abbey, Archbishop Justin said: "In your remarkable witness in this diocese you give so many other people reasons not to fear. But may you be those who, at the end of all things, also show them the person who is the antithesis, the very solution, to fear itself: Jesus Christ."

For much more detail, see the diocesan website at <http://bit.ly/archbishop-visits>



Archbishop Justin visited the Roman Baths with the bishop of Taunton and bishop of Bath & Wells.

# Cynthia Bourgeault and centering prayer

## **Daphne Radenhurst writes:**

I have been meditating for many years, starting with TM (transcendental meditation, brought over by the Maharishi Mahesh Yogi and embraced by the Beatles) in the 1970s, moving on to Christian Meditation when I discovered John Main and the World Community for Christian Meditation (WCCM). So when Roger Layet, co-ordinator for the South West, informed me of the visit of Cynthia Bourgeault to talk about Centering Prayer at St James Priory in Bristol, I decided I had to go and hear her speak.

What is Centering Prayer? It is a method of meditation placing strong emphasis on seeking interior silence, thereby aiming to open up to, and rest in, God. Western religion has traditionally called it contemplative prayer or contemplation. Eastern religion uses the word *meditation*, but the meaning is the same.

In 1979 in America, the Trappist monk Thomas Keating published the first of a number of books on this subject. The Trappist monk Thomas Merton had practised this form of contemplative prayer and so does the Franciscan monk and writer Richard Rohr.

The creators of Centering Prayer trace its roots to the contemplative practice of the Desert Fathers in the third century, to the English mystical work *The Cloud of Unknowing*, written in the 14th century by an anonymous author, and to the writings of St Teresa of Avila and St John of the Cross in Spain.

The earliest Christian writings that clearly speak of contemplative prayer come from St John Cassian in the fourth century, on whom John Main based his own teaching of Christian meditation. This is now being carried



on by Father Lawrence Freeman.

The Rev. Dr Cynthia Bourgeault is an American Episcopal priest, teacher and author. She is Director of the Contemplative Society. She spends half the year in solitude at her seaside hermitage retreat in Maine, and half the year travelling the globe giving talks and retreats. In her late 60s, she is a very engaging and inspiring speaker. Thomas Keating was her mentor and they work in mutual support.

What is meditation? Cynthia asked. She described it as standing still in the centre. In the 1970s there was an awakening of interest in the Church in the power of contemplative prayer. There was a yearning for love, silence and blessing. Silence, she said, was the absence of resistance to God.

Her own practice has been largely taken from the 14th century treatise *The Cloud of Unknowing*, whose unknown author's aim is "to show you how to unite your soul with God." He goes on to say: "we cannot think our way to God, because God can be loved but not thought."

This has brought about changes in the binary level of perception, subject and object, and new interpretations of the old texts, leading to an awareness of non-duality, the unity of all things, and what she described as 'luminous insight.'

This form of meditation is not an extension of the mind, but consists rather of putting the mind into the heart, which is the true organ of spiritual perception. It involves kenosis, or self-emptying. Finally, she said, the experience is personal, relational and compassionate.

The practice has been shown to reduce stress and bring more equanimity and balance. There is a quieter, still awareness of the heart. "The world hangs together in love."

It is difficult in this short space to do full justice to the range of her talk. You can read more about it in her book *Centering Prayer and Inner Awakening*. Her latest book, just published, is called *Heart of Centering Prayer: Non-dual Christianity in Theory and Practice*.

I hope, in this very short article, to have raised some interest in this subject.

# Bath woman's 2,500km pilgrimage

In a season when the news is filled with stories of people fleeing the Middle East on foot, Bath woman Helen Olley has shared her experience of walking in the opposite direction for peace. With her boyfriend Nik Prassas (24), Helen (25) walked 2,500km from Canterbury to Jerusalem in four and a half months from April to August in a pilgrimage that has so far raised £8,000 for Christian Aid.

The feat is all the more remarkable given that, one month into the journey, Helen discovered that Nik doesn't like walking!

From lodging with nuns in northern France, to crossing the Alps in thick snow and reaching the holy sites of Jerusalem in a scorching August, Helen and Nik recalled their experiences in a special event at St Luke's Church, Wellsway, Bath, on Sunday 13 November.

"The walk started out as a pilgrimage for peace and reconciliation," Helen explained, "but as we walked it also became a walk filled with prayer for refugees, for those also on long journeys but, unlike us, forced from their homes, filled with fear and unsure of their final destination.

"We could not begin to imagine walking in their shoes but they were close to our hearts and in our prayers the whole time.

"We followed ancient pilgrim routes and met with people from right across the world who were curious about why we were undertaking such a journey. Most of them were

passionate about the outdoors and walking – and were very surprised to hear that Nik doesn't even like walking but that he and I were inspired by our faith to walk!

"It was a precious opportunity to strip everything back, to put our trust in God and to experience His world and meet with His people. It gave us lots of opportunities to talk and I hope we can continue to raise awareness of the crisis in the Middle East now we are back. It's even more pressing with what is happening in Syria and Iraq, and it is so important that as a nation we do not allow ourselves to forget the human face of each of those individuals caught up in the tragedy of conflict.

"We are supporting Christian Aid's #changethestory campaign, which is encouraging people to tell stories that affirm the dignity of those who have experienced trauma and left everything behind."

Christian Aid works with refugees and displaced people in Lebanon, Iraq and Greece, where it is providing support to some of the most vulnerable refugees including families, women who have experienced gender-based violence and those with disabilities. For more information, visit [www.christianaid.org.uk](http://www.christianaid.org.uk)

To learn more or sponsor Helen and Nik, visit [www.justgiving.com/thewalktojerusalem](http://www.justgiving.com/thewalktojerusalem). The pilgrimage was self-funded and all donations will go directly to Christian Aid.



*Helen and Nik in the Alps. Given the instability in the region, they chose not to walk through Turkey...*



*Instead, they flew from Athens to Tel Aviv and then walked to Jerusalem. Above, at the Mount of Olives.*

# Two Richard Rohr books in our library

*Recently added to the Christ Church library*

■ *Things Hidden: Scripture as Spirituality*. London: SPCK, 2016

■ *The Divine Dance: the Trinity and Your Transformation* (by Richard Rohr with Richard Morrell). New Kensington, PA: Whitaker House, 2016

## **Revd Lore Chumbley writes:**

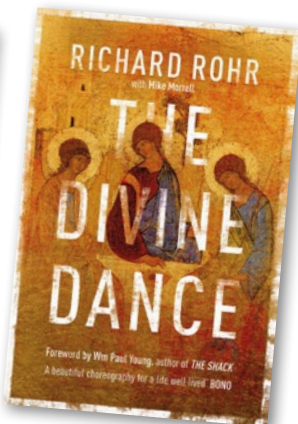
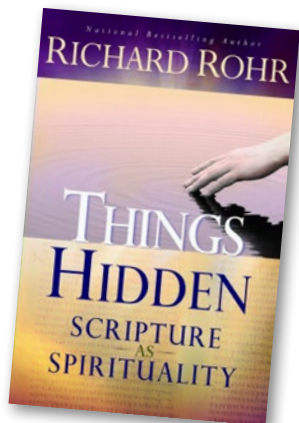
Richard Rohr might perhaps be described as “spiritual director to the world.” As a liberal Franciscan who writes honestly of faith and doubt he has a deservedly devoted following among thinking Christians. Although he is a Roman Catholic, in his writing he is courageously ecumenical. *Things Hidden: Scripture as Spirituality* (London: SPCK, 2016) is his introduction to reading the Bible as a spiritual discipline. As he explains it, the Bible is the story of a people aware of themselves at three levels: as individuals with a relationship with God; as members of a local community, whether that is family or country or political group or all of these; and as a part of something much bigger – the plan or vision of God which includes death, meaning and destiny. It is only when we too are aware of and work with all three levels that we develop spiritually healthy relationship with each and with God. For Rohr, the Bible tells

how it is to live at all three levels, and studying the Bible can open us to participating at all three levels. He is insightful, tough-minded and has no time for sentimentality or lazy thinking. I found myself arguing out loud with this book as I read it.

The second new Richard Rohr book we have acquired for the library is *The Divine Dance: the Trinity and Your Transformation* (New Kensington, PA: Whitaker House, 2016). In this, Rohr moves into new territory exploring the mystery of the Trinity – a concept which, he argues, the church has effectively buried for 2,000 years. Rather than adopting a truly Trinitarian theology, we have been misled over the past 1,700 years either into what is, for all practical purposes, polytheism, or we have reacted with what is effectively a type of modalism, accepting one God with three different faces.

For Rohr, by contrast, the significance of Trinity is that from the beginning God is not singular, but a relationship of love. It is from the loving energy between Father, Son and Holy Spirit that we are created and into which we are invited to return. Rohr moves on to explore scientific sociological and Biblical motifs from their standpoint of God as loving relationship of Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Two caveats. Rohr is not a scientist and his attempts to draw parallels with the energy of atoms and molecules is perhaps less helpful than his wide-ranging historical, theological and psychological insights into individuals and churches. Secondly, this is written in collaboration with Richard Morrell and is perhaps less incisive than *Things Hidden* or his much loved book *Falling Upwards*. It's more like a fireside chat – but what a chat! Settle down and enjoy it.





Welcome to the latest edition of *InFocus*. Our aim is to help you keep in touch with the activities of the National Church Institutions. Do have a look at *InReview*, our sister publication, designed as an A3 version for notice boards.

## Experience #JoyToTheWorld this Christmas

**Churches** are a special place to be at Christmas, with familiar carols, moments of peace and reflection, time to celebrate and party and a variety of ways to hear the Christmas story. To help people around the country experience joy to the world with us this December, [www.AChristmasNearYou.org](http://www.AChristmasNearYou.org) has been launched.

Thanks to the thousands of Christmas services and events added to the site people will be able to find the nearest Christmas services to them, including those singing well-known carols, offering mince pies and mulled

wine, services especially for children and many more.

There's still time for you to add your Christmas services at [www.AChristmasNearYou.org/upload](http://www.AChristmasNearYou.org/upload).

You can also help us to promote the website with posters, social media graphics and more: [www.AChristmasNearYou.org/resources](http://www.AChristmasNearYou.org/resources) (available from 21st November)

Over the Christmas period, join us on social media by tweeting photos and videos from your services and events using the #JoyToTheWorld hashtag!

## How to Pioneer (even if you haven't a clue)

**Small new** Christian communities created by pioneer ministers, both lay and ordained, are popping up everywhere - on housing estates, community centres, schools and numerous other contexts beyond the local church. A new, practical guide for those involved in this ministry was unveiled by Church House Publishing in November by David Male, National Adviser for Pioneer Development. In his Foreword to *How to Pioneer*, Archbishop Justin describes it as 'a "can do" book, best put into the hands of

people who sense a desire to respond to the call of God to reimagine things... deeply practical, deeply hopeful and deeply involving.' The book has also been warmly welcomed by Rhiannon King, Director of Mission, Diocese of Birmingham, who calls it 'a great and timely book - short enough to be hugely readable, long enough to be hugely valuable.'

*How to Pioneer (even if you haven't a clue)* by David Male is available now from [www.chpublishing.co.uk](http://www.chpublishing.co.uk) and local Christian bookshops priced £9.99.

# Renewal & Reform

## To church or not to church

**I used** to help coach a junior cricket team. We weren't the world's greatest and we certainly weren't the world's best coached. Practices were on a Friday evening and matches were – typically – on a Sunday morning.

For the first couple of years I would go on a Friday but not to the matches on a Sunday, at least not until after church. This was partly because I was also doing children's work in church on Sunday as well, but to be honest it was more because I couldn't get my head straight about where I should be. Everybody in the cricket team knew why I couldn't make matches – because I was in church.

And then one year I decided that I was going to go to the matches instead. There were only about 8 of them, and I guessed that half of them would be rained off anyway. But I couldn't settle at the matches. I felt I was somehow in the wrong place. This wasn't what I did, or should be doing, on a Sunday morning. It was compounded by the fact that my wife was now ordained and we had moved church to serve her curacy. I didn't want to be a drag on her ministerial ticket; I didn't want the feeling of people wondering where I was, whether I was committed to church, why I was making such an 'odd' choice. After that summer I reverted to my previous pattern

– coaching on Fridays, church on Sundays. We still didn't win many games.

I look back on that time and wonder – what was the right thing to do? Should I have been making a kind of Eric Liddell point about the importance of church and faith; or should I have been where they were, the only (as far as I know) Christian presence or connection in that team? But I suspect that I never extricated myself from the trap of making some kind of sacred and secular distinction – that church was sacred and cricket is secular, and that sacred always trumps secular.

I think there is a mood within the church just now to think afresh on these kinds of things, working on the understanding that God is involved in and through our whole life. Looking back the thing that would have made all the difference would have been to hear someone in church, ideally during a service, talking about how they are trying to see God at work not just in church, not just in their home, not just in their school or place of work – we tend to talk about this quite a bit in my experience. But I don't hear people talking so much about God being at work in the recreational spaces, the social spaces, the 'trivial' spaces, the 'me-time' (hate that phrase) spaces –

where we kind of assume that God has given us a bit of time out to indulge ourselves. These are times and places of huge and important connection. Why do we assume that these are outside God's, and probably more particularly, the church's interest? Why did I never fully make the connection that the cricket field was also a mission field, that for that time and for those seasons that was where God had put me?

If we are to respond to our Archbishops' challenge to re-evangelise the nation there aren't private spheres or spaces beyond the reach of God or

interest of the church. I'm absolutely not denigrating church in any way or the importance of regular nourishing and sustaining worship as central to who we are in Christ. But I am reflecting that there was an opportunity to help a group of lads begin to glimpse how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ – but I was in church instead.

Tricky.

**Mike Eastwood,**  
**Director of Renewal & Reform**

## Rabbis and Priests Social Action Initiative

**'In Good Faith'**, a new Christian-Jewish dialogue project, has been launched at Lambeth Palace. This is a joint initiative of the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Chief Rabbi of the United Hebrew Congregations, Ephraim Mirvis. Modelled on their own well rooted friendship, this partnership programme will ensure Priests and Rabbis based in close geographical proximity will be encouraged to explore mutual concerns and opportunities for shared action together, initially for the next year.

The Archbishop of Canterbury Justin Welby and the Chief Rabbi Ephraim Mirvis explained their vision and hope for the programme and its place within their respective understandings of the role of faith in society.

Archbishop Justin said: "It is in the everyday conversations, the grassroots

initiatives and the building of local bridges between Christians and Jews, our synagogues and churches, that we will see real change and the hope for a divided world and nation..... I am so grateful to you for signalling hope when the temptation is to succumb to world-weary cynicism, pessimism, defeatism and even despair."

During the day mixed groups of rabbis and priests considered four topics – the challenge of creating and sustaining thriving faith communities, combating religious extremism, the Holy Land and its implications for inter-religious relations, and opportunities to contribute to the common good together.

It is intended that this launch day will be a catalyst for positive dialogue relationships between pairs of priests and rabbis who will continue the day's conversations on a smaller scale in the weeks and months which follow.

# Becoming Reverend: A Diary

**Matt Woodcock's** frank, funny and original memoir of his time spent training for ordination was launched to considerable acclaim in November, with extensive regional and national coverage, including Sunday Times, Daily Mail, Yorkshire Post and BBC radio coverage. Described by the Reverend Kate Bottley as 'refreshingly honest, frequently hilarious and genuinely moving', *Becoming Reverend: A Diary* is now available as Church House Publishing's first Unabridged Audiobook as well as a best-selling paperback and ebook. A

dedicated website [www.becomingreverend.com](http://www.becomingreverend.com) provides extracts from the book and a free downloadable Reading Group Guide for bookclubs as well as links to buy the book in all formats.

Matt Woodcock was a former newspaper journalist and is now a minister in Hull. He puts on a beer festival in Hull Minster every year, and walks real camels down Hull's main shopping street at Christmas. This is his first book. You can follow Matt on twitter @revmattwoodcock

## Visit to Africa informs policy

**In October** the Bishop of Manchester, the Rt Revd Dr David Walker led a delegation to South Africa and Zambia to visit mines, mining companies and communities affected by mining.

The visit provided an opportunity for the group, which also comprised Andrew Brown (Secretary and Chief Executive, Church Commissioners), Stephen Barrie (Deputy Secretary, EIAG) and Crawford Mackay (Rural Asset Manager, Church Commissioners) to set the direction of the Ethical Investment Advisory Groups (EIAG's) policy on extractive

industries, which is currently under development.

The visit took place over six days and involved meeting community group representatives, NGO's, mining companies and a range of faith and civil society leaders as well as visits to four mine sites.

The experiences gained from the South Africa and Zambian visit will be used to inform the EIAG policy recommendations on extractive industries which is due for publication in 2017.

 THE CHURCH  
OF ENGLAND  
**InFocus**



# Bishop's Message for December

*Wonder and worship*



**From the Rt Revd Peter Hancock,  
Bishop of Bath and Wells**

Have you ever wondered how many stars there are? We know there are lots and we know we can't count them. It is clearly not a straightforward question. So what do we know? We believe the universe is some 14 billion years old. We think it is expanding, but we don't know if it is infinitely large or not. And the fact that space-time seems to be curved makes it even more complicated. But if the Milky Way has some 100 million stars in it and if there are in the order of 100 trillion galaxies, we are

looking at something like "1 followed by 24 zeroes" as an answer. That is a lot of stars! And throughout all of human history, people have wondered not only how many stars there are but also who made them.

The Bible gives us an answer to this and reveals God as the Creator of all things. The prophet Isaiah wrote this: *"Lift up your eyes and look to the heavens: Who created all these? He brings out the starry host one by one, and calls them each by name. Because of his great power and mighty strength, not one of them is missing."* (Isaiah 40: 26)

Stars are beautiful, mysterious, awe-inspiring. They cause us to wonder and marvel. Who has not stopped at some point and just gazed at the night sky? It is said that the US President Franklin D. Roosevelt used to take his guests out after dinner to look at the night sky. They would stare at the stars and then he would say: "Now that we feel small enough, let us discuss our business."

At the first Christmas it was a star that led the wise men to the baby Jesus. "When they saw the child with his mother Mary, they bowed down and worshipped him." Christmas reminds us that Jesus is God's Son, our Saviour and our Lord. In the midst of all else that is happening, may we make sure that we take time to wonder and to worship.

**+Peter Bath and Wells**

# This month's charities: Bath homeless

*The loose collection in the plate every Sunday in December will be divided between Julian House and The Genesis Trust to help Bath's homeless. (Donations in collection envelopes will continue to go to Christ Church.)*

The Genesis Trust acts as an umbrella body enabling churches and Christians throughout Bath to demonstrate the love of Christ in practical ways to those in greatest need through its nine projects.

These include a daily drop-in centre at Bath Abbey and two food projects, Lunchbox and Soup Run. At its Lifeline drop-in Genesis helps over 50 people a day, providing them with hot drinks, emergency clothing and bedding, and much needed emotional support and practical advice. Benefit cuts and mental health issues are big issues for its clients. The Lifeskills project, which provides courses aimed at enhancing well-being, provides much needed help with budgeting and cookery skills as well as helping people develop emotionally via creative writing, art and gardening. For more information about Genesis and its work, visit [genesistrust.org.uk](http://genesistrust.org.uk).



Julian House was set up to offer direct support to some of the most marginalised people in Bath – the homeless. Users of its services include rough sleepers, women escaping domestic violence, ex-offenders, the long-term unemployed, and people with learning difficulties and mental health issues. At any time over 100 clients are being helped – men and women who are homeless, have recently been homeless or are at risk of becoming homeless.

Projects include the Manvers Street Hostel, which provides not only beds but a specialist outreach service and a support service that offers people a pathway out of rough sleeping. Julian House runs the only supported housing project in B&NES to support offenders on release from custody, prevent them falling into homelessness and attempt to break the patterns of substance abuse and other causes of crime. Julian House also runs three social enterprises: Bath Soup Company, Bath Bike Workshop and Turnkey Housing Solutions, which it sees as crucial in enabling “move-on” for clients who may be partially or wholly dependent on benefits or live on a low wage.

For more, visit [www.julianhouse.org.uk](http://www.julianhouse.org.uk).

---

## Carols in Wells Cathedral

Wells Cathedral is holding two Carol Services once again this year, on Thursday 22 December and Friday 23 December (both 6pm to 7:30pm). The Cathedral's traditional carol services, led by the Cathedral choir, are always popular, so you're advised to arrive in good time.

You can find more details of all events and services taking place at the Cathedral over the Advent and Christmas period by visiting the website at [www.wellscathedral.org.uk](http://www.wellscathedral.org.uk) or by phoning 01749 674483.

---

## Other LMG services

These are the regular services at our Local Ministry Group sister churches:

### Sundays

- 9am Eucharist, Charlcombe St Mary's
- 10:45am Choral Communion, St Stephen's Lansdown
- 6:30pm Evensong (BCP), Charlcombe St Mary's – 3rd Sunday of the month

### Morning Prayer

- Monday 8:45am St Stephen's
- Friday 9:15am Charlcombe St Mary's
- Saturday 9:30am St Stephen's

# Christ Church calendar Dec. 2016

<b>Dec</b>	1	Thu	Eucharist, 11am
	2	Fri	Cedar Tree café, 11am–1:30pm
	4	Sun	<i>The Second Sunday of Advent</i> 6:30pm Advent Carol Service
	8	Thu	Eucharist, 11am, followed by Advent Bible Study Advent Lunch with St Mary's RC, at St Mary's, 12 noon Pilgrim Group party (all invited!), 7:30pm
	9	Fri	Norland College Christmas Service, 10am Cedar Tree café, 11am–1:30pm
	11	Sun	<i>The Third Sunday of Advent</i> 8am Holy Communion (BCP)
	15	Thu	Eucharist, 11am, followed by Advent Bible Study
	16	Fri	Cedar Tree café, 11am–1:30pm
	18	Sun	<i>The Fourth Sunday of Advent</i> 6:30pm Christmas Carol Service
	22	Thu	Eucharist, 11am, followed by Advent Bible Study
	23	Fri	Cedar Tree café, 11am–1:30pm
	24	Sat	4:30pm Crib Service 11:30pm Midnight Mass
	25	Sun	<i>Christmas Day</i>
	26	Mon	<i>Stephen, the first martyr</i>
	27	Tue	<i>John, Apostle and Evangelist</i>
	28	Wed	<i>The Holy Innocents</i>
	29	Thu	Eucharist, 11am
	30	Fri	Cedar Tree café, 11am–1:30pm
<b>Jan</b>	1	Sun	<i>New Year's Day / Naming and Circumcision of Jesus</i>
	5	Thu	Eucharist, 11am
	6	Fri	<i>The Epiphany</i> Cedar Tree café, 11am–1:30pm

**Got something you want to let everyone know about? Pop a note in the "Magazine Editor" pigeonhole at the back of church or send an e-mail with all the details to [magazine@christchurchbath.org](mailto:magazine@christchurchbath.org). For the weekly notice sheet, e-mail [notices@christchurchbath.org](mailto:notices@christchurchbath.org)**

# Prayer Cycle for December 2016

<b>Thursday</b>	<b>1</b>	For Bible scholars and theologians
<b>Friday</b>	<b>2</b>	For countries which have experienced earthquakes
<b>Saturday</b>	<b>3</b>	For those who live or work in care homes
<b>Sunday</b>	<b>4</b>	For Mark, Keith and the choir
<b>Monday</b>	<b>5</b>	For those who work in the emergency services
<b>Tuesday</b>	<b>6</b>	For our neighbours at St Mary's Catholic Church
<b>Wednesday</b>	<b>7</b>	That we may be peacemakers
<b>Thursday</b>	<b>8</b>	For our Pilgrim Group, meeting tonight
<b>Friday</b>	<b>9</b>	For those who are cold or hungry
<b>Saturday</b>	<b>10</b>	For the elderly
<b>Sunday</b>	<b>11</b>	For Lore and Colin
<b>Monday</b>	<b>12</b>	For our government and politicians
<b>Tuesday</b>	<b>13</b>	For those who live and work in the streets around Christ Church
<b>Wednesday</b>	<b>14</b>	That we may have the gift of joy
<b>Thursday</b>	<b>15</b>	For all those on our rotas
<b>Friday</b>	<b>16</b>	For the unemployed
<b>Saturday</b>	<b>17</b>	We give thanks for those who enrich our lives
<b>Sunday</b>	<b>18</b>	For our flower arrangers and those who look after the church
<b>Monday</b>	<b>19</b>	For members of the legal profession
<b>Tuesday</b>	<b>20</b>	For our compassion fund
<b>Wednesday</b>	<b>21</b>	For children and their families
<b>Thursday</b>	<b>22</b>	For those who are travelling
<b>Friday</b>	<b>23</b>	For those who use or run food banks



<b>Saturday</b>	<b>24</b>	For churches, Cathedrals and communities named Christ Church
<b>Sunday</b>	<b>25</b>	Thanksgiving for the Incarnation
<b>Monday</b>	<b>26</b>	For Canon Angela and Ned
<b>Tuesday</b>	<b>27</b>	For those who work in social services
<b>Wednesday</b>	<b>28</b>	For all in hospital
<b>Thursday</b>	<b>29</b>	For those who mourn
<b>Friday</b>	<b>30</b>	For those affected by disasters in the air or at sea
<b>Saturday</b>	<b>31</b>	We give thanks for the blessings of the past year

## Long-term Prayer List

*Please remember those we've been asked to pray for...*

John Burrows  
Cyril Selmes  
Ned and Angela Townshend  
Joyce Fairburn  
Martin Palmer  
Katharine  
David Slater  
David Lavis

Jason Batup  
Don Sparks  
Marge and Mervyn Gull  
Keith Warren and Jean  
Tabitha and Fonella Coles  
Hilary Hunter  
Steve Faulkner  
Pamela and John Gosling

***Want to add a name to the prayer list, either long-term or short-term, or remove one? Please use the lists at the back of the church, or let the Verger or one of the Churchwardens know.***

### **Christ Church Link**

This magazine is published on the first Sunday of each month. Please send any contributions of news and articles by the 15th of the preceding month to the editor, Alex Soboslay, or by e-mail to **[magazine@christchurchbath.org](mailto:magazine@christchurchbath.org)**

# Rotas for December 2016

*Readers and readings, Sunday 10am Eucharist*

	Old Testament	New Testament	Gospel
<b>4 Dec</b> 2nd of Advent	<b>Judith Bishop</b> Isaiah 11:1-10	<b>Malcolm Wall</b> Romans 15:4-13	<b>Lewis Boyd</b> Matthew 3:1-12
<b>11 Dec</b> 3rd of Advent	<b>Emma Elliott</b> Isaiah 35:1-10	<b>Rowena Hall</b> James 5:7-10	<b>Charles Rice</b> Matthew 11:2-11
<b>18 Dec</b> 4th of Advent	<b>Junior Church</b> Isaiah 7:10-16	<b>Junior Church</b> Romans 1:1-7	<b>Junior Church</b> Matthew 1:18-end
<b>Sat 24 Dec</b> Midnight Mass	<b>TBC</b> Isaiah 52:7-10	<b>Virginia Knight</b> Hebrews 1:1-4	<b>Mark Elliott</b> John 1:1-14
<b>25 Dec</b> Christmas Day	<b>Janet Mahto</b> Isaiah 9:2-7	<b>Brenda Wall</b> Titus 2:11-14	<b>Isaac Elliott</b> Luke 2:1-14
<b>1 Jan</b> New Year's Day	<b>David Bishop</b> Numbers 6:22-end	<b>Rebekah Cunningham</b> Galatians 4:4-7	<b>Morny Davison</b> Luke 2:15-21

*Laity rota, Sunday 10am Eucharist*

	Chalice assistants	Sidespeople	Intercessions
<b>4 Dec</b>	Clive Tilling, Brenda Wall	Janet Mahto, Morny Davison	Revd Cliff Burrows
<b>11 Dec</b>	Keri Chivers, David Rawlings	Ken Ayers, Sylvia Ayers	Penny Edwards
<b>18 Dec</b>	Malcolm Wall, Janet Mahto	Jane Nicholson, Margaret Silver	Sarah Jones
<b>Sat 24 Dec</b> Midnight	TBC	TBC	TBC
<b>25 Dec</b>	TBC	Ken Ayers, Sylvia Ayers	TBC
<b>1 Jan</b>	Clive Tilling, Malcolm Wall	Margaret Heath, Morny Davison	Mark Elliott

# Who's who at Christ Church

**Priest-in-charge** Revd Lore Chumbley  
07595 294146  
lore.chumbley@me.com

**Supporting clergy**  
Revd Prof. Cliff Burrows  
Revd Canon Simon Tatton-Brown

**Reader, Director of Music** Mark Elliott  
01225 445360  
mark.elliott@christchurchbath.org

**Churchwarden,  
Council Treasurer** Malcolm Wall  
01225 864933  
malcolm.wall@christchurchbath.org

**Churchwarden,  
Christ Church Link editor** Alex Soboslay  
07769 655927  
alexs@christchurchbath.org

**Verger** Angela Soboslay  
01225 333297  
angela.soboslay@christchurchbath.org

**Chair of Trustees** Sarah Jones  
01225 443284  
sarah.jones@christchurchbath.org

**Treasurer** David Bishop  
01225 869409  
david.bishop@christchurchbath.org

**Safeguarding officer** Lewis Boyd  
07739 989639  
lewis.boyd@christchurchbath.org

**Organist and Assistant  
Director of Music** Keith Pigot  
01225 723801  
keithpigot@gmail.com

**Concert bookings,  
weekly notice sheet** Judith Bishop  
01225 869409  
concerts@christchurchbath.org  
notices@christchurchbath.org

**Pastoral care co-ordinators** Keri Chivers  
01225 421265  
keri.chivers@christchurchbath.org  
Revd Canon Simon Tatton-Brown  
01225 835404  
simontb@christchurchbath.org

**Tower Captain** Ian Hay Davison  
07932 160482  
bells@christchurchbath.org  
**Ringing Master** Will Willans  
**Steeple Keeper** David Kelly

**Laity rotas** (acting) Judith Bishop

**Prayer cycle** Virginia Knight

**Cedar Tree café** Janet Mahto

**Publicity co-ordinators** Janet Mahto,  
Lewis Boyd, Hazel Boyd

**Junior Church** Emma Elliott

**United Society,  
Churches Together in Bath,  
Traidcraft stall** Rebekah Cunningham

**Mothers' Union** Sylvia Ayers  
01225 463976

**Mission to Seafarers** Sylvia Ayers

**Deanery Synod Reps** Brenda Wall  
Sarah Kerr  
Jane Nicholson



THE CHURCH  
OF ENGLAND

# About Christ Church

*We're a liberal, inclusive and open church,  
seeking God through beauty in our worship, honesty  
in our faith and doubt, and support in our community*

Christ Church has an unusual history, out of which has developed a distinctive ministry. It was founded at the end of the 18th century by a group of socially concerned clergy and lay people for those excluded from worship through the system of pew rents. It was probably the first church in England since the Reformation to provide seating for all free of charge. Early supporters included: John Moore, the Archbishop of Canterbury; William Wilberforce, the great evangelical and campaigner against slavery; and Martin Stafford Smith, godfather of John Keble, a founder of the Oxford Movement.

Christ Church is not a parish church and does not have a full-time vicar. This has led to the development of a shared ministry where clergy and laity both make important contributions to worship and church life.

Christ Church is part of the Anglican diocese of Bath and Wells, although it still sits outside the normal Church of England parish system. We see ourselves as a traditional and liberal Anglican church. Worship is led by our clergy, and music is provided by our

robed choir and organist. There is the option of separate activities for children in Junior Church groups during our 10am Sunday service.

As well as worship on a Sunday morning, there are many other activities going on in our community. We support the Genesis Sunday Centre and have our own community café. The musical tradition of the church continues to thrive, and we have an active choir. New singers of all ages are always very welcome. Our ecumenical Pilgrim Group provides a space for exploration and discussion of faith in an open and non-judgemental setting.

## Regular Sunday services

8am Holy Communion (Book of Common Prayer)

*On the second Sunday of every month*

10am Sung Eucharist with Junior Church activities for children and young people  
*Every Sunday*

4:30pm Choral Evensong  
*Usually on the third Sunday of every month, but see website or notice board for details*

Baptisms, marriages and funerals by arrangement – please contact us!



## Contacting us

Christ Church,  
Julian Road,  
Bath BA1 2RH  
Phone: 01225 338869  
(answer phone)

Email: [admin@christchurchbath.org](mailto:admin@christchurchbath.org)  
Website: [www.christchurchbath.org](http://www.christchurchbath.org)

