



A Happy and a Holy Christmas to all!



Christ Church *Link*

December 2022 ● Number 128 ● 50p where sold

Paradox of the Incarnation

From the priest-in-charge...

Revd Lore Chumbley writes:

Our young people are central to Christ Church and we try to have an annual Junior Church outing, though that has been difficult for the past two years. This year we will be off to the Theatre Royal soon after Christmas to see *Aladdin*. We are looking forward to the weak jokes and audience participation which are traditional in pantomime. Somehow after the breathless expectation of Advent, the beautiful austerity of our Advent and Christmas carol services, the excitement and giggles of the Christmas Eve wait for Father Christmas, the glory of sung Midnight Communion, and the joyful rush of cooking and feasting on Christmas Day, the absurdity of a traditional pantomime is just what's needed.

There will be cross-dressing for the fun of it, Widow Twankey in all her absurdity, a princess, a magic lamp that grants wishes and a satisfactorily wicked villain. For an afternoon everything will be magical and strange and will only make sense if you choose to enter a world in which a lamp grants wishes and, as a matter of course, the answer to "Oh yes I will" is "Oh no you won't."

In the incarnation God turns everything we thought we knew about God upside down, becoming human, fallible and mortal. In a hymn which is popular for weddings we sing "Immortal, invisible, God only wise." It goes on: "Unresting, unhashting, and silent as light". It seems theologically quite sophisticated until we realise that God

chooses to come among us a baby who is quite obviously none of those things. Jesus is mortal, visible, not in the least silent and often in a hurry to get to the next village and tell the good news there. He loves eating and drinking with friends, and I think would have roared with laughter at a pantomime. None of that undermines the sense of awe and "fear of the Lord" that the Old Testament teaches is essential in the presence of God the Father, but as at Christmas we celebrate the coming of the Christ Child we can also know God as tiny and vulnerable and willing to suffer if that will save us.

Happy Christmas!



By chance, there happened to be a cross in the background behind this nativity scene, symbolising the mortality into which Jesus is born.

Curate's corner

Revd Kara Maylor writes:

Laughter, feasting and sun shining through the apple trees was the wonderful backdrop for our Newcomers lunch in mid November. We were so blessed that we were able to sit outside in Janet's glorious garden. Many thanks go to Janet for hosting and Lucy for providing a feast. It was a wonderful gathering with a mix of generations. I think the children are already looking forward to the next apple picking!

Our Cedar Tree community resounds with laughter as our Jenga skills grow week by week – come and see it in action. We are all looking forward to our Cedar Tree Christmas Party followed by an outing to Bath City Farm for whoever would like to join us.

After our Cedar Tree group walk, Barney and I head up to the Chaplaincy at the University, where we walk, talk and pray with students who are missing their dogs and like to cuddle Barney or just want to chat. A group of us went the ice rink in the evening – without Barney, I hasten to add. Two of the group are from India and had never seen ice before, let alone tried ice skating... It was an experience for them. The hot chocolate mountains afterwards were worth it, I was assured.

We are excited to have gained permission for Community Carols on St Andrew's Green on 15 December at 5:30pm. Do come along, and if you can help with flasks of mulled wine, hot chocolate, mince pies or stewarding, do let me know. And please pray that we can set the hearts of the community on fire with the true spirit of peace and hope of Christmas.



Carols on the Green, Christmas 2021.

Follow The Star THE GREAT INVITATION

Following a series of difficult Christmases, all are invited to follow the star at church services and other ways this Christmas.

Why not invite a friend to come along to your church this year? The Talking Jesus Report 2022 indicates that lots of people who are not churchgoers are open to receiving an invitation, while many church people are anxious about asking. Revd Stephen Hance from the Church of England Vision and Strategy team suggests considering the three 3Ps before you extend your invitation:

- *Pray* before you invite someone (after all, it is God who draws people);
- *Prepare* (what kind of service is your invitee most likely to be interested in?); and
- *Petition* (in other words, just ask). If that person says no, consider who else may welcome an invitation.

The invitation to join in is not limited to attending church. All can engage with the reflections for *Follow the Star: the Great Invitation*. Starting on Christmas Eve and continuing daily (Monday to Saturday) until Epiphany (6 January), these reflections will help you make space this Christmas. On each of the 12 days, a different contributor will share something that speaks of a Christmas invitation for them, bringing the theme to life through a mixture of personal story, Bible reading, reflection and challenge. The reflections will be available via e-mail, audio, an app and a printed booklet – so anyone can join in.

Find out more at churchofengland.org/resources/advent-and-christmas-resources.

As Stephen concludes, "It's a beautiful thought that God can use you and me to invite people into his love this Christmastime – and it's true! So who will you invite?"

Hidden ministries

Revd Lore Chumbley writes:

Not all ministries at Christ Church are immediately apparent. Many are hidden. For a couple of years Andrew Manister has been creating films inspired by the Bible. They have been well received and he has made some into eight-hour loops which are popular as an aid to sleep. But they are not primarily designed to put you to sleep! His YouTube channel “No Greater Love” received a YouTube Silver Creator Award when it reached 100,000 followers. This is how Andy introduces his channel:

“If you long for a deeper, intimate, more meaningful connection with God; if your Prayer-life needs inspiration; if you need help but you don’t know what help – then this channel is for you. In these series of films, we explore the concept of holding God to His word on the promises He made to us in scripture; we explore what Christ said and meant, and we look to take our relationship with God deeper and into a stronger connection.”

You can read the story of how Andy felt God calling him to make the films on our website, <http://christchurchbath.org>, and you can access the films themselves at <https://www.youtube.com/c/NoGreaterLove>.

Last month...



Speaking of hidden ministries: the indefatigable Robin Kerr is seen here carrying out one of the many maintenance tasks he quietly takes on behind the scenes. Photo courtesy of Lore Chumbley

Bishop Michael installed

In a service in Wells Cathedral marked with tradition and symbolism, the Rt Revd Michael Beasley was installed 80th Bishop of Bath and Wells wearing the Coronation Cope, originally commissioned for the Coronation of Edward VII in 1902. His Oath of Allegiance to the King was taken on Bishop Robert Creighton’s Bible, which dates back to 1633, and he received the 15th century episcopal ring.

Representatives from every parish across Bath and Wells, young and old, attended the service – clergy, parish lay representatives and guests from local schools, businesses, and civic society. All were encouraged by Bishop Michael to “be people who long for a harvest

– a world transformed into a place of peace, fairness, service, justice, loving-kindness.”

He gifted 1,000 saplings to those present, asking: “Will you plant a sapling as a sign that under God each of us, in every place, can play our part in working for change, for transformation, for life?”

In the morning, Bishop Michael had attended morning prayer at Bath Abbey. Instead of simply driving back to Wells, he used different forms of transport, meeting the people of the diocese along the way, living out a phrase that has stuck with him from the service when he first became a bishop: “bishops know their people and their people know them”.

Book review: *Humbler Faith, Bigger God*

Humbler Faith, Bigger God: Finding a Story to Live By, by Samuel Wells (Canterbury Press, 2022, 224 pages. ISBN 978-1786224187). RRP £14.99 (available in paperback or on Kindle)

Peter Bowes writes:

An interesting title, especially the subtitle, that seems to me to resonate well with the “About Christ Church” strapline on the back page of the *Link* (and on the church website), which speaks of “seeking God through beauty in our worship, honesty in our faith and doubt, and support in our community”. Those words encouraged us to join Christ Church when we moved to Bath. And those words came to mind as, on a recent retreat, I read this new book by Sam Wells, the Vicar of St Martin-in-the-Fields in London.

He describes the book as being equally for the person who has no background in Christianity, for the person coming from another faith tradition, the Christian who is struggling with faith, and for the person giving Christianity another chance after disappointment, hurt or disillusionment. I guess most of us might fall within at least one of those categories. His approach is to take what he sees as the ten most substantial arguments against Christianity and devotes one chapter to each. Each chapter begins with a broadly traditional orthodox statement of Christianity. It then challenges that statement with the conven-

tional and plausible arguments and evidence commonly set against it. Then he offers space for what he calls the rival story (sometimes more than one) – what an educated, rational, contemporary person would generally think.

This sets up a counter argument, and he pauses to assess the validity and flaws of this rival story. The third part of each chapter, the heart of the book, is his opportunity to offer what he calls a story to live by, his chance to express the territory that has been covered in the first two sections in a constructive vision for a renewed Christian faith.

I’d be tempted to say this is a novel approach, but he points out that it was in fact very much the approach adopted (albeit at much greater length!) 750 years ago by Thomas Aquinas in his *Summa Theologica*. Be that as it may, I found it an interesting approach – albeit not agreeing with him on every point – and a real stimulus to thinking about my story to live by.

The material in the book has been road-tested in study groups at St Martin-in-the-Fields, and might well lend itself for that elsewhere – a project for the Pilgrim Group, perhaps? Reflective questions on each chapter are provided to help the reader, whether a solitary person or a participant in a group, draw out for themselves the implications of what they are reading.

Christmas services

Sunday 11 Dec.

- 5pm LGBTQI+ Affirming carol service

Thursday 15 Dec.

- 5:30pm Community carol singing on St Andrew’s Green

Sunday 18 Dec.

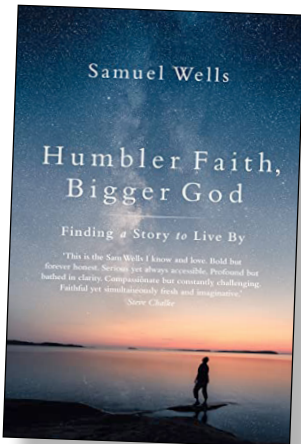
- 10am Family Eucharist and Nativity Play – families and children particularly welcome
- 7:30pm Christmas Carol Service – a joyful service of lessons and carols with the choir

Saturday 24 Dec. – Christmas Eve

- 4:30pm Crib Service – a candlelit service for the whole family
- 11:30pm Midnight Eucharist – the traditional start to Christmas

Sunday 25 Dec. – Christmas Day

- 10am Sung Eucharist



Bishop's Message for December

His light is never extinguished



**From the Rt Revd Michael Beasley,
Bishop of Bath and Wells**

As 2022 comes to a close, our hearts go out to the people of Ukraine, whose country was invaded by Russia on 24 February this year. In the months since, we have watched in horror as civilians, cities and infrastructure have been attacked, land occupied and atrocities committed.

The UK has received more than 100,000 people fleeing from the conflict. The gift of their presence among us reminds us that this is no “quarrel in a far-away country, between people of whom we know nothing”.

As we recall once again the coming into the world of Jesus at Christmas, our challenge is to connect our celebration of his birth with the realities and consequences of the conflict that is happening. Sadly, it's not hard to see the links. Jesus was born in a land (Palestine) that had been annexed by an expansionist foreign power (Rome) in pursuit of its territorial ambitions. The demands of the Roman occupiers

meant that Jesus' birth happened not at home in Nazareth, but at a counting centre – Bethlehem. He was born in a stable because “there was no room at the inn”. While still a baby, Jesus became a refugee when taken to Egypt due to warnings of atrocities to come.

Viewed this way, the Christmas story is no sentimental fable. It is a brutal foreshadowing of the events that Ukraine and our whole world have encountered this year. At the same time, it is also a story of hope. For it tells us that even in the very worst that can happen, the Christ child whose birth we celebrate knows all too well the realities of the human condition. As a result, in any darkness his light is never extinguished. For he is Emmanuel – God with us.

So as we come to the end of 2022 we give thanks that God is always with us in whatever we face. May he be with Ukraine. May he be with Russia. And may he be welcomed by us all.

A very happy Christmas!

+Michael

Folk duo concert

What is it? As part of the launch tour for their new album *You, Golden*, young folk duo Owen Spafford (fiddle) and Louis Campbell (guitar) mix traditional and experimental music. They make two instruments seemingly sound as one, creating subtle and emotive textures that redefine the trad fiddle and guitar duo idiom. *When is it?* Wednesday 7 December, 7:30pm *Where?* Christ Church

Tickets £12 adults, available from Mark Elliott or Bath Box Office, <https://bathboxoffice.org.uk/whats-on/owen-spafford-louis-campbell/>

This month's charities: for Bath's vulnerable

The collection in the plate on the second and fourth Sunday of the month – 11 and 25 December – plus other collections at services this month as notified will be divided between Julian House and The Genesis Trust. (Donations in collection envelopes continue to go to Christ Church.)

As a Christian charity, Genesis works with local churches and volunteers in the wider community in Bath and the surrounding area to help disadvantaged and vulnerable individuals and families to change their lives. Offering immediate practical help with food, clothing and furniture, as well as long-term opportunities, training and work experience, Genesis supports people on their journey from crisis to independence.

“We recognise that poverty is not just about lacking material resources but can encompass a lack of relationships and network of support, and a lack of identity and purpose,” the charity says. “We aim to address this through practical help, personal encouragement, mentoring and training.”

At Christmas time, “we love to be able to give Christmas presents to our clients. We give toy vouchers and festive food to families using our foodbank, we give toiletries, warm items of clothing and edible treats to those who are sleeping rough and activity-based packs to our clients who are socially isolated and/or struggling with mental ill-health.”

For more information on the charity's activities, visit <https://genesistrust.org.uk>.

For more about the charity's Christmas appeal, plus links to ways to donate, details of fairs and events at which Genesis will have a stall, and ways to buy the Genesis Christmas cards or Calendar, visit <https://genesistrust.org.uk/about/christmas-page>.



Julian House is a Bath-based charity working across the South West supporting vulnerable and at-risk individuals including men, women and young people experiencing homelessness, women and children escaping domestic abuse, adults with learning difficulties and people who need support after leaving prison.

The charity says: “Homelessness doesn't take a break, especially during the festive season. For our Christmas appeal we want to raise awareness of the reason why the people we support have fallen into difficult circumstances. These can include domestic abuse, mental health issues, family breakdown, childhood trauma and addiction.”

As the media have widely publicised, domestic abuse and the factors that lead to it were exacerbated over the pandemic. These remain a major focus for Julian House. “In addition to safe refuge accommodation, we run the Freedom programme, which promotes positive changes and recovery for women and their children in a supportive environment. This is a rolling 12 week course we run three times per year for women who have experienced domestic abuse.

“We also run a Children and Young People service, where we offer practical and emotional support, information, and education for children and young people who are experiencing or have experienced domestic abuse. We also work with local schools to raise awareness of the issues children and young people face around domestic abuse. In addition, we support school staff to educate students about healthy relationships.

“The last few years have made things much harder for our clients and for Julian House. We're concerned that the challenges which make things so difficult look like they are going to continue in 2023.”

You can find out more and donate online at www.julianhouse.org.uk.

Christ Church calendar Dec. 2022

4 Sun *The Second Sunday of Advent*
10am Eucharist
6:30pm Advent Carol Service

7 Wed Pilgrim Feast 7:30pm

8 Thu 11am Eucharist

9 Fri Cedar Tree café, 11am – 1:30pm

11 Sun *The Third Sunday of Advent*
8am Holy Communion (BCP)
10am Eucharist
5pm LGBTQI+ Affirming Carol Service

15 Thu 11am Eucharist

16 Fri Cedar Tree café, 11am – 1:30pm

18 Sun *The Fourth Sunday of Advent*
10am Eucharist
7:30pm Christmas Carol Service

22 Thu 11am Eucharist

23 Fri Cedar Tree café, 11am – 1:30pm

24 Sat *Christmas Eve*
4:30pm Crib Service
11:30pm Midnight Eucharist

25 Sun *Christmas Day*
10am Eucharist

26 Mon *Boxing Day / Stephen, the first martyr*

27 Tue *John, Apostle and Evangelist*

28 Wed *The Holy Innocents*

29 Thu 11am Eucharist

30 Fri Cedar Tree café, 11am – 1:30pm

Jan 1 Sun *New Year's Day / The Naming and Circumcision of Jesus*
10am Eucharist

Our Sunday 10am Eucharist, and other services as advertised, continue to be live-streamed at www.facebook.com/christchurchbath

Prayer Cycle for December 2022

Thursday	1	For those who live and work in the streets around Christ Church
Friday	2	For those in slavery and bonded labour
Saturday	3	For our Environment Group
Sunday	4	For the Trustees of Christ Church
Monday	5	For those in the legal profession
Tuesday	6	That we may be pure in heart
Wednesday	7	For those who have lost their faith
Thursday	8	For our neighbours at St Mary's Catholic Church
Friday	9	For those who use and run food banks
Saturday	10	For peace
Sunday	11	For Jane and Janet our Churchwardens
Monday	12	For journalists and those who work in the media
Tuesday	13	For the ministry of hospices
Wednesday	14	We give thanks for family and friends
Thursday	15	For those on our long-term prayer list
Friday	16	For victims of natural disasters
Saturday	17	For those preparing for marriage or recently married
Sunday	18	For new members to be added to Christ Church
Monday	19	For those who work in the transport industry
Tuesday	20	That we may have the gift of faithfulness
Wednesday	21	For carers
Thursday	22	For those who travel
Friday	23	For those who are unable to keep warm

Saturday	24	For children and their families
Sunday	25	Thanksgiving for the Incarnation
Monday	26	For all clergy spouses
Tuesday	27	For our charities of the month, Genesis Trust and Julian House
Wednesday	28	For the local Deanery Synod
Thursday	29	For good use to be made of this prayer cycle
Friday	30	For the sick and suffering
Saturday	31	We give thanks for the blessings of the past year

Long-term Prayer List

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

Tilly	Chris
Revd John	Thomas
Jean	David
Louise and Elliott	Patrick
Amber	AJ
David	John K
Joyce W	Romey
Roger and Frances	Frankie
Joyce K	Mylene
Jean and John	Evelyn
Guo Ping Jiang	Margaret H
Kun Yue	Hui Tao Ling
Judith and Bob	

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

Cedar Tree is open

The Cedar Tree community café is open every Friday from 11am to 1:30pm. All are welcome! If you live or work in the area, do consider dropping in for a chat, a cup of coffee, home-made cake or a light snack, to support this important part of our outreach to the local community. If you can help on a Friday or make a cake we can sell, then please contact Jenny Hesketh. Your offers will be very gratefully received.



Rotas for December 2022

Readers and readings, Sunday 10am Eucharist

	Old Testament	New Testament	Gospel
4 Dec. 2nd Sun. of Advent	Angela Soboslay Isaiah 11:1-10	Richard Gabe Romans 15:4-13	Sylvia Ayers Matthew 3:1-12
	Intercessions: Georgina Bowman		
11 Dec. 3rd Sun. of Advent	Kara Maylor Isaiah 35:1-10	Beryl Bowes James 5:7-10	David Bishop Matthew 11:2-11
	Intercessions: Peter Bowes		
18 Dec. 4th Sun. of Advent	Nick Wells Isaiah 7:10-16	Mary Nyota Romans 1:1-7	Jonathan Stead Matthew 1:18-end
	Intercessions: Beryl Bowes		
24 Dec. Christmas Eve	Jane Hoe Isaiah 52:7-10	Mark Elliott Hebrews 1:1-12	Peter Bowes John 1:1-14
	Intercessions: Jonathan Stead		
25 Dec. Christmas Day	Emma Elliott Isaiah 9:2-7	Malcolm Wall Titus 3:4-7	Jude Bishop Luke 2:1-14
	Intercessions: Mark Elliott		
1 Jan. Naming of Jesus	Jane Hoe Numbers 6:22-end	Brenda Wall Galatians 4:4-7	Simon Tatton- Brown Luke 2:15-21
	Intercessions: Kara Maylor		

Who's who at Christ Church

Priest-in-charge	Revd Lore Chumbley 07595 294146 lore.chumbley@me.com	Organist and Assistant Director of Music	David Winters david.winters@christchurchbath.org
Curate	Revd Kara Maylor	Event/concert bookings, weekly notice sheet	Judith Bishop 01225 858816 concerts@christchurchbath.org notices@christchurchbath.org
Supporting clergy	Revd Canon Simon Tatton-Brown 01225 835404 simon@tattonbrown.myzen.co.uk	Christ Church Link editor	Alex Soboslay 07769 655927 alexs@christchurchbath.org
	Revd Beryl Bowes Revd Dr Peter Bowes	Tower Captain, Ringing Master	Will Willans
Reader, Director of Music	Mark Elliott 01225 445360 mark.elliott@christchurchbath.org	Steeple Keeper	David Kelly
Churchwarden	Janet Mahto 01225 424860 janetmahto@gmail.com	Cedar Tree café organiser	Jenny Hesketh jenny.hesketh@me.com
Churchwarden	Jane Nicholson 07990 552413 jane@janemicholson.com	Junior Church	Emma Elliott
Verger	Angela Soboslay 01225 333297 angela.soboslay@christchurchbath.org	Laity rotas	Judith Bishop
Chair of Trustees	Nick Wells 07774 104584 nicholaswells5@btinternet.com	Prayer cycle	Virginia Knight
Treasurer	David Bishop 01225 858816 david.bishop@christchurchbath.org	Charitable Giving co-ordinator	Jonathan Stead
Deanery Synod Reps	Brenda Wall Pauline Swaby-Wallace	Mission to Seafarers	Sylvia Ayers
Safeguarding officer	Virginia Knight 07896 916840 safeguarding@christchurchbath.org		

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



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 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. New singers of all ages are always very welcome.

For anyone concerned about the health risks of congregational singing, we do not sing at the 8am BCP Communion or 5pm Quiet Service.

As well as worship on Sundays and Thursdays, there are many other activities going on in our community, including our weekly community café every Friday. Our ecumenical Pilgrim Group provides a space for exploration and discussion of faith in an open and non-judgemental setting. Visit the website to check service times and events.

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 – also streamed at www.facebook.com/christchurchbath*
- 4:30pm Choral Evensong – *Usually on the third Sunday of each month*
- 5pm Contemplative Quiet Service (Iona) – *On the fourth Sunday of every month*

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

Contacting us

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