

Christ Church Link

Summer 2011 Issue 5

We're an open-minded Christian community exploring our faith together

50p Where sold

Summer of stillness?

Jayne Tricket

The summer is well and truly upon us and at the time of writing many of my fellow students are celebrating the end of exams and looking towards going home for the summer, for some, packing up to leave Bath for the final time.

For some of us, a break after working or studying gives us a chance to rest, enjoy the summer and to reflect on the past year. At Christ Church it's been a year of working together during the interregnum and considering God's mission for our church. Lots of people have worked really hard to keep all of the church's activities going and this has helped our community draw upon its people's gifts and individuals' willingness to serve.

So what are we looking for in our well deserved winding down during the summer months? I'm sure a relaxing holiday complete with (some?) sunshine wouldn't go amiss! But on a deeper level, how can we recharge our spiritual batteries to come back with renewed enthusiasm for God's work at Christ Church? Throughout his ministry Jesus took time away from others to rest and spent time in prayer. Prayer is the source of our relationship with God; through it we become better aware of God's presence at work in our lives and the lives of others. It's in the stillness and quiet, away from the busyness of daily life that we may be able to listen more attentively. We are known by God better than we know ourselves (see Matthew 10: 29-31). This is such a comforting aspect of God as our heavenly Father. However at the same time it's a somewhat humbling realisation of our own weak understanding of ourselves in relation to God.

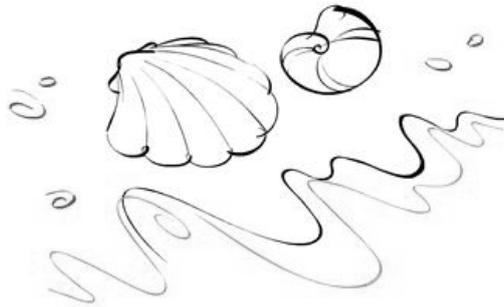
Maybe we could all take time to retreat from the world; its deadlines, expectations and worries, to be still and listen. Even just to the garden, or the park or anywhere else we can be alone with God.

The challenge is that our walk with God is of the endurance kind, certainly one with hills to climb! Our refreshment needs to sustain us for that journey. Regular prayer is important, just as we can mark the Sunday Eucharist to reflect on the past week. How can we support each other in our spiritual journeys, as an open and reflective community? Remembering that God is everywhere, in all things and present at

all times, let's be encouraged to engage with Christ Church's mission objectives to 'foster and encourage discipleship by prayer and the opportunity for teaching and exploration of faith.' (Christ Church Mission Statement 2011-2012). The appointment of a new incumbent marks an opportunity for renewal; a focus for our prayers this summer.

As we take time to reflect on our own and the spiritual life of our community at Christ Church, I found the following poem by John Birch useful:

We have a call
To be loved and to love
To be shown mercy and to show mercy
To be forgiven and to forgive
To receive hope and to offer hope
To know joy and share joy
To feel peace and bring peace
To be made whole and offer wholeness
We have a call
Listen...
Listen...
Do you hear?



Who are you going to invite?

Sarah Jones

Back to Church Sunday (BTCS) a national event based on the simplest and shortest step in growing the church - that we should invite someone we already know to something we love: invite a friend to our church. It raises a high media profile as tens of thousands of Christians offer this invitation at the same time.

The initial focus of the event (which began in Greater Manchester in 2004) was to invite 'back' those who used to attend, but the aim is now to ensure that anyone who doesn't currently attend church can be guaranteed a specially warm welcome on that day. There are some particular statements which describe what BTCS is all about:

- Back to Church Sunday is about the people who are not here.
- It aims to reach the people who are not here through the people who are.
- Success isn't a percentage, a number, or a line on a graph. Success is one person inviting one person.
- Success is best supported when we act all together as 'one big church' on one day.



Although BTCS began as a Church of England event and still has a focus through Anglican dioceses, it now takes place in churches across denominations in countries around the world.

We have registered to take part in Back to Church Sunday this year on 25th September. There are currently no plans to change our service particularly, but there will be invitations available for you to take away in advance of the date, to consider whether there is a particular person you could invite. And of course we will make doubly sure that our warm welcome is evident to anyone visiting on that Sunday.

You can find out more about Back to Church Sunday on their website: www.backtochurch.co.uk

Sea Sunday

Sylvia Ayers

10th July is Sea Sunday when The Mission to Seafarers encourages us to celebrate our seafarers, and give thanks for their hard work. In particular this year there is a focus on piracy and the added danger it brings to the lives of those working at sea.

We will be holding a retiring collection for The Mission to Seafarers on 10th July to support their work in offering emotional and practical support to those who work on the oceans.

You can find out more about the organisation and this year's campaign on their website:

www.missiontoseafarers.org
or speak to me.



Update on the Mothers' Union Bye Buy Childhood campaign

Margaret Burrows

As you will recall from the last edition of the magazine, the Mothers' Union launched their campaign against the commercialisation and sexualisation of childhood in September last year. The Government review of this topic led by Reg Bailey (their own Chief Executive) reported in June.

In general the MU welcomed the recommendations but would like more robust action from the Government than has been recommended. Their response states: "We cannot agree with the Review... that further regulation or legislation would necessarily disempower parents."

You can read the full response on the website: www.themothersunion.org

Big Questions: Little Answers

Having already put this piece together, we discovered Angela Berners-Wilson may have already done Big Qs: Little As for the previous incarnation of the magazine. If you're feeling curious you could trawl the archives on the website and compare her answers...

What are your hobbies?

Playing Sudoku; travelling; playing Petanque (latest craze - I'm on the Uni team that now plays in the Bath League in Queen's square alternate Tuesdayevenings); walking in the countryside; reading good novels.

What car do you drive?

A red Suzuki Swift

What is your favourite film, and why?

Dr Zhivago - I used to be in love with Omar Sharif, and the scene in the snow in the house with the wolves outside and the icicles hanging on the inside.

What is your favourite kind of music?

Classical; Leonard Cohen; Peter Sarsted; Greek.

What is your favourite kind of meal / food?

Greek/Chinese/Indian but not *too* hot. Chocolate - in any form but **not** with nuts.

What has been your proudest moment?

Abseiling down Colerne Church tower to raise funds - twice!
Being ordained Priest in Bristol Cathedral on 12th March 1994 - 5.30pm

What is the most amazing place you have visited?

The Blue Lagoon in Iceland. The Forbidden City in Beijing. Climbing Ayers Rock in Australia - you were allowed to in 1997 when I went there.

What famous person, dead or alive, would you like to meet?

Shakespeare.

What's your pet hate?

Nuts. People who shout into their mobile phones on trains. [We presume this is two separate answers not two descriptions of the same group of people! - Eds]

What's your favourite book?

The Narnian Chronicles - especially *The Horse and His Boy*, and *The Last Battle*.

Tell us a little known fact about yourself

The 4th toe on my right foot is a bit squished and not much longer than the 5th one.



Dave Walker is a freelance cartoonist and has published three books of cartoons about church life. We hope you enjoy his work as much as we do.

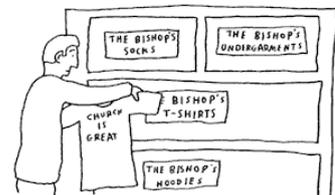
This CartoonChurch.com cartoon originally appeared in the Church Times.

THE BISHOP'S CHAPLAIN

THEIR DUTIES ARE AS FOLLOWS:



CARRYING THE BISHOP'S CROZIER AS IT CAN GET QUITE HEAVY AFTER A WHILE



ORGANISING THINGS FOR THE BISHOP



HELPING THE BISHOP TO GATHER RESOURCES



CARRYING OUT MISCELLANEOUS TASKS AS AND WHEN REQUIRED

A new Priest-in-charge

The process for appointing a new Priest-in-charge at Christ Church has been progressing for many months. It culminated at the end of June with two days when the candidates had a chance to meet members of the church community and clergy from neighbouring churches, share food and drink with us and take part in a more formal interview.

We are pleased to announce that the process was a great success, the interview panel came to a unanimous decision and the candidate in question has accepted our verbal offer. We now need to pursue the formalities of seeking a reference from her current bishop, applying for CRB clearance and so forth. Therefore as yet the decision cannot be shared. However if all goes smoothly and we can make arrangements to coordinate the process with the candidate's current church, an announcement should be made in the next two weeks.

Warm thanks are due to everyone who has taken part in this process: both putting together the profile document and organising and participating in the two day selection process. In particular, many of those who enquired about the post (including the candidates who came to interview) were extremely complementary about the appearance and content of the church profile. And both candidates said they found the church a warm and welcoming place during their time with us.

This is obviously an exciting time for Christ Church and we look forward to working with our new incumbent when she arrives here in the autumn.



The Gospel according to Pullman?

Sarah Jones

It is one of the minor dilemmas of the liberal Christian. One would like to read some of the books written by the fêted atheists prominent in popular culture, but perhaps one does not wish to boost their sales figures. So when Matthew and I were passing a pleasant hour or so in Barter Books (a wonderful second hand bookshop in Alnwick, Northumberland) and I came across a copy of *The Good Man Jesus and the Scoundrel Christ* by Philip Pullman I thought I'd see what the fuss had been about. As you may recall when the book was published in April last year some Christians were scandalised by yet another atheist attack on the Christian faith. However others (from the liberal to the evangelical) found themes of interest in the book and whilst disagreeing with the text, saw that it might be a way for people to reengage with the original gospel stories.

In a vivid style, close to what we find in modern Bible translations, Pullman tells a story. Mary gives birth to twins: the first, Jesus is strong and calm, the second born she calls Christ; an introspective character. Jesus hears a calling from God and goes out to preach the coming of the Kingdom. Christ is impressed by his brother's oratory and moral passion, but fears where it will lead. He is visited by an unnamed stranger who persuades him that Jesus' teaching needs interpretation and a little improvement. Ultimately some sort of

organisation, called the church perhaps, should control Jesus' story. It is Christ who puts the three satanic questions to Jesus in the desert, and at the stranger's behest, it is Christ (not Judas) who betrays Jesus to the authorities.

Pullman knows his craft making the text compelling. It is worth reading for some of the retellings of the parables alone. Does it teach us anything? The central theme is the familiar idea that Jesus was a good man who's message has been corrupted by the edifice that is the Christian Church. There are many that have sympathy with this idea, so if we seek to reach out to those in wider society we would do well to understand why people feel this way. One particular passage in the book touched me deeply, it is set in Gethsemane as Jesus talks to a God he is not even sure is there:

"Lord...I'd pray for this above all: that any church set up in your name should remain poor, and powerless, and modest. That it should wield no authority except that of love. That it should never cast anyone out...That it should not condemn but only forgive. That it should be not like a palace with marble walls and polished floors, and guards standing at the door, but like a tree with its roots deep in the soil, that shelters every kind of bird and beast..."

It seems to me an admirable, challenging aspiration for a church, beautifully expressed. If you would like to borrow the book and form your own opinion, please let me know.

The Compassionate Face of Religion

Karen Armstrong is an author and commentator who has written twelve books on comparative religion. A former Roman Catholic nun, she went from a conservative to a more liberal and mystical faith. The preface her recent book, *Twelve Steps to a Compassionate Life*, includes the text of a *Charter for Compassion* (see box). The following comments on this book were shared at a retreat recently attended by Margaret Heath.

The first step is learning about compassion. The book is a tool to educate in the deepest sense “to bring forth the compassion that exists potentially within every human being...you cannot learn to swim by sitting by the side of the pool watching others...” Armstrong then points out that myths are not to be taken literally “a myth...is an attempt to express the deeper significance of an event...it is about timeless, universal truth”. She refers us to Bill Moyers’ interview with Joseph Campbell on the power of myth: one of the great teaching tools of spirituality. In this first chapter she also outlines her thesis that compassion is at the heart of all religion, ethics and spirituality.

The second step is “Look at your own world”. Many find it a helpful exercise to start with the family as the place we learn compassion and move to the workplace and on to the wider human world. There is a danger in reverencing nature: some show more compassion for animals or for trees than for their neighbours.

The third step is compassion for yourself. Armstrong learns from Rabbi Friedlander: “if you cannot love yourself, you cannot love other people either”. She takes us through the dark side in which people are driven to self-hatred. What we most attack in others is what we most fear in ourselves.

A Charter for Compassion

The principle of compassion lies at the heart of all religious, ethical and spiritual traditions, calling us always to treat all others as we wish to be treated ourselves.

Compassion impels us to work tirelessly to alleviate the suffering of our fellow creatures, to dethrone ourselves from the centre of our world and put another there, and to honour the inviolable sanctity of every single human being, treating everybody, without exception, with absolute justice, equity and respect.

It is also necessary in both public and private life to refrain consistently and empathically from inflicting pain. To act or speak violently out of spite, chauvinism, or self-interest, to impoverish, exploit or deny basic rights to anybody, and to incite hatred by denigrating others - even our enemies - is a denial of our common humanity. We acknowledge that we have failed to live compassionately and that some have even increased the sum of human misery in the name of religion.

We therefore call upon all men and women to restore compassion to the centre of morality and religion: to return to the ancient principle that any interpretation of scripture that breeds violence, hatred or disdain is illegitimate. To ensure that youth are given accurate and respectful information about other traditions, religions and cultures. To encourage a positive appreciation of cultural and religious diversity. To cultivate an informed empathy with the suffering of all human beings - even those regarded as enemies.

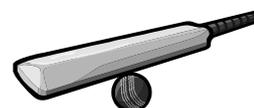
We urgently need to make compassion a clear, luminous and dynamic force in our polarized world.

Rooted in a principled determination to transcend selfishness, compassion can break down political, dogmatic, ideological and religious boundaries. Born of our deep interdependence, compassion is essential to human relationships and to a fulfilled humanity. It is the path to enlightenment, and indispensable to the creation of a just economy and a peaceful global community.

Farewell Lloyd



As most people will know Lloyd Grosvenor died on 15th May and his funeral was held here at Christ Church on 31st May. The church was full and the service was a real celebration of Lloyd’s life and loves. The choir sang some of his favourite pieces and the Rainbow Steel Band added to the musical atmosphere. We hope to bring you a full tribute to Lloyd in the next edition of *Christ Church Link*.



Devil's Advocate



"Christ Church is a liberal, catholic church... We aim to offer a spiritual "free space" for anyone to come to worship and explore their faith. We believe in the need for openness and freedom of thought, and the necessity to remain fully engaged with the rest of the Church universal."

So said the Church Profile we sent to people interested in applying for our Priest-in-Charge vacancy. It sounds great, but is it true?

Devil's advocate

(noun, idiomatic)

One who debates from a view which they may not actually hold, usually to determine its validity, or simply for the sake of argument.

Overall, I suspect it is, but one aspect is niggling me - the attitude to evangelical Christians I sometimes come across at Christ Church, which can be instantly dismissive of everything they believe and stand for. It may even be slightly condescending and patronising: "If only they understood this properly, they wouldn't think that".

Now, I'm not saying that everything about evangelical Christianity is perfect, of course it's not. This side of heaven, no one's got all the answers, not even those of a liberal catholic bent! But if we're truly liberal, open, free to think and engaged with the Church universal, then surely we shouldn't be summarily dismissive of a major branch of Christian theology. Shouldn't we should seek to engage with it, understand and see what we can learn from it, even if ultimately we don't agree with all of it?

I for one think there's a lot Christ Church could learn from churches of a more evangelical nature, especially around a serious commitment to private and public prayer and study of the Bible.

So perhaps some, or even most, of us need to be more open minded about evangelicism.

Are you a Devil's advocate?

Would you like to use this anonymous column to get people thinking about an issue in a different way? If so, please talk to the editors.

From the editors' laptop

Matthew and Sarah Jones



Are you looking forward to the summer? Many of you (like us) may have already enjoyed your main summer break, going away before the schools break up. But there is still the hiatus of August to come. In many

settings (work, school and church) it is a month

where many things are suspended. It can be a time of refreshment and pause but can also have a slightly empty feeling about it. At church

particularly, people may choose to be absent from the Sunday service for all sorts of reasons.

We have considered using the time to visit some of the other churches in Bath, including our LMG partners. We found the process of visiting other Christian communities very refreshing when we moved to London (you may recall our occasional columns on the topic) and it is sometimes a good

way to view your own church with fresh eyes.

This quality of viewing something anew is one that we are constantly reminded of living with a 7-month old baby. There is so much in the world which is new and exciting to him and there is a real joy in watching his reactions to novel things. Perhaps this innocent delight is one of the things Jesus had in mind when he told us to be like children. It is easy for us as adults to cling on to old certainties and not see the potential joy in new things or situations

The Autumn will bring change, and our new Priest-in-charge will be viewing Christ Church with fresh eyes. As Mark said in the first issue of *Christ*

Church Link last summer:

"The message I would like to proclaim loudly and strongly is this: *change is good!*"

We have, as Mark urged us to, taken stock and thought about the new directions in which God might be leading us. Let us now embrace this next period of change.

Have a refreshing summer.

The deadline for articles for the Autumn edition is Sunday 11th September.

Coming up at Christ Church

Sunday 10th July	8am BCP Holy Communion There will be a baptism at the 10am service
Sunday 31st July	There will be a baptism at the 10am service
Sunday 14th August	8am BCP Holy Communion From 11am Christ Church to help at Genesis Sunday Centre
Tuesday 23rd August	Trustees meeting
Sunday 4th September	4:30pm Choral Evensong
Sunday 25th September	Back to Church Sunday (see page 2 of this edition to read more)

Who's who

Priest-in-charge	Vacant	Junior Church Laity rotas	Sarah Cade 01225 339305
Supporting clergy	Rev'd Cliff Burrows Rev'd Angela Berners-Wilson	Organist	David Wrigley 01761 439355
Reader Chair of Trustees Director of Music	Mark Elliott 01225 445360 mark.elliott@christchurchbath.org	Pastoral care coordinator	Keri Chivers 01225 421265 keri.chivers@christchurchbath.org
Reader	Cyril Selmes 01225 420039	Magazine editors and publicity coordination	Matthew & Sarah Jones 01225 443284 sarah.jones@christchurchbath.org
Churchwarden Chair of Church Council Home group leader	Lewis Boyd 01225 329190 lewis.boyd@christchurchbath.org	Concert bookings Weekly notice sheet	Judith Bishop 01225 869409 concerts@christchurchbath.org notices@christchurchbath.org
Churchwarden	Malcolm Wall malcolm.wall@christchurchbath.org	USPG	Adrian Pegg 01225 858809
Verger	Angela Soboslay 01225 333297	Mothers' Union	Margaret Burrows 01225 334743
Treasurer	David Bishop 01225 869409 david.bishop@christchurchbath.org	CTB	Margaret Heath 01225 428272
Secretary to Church Council	Brenda Wall	Deanery Synod	Andrew Sillett
CTB Mothers' Union Mission to Seafarers	Sylvia Ayers 01225 463976		

Regular Sunday Services

- 8am Holy Communion using the text from the Book of Common Prayer.
Usually the second Sunday of every month but see website or notice board for details
- 10am Sung Eucharist
With Junior Church activities for children and young people
- 4:30pm Choral Evensong
Usually the first Sunday of every month but see website or notice board for details

The church also aims to be a place of spiritual welcome when marking particular points in life's journey. If you would like to discuss holding a service of marriage, baptism or a funeral here, please use the details below to contact us.

About Christ Church

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

It is not a parish church and does not have a paid 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 today is part of the Anglican diocese of Bath and Wells, although it still sits outside the normal 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 are separate activities for children in Junior Church groups.

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. Our ecumenical home group provides a space for exploration and discussion of faith in an open and non-judgmental setting.

If you are considering whether Christ Church is a place where you would feel comfortable in exploring the Christian faith, we would be delighted to welcome you, please come along to a service or get in touch with us (see below). If you feel you are looking for a different Christian community we wish you well with God's blessing and we would be happy to tell you of other churches in the area.

How to find or contact us

Christ Church
Julian Road
Bath
BA1 2RH

Telephone: 01225 338869 (answer phone)

Email: admin@christchurchbath.org

Website: www.christchurchbath.org

