



Christ Church  
Alsager

# *The Magazine*

**Christ Church Alsager**

**April / May 2021**

**[www.christchurchalsager.uk](http://www.christchurchalsager.uk)**



Dear friends,

In my Easter letter last year, I said I was “aiming for Easter!” Partly I was just wanting to get to the joy of Easter but partly I was also hoping that we would be having in-person services and activities in time for Easter Sunday 2020! How wrong, nay naïve, I was to think it would fine again in just 21 days.

“So many people right across the country are anxious about employment, anxious about food, isolated from loved ones and feel that the future looks dark.” These are words from the Archbishop of Canterbury’s sermon on Easter Day 2020. Who would have thought that we would be experiencing the same uncertainties this Easter!



Yet the Easter story remains one of hope overcoming darkness and despair. The women arrived at the tomb on Easter morning with mixed emotions, as they came to anoint Jesus’ body (Mark 16.1). They were confused as they tried to make sense of Jesus’ death. Their hopes were dashed and they had an uncertain future. In the current pandemic, we too are left asking: Where is God in all this? Yet the young man at the tomb tells them not be alarmed: “You are looking for Jesus the Nazarene, who was crucified. He has risen! He is not here. See the place where they laid him.” (Mark 16.6).

The women had forgotten Jesus’ promise to the disciples that He would die and rise from the dead. Jesus’ resurrection is also the sure foundation of hope for us in the present crisis. He turns our confusion and fear into joy and wonder! We can trust Jesus’ plan for the future of our world and lives, despite the fact that things can’t return to the way they were: “There needs to be a resurrection of our common life, a new normal, something that links to the old, but is different and more beautiful.” (Justin Welby).

Jesus said, “I am the resurrection and the life.” (John 11.25). Jesus has the power over life and death. When Jesus brings resurrection, he doesn’t just return things to where they were before, he transforms them, so they’re better than they were before. He offers a transformed life – life in all its fullness.

This year as I aim for Easter, I’m praying for a transformation in my life, the church and our community. A transformation that is Jesus centred and life-giving.

Yours in Christ

Daran

Many thanks to Paul Newton who gave permission for us to use his fabulous picture of Christ Church in spring glory! Don’t forget our photography competition for the 2022 Christchurch Calendar. See the advert overleaf.

**Copy deadline for the June / July 2021 issue is Friday 14th May. Please email any articles and pictures to [magazine@christchurchalsager.uk](mailto:magazine@christchurchalsager.uk)  
All pictures of children must have parental permission to publish. Aly**

# The Christ Church Calendar Competition

The theme for the 2022 Calendar is  
Creation

March to June we would like photos of

## *Spring*

Grab your camera or smart phone and get snapping!

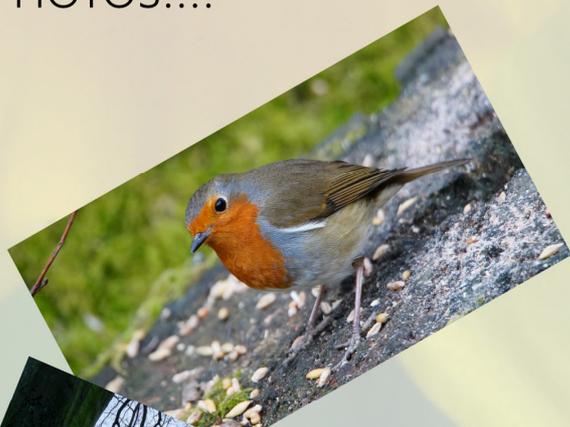
The winning entrant for each month will have their photo in the calendar and also in the Christ Church magazine!

The competition for the cover photo will be announced later in the year.

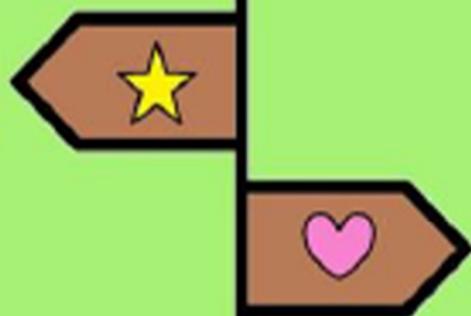
Please submit your photos to:

[Graham5410@btinternet.com](mailto:Graham5410@btinternet.com) along with your name and contact details.

The A4 size calendars will be available late 2021 featuring  
**YOUR PHOTOS!!!!**



# Can you complete the Easter Trail?



Follow the trail and  
explore the story of  
Easter together.

**Thursday 1<sup>st</sup> to Sunday 4<sup>th</sup> April**

Complete the trail as a family at a time  
which works for you. Simply download  
the trail map and tick sheet from  
[www.christchurchalsager.uk](http://www.christchurchalsager.uk)  
and you are all set to go.

Please ensure you follow social  
distancing measures throughout the trail.



[www.christchurchalsager.uk](http://www.christchurchalsager.uk)  
[families@christchurchalsager.uk](mailto:families@christchurchalsager.uk)  
01270 872291

## Singing helps us to encounter the breakthrough God

We've enjoyed having our Christ Church family join us for worship and prayer on a Monday evening at 8pm on Facebook live. We know some people can't make Mondays, so they catch up later in the week (a benefit of online recordings). Worship and Prayer Facebook live nights were set up with agreement from Daran. We had heard a leader share that worship was significant this season and would precede breakthrough, which nudged us to activate what we'd been thinking about.



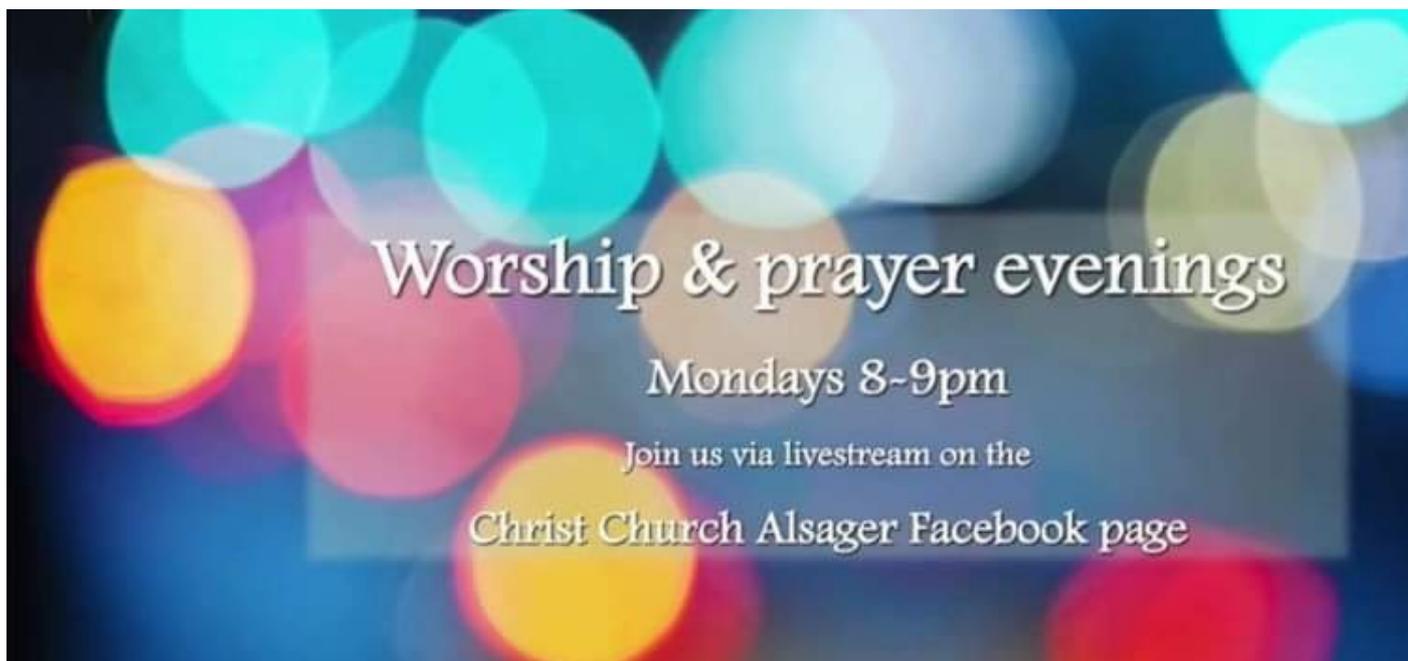
God enjoys it when we worship - He comes and hangs out on our praises (Psalm 22:3). Our prayer has been that people would meet with God in our times of worship and the truth of Jesus would become embedded in people's hearts. We've focused on the Bible series on the miraculous ministry of Jesus from the gospel of John that has been covered on Sundays. Worship can help us remember God's word. In Deuteronomy 31:19, just before God's people enter the promised land, God asks for His words to be put into song to help them remember what He had said. This is an example of the praising of God in song leading into the breakthrough of entering the promised land. We also see something similar in the story of the walls of Jericho coming down, so that God's people could take over the city - a shout of praise after a march brought the walls down (Joshua 6:1-27). Have you considered what breakthroughs your times of sung worship might be influencing?

In Colossians 3:16 the verse links to letting the word dwell richly in us with teaching and also singing to one another. As we sing songs that echo biblical truth it helps the word of God dwell more richly in our hearts. We've had lots of fun exploring different songs that emphasise the Bible teaching themes. We become like what we behold (consider Psalm 135:18 and 2 Corinthians 3:18). So if you behold Jesus and His miracles - you become more like Jesus and are more likely to experience the miraculous. For example, when we recorded the singing for the Sunday service on Jesus raising Lazarus from the dead, I received a text asking for prayer for a guy on life support and the hospital was turning off the machine because there were no signs of life. I joined lots of people in praying and sang the lyrics 'dead man come out of that grave, come out of that grave as we sing' with this situation in mind. The next day I received news that the guy started breathing for himself and the doctors had said it was miraculous. I smiled at God - in the Monday

evening worship and prayer night we introduced the song 'Come out of that grave (Resurrection Power)' from Bethel music, before doing it for the Sunday service and I had said that it messes with my head that Jesus still raises people from the dead today. Here God was, days later, breathing life into a guy whom the doctors had decided was dead. He loves to hang out with us when we worship (Psalm 22:3) and He loves to answer prayers as we embed God's word in our hearts. Worship can set you up for an encounter with the breakthrough God.

For now, we are committed to continuing on Monday evenings until lockdown measures have significantly eased and we hope you can come and join us live, or on catch up. Let's keep singing and praising God and watching to see what He is doing.

Blessings from Dan and Sarah



WORSHIP ENCOUNTER PRESENCE CONNECTION MINISTRY

**UNITED**  
*Elements*

2021

1 24 - 28 July

2 29 July - 2 August

East of England Showground, Peterborough

**Christ Church are booked to attend week 1 (24—28 July) We hope you can join us!**

Book online [new-wine.org/united21](http://new-wine.org/united21)

NewWine



# Easter

at Christ Church

*Easter Egg Trail 1st to 4th April*

More information from  
Rachel at [families@christchurchalsager.uk](mailto:families@christchurchalsager.uk)

*Good Friday Reflection 2-3pm*

A peaceful hour in church with the Easter story

*Easter Day - 4th April*

9am - A traditional celebration

11am - All-age celebration

All the above services  
will be in person and  
live streamed  
Please contact the office  
to book your place if  
you would like to  
attend in person



A lively part of the Church of England,  
On Church Road, near the High School, ST7 2HS, 01270 872291

[admin@christchurchalsager.uk](mailto:admin@christchurchalsager.uk)



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# Thy Kingdom Come

Thy Kingdom Come is a global prayer movement that invites Christians around the world to pray from Ascension to Pentecost for more people to come to know Jesus.

Since its start in May 2016, God has grown Thy Kingdom Come from a dream of possibility into a movement. Christians from 172 countries have taken part in praying

'Come Holy Spirit', so that friends and family, neighbours and colleagues might come to faith in Jesus Christ.

As a church family we have been a part of this movement since its start, and this year is no different.

During the eleven days of Thy Kingdom Come, it is hoped that everyone who takes part will:

- *Deepen their own relationship with Jesus Christ*
- *Pray for five friends or family to come to faith in Jesus*
- *Pray for the empowerment of the Spirit that we would be effective in our witness*

After the very first Ascension Day the disciples gathered with Mary, constantly devoting themselves to prayer while they waited for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. Like them, our reliance on the gift of the Holy Spirit is total – on our own we can do nothing.

Through the centuries Christians have gathered at that time to pray for the coming of the Holy Spirit. 'Thy Kingdom Come' picks up this tradition. Over the years more and more worshipping communities have dedicated the days between Ascension and Pentecost to pray 'Come Holy Spirit'.

We are praying that the Spirit will inspire and equip us to share the Good News of Jesus Christ with our friends and families, our communities, and networks. It has been amazing how many varied ways there have been in which people from every tradition have taken up this challenge. The effects have been remarkable.

It is our prayer that those who have not yet heard the Good News of Jesus Christ and his love for the world will hear it for themselves and respond and follow Him. Specifically, we again invite everyone to pray that God's Spirit might work in the lives of five friends who have not responded with their 'Yes' to God's call.

There are new resources for 2021 which will include:

- An eleven-part family-friendly animation series;
- Video reflections from influential Christian voices such as Bear Grylls, Bishop of Dover Rose Hudson-Wilkin and Archbishop Angaelos,
- This year's Prayer Journal, penned by the Archbishop of York, Stephen Cottrell.

This year's resources are also designed to encourage worshipping communities, families and individuals who may have struggled with the idea of church at home.

**For families**, there is an eleven-part children's video series called Cheeky Pandas – packed with Bible stories, prayers, animation, worship songs and interviews with special guests including: adventurer Bear Grylls, CBeebies Presenter Gemma Hunt, Revd Nicky Gumbel (HTB and Alpha) and Pastor Agu and Shola (Jesus House) to name a few.

The video series (which will be available from early April onwards) can be used as part of church at home, gathered church (online and offline) and in-school assemblies. Like last year, the series will be the main content in the Family Prayer Adventure Map and App.

**For Youth**, Thy Kingdom Come are working with the Archbishop of York's Youth Trust to produce a selection of youth resources including a series of video reflections from young influential Christians such as the current Methodist Youth President - Phoebe Parkin, rapper and author - Guvna B, Worship Leader- Elle Limebear, Spoken Word Artist - Joshua Luke Smith and many more.



The award-winning **Thy Kingdom Come app**, available in nine languages, will for the first time, include audio content from **24-7 Prayer's Lectio 365** with audio reflections from Pete Greig, Archbishop Justin and 24-7 Prayer GB UK Director, Carla Harding.

This year Thy Kingdom Come is also giving away 100,000 copies of the Prayer Journal and Family Prayer Adventure Map to UK churches, as long as P&P is covered.

Whether you have joined in 'Thy Kingdom Come' before or not, we invite you to take part – and we will be alongside churches from over 65 different denominations in 172 countries around the world.

*"In praying 'Thy Kingdom Come' we all commit to playing our part in the renewal of the nations and the transformation of communities."* Archbishop Justin Welby

**Watch this space for more information!** - *Andrea Chatterley*

## PAUSE AND PRAY TODAY



**"For God alone my soul waits in silence;  
from him comes my salvation.  
He alone is my rock and my salvation,  
my fortress; I shall not be greatly shaken"**  
- Psalm 62:1-2

Today, as you rest, try waiting for God in silence:

### **Find a comfy chair**

As you relax into it, invite the presence of God to meet you there

### **Find a quiet spot outdoors**

As you walk, listen to God in the silence of nature

### **Find a hiding place**

If you find yourself surrounded by noise, seek out a secret place to encounter God in quiet and stillness

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**"For God alone my soul waits in silence;  
from him comes my salvation.  
He alone is my rock and my salvation,  
my fortress; I shall not be greatly shaken"**

- Psalm 62:1-2

**Blessings,**  
The 24-7 Prayer team



# Christ Church Youth

**Sam Parnell**  
Youth Leader  
Email: Youth@Christchurchalsager.uk.  
Tel: 01270 872291

As we have just passed the milestone of a year since it started, I thought I would share a short update on how our online youth group has been going!

This group has been meeting through Zoom since the very early stages of the first national lockdown last year, at first twice weekly, and then when schools started back reducing to once per week, and now once per fortnight. It is run by Christ Church in partnership with Wesley Place Methodist Church.

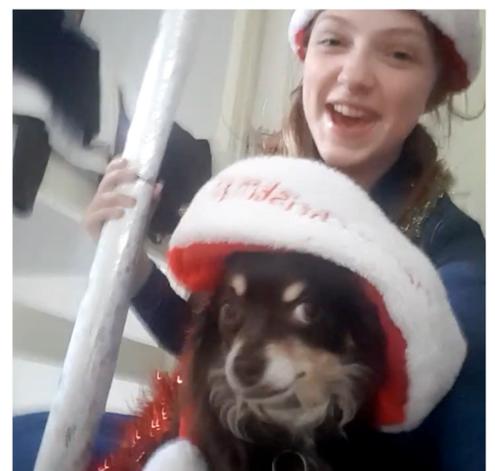


Whilst we continue to hope and pray that some of our groups and youth ministries will be able to resume in person over the coming weeks and months, both Jonny Newbould and I have been constantly surprised by how well young people have adapted to meeting online, with most of them having done so much more quickly than their parents or youth leaders!

We have managed to arrange a large number of fun and engaging activities over the past year, with some highlights being our regular games evenings, an international quiz night where each young person represented and prepared a quiz round about their chosen country, a number of 'goose chase' evenings where young people were set a series of challenges to complete and provide photographic or video evidence, themed fancy dress evenings, and even a Christmas party (complete with a Covid secure secret santa).

It may not be the way we'd ideally like to meet, have fun, and share the good news of Jesus with young people in our community, but it has been great to see that the group have continued to engage with faith as part of this group, and meeting digitally has provided some unexpected benefits. We have been able through technology to include young people from Alsager, Sandbach, Nantwich, and even Dorset in the group over the past year, and it has been great to encourage and support young people from a variety of locations, even when their regular local youth groups have not been able to meet.

Please continue to pray for our young people - both those whom we have been able to continue to meet with through the online youth group, and those within our wider community who we may not have seen for a while.



# Christ Church Families

Lots to do for children and families  
All welcome!



Join us on online or in-person as we have fun exploring faith.

We are excited that we are going to be able to start holding some services and activities in our church and church hall again in the coming months as restrictions ease. However, we do not have certainty as to when we will be able to do what, so keep your eyes open for email updates and information put out on our Facebook pages.



Rachel Mason  
Children and Families Leader  
Email: [families@christchurchalsager.uk](mailto:families@christchurchalsager.uk)  
Tel: 01270 872291

## SUNDAY WORSHIP FOR CHILDREN & FAMILIES

We are planning to restart our **Children's Worship Service** alongside the 11am church service each week from **Sunday 18th April**. This runs in the church hall with a maximum of 15 children being able to attend at one time. Parents/carers need to pre-book places for their children each week. We have lots of fun being explorers and worshipping together, as we engage with God and faith. We have Bible teaching with stories, videos, puppets, actions and play. We worship in creative ways using signs and actions, musical instruments and flags (no singing at present). We play non-contact games and do craft activities. A real action-packed time! Social distancing is maintained between children from different households during sessions. To book a place for your children on a particular Sunday please email: [christchurchoffice@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:christchurchoffice@hotmail.co.uk) or telephone: 01270 872291 by Wednesday midday.

If we are unable to run this service, we will continue having **Zoom Family Worship on Sundays** aimed at families with children aged 0-11. It's a short time where we can gather together to have fun and engage with God and one another. It's interactive with games, songs, Bible teaching and prayer. If you would like to join us, contact Rachel (details below) for the Zoom details.

## MESSY CHURCH

Watch this space! We are hoping to have some form of Messy Church in the summer term, look out for information in the coming weeks.

## BABIES & TODDLERS

Whilst we are unable to run a Toddler Group in person we will continue to have **Toddler Time on Mondays 10am** livestreamed in the 'Christ Church Families at Home' Facebook group. Do join me and my puppet friends for songs and a Bible story each week. If you miss us live you can always catch up later.

**We are hoping to be able to start running a social distanced group for parents with babies/toddlers in the summer term, so look out for information in the coming weeks.**

## PARENTS

We run a group called **Parent Chat** which at present meets **every Monday (term-time) on Zoom at 10:30-11:30am**. It's a group of parents with children of all different ages who meet together to encourage and support one another. If you'd like to join us you are most welcome, simply contact Rachel (details below), to get the Zoom details.

Do join our Facebook group 'Christ Church Families at Home' to get resources and activities to do with your children at home, as well as some encouragement.

Rachel Mason (Children and Families Leader)

Email: [families@christchurchalsager.uk](mailto:families@christchurchalsager.uk)



# Thy Kingdom Come

## Praying the Lord's Prayer

This session has activities which help you to think through and pray the Lord's Prayer using resources you can find around the house.

**1. Our Father in heaven** - *We are all part of God's family; He is 'our father', the perfect parent.* Create a photo frame using whatever you have around the house, maybe you can cut out a frame from some cardboard or create a frame using lollipop sticks. Decorate it to make it special using pens and/or sticking bits and bobs onto it. Now draw a picture of yourself and anyone else you might like to, perhaps other members of your family, friends and people from school and Messy Church, stick your picture into the frame you have created and decorated. You are part of a big family picture; you are part of God's big family. Looking at the people you have drawn, *what difference does it make knowing that we are all part of God's family?*

**2. Hallowed be your name** - *God is holy.* Think about what words and phrases you might use to describe what God is like, would you use any of these words: Strong, Powerful, Gentle, Fair? Cut out some triangles from paper or card. Write or draw your thoughts about how to describe God onto these triangles and attach them onto some string. You have created some praise bunting, hang it up to remind you of who God is and in praise to him for who he is.



**3. Your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as in heaven** - Heaven is a perfect place, where everyone has all they need, is with God and the people they love and is happy. Our life on earth is not like that. Write or draw what you think earth would be like if it was like heaven. Think or chat about what could you do to help make this happen?

**4. Give us today our daily bread** - Bake your own bread. Here is a simple recipe: [www.bbcgoodfood.com/recipes/easy-white-bread](http://www.bbcgoodfood.com/recipes/easy-white-bread). As you make your bread think or chat about

those things we have which we take for granted, such as food, drink and a warm place to sleep at night. When your bread is baked and you are enjoying eating it, *say thank you to God for all you have, for food, drink and a place to live.* And when you have finished eating, *think of those people who do not have enough to eat, clean water to drink or a warm place to sleep tonight,*



*ask God to help them and think about what ways could you help those who do not have enough?*

**5. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us** - Think about things that you wish had gone differently, say sorry to God, or give those feelings of regret to God and leave them with Him. *Is there anything that you are sorry that you did to someone? Is there something that you are sorry you **said** to someone? Is there a time when you could have helped someone or said something kind, but you didn't? Is there anything that you think "I wish I had....."?* Find a stone or pebble in the garden, hold it in your hand and feel how hard it is, think about what you regret or are sorry for. When you are ready, gently drop the pebble into a bowl of water and as you give that regret or sorry to God, you are washed clean, forgiven.

## 6. Lead us not into temptation

When it is difficult to make decision people sometimes toss a coin. *What difficult choices are you making at the moment?* Take a coin and look at the picture of the Queen's head. Think about the reasons why you should say yes or make a particular choice. Now look at the other side of the coin, the tail, think of reasons why you should say no or make the opposite choice. *Take your time, bringing this choice to Jesus.* When you are ready lay your coin down as a sign of giving that choice to Jesus, if you have a cross you could lay the coin at the foot of the cross as a sign of giving that choice to Jesus.



## 7. But deliver us from evil

Think about something that worries you or frightens you. *Even when we feel on our own Jesus is with us and cares about us.* Light a candle (with adult supervision), or, sitting in a darkened room, turn on a light as a sign that *Jesus brings light when it feels dark.* Draw and cut out a star shape from paper or card and decorate it with bright colours and shiny things. Put it up somewhere to remind you of the light which Jesus brings.

## 8. For the Kingdom, the power and the glory are yours, now and forever. Amen

*God's kingdom, power and glory go on for ever. God's love is never ending.* Cut a strip of paper and decorate it to represent God's love, power and glory using pens or colouring pencils. Now make the strip into a circle, give it a half twist and tape the thin ends together. Run your finger along the circle, it never ends. As you feel it never ending, think about God's love which never ends.



**Pray the Lord's Prayer.** You might want to use actions, here is a video showing you some actions you could use: [www.youtube.com/watch?v=tOugEQpcc k](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tOugEQpcc k).

Our Father in heaven, hallowed by your name, your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours now and for ever. Amen.

You might like to **listen to or sing the song 'Pray at all times'** by Nick and Becky Drake. You can find it on YouTube; this version was put together by Christ Church families in 2020: [www.youtube.com/watch?v=XzWZLusycMk](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XzWZLusycMk).



# THY KINGDOM COME

13<sup>th</sup> to 23<sup>rd</sup> May

This year the Cheeky Pandas are bringing us an 11-part fun-filled series packed with Bible readings, animations, worship songs and prayer. Find out more and download your personal Cheeky Pandas prayer diary at [www.thykingdomcome.global/cheekypandas](http://www.thykingdomcome.global/cheekypandas).



# Children's Corner

## Bible Bite

A short story from the Bible

It can be read in the Bible in  
Matthew 26:20-25, 31-35, Mark 14:17-21, 27-31  
Luke 22:22, 31-34, John 13:21-30, 36-38

The Jewish leaders wanted to kill Jesus.  
One of Jesus' disciples, Judas, had  
accepted money from them to betray him.

As Jesus and his disciples ate the  
Passover meal, Jesus said



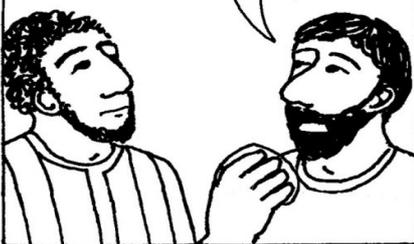
John was sitting  
next to Jesus, so  
Peter said



So John asked Jesus



It is the person I give  
this piece of bread to.



Jesus dipped a piece  
of bread in sauce, and  
gave it to Judas.



What you are about to do  
you must do quickly.



Why has Judas gone out?



They continued  
the Passover meal



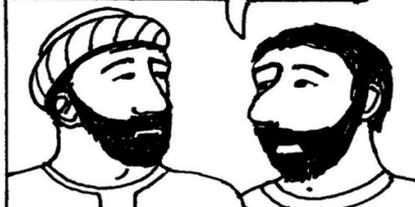
Jesus then told the rest of the  
disciples



Peter said



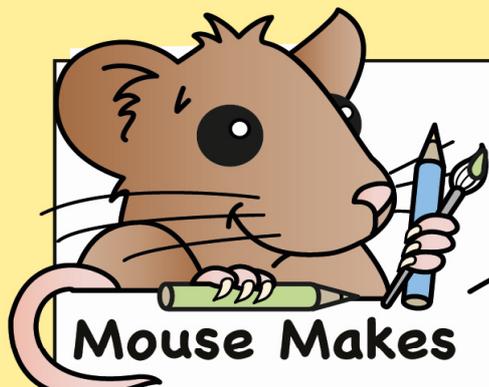
Before tomorrow morning  
you will have denied you  
even know me 3 times.



Even if I have to die, I  
will never disown you!



# Children's Corner



## Mouse Makes

Can you find these names of **Jesus** in the word search?

### SON OF GOD

Matthew 3:16-17



### KING OF KINGS

Revelation 17:14

### PROPHET

Luke 24:19



### PRIEST

1 Timothy 2:5

### ROCK

1 Corinthians 10:4

### LORD

1 Corinthians 1:9

### AMEN

Revelation 3:14

### LIFE

John 11:25-27

### MESSIAH

John 1:41

### SHEPHERD

John 10:11

### LIGHT

John 8:12



### WORD

John 1:1-50



### BREAD

John 6:35

### CREATOR

1 John 1:3



### CHRIST

Matthew 16:16

### SAVIOUR

John 3:16-17

### HOLY ONE

Mark 1:24

### VINE

John 15:5



### DOOR

John 10:9



### WAY

John 14:6

### LAMB

John 1:29



V L I F E W D  
 D I A L A R O C K  
 C M H M O M S R E H C  
 H E O B R E A D O O R  
 R S L W D N V I N E E  
 I S Y A P R I E S T A  
 S I O Y P R O P H E T  
 T A N J E S U S T D O  
 S H E P H E R D E D B R  
 K I N G O F K I N G S  
 D S O S O N O F G O D  
 L I G H T

# CHRIST CHURCH'S YOUTH EASTER TRAIL!

5th & 6th April 2021

Find the 12 boxes hidden around Alsager, piece together the clues, and crack the code to solve "The Greatest Mystery Of All Time" and win a chocolate Easter Egg.

You will need a phone with an internet connection and Google Maps to take part.

Aimed at Young People aged 11-16.

For more information or to enter, visit [www.tinyurl.com/chchmystery](http://www.tinyurl.com/chchmystery) or scan the QR code



01270 872291

[www.ChristChurchAlsager.uk](http://www.ChristChurchAlsager.uk)

## In praise of the afternoon nap

*(Some good news! Ed)*

A short nap in the afternoon improves your memory and keeps your brain more agile. People who nap tend to speak more fluently, have greater mental agility, and remember things better than those who do not break up their day with sleep.

Even a five-minute nap can offer your brain a chance to down-time and replenish itself, so that it is 'good to go' again.

If you want longer than five minutes, try to stop at 40 minutes, before you enter the deepest stage of sleep. If you do carry on, sleep for two hours, which is a full sleep-cycle. The study was published in the British Medical Journal.



## My new friends – the Boy, the Mole, the Fox and the Horse

I'm sure I'm not the only one to have really missed being able to meet up with my friends in this last year. I'm very grateful for the opportunities afforded by Zoom and phone and Facetime, but they can only go so far and actually being with those we love, sharing food, being able to give and receive a hug are things I've really missed. I'm not sure whether being an extrovert makes it harder as well. If you know me reasonably well, you'll know that I don't really know what I think about something until I've had a chance to talk about it – in other words I process externally – and that's been harder this last year.

But I have made some new friends who have been a help, even though they are not real ones in the strictest sense of the word. I've become a big fan of Charlie Mackesy's beautiful drawings of the Boy, the Mole, the Fox and the Horse. This unusual group of friends have been through many challenges and adventures together, which over the last year have mirrored many of the challenges and sorrows we have faced. For me Charlie has somehow managed with a few words and strokes of his skilful pen to encapsulate the emotions, thoughts and dreams of so many of us. He's produced a book with many of these drawings and a few months ago I sent a copy of that book to a family in Derby who have become family to us, to encourage and bless them. Coincidentally, within a week of doing so, another very dear family in Congleton sent us a copy of the very same book.

For reasons of copyright, we can't reproduce the drawings here, but if you go to his website <https://www.charliemackesy.com/>. or watch his introduction to the book [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AJ47BQQuh\\_](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AJ47BQQuh_) you will be able to see some of them.

But I think it's permissible for me to share the text from my three favourite drawings:-

**“What's the bravest thing you've ever said?”** asked the boy. **“Help”** said the horse.

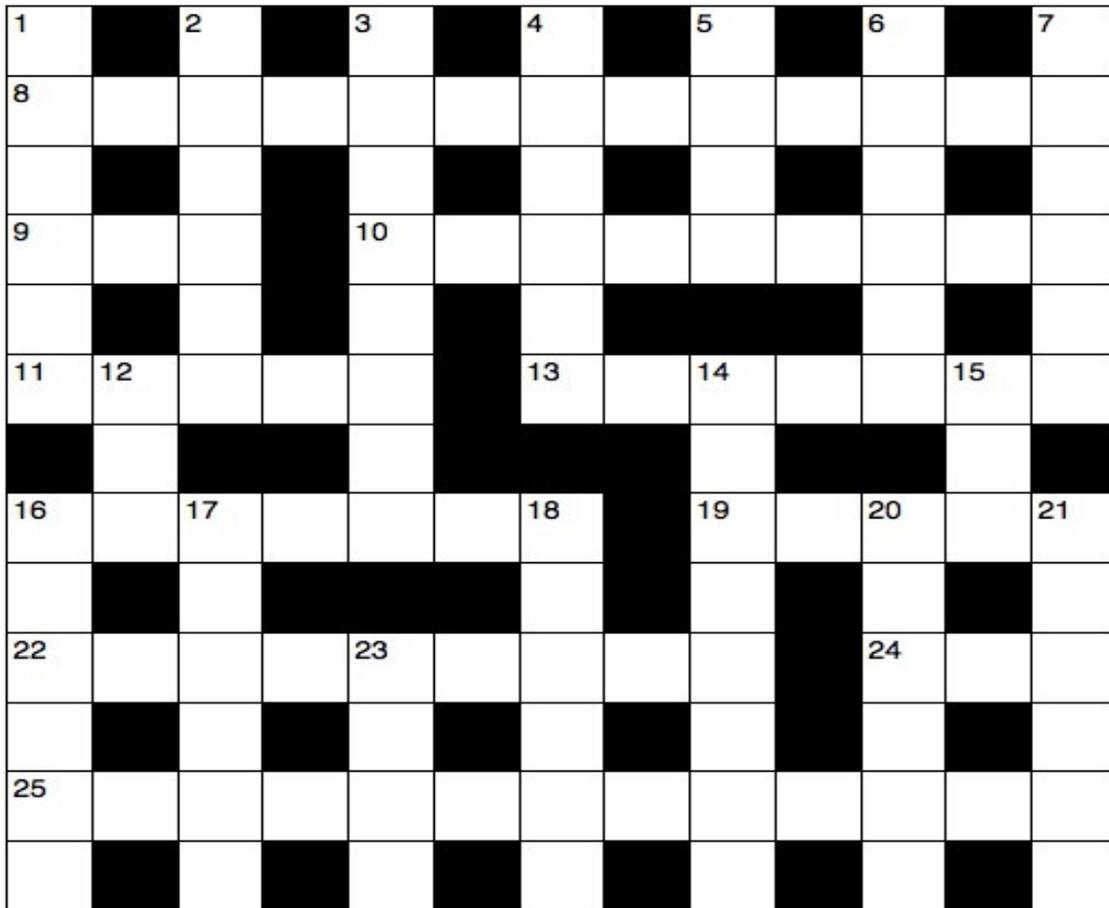
**“What do we do when our hearts hurt?”** asked the boy. **“We wrap them with friendship, shared tears and time, till they wake hopeful and happy again.”**

**“This storm will pass”**

Going forward into this new season of spring, with lockdown gradually lifting, winter is over and the storm is passing. We can look forward with hope, whilst also giving ourselves and others times to grieve the losses and struggles we have faced and continue to face. We do this, not just as individuals but as part of a community of faith, where we carry one another's burdens.

Perhaps you are already familiar with Charlie Mackesy's work, but I want to finish this article with some words about his faith. By his own admission, Charlie found the whole idea of church very uncomfortable, but then he gave it another look and realised he'd made a mistake and actually it wasn't what he'd thought. His short video, introducing the Alpha Course is on our church website, or you can use this link to view it <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ial4UsFtJxU>. Charlie discovered for himself that at the centre of the Christian faith is a love that pursues us with a passion, and pays the ultimate cost to bring us home, to know the one who made and loves us without measure. And I believe that as we go forward into spring and summer 2021, that offers us the best and brightest hope of all.

Heather Kemball



### Crossword clues

#### ACROSS

- 8 'He poured out his life unto death, and was numbered with the — ' (Isaiah 53:12) (13)  
 9 'When they had sung a hymn, they went — to the Mount of Olives (Matthew 26:30) (3)  
 10 Comes between Galatians and Philipians (9)  
 11 'Your heart will — and swell with joy' (Isaiah 60:5) (5)  
 13 Muslim holy month (7)  
 16 Ten ears (anag.) (7)  
 19 Under (poetic abbrev.) (5)  
 22 How Abram described himself to God when he complained that his inheritance would pass to a servant (Genesis 15:2) (9)  
 24 'Go to the — , you sluggard' (Proverbs 6:6) (3)  
 25 Debar from receiving Communion (13)

#### DOWN

- 1 My — for His Highest (Oswald Chambers' best-known book) (6)  
 2 Festival of the resurrection (6)  
 3 'His sons will prepare for war and — a great army' (Daniel 11:10) (8)  
 4 'Let not the — string his bow' (Jeremiah 51:3) (6)  
 5 Name of the River Thames in and around Oxford (4)  
 6 'From then on Judas watched for an opportunity — — him over' (Matthew 26:16) (2,4)  
 7 'But Christ is faithful — — — over God's house' (Hebrews 3:6) (2,1,3)  
 12 Long-handled implement used to till the soil (Isaiah 7:25) (3)  
 14 Order to which monks and nuns devote themselves (8)  
 15 Appropriate (Proverbs 15:23) (3)  
 16 I, uncle (anag.) (6)  
 17 'They gave him — — of broiled fish' (Luke 24:42) (1,5)  
 18 'Weren't there three men that we — — and threw into the fire?' (Daniel 3:24) (4,2)  
 20 Mountain where Noah's ark came to rest (Genesis 8:4) (6)  
 21 'Don't you know that friendship with the world is — towards God?' (James 4:4) (6)  
 23 Prominent architectural feature of large cathedrals such as St Paul's (4)

The Bible version used in our crosswords is the NIV.

Crosswords reproduced by kind permission of BRF and John Capon, originally published in *Three Down, Nine Across*, by John Capon (£6.99 BRF).— **Answers on page 22**

# St George's Day

The film *How to Train your Dragon* is set in a Viking village under attack by dragons, who steal livestock and burn down houses. Hiccup, the village Chief's son, invents a machine to capture them. However, when he catches the most dangerous one, Night Fury, he cannot kill it. This is because when he looks into the dragon's eyes, he sees that he is just as frightened as himself. Through their friendship, the people and dragons eventually come to live in harmony.

It's appropriate to think about dragons this month, when we remember St. George, England's patron saint, famed for slaying a dragon. Whether he actually killed a dragon is open to question! We do know that the original George was a Roman soldier at the time of Emperor Diocletian. He refused to renounce his faith, as commanded by the Emperor, resulting in his death on 23 April 303 AD.



So, we have here St George who slayed a dragon, while Hiccup refused to kill one. They seem like opposites: one a brave soldier and the other a weak boy! However, both acted according to their conscience, going against what people expected and not worrying about the cost to themselves. St George was martyred for standing up for his faith in Jesus, while Hiccup risked rejection by his father and village because of his compassion.

Today, we are still called to stand for Christ against wrongs and injustice in a daily life, despite the personal cost. We need to look into the eyes of apparent enemies and meet their hostility with love and compassion. And for all of us the most important place where we need to slay evil is in our own hearts. Don't forget that we have the power of the Resurrection at our disposal!

Several years ago, a notice appeared on the vestry noticeboard of a church in Hampshire, after a Holy Week performance of Stainer's 'Crucifixion'.

The choirmaster wrote "The Crucifixion – well done, everyone!" Later that day, someone had added, 'The Resurrection – well done, God!'

# Oakhanger Church

## News from Oakhanger



### **Oakhanger Project plans to start outdoor activities at Brereton from May 2021.**

Wednesday Canoe and kayak group will meet every Wednesday starting on 12th May.

Booking is essential and full details on request

Families will be invited to attend our taster sessions during the school holidays on Wednesday 2nd June and at other times as advertised on the Oakhanger Project website.

There will be an Oakhanger activity weekend on Saturday 12th and Sunday 13th June and a family weekend in Anglesey on Saturday 7th and Sunday 8th August.

We are currently running a Coping Skills course on Zoom to prepare our volunteers to recognise and address issues of stress and change as we seek to move forward.

We are conscious that many are anxious after the events of the past year and some will find it hard to engage after a period of lockdown.

It is known that outdoor activity and adventure can help to improve physical, emotional, mental and spiritual health and well-being and support will be provided to encourage the safe access to activities with Oakhanger and in other places.

Please pray for those involved at all levels and for our leader team as we prepare for a challenging year.

Please note that all activities are subject to health and safety guidelines at the time and we reserve the right to change the schedule at any time.

For Full details and to book any of the above activities please contact me at the address below

Graham

Graham Bushill, Oakhanger Project

Oakhanger Project (Charity No: 1189721)

E-mail: oakchallenge@aol.com

*Mobile: 0799 993 2963*

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(874353)

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Call Debbie in the church office  
on 01270 872291



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Grandad was babysitting when he heard his little grand-daughter muttering the alphabet over in hushed tones. "What are you doing?" he asked her. "I'm praying," she replied. "I can't think of the right words so I just say all the letters. God will put them together for me 'cos He knows what I'm thinking."



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#### Crossword Answers

**ACROSS:** 8, Transgressors. 9, Out. 10, Ephesians. 11, Throb. 13, Ramadan. 16, Nearest. 19, Neath. 22, Childless. 24, Ant. 25, Excommunicate.

**DOWN:** 1, Utmost. 2, Easter. 3, Assemble. 4, Archer. 5, Isis. 6, To hand. 7, As a son. 12, Hoe. 14, Monastic. 15, Apt. 16, Nuclei. 17, A piece. 18, Tied up. 20, Ararat. 21, Hatred. 23, Dome.

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# Church Services

While it is great to get back to church, things are going to be different. Please remember to book your seats for services and Children's Church by 12 noon on Wednesday (see phone number and email address below) .

<b>Theme:</b>	<b>The Easter Journey</b>
<b>2nd April</b>	<b>Good Friday</b>
2-3pm	Good Friday Reflection
<b>4th April</b>	<b>Easter Celebrations</b>
9am	Traditional celebration with communion
11am	All-age celebration with Holy Communion.
<b>11th April</b>	<b>Peace be with You - Acts 4.32-35 John 20.19-31</b>
9am	Reflective Service
11am	Informal service - children's church will meet on Zoom
<b>Theme:</b>	<b>As we emerge from lockdown.....</b>
<b>18th April</b>	<b>Hearing the voice of God - Exodus 3.1-22</b>
9am	Reflective Service
11am	Informal service with children's church in the hall
<b>25th April</b>	<b>Trusting the promises of God - Exodus 4.29-6.5</b>
9am	Reflective Service
11am	Informal service with children's church in the hall
<b>2nd May</b>	<b>Receiving the grace of God - Exodus 12.1-31</b>
9am	Reflective Service with communion
11am	Informal service with communion with children's church in the hall
<b>9th May</b>	<b>Experiencing the salvation of God - Exodus 13.17-14.31</b>
9am	Reflective Service
11am	Informal service with children's church in the hall
<b>16th May</b>	<b>Accepting the provision of God - Exodus 16.1-36</b>
9am	Reflective Service with communion
11am	Informal service with children's church in the hall
<b>23rd May</b>	<b>Pentecost Sunday - Acts 2.1-21</b>
9am	Reflective Service
11am	Informal service with children's church in the hall
<b>30th May</b>	
9am	Reflective Service
11am	Informal service with children's church in the hall

## Online Service

If you can't make it to church, our 9am and 11am services will be live streamed and also available on our website for you to watch later. Our new YouTube channel is:

<https://tinyurl.com/chchalsager>

Church Office: 01270 872291 admin@christchurchalsager.uk  
Vicar - Rev'd Daran Ward: 01270 878537 vicar@christchurchalsager.uk



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