



The Magazine

Christ Church Alsager

August / September 2020

www.christchurchalsager.uk



**God speaks to us through ordinary,
everyday things.
Find out more inside!**



Summer Update Regarding Sunday Services

16th July 2020

Dear friends

No doubt many of you will be planning a break during the summer holidays, some of you will be having staycations and others will be going further afield. Whatever you are doing I hope that you can relax, have fun and stay safe.

Thank you to everyone who responded to my two my questions

- Do you feel ready to return to the church building or is it too soon?
- How do you feel about attending a socially distanced outdoor service?

Your responses have helped me and the PCC to find a way forward as we plan Sunday worship throughout the summer holidays and into September.

Sunday services will remain online at least until the early part of September

The consultation process has indicated that there is very little desire to return to the church building at the moment. Most look forward to returning but for various reasons, not now, including: they are still shielding, the restrictions would not work for their children, it is not worthwhile with existing restrictions, the restrictions mean that they can have a better experience by tuning into the online services, they are very happy with the online services.

Therefore the PCC has decided to continue with online services throughout August and into September, with a review at the next PCC on 7th September.

Family Open Air Celebration Service on 30th August at 2pm

It is good to praise the Lord and make music to your name, O Most High, proclaiming your love in the morning and your faithfulness at night, to the music of the ten-stringed lyre and the melody of the harp. (Psalm 92.1-3)

The consultation has revealed a great response to the idea of an outdoor service and most people who responded are keen for us to go ahead with an event that can safely accommodate all the church family. Therefore it is with great joy that I can announce that we are planning a socially distanced celebration service which will take place in the playing field at Alsager High School on Sunday 30th August at 2pm.

We will be doing everything possible to minimise risk and maximise the spiritual wellbeing of the attendees of this event.

As per the current government guidance for accessing green spaces safely, you will be able to sit in groups consisting of up to two households (your support bubble counts as



**Copy deadline for the October / November magazine is Friday 18th Sept.
Please email any articles and pictures to magazine@christchurchalsager.uk
All pictures of children must have parental permission to publish. Aly**

- one household) or up to six people from different households.
- The field is very large so groups can easily be separated with wide corridors providing social distancing in excess of 2 metres.
- All attendees will need to register for track and trace purposes and the data will be kept for 21 days. We will encourage people to register in advance and indicate who is in their household or bubble, although we will accept registration on the day.
- The size of the field means that there will be plenty of space away from the groups, if children need to run around supervised by their parents/guardians.
- The Church Hall toilets will be available for use and just a short walk away. Access to toilets will be one person at a time (or an adult and children from their household).

We continue to live in uncertain times and government advice may change which could require us to rethink our plans. Please pray that the Lord blesses us with good weather! I plan to have an online service on the shelf in the event that we need to cancel the open air service due to unforeseen circumstances.

Please put the date in your diaries and look out for further details over the coming weeks.

I look forward to us coming together in one physical location to praise the name of the Lord our God.

Yours in Christ

Daran

Prison
F E L L O W S H I P

Still helping the prisoners

Prison Fellowship has reminded its supporters of the hardships facing prisoners during coronavirus. Many prisoners have had to spend nearly 23 hours a day in their cells.

Though such lockdown has been essential for the protection of both staff and prisoners against the coronavirus, it has had the effect, says Peter Holloway, CEO of Prison Fellowship, of creating for the prisoners “a much harsher sentence” than they would normally have had.

He goes on: “Most Prison Fellowship volunteers are not currently allowed into prison, and we feel the loss of that 'ministry of presence' as an organisation. Yet we are not passive! We know that soon our programmes and that loving presence of our volunteers - showing Christ’s love in a thousand small ways - will be more essential than ever.”

Yet Prison Fellowship itself is struggling, as donations have inevitably plummeted due to Covid-19. If you can help, please go to: <https://prisonfellowship.org.uk/insight/>

Ros's Story

If you read Keith's story in the last issue of the magazine, you will have read how we worked in Kenya for four years with The Church Missionary Society and of how difficult we found it coming back to England with three small children, no job for Keith and no home of our own. Being isolated with three small children in a different country with no support from friends or family or toddler groups etc had all taken its toll on my mental health. Life in Kenya was both hard and lonely and I constantly shelved my needs for the needs of Keith and the children and I continued this pattern of behaviour when we got back to England to the point that I didn't know who I was anymore. I could no longer tell you what I liked or wanted to do because I had almost totally forgotten. I had lost the essence of Ros. I managed to keep pressing on each day concentrating on looking after Keith and the children, trying to put to one side how terrible I felt, until one day in 1993, I totally ground to a halt. The anxiety and fear I felt became overwhelming and I took myself off to bed not knowing how I was going to go on living. I was so frightened. For most of the time I was able to drift away from reality in a trance-like state which I now know to be Dissociation. I could stay in bed for days not wanting to eat, drink or see anyone. If I needed a drink, I would drink it quickly so I could hide under the covers again.

On better days, when I could get out of bed, I went to church because I didn't want the children to think it was OK not to, but I cried my way through most of the services.

Worship songs were unbearable as I could not feel any of the joy that other people seemed to be experiencing around me. Why was God not making me better? Didn't he love me and promise not to forsake me?

People struggled to know what to say to me, even asking Keith how I was when I was standing beside him.



I was eventually admitted to Ward 81 of the mental hospital at North Staffs where I stayed for nearly three months. The whole stay seemed to be based on getting my medication right. I didn't get any counselling, often trying to comfort other distressed patients who the staff also seemed to ignore. At least the stay relieved me of the responsibility of looking after the home and the children as I was in no fit state to care for them at that time.

I took antidepressant medication for several years and was told by my cousin who is a GP that I had probably inherited depression from my father and that I would need to take medication for the rest of my life. I can only describe it like being in the bottom of a giant milk bottle with no means of climbing out. I felt absolutely helpless and without any hope that I would get better. Eventually I came to see the tiniest of footholds on the side of the bottle and I started on the long journey of recovery with its many ups and downs and which required a great deal of soul searching and self-care. I had learnt from an early age the mantra of Jesus first, others next and yourself last. I needed to reverse that mantra and realise that God saw me as special and I needed to start treating myself that way too. To use another metaphor, if there was a small cake, instead of cutting it into four for Keith and the three children, I had to start cutting it into five because I mattered too so we had 72 degrees of cake each! I learnt to look after myself, make some time for myself to recharge my batteries, stop trying to please everyone else and to say no more often. The lost Ros was slowly coming back!

As I started to get better, people who had mental health problems seemed to want to talk to me about it. I became very interested in psychology, mostly at first, to understand what had happened to me but I also really wanted to learn the skills to help other people who suffered with their mental health. Eventually, by another set of miraculous events, I embarked on the Certificate of Counselling course at Keele University which led to a Diploma and then a Masters in Counselling/Psychology. I have the joy of working as a counsellor on a daily basis with precious people who also are unable to recognise or have lost sight of their specialness for many different reasons. I believe we are all made in the image of God and I see my job as helping people to strip off the layers of difficulties and negative messages that life has handed them, to begin to love themselves and to get back to that person God made them to be. As the Italian sculptor Michelangelo said when asked how he carved such beautiful things out of wood, 'I see the angel in the wood and chip away to release her'.

I now know why God did not give me an instant answer to my prayers for healing as healing for me was to be a very important journey of changing my thoughts, beliefs and behaviours. If he had healed me in an instant, I would have missed all the important learning I needed to do. It's perhaps an odd thing to say, but, although I would probably rather die than go through that experience again, I thank God for it and can see now that it has actually been the making of me. I know who I am and I enjoy being who I am. I have not taken antidepressant medication for well over twenty years and no longer believe that depression needs to be a life sentence. Hallelujah! - Ros Davies

LIFE IN LOCKDOWN: A PRAYER EXPERIENCE

Life over the last four months has seen difficult times for us all with the development of the Global Coronavirus Pandemic, and many have faced loss, isolation, and uncertainty. But as Christians we are called to pray, in Matthew 9:35 (MSG) the Bible says: *“when Jesus looked out over the crowds, his heart broke. So confused and aimless they were like sheep with no shepherd. “What a huge harvest!” he said to his disciples. “How few workers! On your knees and pray for harvest hands.””*

As a church of disciples, we took this on board and committed to pray continuously from virtually the beginning of lockdown, through Pentecost (and the “Thy Kingdom Come” prayer initiative) until the end of June. As we couldn’t meet or use the church building as an interactive prayer room, a virtual (on line) prayer room was set up (one of 950 in our nation) for people to commit to pray in slots of an hour or more. Little did we know when we set it up that the last planned day of the prayer room would coincide with the permitted opening of churches once again for personal prayer!

There have been some amazing stories nationwide of people encountering God through their prayer times and I do think that God has been speaking throughout my prayer time over the weeks of our virtual prayer room. For me, over this time it has been an evolving theme:

- I was first drawn to three TV aerials that I can see from the chair that I usually sit in during my prayer time. This is a regular seat and I have not been struck by the significance of them all pointing in the same direction before. What jumped out was that that I/we must all be pointing to the source of the transmitting beacon, any deviation and we get distorted pictures.
- When out running I then became aware of a transmitter mast, again this was a gradual revelation. At first I noticed the (I think) mobile network boosters. Then what became apparent were two rods above the "boosters" on each side pointing up to the sky and following that I was drawn to a larger rod above and in the middle pointing higher and upwards.
- From there all the wires running from the overhead cables became apparent, first from the electricity grid and then the phone wires. these cables were running all over and crossing at the same time.
- Running over the motorway bridge was always exhilarating and at first even though there was little traffic the lanes stood out as reaching out all over the country. As the traffic increased this became more intense and it was like looking at videos of car head and taillights travelling at speed.
- The words "Network" and then more recently "connection" have been given to me. I am continuing to pray for more revelation from God on what he might be saying through this and He is answering, but what I do know is that God is delighted when we connect with Him and through His power we connect with others.

Can I be honest with you? I am not actually into prayer, but I am into Jesus so we talk, and I can say that God speaks to us wherever we are, in whatever we are doing and through ordinary everyday things. I also believe in the power of God, so I ask for His help a lot. I hope that this has been an encouragement to you. — Andrea Chatterley

FAMILY
Outdoor Worship
SERVICE

ALSAGER SCHOOL PLAYING FIELDS

SUNDAY 30TH AUGUST

2PM - 3.30PM

GATES OPEN AT 1.30PM

Worship : Fellowship : Fun!

*Pre-register via Eventbrite at tinyurl.com/CHCHopenair by 26th Aug,
email christchurchoffice@hotmail.co.uk, tel 872291 or register on the day
(Registration data will be held for 21 days for track and trace purposes)*

Current guidelines on social distancing will be adhered to

Bring a picnic, chairs or a blanket and make an afternoon of it

Park in the church hall car park. The hall toilets will be open





Christ Church Youth

Sam Parnell
Youth Leader

Email: Youth@Christchurchalsager.uk
Tel: 01270 872291

One of the things I've noticed since moving to Alsager in early February is that teenagers here have a pretty bad reputation, and get a pretty hard time from adults and older members of the community. This isn't something new, nor is it something unique to Alsager, but as with many things I've experienced it seems the smaller and more close-knit nature of the community here means the negative connotations around young people are compounded and distilled, and young people are often rightly or wrongly blamed for many of the negatives that people who live here experience.

One of the first conversations I had with a member of the community here in Alsager was a rather accusatory one about their experience of problems with noise outside of the church when the youth group happens, and over the lockdown period it's proved interesting to keep track of when young people are mentioned on the 'What's Going On In Alsager' Facebook group. From noisy motorcycles late at night, to leaving litter next to the overflowing bins outside the sports hub, to not putting their dog poo bags in the bin, letting off the dreaded fireworks, and most recently (and bizarrely) stripping a tree of all of its bark, it's safe to say that if something happens that people don't like, teenagers often (rightly or wrongly) take the blame.

Whilst undoubtedly teenagers probably were responsible for some of these acts, the type of blame and demonisation I've seen rarely takes account of the fact that they are perpetrated by a small minority of the teenagers in our town. At best this is unfair to the majority who are kind, helpful and friendly, and at worst it likely fuels the general sense of loathsomeness towards some teenagers that causes them to own the negative perception of them as an identity, and causes the lack of respect for society and authority to spiral; it doesn't respect them so why should they respect it?

Before moving on to his new job at UCB, my predecessor Matt Brown had started work on having Alsager designated a 'Youth Friendly Town', having observed that the majority of young people here don't feel welcomed, appreciated or valued as a part of the community.

I believe that as a church we can and must make a big difference here. If we truly value and appreciate young people, we first of all have to start to see them in the way that God sees them. We must remember that one of Israel's greatest kings, and the only man in the whole bible to be described as 'a man after God's own heart' was only a youth when he was called by God, and when he stood alone against the mocking and oppression of God's people by the Philistines. We must remember when God called Jeremiah and instructed him: "Do not say, 'I am only a youth'; for to all to whom I send you, you shall go, and whatever I command you, you shall speak."



Christ Church Youth

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

In my favourite Bible verse, Paul instructs Timothy “Don't let anyone think less of you because you are young. Be an example to all believers in what you say, in the way you live, in your love, your faith, and your purity.”

This is a verse I often encourage young people with. It extols them not to allow their elders opinions of them to stop them from pursuing God's plan and achieving their potential in him, but I believe it should also inspire us as adults to set an example for others who would look down on, or as another translation puts it 'despise' young people.

So be inspired - young people have so much to offer to our community, and even those who cause problems are loved and valued by God. Let's commit as a church to try to change the negative perceptions of young people in Alsager, and instead try to encourage them, inspire them, build them up, point them to Jesus, and enable them to reach their potential in him. Let's see young people as God does, and be blessed overwhelmingly as a result!

Debts and lockdown—By David Pickup, Solicitor

Over the lockdown period there has been a 'holiday' period for people in debt, when some official action has been put on hold. At the beginning of the coronavirus emergency, the Government introduced regulations to temporarily prevent court officials such as bailiffs seizing goods in people's homes or on highways (where your car may be).

There has also been a suspension of enforcement of house possession orders. In addition, many banks have agreed mortgage repayment holidays, or agreed overdrafts at lower interest rates. Some taxes such as VAT or other taxes will not be collected during the emergency. Many court hearings on are hold.

It all sounds too good to be true. This has been a unique experience offering a breathing space to people in debt, but what happens when the debt holiday ends? Many people must be very concerned at the reduction in income at the moment, and dread what will happen when things begin to get back to normal and the little brown envelopes start coming through the letterbox. So, what can you do? You can start preparing now.

Put some money aside every week if you can, set a budget and stick to it.

Talk to the people you owe money to. Make a note of what was said and confirm it by email or post.

Get advice from a debt counsellor or free advice agency.

Do not be afraid to ask for help or more time.

Do not do nothing!

Look out for each other. If you know of someone in trouble, suggest they get help.

Always get proper professional advice.

Let's connect

With everyone so isolated at the moment, we thought it would be good to connect with others in the community online!

We're running a course where everyone watches an episode about questions around the Christian faith, then chats about it together online. It's called Alpha.



You Are Invited!



Christ Church Alsager are running Alpha online. No one has all of the answers, but Alpha is for anyone who has questions about life, or is interested in finding out more about the Christian faith. Alpha is free, and our online course will be starting soon.

Please email: Admin@ChristChurchAlsager.uk or visit www.christchurchalsager.uk for more information, or to sign up.

Giving by Text & Mobile Phone

During this difficult time our income is significantly reduced. Did you know that you can give by text or mobile phone? This will help with our cash flow.

Thank you.

Text: chchalsager (followed by a number between 1 and 20 to match your donation) to 70085 e.g. to donate £10 text chchalsager10 to 70085. Texts will cost your donated amount plus one standard rate text.

You can also give by scanning this QR Code on your mobile phone. Simply point your phone camera at it and follow the on-screen instructions.



Christ Church Families

Lots to do for children and families

Rachel Mason

Children and Families Leader

Email: families@christchurchalsager.uk

Tel: 01270 872291



Do you like going on adventures? What adventures have you been on recently? What adventures do you hope to go on this summer? There are all sorted of adventures we have. Sometimes they are planned, other times they just suddenly happen! They can be short-lived, or go on for a while. Living life with and for Jesus is the greatest adventure of all. It's a lifelong adventure which we don't do alone, God is with us and we have the church family to encourage and support us along the way.

Over the summer holidays we are continuing with our online Sunday services and we will be exploring the story of Jonah from the Bible. He had quite an adventure! He tried to run away from God, ended up in the belly of a big fish, finally obeyed God and didn't like the outcome! Through his adventure, God demonstrated his compassion and mercy for Jonah and for everyone else too. Why not join us for Christ Church Online and go with us on Jonah's adventure this summer? Christ Church Online is premiered on YouTube at 10am each Sunday on the Christ Church Alsager YouTube channel: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCD16n5pJD3UjXJCsuzy08g>, the link is also posted on our Facebook page each week.

There will be no Toddler Time or Zoom Groups through the summer holidays but we will continue to post some content into our Facebook group. There are online holiday clubs and festivals which you can enjoy from home which we will share the links to. So do join our Facebook group for families '**Christ Church Families at Home**'. Also, you can subscribe to the Christ Church Families YouTube Channel to catch up on videos we have produced over the last term. Keep up to date with what's going on via Facebook and our website www.christchurchalsager.uk. We will let you know what is happening in September later in the summer, please check our website and follow us on Facebook.

Have a great summer, enjoy some adventures and why not ask Jesus to come along with you!

God bless

Rachel



God & Water

Why is there so much WATER in the Bible?
Enjoy this soggy session!

Activities

If you can't get exactly these materials, just see what you can find around the house instead!

God CREATES the water: Holy Spirit Hovercrafts

You will need: sports cap bottle lids, such as those used on Fruit Shoots; blank CD/DVDs; balloons; superglue; glue sticks; sequins; marker pens

What to do: Remove the sports-cap lid from the bottle and push it down so it is closed. Glue the lid to the centre of the underside of the disk around the hole, and leave it to dry overnight. Decorate the underside of the disk and/or write the words 'Holy Spirit hovercraft'. Once complete, blow up a balloon and attach the end to the lid. Put the lid in the open position, and watch it glide over a flat surface.



Talk about how, in Genesis 1, the Spirit hovers over the water of creation. God is the creator of all of our planet's seas and oceans. What can we do to look after the world we live in? Does God's Spirit still hover around our watery world today?

God MOVES the water: Parting of the Red (pepper) Sea

You will need: paddling pool or washing-up bowl; water; dishwashing soap; large towels; a large staff/stick; ground black pepper

What to do: Fill the paddling pool or washing-up bowl with water, and then pour the pepper over the water. Invite people to either put some soap on their finger or the staff/stick and put it in the water. The pepper will move as it reacts with the soap.

Talk about how God parted the whole sea so that Moses and the Israelites could escape from Pharaoh and the Egyptians (Exodus 14). How do you think you would have reacted if you were there? What amazing power God must have to be able to do this. Does this affect how you view God?



God TALKS to water: Apple Boats

You will need: apples; cocktail sticks; felt-tip pens; coloured foam sheets (or cardboard); water tray (filled with water); knife (to cut the apples); towels to keep the floor dry

What to do: Thinly slice the apples in round pieces. Cut a wind sail shape out of the foam (or card) and decorate it. Then attach the sail to the cocktail stick, as shown in the photo, and stick it into the centre of the apple slice. Float the boat on the water and splash gently to simulate stormy water.



Talk about how Jesus calming the storm in Mark 4:35–41 reveals the power of God. Can you think of any times when you have heard about God’s power before or experienced it yourself? Is there something going on in your life that you want Jesus to calm or transform?

God GIVES living water: Holy Spirit Well

You will need: strong plastic cups; mini plastic glasses or pots; coloured lolly sticks (large and small) or craft matchsticks; glue; sticky tape; elastic bands; string or twine

What to do: Attach the colourful lolly sticks to the outside of the cup using the glue or sticky tape. Wrap elastic bands around them to hold them in place. Using the sticky tape, fix a piece of string on either side of a mini glass as a bucket. Then tape three smaller lolly sticks together to form an inverted U-shape that can hang over the well. Wedge and secure the U (see photo), using sticky tape if necessary. Wrap a piece of string around the top and connect it to the bucket handle, so the bucket hangs in the middle of the well.



Talk about how Jesus, in John 4, talks about being ‘living water’. What does this mean? Talk about God’s Holy Spirit. How can we get this ‘living water’?

Celebration

Sing the song ‘I’m Gonna Jump Up and Down’, you can find it on YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WodvQf0Jo9s>

Read the account of Jesus walking on water from Matthew 14:22–33 or a version of Jesus walking on water from a storybook Bible, or you watch it on YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K2t3-S6eSUU>.

Chat about: What did everyone like best about the account of Jesus walking on water and why?

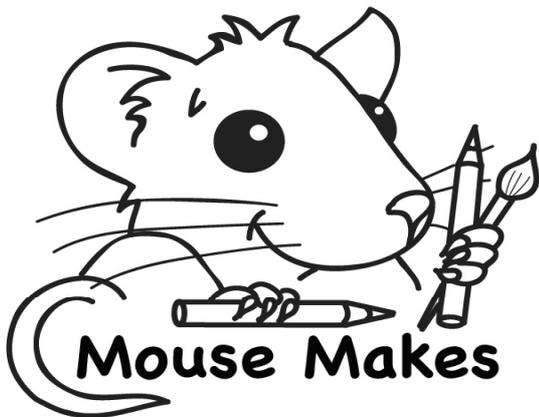
What did you think was most interesting about water and God from the activities today?

If Jesus is ‘living water’, what sort of water do you think of when you think of him? A dripping tap? A rainstorm? A waterfall?

Prayer: Use words or phrases which stood out to you to talk with God today.

God, Thank you that you are a powerful God, who has the power to calm our fears and transform situations and our lives. Please come into those situations which are troubling us and be with us by your Holy Spirit and transform them for the better. Fill us with your living water, your Spirit today. Amen.

Children's Corner



The **PSALMS** are hymns of **PRAYER** and **PRAISE** to God.

*"I will proclaim your greatness, my God and king; I will **thank you**: I will **praise you** for ever and ever."*

Psalm 145:1-2

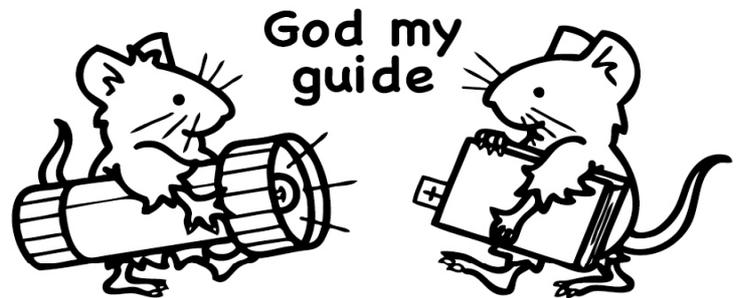
Glory to God



"How clearly the sky reveals God's glory! How plainly it shows what He has done."

Psalm 19:1

Cut out and colour these cards to help you to **thank** and **praise** God.



God my guide

"Your word is a lamp to guide me and a light for my path." Psalm 119:105

God's World

"The world and all that is in it belong to the Lord: the earth and all who live on it are His."

Psalm 24:1



Praise the Lord!

*"Let everything that has breath, **praise the Lord.**"*

Psalm 150:6



Give thanks!

*"Your constant love is better than life itself, and so I will **praise** you. I will give You **thanks** as long as I live; I will raise my hands to you in prayer."*

Psalm 63:3-4

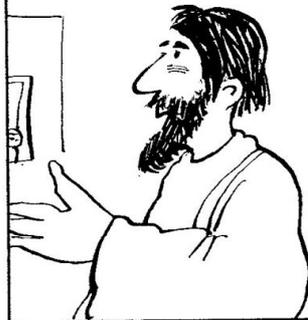


Children's Corner

The doctor and the ill person



JESUS OFTEN TOLD STORIES WITH HIDDEN MEANINGS



ON ONE OCCASION JESUS CALLED MATTHEW - A TAX COLLECTOR TO BE HIS FOLLOWER.

JESUS EVEN WENT TO MATTHEW'S HOME.



THIS SET PEOPLE'S TONGUES WAGGING. THEY THOUGHT JESUS WAS LETTING THE SIDE DOWN!

BUT JESUS EXPLAINED THAT IT WAS IMPORTANT TO TALK TO EVERYONE!

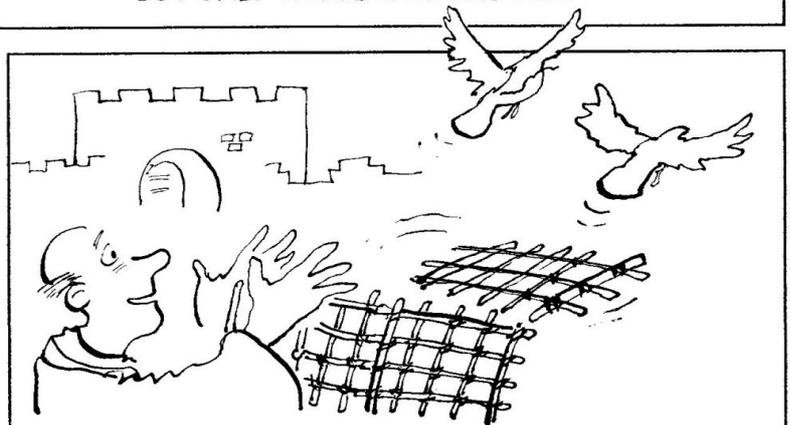


"PEOPLE WHO ARE WELL DO NOT NEED A DOCTOR"



"BUT ONLY THOSE WHO ARE SICK"

"IT IS KINDNESS THAT GOD WANTS"



"NOT ANIMAL SACRIFICES!" see Matthew Ch. 9 v.9-13

Clewer Initiative launches app designed to help tackle labour exploitation on British farms

A new app designed to help tackle labour exploitation and modern slavery in the farming, horticulture and food production sectors was launched on 16th July by the Church of England's modern slavery initiative.

The Farm Work Welfare App, developed by The Clewer Initiative, will provide information on employment rights in eight languages and is aimed at the thousands of workers who come every year to help with the harvest of fruit and vegetables on UK farms.

In a sector which often uses recruitment agencies or third-party labour providers, the app will also give guidance to farmers and growers on how to prevent labour exploitation. Farmers will be able to access practical information on licensed labour providers, document verification and the rights of workers.

The app will allow both farmers and workers to flag up concerns about labour exploitation or modern slavery and seek help, with the information processed by the Modern Slavery Helpline.

It has been drawn up in partnership with the Gangmasters and Labour Abuse Authority (GLAA), the National Crime Agency, the National Farmers' Union (NFU), the Church Commissioners for England and fresh produce supplier the Fresca Group as well as the Modern Slavery Helpline.

It comes after The Clewer Initiative and the Catholic Church in England and Wales launched the Safe Car Wash App in 2018 encouraging motorists to report concerns they may have over labour exploitation and modern slavery in the hand car wash industry.

Bishop Alastair Redfern, who chairs The Clewer Initiative, said: "Victims of modern slavery are often kept by highly-organised, ruthless criminal gangs in remote locations. These gangs pose as legitimate labour providers offering a ready supply of workers to farmers and growers who may not always spot the signs of exploitation.

"That is why we have developed the Farm Work Welfare App - we want to provide a resource for both farm businesses and workers to help them navigate the challenges of seasonal worker recruitment and thwart the criminal networks."

The app is currently available on Google Play and expected shortly on iOS App Store. More information is available [on the Clewer Initiative website](https://www.theclewerinitiative.org).

MODERN SLAVERY HIDDEN IN PLAIN SIGHT IN OUR COMMUNITIES

If you spot the signs call the
Modern Slavery Helpline

0800 0121 700

Get help, report a concern or seek advice

If someone is in
immediate danger call
the police on **999**

To report concerns about
labour exploitation call the
GLAA on **0800 432 0804**



[WWW.THECLEWERINITIATIVE.ORG](https://www.theclewerinitiative.org)

We must be determined to be ‘anti-racist’

George Floyd is the latest in a long line of black people who, in recent years, have died at the hands of the police in America. This has led to a global outcry against racism, demanding fairness and equality in interpersonal relationships. But more than this, justice requires us to root out and re-order any system, structure, or narrative which privileges white people over people of colour and their cultures, norms, and perspectives.

Many consider racism against black people to be an American problem, but Britain’s imperial history has given us our own particular brand. While many white people would publicly denounce overtly racist behaviour, many of our systems are inherently racist and some people remain willing and conscious participants in them.

That’s why it’s not enough to check our unconscious biases. We must be determined to be ‘anti-racist’, to work against the *status quo* wherever it disadvantages black people. This is fundamentally theological: affirming the inherent dignity of all people created in God’s image.

In the UK, recent research demonstrates that black children are twice as likely to live in poverty than white children. Black people face discrimination in employment and health care. They are more likely to be stopped and searched by the police, to get sentenced to prison time and to be given longer sentences than white people. As a country, we have our own stories of excessive force and of the deaths of black people in police custody. Stories that do not end with justice.

These realities are well-known by black people in the UK, including black Christians. Black Brits share the pain of African-Americans suffering under the weight of the same sin and injustice, the same racism.

Yet, the lack of solidarity displayed by many white Christians and leaders has deepened this pain. The unity and witness of the church – as an institution and through its members in society – depend not just on shared faith, but also on shared love and shared burdens. The racial inequities of our churches often fail to speak prophetically to the world – this is a week for lament and repentance.

For those moved to compassion, it’s also a time to listen, learn, and practise solidarity with your black brothers and sisters. Action is the way we bring about a new world. A world that cares, principally, for the ‘least of these’.—Selina Stone, LICC

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4 Burger St, Pietermaritzburg, 3201
South Africa
(PO Box 101071, Scottsville, 3209)
Tel: + 27 33 845 0400,
Fax: + 27 33 845 0455
email:
enquiries@projectgateway.co.za website:
www.projectgateway.co.za

Dear supporters of Project Gateway,

As I write, it is the start of a new phase for us at Project Gateway and for Gateway Christian School. It is day 1 of lock-down Level 3 in South Africa. The lock-down started on March 23rd when Gateway Christian School and Gateway School of Fashion had already closed for the end of Term 1 of the 2020 education year. Term 1 had been very successful and all we hoped to achieve through the various projects was achieved.

Suddenly the world faced a new threat – COVID-19. Precautionary measures were put in place and all staff who could work from home did so. The poverty and hunger levels in South Africa started to rise substantially as those in subsistence businesses such as selling fruit and sweets etc on a daily basis and living virtually hand to mouth suddenly had their livelihoods cut off. Main stream society and businesses etc shut down. Family life was severely disrupted and a new way of living began. Schools were told to wait for a directive from Government before reopening.

Project Gateway, with the help of Executive Board members who are also Pastors from various areas around the city embarked upon a food delivery drive which resulted in many hungry families being fed and many child headed households receiving much needed food support. This still continues ten weeks later.

Today however our school was allowed to re-open. Last week staff were given “permission to travel” permits. All support staff were called back to deep clean and sanitize and tidy the grounds and the classrooms, the administration block and the offices. The Site manager, Matthew, his staff, together with Pastor Jabu the CEO and Mr. Clark the School Principal, have been working tirelessly ensuring that the requirements of Government have been met according to all aspects of the Department of Education and the Department of Health’s directives.

Offices being deep cleaned





**Staff and learners
undergoing safety
instruction**

Please continue to pray for us at Project Gateway. We pray for the safety of all staff and all learners. We wish to thank you all for your ongoing support to us at Project Gateway and we value your prayers at this unprecedented time that South Africa and the world is facing as we continue to fulfil the Mission of Project Gateway: 'To change people's lives by helping them physically, emotionally and spiritually. We aim to uplift people and their communities through job and life skills, reaching all people without prejudice, showing the compassion of Jesus Christ, and honouring our Creator.'

We remember the 2 scriptures that Project Gateway is based upon:

Isaiah 56 v 6 –12loose the chains of injustice, untie the cords of the yoke, to set the oppressed free and break every yoke? Is it not to share your food with the hungry and to provide the poor wanderer with shelter, when you see the naked to clothe them.....

Matthew 25 V 35 -40For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.

Thank you for your support and prayers.

Best regards,

Di Milford on behalf of Pastor Jabu (CEO)

It is not the possession of extraordinary gifts that makes extraordinary usefulness, but the dedication of what we have to the service of God.

F W Robertson

UNITED

30 JULY - 3 AUGUST 2020

Breaks Out



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- for teaching, worship and prayer ministry for all ages and abilities.

new-wine.org/breaksout

NewWine

New Wine - United Breaks Out

30 July – 3 August 2020

Gathering the New Wine family - across homes, gardens and communities - for teaching, worship and prayer ministry for all ages and abilities.

Sign up to **Event & Resource updates**

at new-wine.org/sign-up to find out more.

new-wine.org/breaksout #UnitedBreaksOut

Oakhanger Church News from Oakhanger

Think about what you do each day. Plan your day and avoid unnecessary travel. Keep a diary to plan your week and include -



- **Something physical** – exercise – walk, run or cycle. Take a leaflet on “Walks around Haslington” and other ideas. Join an Oakhanger activity session.
- **Something emotional** – to make you smile, cry, etc. Sing or read or watch a film that raises your spirits.
- **Something mental** – Keep a diary recording what you do and what you think each day. Check out the education programs on TV or your computer. Aim to learn at least one new thing each day.
- **Something spiritual** – Listen to gospel music, read your Bible or a devotional story. Check out the Christian material on you tube or Facebook. Check out church services online.
- **Pray for each other** - . Share any concerns or prayer requests you may have. Pray for those who have lost loved ones in the past months. Give thanks for the life and testimony of Sarah from Seattle as she battled cancer for the past two years and pray for her family in their loss.

Graham Bushill, Oakhanger; Tel: 0799 993 2963; Email: oakchallenge@aol.com

What's On?

Something for everyone
at Christ Church

BIG BREAKFAST

Mondays 8am to 10am

Only £2 - come along and enjoy a
great breakfast

CRAFT GROUP

Tuesdays 1pm - 3pm

Cardmaking, flower arranging etc.
Contact Debbie Daniels

BOWLING GROUP

Indoor carpet bowls

Tuesdays 1:15pm to 3:15pm

Contact Tony and Pauline Birchall
(874353)

GROWTH GROUPS

Fortnightly (mostly)

For: Friendship, Bible study,
Prayer, Socials. Ten groups day
time or evenings. Contact church
wardens for further details and to
join. - **PLEASE MESSAGE YOUR
GROWTH GROUP LEADER
FOR DETAILS OF HOW YOUR
GROUP WILL STAY IN TOUCH.**



Call Debbie in the church office
on 01270 872291



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Thank you



"The organist isn't too sure about it, he says he can't play that fast."

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Our response to Coronavirus (COVID-19)

In light of the Government guidance around non-essential contact and the Church of England's response (www.churchofengland.org/more/media-centre/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-churches) we are taking appropriate steps to ensure we keep our congregations, staff team, and everyone who partakes in our activities and events as safe as possible.

Join us for Church Online on Sunday at 10am

We are streaming our Sunday worship service into your homes. Details on how to access this can be found on our website.

Churches activities suspended

Sadly, all activities that currently take place in the church or church hall are suspended until further notice. This includes all the regular activities:

- Sunday worship at 9am and 11am including Kids for God
- Messy Church
- Coffee and Communion
- Morning Prayer (Heather is streaming on Facebook, Mon, Wed & Fri)
- Prayers @ six (Continuing as a Zoom meeting—see notices)
- Prayer @ 7:14
- Big Breakfast
- Cherubs
- Parent Chat
- Friday clubs: Radiate and Revive

NEWS! NEWS! NEWS!

We are now allowed to open for private prayer. The church will be open on Mondays between 11am - 1pm and 2pm - 4pm. Cleaning and appropriate social distancing measures are in place, and there will be volunteers on hand.

Do you need support?

Are you ill, self-isolating or social distancing? Can we support you especially with essentials like food shopping or collecting medicine? If so, please contact us by emailing helpinghand@christchurchalsager.uk with your name and telephone number or by calling the church office on 01270 872291.

“Be on your guard; stand firm in the faith; be courageous; be strong. Do everything in love.” (1 Corinthians 16:13-14)

Church Office: 01270 872291 admin@christchurchalsager.uk

Vicar - Rev'd Daran Ward: 01270 878537 vicar@christchurchalsager.uk

 Christchurchalsager  @chchalsager

www.christchurchalsager.uk

