



The Magazine

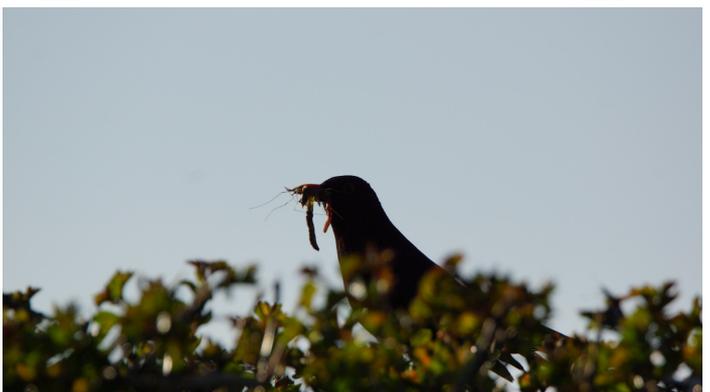
Christ Church Alsager

July 2020

www.christchurchalsager.uk



Beautiful Birds in Alsager



Finding the next normal

Dear friends

Christ Church is now open for private prayer on Mondays from 11am to 1pm and 2pm to 4pm. We have carefully followed the Church of England's guidance to ensure that we provide a safe environment. The church has been setup to promote social distancing with some pews cordoned off and a one-way system in place. Two people will be in attendance during the opening times to be of assistance and to clean vacated areas after each person leaves. In addition to the two volunteers, a maximum of four people will be allowed in church at any given time. If this is insufficient due to the demand, it will be reviewed subject to our capability to safely open more space in the church.



While we all know we do not need to be in a church to pray and engage with the Lord, many find that sacred spaces enable them to engage more readily with God.

Thank you to everyone who responded to my two questions:

What aspects of church do you miss that have been absent during lockdown?

What have you appreciated about church since lockdown that we should continue to do?

Just picking up on the first question for now, the most common responses referred to the relational aspects of church: meeting together in person, the shared experience in one physical place, worshipping together in the church building, touch, hugs, chats face to face, physical fellowship and being together as the church family.

You will probably be aware that churches can open for public worship services from 4th July, providing physical distancing remains in place. The Bishop of London, Sarah Mullally, who leads the Church of England's Recovery Group, has said "The last three months have been an extraordinary time - the first period without public worship and the sacraments in England in more than 800 years. There will be real joy as we begin to come together again – if even at a physical distance – but I also know that many will be understandably cautious at this news."

Bishop Keith has said, "We are very aware that not all church buildings will be ready to hold regular services on 4th July and it is important that this happens only when you have confidence that you can do so safely. As has been the recurring theme to the guidance in recent weeks, it is permissive not prescriptive."

Clearly this is a massive challenge for us at Christ Church. Unless someone knows a way to supersize our church building, it is clearly not possible for us to welcome everyone back and maintain social distancing. In the medium term we will need to continue to have

During these difficult times, it is my plan to produce a magazine every month to keep us in touch and to share any news/tips/thoughts. Copy deadline for the August magazine is Friday 17th July.
Please email any articles and pictures to magazine@christchurchalsager.uk
All pictures of children must have parental permission to publish. Aly

online church services, perhaps in parallel with a small number of people meeting in church.

We are working on improving our technology and internet connectivity to enable us to record services in church and/or to live stream from church. Some of the improvements will take time to implement especially where external service providers are involved. In the meantime, there are still unknowns, for example, are we allowed to sing in church?

Initially it is likely that those who can come into church will experience a pre-recorded service projected on to the large screen. This will go some way to providing the relational aspects of church that many people are missing.

In the longer term there will be a strong case to continue to record and/or live stream services for those who are house bound, unwell, working on Sundays, etc; and to enable those who are curious to check out Christ Church without needing to come through the front door.

I suspect in the longer term we will still want to include pre-recorded elements in our church services to enable us to continue to experience the creativity that we have seen in the online services over the last three months.

Perhaps you, like me, after three months of physical separation, would like us to come together to worship with the whole church family. To enable this, I am exploring the possibility of an outdoor celebration service whilst maintaining whatever government restrictions that are in place at the time. For example, this might mean those attending would sit in household groups or their 'bubble', socially distanced from other bubbles.

To help me and the PCC to find the way forward I would love to hear your responses to the following 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?

Let's finish with a word of encouragement from Paul, "I can do all this through him who gives me strength." (Philippians 4.13)

Through Christ in the power of the Holy Spirit we will find the way forward for the glory of God the Father.

Yours in Christ

Daran

Smile-lines - The Seagull

A father was at the beach with his children when the four-year-old son ran up to him, grabbed his hand, and led him to the shore where a seagull lay dead in the sand. "Daddy, what happened to him?"

"He died and went to heaven," the father replied.

The boy thought a moment and then asked: "Why did God throw him back down?"

IcFEM Mission at work in western Kenya – COVID-19 UPDATE

With the help of supporters' donations, IcFEM is supporting people around the Kimilili area. The distribution will be widened **as more funds become available**. Families and communities face starvation through loss of work owing to lockdown and through the devastating floods that hit western Kenya a few weeks ago. Distribution is initially to sponsored students and their families, and to Local Transformation Units (LTUs).

Can you help?

Items ready for distribution: water butts, food and other essentials.



LTU members gather for the distribution.

Recipients wearing IcFEM branded masks.



A sponsored student & his mother now have hope



Cost: £1800 per LTU



Cost: £130 per student family

There are 3 ways to support this desperately needed work, if you would like to:

through the website: www.icfem-mission.org Click the Donate button; in the dropdown box for allocation click 'Other' and enter 'Intervention Project'. You will be taken to the PayPal site where you will enter the amount again. This **doesn't** double your donation! Your gift will be acknowledged.

by direct bank transfer to 40-09-25, a/c 51445553, tagged 'Intervention'. Please email office@icfem-mission.org with details so you get an acknowledgement and thanks.

by cheque payable to "**IcFEM-Mission (Europe)**" to 12 Ash Grove, Rode Heath, ST7 3TD

God bless us all; we are so richly blessed here in the UK. Please share that blessing with those who have no social or health security. They trust in God. He answers partly through us! And please pray for them and the Mission's work among them! - Martin Oram

Bring an end to racial injustice

A group of Christian leaders across Cheshire have come together to stand against racism, bullying and prejudice following the protests that have taken place across the Western World.

Crowds of people gathered a few weeks ago outside Chester's Townhall for a "socially distanced protest", which was organised by BLM Chester.

Now, this group of Christian leaders, including the Bishop of Birkenhead, the Archdeacon of Chester, and the Dean of Chester, plus leaders from a wide cross-section of other Christian denominations have released a statement asking God to "bring an end to racial injustice".

The letter reads:

"As Christian leaders in Chester we know that silence is no longer an option: Black Lives Matter.

Following the recent murder of George Floyd in Minneapolis we make it clear that we are appalled by the violence committed against a human being created in the image of God. Racial justice is not just a black or white issue; it is a Kingdom of God issue. Jesus came to destroy every dividing wall of hostility to make one new humanity in Christ.

The Christian scriptures contain a vision of the justice that Christ established through his life, death and resurrection: He has brought down the powerful from their thrones, and lifted up the lowly; he has filled the hungry with good things, and sent the rich away empty. In contrast to this, we recognise that racism is embedded in many institutions and cultures – including our own. For this we are truly sorry.

We recognise that we have allowed ourselves to become estranged from God's heart and we have at times disregarded the people He loves including those from the Black, Asian and other ethnic minorities in our own churches and communities.

We recognise we need to listen to and learn from our Black, Asian and other ethnic minorities sisters and brothers. We need to reflect, repent and act differently across our city to forge together a better future where all have a voice, are able to contribute and live free from fear and oppression.

We wish to build relationships in our city so we value others, irrespective of differences, addressing problems together and finding common cause with partners and friends to forge a better future together.

We hope that through our listening we can shape the policies, practices and priorities of the institutions, churches, businesses and services of our city.

May God transform our hearts, renew our minds and lead us forwards in humility and love."

This article was taken from the Chester Diocese web site news page. You can find more at <https://www.chester.anglican.org/news> - Ed

A TIME OF WAITING - by Keith and Ros Davies

Some of you will know that Ros and I spent four years in Kenya in the late 1980s working for CMS, the Church Mission Society.

It was a pretty radical decision to take a young child to a continent we had little knowledge of and live in an alien environment so different from all that we knew. It meant that we had to give up most of our human securities including selling our house in Biddulph. Nevertheless, we felt guided by the Holy Spirit to take that step and in May 1985 we moved to Murang'a, a small town some 60 miles North of Nairobi, which was to be our home for the next four years.

In a way that was the easier part. What was far harder was returning to the UK in 1989. Don't get me wrong. It wasn't that we didn't want to return, but it was a matter of all the uncertainty we were to face for more than five years after coming back.

Various factors indicated it was the right time to return, one of them being that my father had been diagnosed with lung cancer and our homecoming meant that we could support my parents during the last year of my father's life and we were able in some small way to minister to him as his death drew nearer.

For the first 18 months after returning I spent my time teaching, but it was all rather unsatisfactory. I was expensive to employ and schools were watching their budgets. The best I could get were temporary contracts and supply work. I found it hard to return to the classroom and the whole thing seemed like a backward step. At one of my schools I met a rep from Teachers Assurance, who ran a lunch time meeting. I liked the low key way he helped people to sort out their financial arrangements and thought that I might be suited to this work so I put in an application. I was delighted when I was accepted for training and spent the next four years visiting schools and talking to prospective clients in their homes.

Living on a commission basis for most of that time was pretty unsettling with a young family to feed (by now we had three children). To make matters worse it coincided with the time that Ros became severely depressed, spending at one point some 11 weeks in hospital. This was a very dark time and often the only prayer I could utter was, "Lord, help!" Yet in our better moments we could see God's hand at work through the help of my lovely cousin, Joan Rawlins, and friends from church who looked after the children when I was visiting clients in the evenings.

Back in 1991, my mother suggested I should apply for a job with the Home Tuition Service which she had heard about from a friend at church. I sent in an application form but heard absolutely nothing, not even receiving an acknowledgement. In time I forgot about it and threw myself into my insurance work with added gusto. However, after four years the work began to dry up so I applied for job as a mortgage adviser with a well-known local estate agent. I was accepted, but before very long I found myself being put under increasing pressure to sell products that were not in the clients' best interests. As a Christian, I would not do this and consequently one morning, I was called into the manager's office and given half-an-hour to clear my desk.

As you can imagine, I was distraught. "Lord, help!" I prayed again. I phoned my vicar,

Andy, in Biddulph and asked if I could come and see him. He told me to come right over and there in his study I poured my heart out and we prayed. We prayed for guidance, for protection and especially for God's provision (because of Ros' illness I was now the sole breadwinner for the family).

The only thing I thought I could do was to return to teaching once again. Had I not already decided that this was a backward step but what else could I do to put food on the table? I spent a couple of months supply teaching but then, suddenly, quite out of the blue, I had a phone call.

"Hello, is that Keith Davies?"

"Yes," I replied.

"Well, my name is Grace Barker and I am the local co-ordinator for the Staffordshire Home Tuition Service. I have a big apology to make.... You see, I've just discovered an application form that you sent to me four years ago. All that time it has been sitting at the bottom of a drawer in my office. I am really sorry. I just wondered if you might still be interested."

Interested? You bet I was. I took the job and there followed some of the happiest years of my life up to the day I finally retired

at the age of 65. It reminded me that God really is good and, if we commit our way to him, he is there all the time looking after us. Truly, it is said: "Underneath are the everlasting arms."

As we look back we wish we had been more trusting in God as we can now see his hand in the bad times as well as the good. Often we felt God was not hearing our prayers when actually he was teaching us so many things we may not have learnt if life had been easier. Even Ros's deep depression has been the catalyst for her career in psychotherapy through which she has been able to help many people, but that's another story.

Ros and Keith with Simon and Anna at home in Murang'a 1986





Christ Church Youth

Sam Parnell
Youth Leader

Email: Youth@Christchurchalsager.uk.
Tel: 01270 872291

Despite the weather outside being pretty dismal at the time of writing this article, the summer holidays are fast approaching, and whilst the situation the country finds itself in may mean this is a slightly less exciting prospect than in most years, thankfully there are still a few things for young people to look forward to!

“Then Moses climbed the mountain to appear before God.”

Exodus 19:3

Some of the strongest memories I have of learning about and experiencing God as a young person happened away from home at residential youth events, conferences, and festivals. Whilst there was nothing magical or special about these events, and God wasn't any more present at a holiday camp, or in a muddy field in the middle of nowhere than at the church I was part of every Sunday, there was something significant about being away from my regular environment, making new friends, building a strong sense of community, and worshipping God with thousands of other young people that played an important part in the formation of my faith. I have seen this same experience mirrored time and time again in the lives of young people I've worked with, and these 'mountaintop' experiences of meeting with God in an unfamiliar environment can be genuinely life changing for teenagers.

“So Moses went down to the people and told them what the Lord had said”

Exodus 19:25

I love mountains, and have many great memories of visiting Wales with my family as a child. The view from the top of Snowdon on a clear day is truly something to behold, and made all the more rewarding by the effort exerted to get there. The truth is though, that as beautiful as mountaintops are to visit, nobody lives there, because it's rocky, it's cold, and nothing grows there.

Moses met with God on the top of Mount Sinai, but God sent him back down to use what he had shared with Moses to inspire and guide others. Similarly, the 'mountain top' experiences young people have at Christian festivals, residential and events should inspire them to go back into their everyday life equipped to follow God, and to inspire and guide others to do the same.

Whilst some young people may be disappointed about summer camps and festivals being postponed until next year, the great evangelist Billy Graham once said “Mountain tops are for views and inspiration, but fruit is grown in the valleys”, and I think there's something valuable in remembering that.



Christ Church Youth

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Here are a couple of Christian festivals for young people that will be happening online this Summer:



Luminosity is a brand new youth initiative that has been created out of the New Wine festival. It was due to take part alongside New Wine's 'United' festival, but will now take place online instead. Luminosity are encouraging young people to camp in their garden, living room, or anywhere else they can fit a tent from the 30th July - 3rd August, and engage with their program online. Find out more at www.weareluminosity.org, or follow @weareluminosity on Instagram.



Limitless is a festival for young people organised by the Elim church network, but aimed at young people from all churches and backgrounds. It was due to take place at the Staffordshire Showground this year, and was one of the main events picking up where 'Soul Survivor' left off when it held its final summer festival last year. Limitless have a great program of lively worship, powerful teaching, fun and games lined up, and young people won't want to miss out.

Limitless Festival is instead happening online on the 7th & 8th of August. Find out more at www.limitlessfestival.co.uk, or follow @limitlesselim on Instagram.



Here you will find the latest news, stories and prayers from the Aru Project and people. Find out how God has used your generosity to transform lives!

Language of love

During the translation process, it is vital that Scripture goes through a number of community checks. This ensures that it sounds natural, is accurate and makes sense to the readers. The Dobel team has found that these checks do much more than bring clarity to their translations; they also change people's lives. Some in the Dobel community have taken part in a number of checks, and through this have been growing in their understanding of Scripture

'I really care for people who are old and can't walk. I thought loving them just meant giving them something. I just learned that we can love people in many other ways as well.' - Dobel community checker

For some the impact is being seen not only in their own lives but also in those around them.

'This is the third time that I have helped to check books of Scripture in my own language. Through each check I just keep growing in my faith and my life keeps changing. I'm changing to be more loving to my family.' – Dobel community checker

The team hopes to soon move onto the community checking of 1 Peter, but has had to put this on hold due to Covid-19 restrictions. Join in prayer that it will eventually be able to go ahead, and have an eternal impact.

Right on target

The Kola team has been busy connecting with the local community through visits to villages and churches. During these visits, the team helps people to read translated books and encourages people to pray in Kola. Many of those the team met with have shared how much more they understand of Scripture when it is in the Kola language rather than in Indonesian. Local man, Minggu, described wonderfully what it was like to pray in Kola: *'It's like when you shoot an arrow and it hits the target.'*

A change in focus

It has been a joy to partner with both the Dobel and Kola teams. Over many years we have witnessed their faith, endurance and commitment to ensuring that their communities have access to the transformative word of God. We thank you for standing with them. Over the last year we have had to review our support to the Dobel and Kola teams, looking at how we can make best use of our available resources. As a result, from now on we shall solely be providing support to the Dobel team as it comes close to completing the New Testament. The Kola team is currently exploring the possibility of receiving support through other Wycliffe organisations to enable it to continue with the encouraging progress it has made in translation and reaching out to local churches.

Persevering through Covid-19

The impact of Covid-19 has begun to be felt in the Aru Islands. The translation office is closed and teams are unable to work due to lack of internet connection. All village visits are also suspended. In the wider community people are concerned for their health if there is a virus outbreak, as they live in crowded houses and healthcare is limited. Many also rely on going regularly to markets as they do not have fridges to preserve food.

Heading for the finish line

We praise God that despite the delays that Covid-19 has caused, in recent months the Dobel team has been racing towards the finish line and has, at times, even been ahead of schedule. The finishing touches have now been made to 1 Corinthians which is ready for publication and 2 Corinthians is just one check away from also being complete. When praying in Kola, Minggu feels that God immediately hears and understands him as if he is right there by his side.

Praise and prayer—Give thanks for:

the progress made on 1 and 2 Corinthians in Dobel, and Luke and James in Kola community checking of 2 Corinthians being completed before lockdown understanding of Scripture growing and having an impact on people's lives Dobel translator Yoke's health improving.

Please pray for:

protection over the community and team as they begin to see the impact of Covid-19 God's provision for the Kola team as they seek support from other organisations wisdom on how to proceed with translation during Covid-19 the community to continue to use translated Scripture

Thank you for partnering with the Aru community in prayer and support.

Christ Church Families

Lots to do for children and families

Rachel Mason

Children and Families Leader

Email: families@christchurchalsager.uk

Tel: 01270 872291



Everyone loves a good story, and we all have stories to tell. Stories of our lives. Stories of challenges faced and overcome, of failure and of success, of mountain top moments and deep valley stretches, of love and of loss, and of those times in between when nothing much seemed to happen. Often we think only to tell those stories that seem particularly significant or life changing, but actually those stories of our day-to-day existence are just as important. Sharing our stories encourages others and helps them to continue walking their own. What is your lockdown story? Everyone's is different but just as important. Where in that story do you see God at work? Can you see Him woven in the many strands which make up day-to-day life in your household, is there a particular moment which you experienced Him, or do you struggle to see where He has been in this season?



As we read, our stories can connect for a time. Church is our common ground, let us walk this part together. Join us as we learn of God and explore and grow in our faith. There are many ways we can do this through our Christ Church Online services each Sunday, our activities and groups. You can also join others in their stories through praying for one another and contacting each other. Maybe there is someone from church who you haven't seen for a long time. Why not contact them today? Our term-time regular groups continue online...

We are live streaming **Toddler Time on Mondays 10am** in the 'Christ Church Families at Home' Facebook group, so do join me for songs and a Bible story each week.

We are running a **Kids Zoom Group on Thursdays 3pm**. Just over 30mins of hanging out together, where we sometimes play games, do quizzes, sing songs and pray. If you are interested in joining in with this, email Rachel on families@christchurchfamilies.uk or message 'Christ Church Families' on Facebook.

Do join our Facebook group for families '**Christ Church Families at Home**'. This group is open to everyone, just search on Facebook and ask to join. In the group various content is shared with the aim to support and encourage families to worship together, and explore and grow in faith and knowledge of God. It is also a forum for you to share with us and interact with one another. Also, you can subscribe to the Christ Church Families YouTube Channel:

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCokYwAamf3jhyVq2LJFNd9w> to catch up on Toddler Time, Sunday talks and assemblies we are doing for primary schools. Keep up to date with what's going on via Facebook and our website www.christchurchalsager.uk.

Rachel Mason (Children and Families Leader)

Email: families@christchurchalsager.uk



Jonah's Messy Olympics

The Tokyo Olympics may have been postponed, but the Jonah Olympics are about to happen in your own home!

Activities

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

Ping-pong races

You will need: numbered ping-pong balls; a racetrack marked on the floor using masking tape, with start and finish lines; paper straws

What to do: Two people race down the track by blowing their ping-pong balls, either through their straws or not.

Talk about how the storm that blew Jonah's ship was very strong. I wonder how the sailors felt. When they were scared by the wind, they prayed to their gods for help. Who do ask for help? Do you pray to God?

Find Jonah

You will need: a tray; sand, shaving cream, hair mousse or slime; a Lego figure (Jonah); blindfolds; a timer

What to do: One person hides Jonah in the sand (or other material) so no one can see him. Put a blindfold on and try to find Jonah in the sand with one finger only – or a hand for smaller people. Take it in turns and time yourselves. Make it a race!

Talk about what you do when you are searching for someone or something. Do you just run off and turn everything over, or do you have a plan? How did God know where to find Jonah?

Olympic rings

You will need: a large piece of card with the Olympic rings drawn on it; pencils/pen

What to do: Jonah had gifts of speaking and teaching – that's why God asked him to speak to the people in Nineveh. What are your gifts? What are you good at? If you aren't sure, ask someone! Write or draw inside the Olympic rings a list of all your different gifts and how you could or do use them to share God's love with others.

Talk about how sports people have to work incredibly hard to reach a level to represent their country at the Olympics. Yes, they are gifted, but it also takes hard work and commitment. God gives us gifts to use for the good of everyone, but it doesn't mean we don't have to work hard at improving them. God gives us the gifts, but it's up to us to develop them and put them to good use. How do you improve and build your gifts?



Massive fish prayer space

You will need: a tent or den; lots of brown paper; coloured paper; scissors; sticky tape; marker pens; bottles; pens

What to do: Put up the tent or construct a den, and leave the door open as the mouth of the fish. Then cover the tent with paper, adding eyes, teeth, scales, a tail. Inside the tent have a supply of bottles, pieces of paper and pens. Write prayers that start, like Jonah's prayer when he was in the big fish, 'Lord God, HELP!...' and put the message in a bottle.

Talk about the way God hears our prayers even in the deepest, darkest places.

Celebration

Sing the song 'Our God is a Great Big God', you can find it on

YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eSTfM8M2Md8>

Read the story of Jonah from a Bible storybook or watch a video of the story, such as this one:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WOSadLyqshg>, or this fun VeggieTales version which is

great but is long as it is a movie: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2MWTzLivNE8>

Chat about the story:

What did everyone like best about the story?

In what ways do we run away from God? How does that work for us?

Have you ever felt called to do something? How did you respond?

When you need help, who do you turn to?

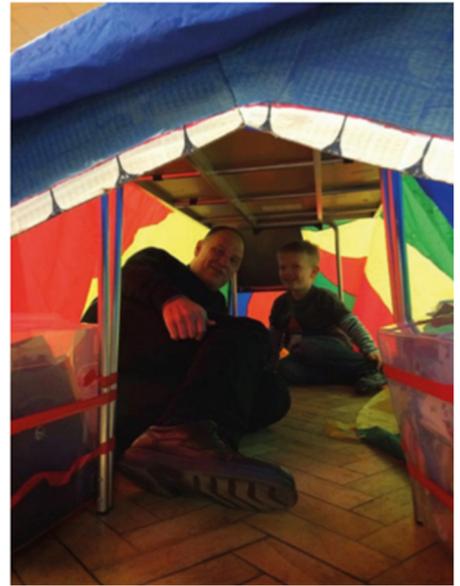
What did you learn about yourself today? What did you learn about God today?

Prayer: Use activity 4 to pray for those situations for which you want to ask God's help.

Lord God, Help ... (add your help prayers). Thank you that you hear us when we pray. Amen.

Mealtime

See if you can find food from different Olympic countries and enjoy trying new things.



An enormous thank you to
Perry (Graham) Mason
for the wonderful photos
you see here and on the
cover. He really is
extraordinarily gifted.
Thank you—Ed



Children's Corner

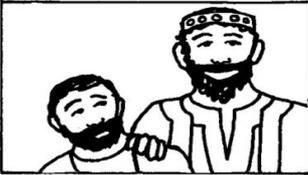
Bible Bite

A short story from the Bible

It can be read in the Bible in
1 Samuel 24

God chose Saul to be the King of Israel,
but Saul chose to disobey Him. God said
that the next king would not be Saul's son.

Saul didn't know
that God had
chosen David to
be the next king.



David was very successful
as a fighter and very
popular.



David had to go on the run and
hide.



One day, Saul
and his army
were in En-Gedi.
Saul needed to
pee, so he went
into a sheep
fold built next
to a cave...

David and his men were hiding at the
back of the cave!



David crept over and
cut a piece off Saul's
robe.



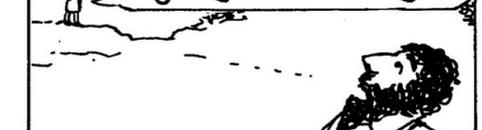
Then David felt bad.



David waited until Saul
was far enough away
then he shouted to him.



Your majesty, I could have
killed you today, but I
knew it was wrong. I want
to prove to you I'm not
trying to harm you.



David, you are better than
me. I would have killed you
but you were kind.



David promised, and
Saul and his army
went home.



Children's Corner

p	h	i	l	i	s	t	i	n	e	s	y
m	u	i	m	c	h	o	i	c	e	e	k
c	j	e	a	l	o	u	s	i	b	c	i
k	h	o	j	r	u	i	i	o	k	h	n
a	n	o	e	o	t	f	s	u	t	a	d
f	r	o	s	b	e	i	a	r	w	n	i
o	c	m	t	e	d	g	u	m	a	c	p
l	a	d	y	i	n	h	l	p	i	e	y
d	v	t	h	j	c	t	e	o	t	l	l
b	e	k	i	l	l	e	d	n	e	n	y
t	c	a	t	c	h	r	f	x	d	p	f
k	i	n	g	s	d	a	v	i	d	j	r

choice

robe

family

king

Israel

shouted

kind

army

chance

sheep

disobey

fighter

Saul

waited

catch

killed

chosen

David

notice

jealous

Philistines

majesty

fold

cave

UNITED

30 JULY - 3 AUGUST 2020

Breaks Out



Gathering the New Wine family - across homes, gardens and communities
- 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

New Wine will be gathering the family together online this summer - across homes, gardens and communities - for an online event for all ages and abilities:

Morning and evening teaching, worship and prayer ministry, afternoon TED-style seminars, sofa sessions, Q&As and webinars.

Here's a taste of what you'll be able to enjoy, for free, from your sofa, a tent in your garden, your local park or even your bed!

In the mornings, Bible Teaching will be led by Pete Hughes and Bishop Jill Duff.

Pete leads KXC, which has been described as 'one of London's most innovative churches'. His recent book *All Things New* is about God's relentless passion to redeem lives, heal the nations, rewire the culture and bring renewal to all of creation.

Bishop of Lancaster, Jill Duff, will be speaking in Impact, the urban venue, on Friday, Saturday and Monday mornings. As bishop, she oversees mission, evangelism and church planting in the Diocese of Blackburn.

Evening sessions will be led by a different guest speaker each night. Confirmed so far are Miriam Swanson of Fusion, Gary Haugen of IJM, leadership coach Jo Saxton, author, speaker and advocate, Danielle Strickland, Chris Lane, of St Mellitus North West, and New Wine National Leader Paul Harcourt.

Each afternoon will be TED-style seminars led by experts in topics that are relevant and important at this time: grief, loss and lament; Holy Spirit ministry; leading in changing times; race; mental health and well-being; apologetics; creation care; parenting; and prayer. These will be followed by sofa sessions, Q&As and webinars for further discussion and questions.

UNITED

30 JULY - 3 AUGUST 2020

Breaks Out



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

new-wine.org/breaksout

NewWine

Each morning at New Wine Kids: Space Agency, 0-11s and their families will encounter God through songs, challenges, stories, teaching and gunge! In the afternoons, join Stomping Ground live for fun, games, challenges and general craziness. New for 2020 is an Augmented Reality App packed with stories, games, crafts, activities, prayer and worship.

Luminosity is an exciting programme for 11-18s including breakfast time devotions and chat; challenges; afternoon workshops on mental health and anxiety, evangelism, apologetics, calling, leadership, social media and the world we could create; Evening Celebrations with high energy worship and guest speakers; and After Parties. For more info go to weareluminosity.org

Members of the New Wine Leadership Network will be able to access a programme of 1-2-1 prayer slots, mission consultations and international gatherings via Zoom as well as discussions with special guests about 'What's next for the local church?', 'Leading and well-being' and 'Mission and planting'.

Throughout the event you can browse our online Resource Venue where you'll find St Andrew's Bookshop and other shops including Christian Gift Co and Wee Sparrow, and opportunities to connect with Christian organisations including BRF, CAP, Open Doors and Hope for Justice. Using our interactive map you can also access charity experiences from Mercy Ships, MedAir, Compassion and MAF.

Over 300 people have volunteered to be United Breaks Out Community Makers, tasked with modelling the same fellowship and connection in homes and communities that is seen across the campsite each summer.

Sign up to **Event and Resource updates** at new-wine.org/sign-up to find out more.

new-wine.org/breaksout

#UnitedBreaksOut

Rats!

I am an animal lover and enjoy God's creation particularly when it's cute and covered in fur. When our eldest, Sarah, turned 7 she wanted a small furry pet. We went to a marvellous pet shop where they had a huge range of such creatures – mice, rats, hamsters, guinea pigs, gerbils, chinchillas, degus.. and the very patient shop owner gave Sarah a close look at all of them. She liked them all. Completely over-whelmed, I asked the owner which rodent she would recommend. Without batting (ratting?) an eyelid she said 'Rats! Intelligent, easy to handle and not nocturnal!' .

And so we became a family of rat lovers or 'rat fanciers'. Sarah chose an agouti (grey/brown) male and Molly (aged 4) chose a white one. Fred and Whisper. Rats are sociable and don't like to be alone. We chose a lovely cage. Then we chose another lovely cage because Fred



proved to be quite an escape artist. I came downstairs one morning to find him sitting on top of the bookshelves. We were rarely rat-free for the next 10 years. Ben our youngest demanded rat ownership rights on parity with his older sisters about 2 years later so our rats came in threes instead of twos. Scabbers in the Harry Potter novels was fuel to the rat fire.

It was lovely when they arrived as babies (baby rats are called kittens) – even more cute but nervous. As they grew, so did their curiosity and confidence with careful daily handling. At the end of our evening meal we would allow the rats to scurry about our kitchen table enjoying the leftovers. I realise that this would be a horror movie scene for many but when you see their little pink noses and their twinkly whiskers and listen to them chattering when they are content sat on your shoulder – the film turns into a love story. Another feature of family life was the rat races. All competitors were placed on the bottom stair and the



one who got to the top first was the winner! Due to rats' curiosity and lack of sense of urgency or in fact any type of competitive spirit these races could take a while.

Rats are very easy to care for. They love to climb and explore so a big cage with bars and shelves and rope bridges and hammocks and tubes is a good investment. They keep themselves clean and have a good wash several times a day. We clean the cage once a week and they don't get smelly..or am I immune to parfum de rat after all these years..? Rats love to be busy and we leave torn strips of newspaper on top of the cage and they spend a happy few hours tugging it through the bars and down to their intricate nest. They enjoy carrot tops, chicken drumstick bones, baby food (this keeps supermarket loyalty card algorithms on their toes)..and cleaning empty yogurt pots as well

as proper rat food pellets. They need fresh water in their bottle all the time. They live 2 – 3 years. They are lovely to handle and seem to enjoy human company. They can be taught to do tricks and will chuckle when you tickle them. Our cats give them a wide berth usually



after sitting on their cage and getting their paws nipped through the bars. Rats have very poor eyesight and explore things by biting them. Never poke your fingers into a rat cage.

After the children left home and rat demand declined I realised that I missed an occupied rat cage. So for my birthday in 2018 for the first time I had my very own rats. Daisy and Munchkin. See photos!

Like many animals, I wonder what God was thinking when He came up with the rat. I enjoy their companionship and, dear reader, I recommend them to you.

Rachel White June 2020

Do you have an unusual pet? We'd love to hear about it. - Ed



Creative Worship at Christ Church:

Shortly after I first became a Christian in 2005, whilst living in Solihull, I met with some very charismatic church members who showed an enthusiasm for authentic and personal praise and worship of our Lord. When I (a personal trainer with a Psychology degree, retraining as a Mental Health nurse) let it slip that I had once been extremely passionate about art and had for many years, dreamed of a career in fashion, this wonderful church family began to nurture the artistic drive in me that I had allowed fear and doubt and expectations of others to squash. Having done very little in the way of artistic pursuits since quitting art college in 1998, these occasional prompts from God allowed me to dabble in creative worship sessions in growth groups for a time and , more recently, on visiting Beacon House of Prayer.

Over a series of chats, Helen Berry and I discussed our frustrated artistry and innate desire to engage our church and wider community in some kind of creative movement: to give glory to God; to engage with members of our community in a loving and non-judgemental space and to allow an outpouring of creativity and spiritual and emotional healing. So far we have launched our pilot Creative Worship group at Christ Church which was due to be held monthly in the church hall on a Saturday from 3-5pm. This initial session showed real potential, but due to lockdown, we have since taken to inviting willing creatives to set aside this time each month and to post photos of videos of any creative offerings. We have no idea how this fledgling will grow or what shape things will take, but we are open to God's guidance and appreciate prayer and support from anyone who may share our vision!

The next "creative time" will be Saturday 25th July, 3-5pm (or whenever you can). Please feel free to support us in prayer and worship at this time. We will keep you posted about future developments!

Emmy Butler

Oakhanger Church News from Oakhanger



Dear All,

Many have sent "Thank you" posters for the Oakhanger window and our readings at

Pentecost emphasised the victory we have in Jesus. "You shall receive power after the Holy Spirit has come on you and you will be my witnesses (to faith, hope and love, etc.) to the ends of the earth".

Please continue to pray for our children and for all who have responsibility for their learning and growth as decisions are made about school and education. Pray for teachers and parents that they may support the children to enable them to face the challenges and enable them to become confident adults. Pray for those who make difficult decisions regarding return to school and about education in general.

Please pray especially for people who are feeling isolated and confused in the uncertainty of the current crisis.

If you or anyone you know is not coping please contact me for details of where to find support (or just ring for a chat over a virtual cup of coffee!).

Graham Bushill, Oakhanger Project

E-mail: oakchallenge@aol.com, Mobile: 0799 993 2963

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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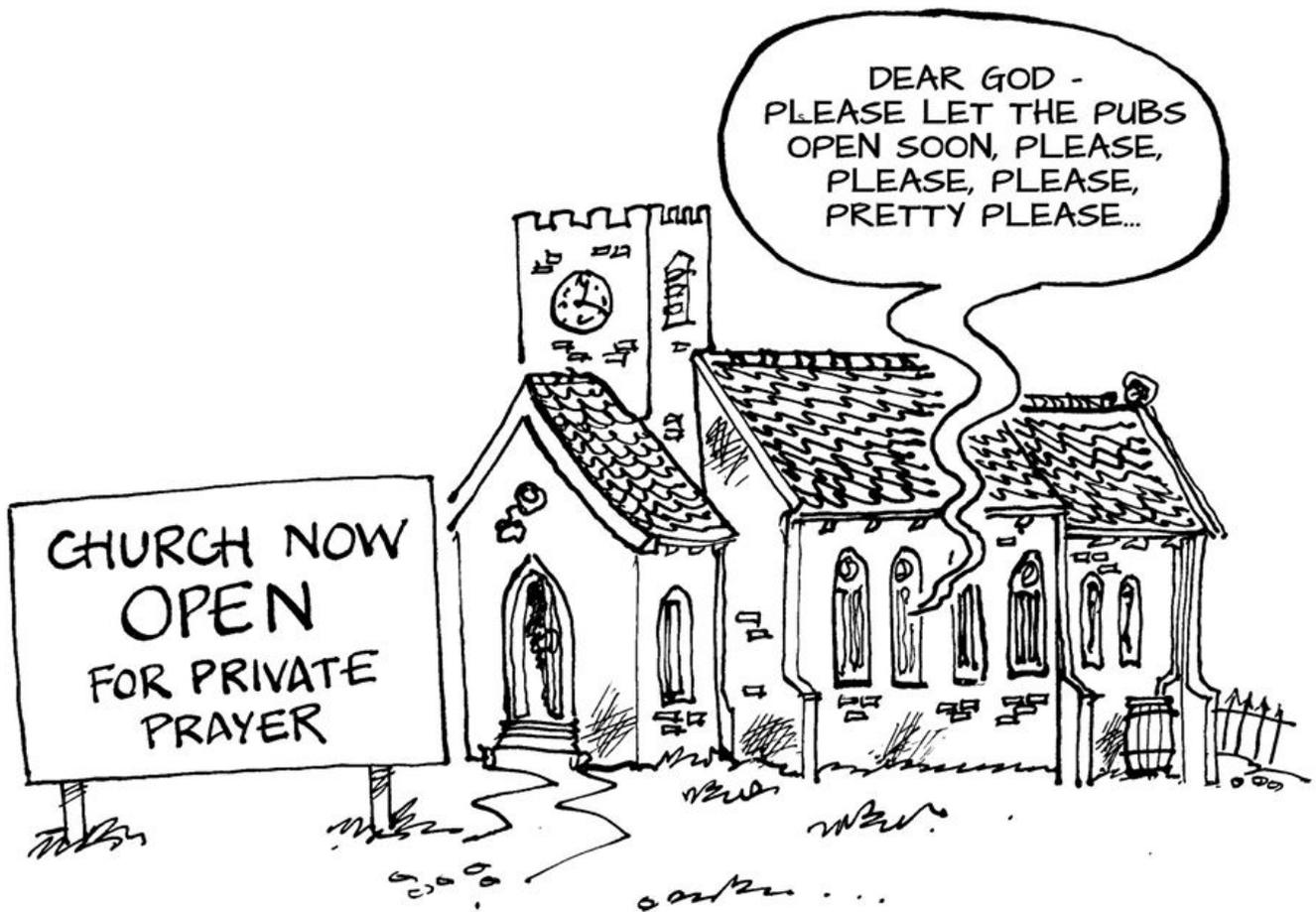
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Our response to Coronavirus (COVID-19)

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. Starting 29th June, 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

