



The Magazine

Christ Church Alsager

October / November 2020

www.christchurchalsager.uk



**Christ Church Gathers to
Praise the Lord!**

Some of what I remember before Covid-19

Dear friends

Our Annual Parochial Church Meeting (APCM) will take place on Sunday 11th October, so I thought I'd take the opportunity to reflect on 2019 and in doing so, also share as widely as possible my APCM report.



I was collated by Bishop Peter Forster and inducted by Archdeacon Ian Bishop on Friday 15th March 2019. Collated and inducted? Don't ask – basically I became the vicar!

One of my first official duties was to chair the APCM. Who would have thought it would be another eighteen months before the next 'annual meeting'. Given that we are in the autumn term it makes it difficult to avoid mentioning 2020, but I will try to restrict myself to reflecting on 2019.

There were of course many Alsager firsts for me during the rest of 2019. To name just a few, my first assemblies in the schools, first time at Dennis Round, first worship services, first Big Breakfast, and first time as chair of the Alsager Education Foundation. First meetings with our ministry teams, Alsager Churches Together ministers, and deanery colleagues. But also, first time checking out the local walks, pubs and restaurants. First Alsager Carnival, Alsager Animal Safari, Alsager Music Festival, Alsager Italian Festival, and not least Christ Church Summer Festival. There is never a dull moment in the life of Christ Church and the town of Alsager (or should I say village?)

I was particularly pleased to introduce a first to Christ Church - ten days of 24-hour continuous prayer from Ascension Day until the Day of Pentecost as part of the Archbishops' "Thy Kingdom Come" prayer initiative. I believe that prayer should underpin everything we do. When I arrived I was so pleased to see that prayer was already a key part of the life of Christ Church. It was encouraging to see that some of the fruit from the ten days of prayer was more opportunities to pray together at different times and in different styles to complement what was already taking place, and people stepping forward to lead them.

It was also good to arrive while an Alpha Course was taking place, and to see that evangelism had continued throughout the interregnum. As I write we have just had the first session of our first online Alpha Course. I miss the meal and the chance to build relationships in person, but nevertheless the privilege of sharing the good news of Jesus never gets old whether online or in person. But I'm starting to meander into 2020.

Back to 2019, at the end June, Heather was ordained deacon at a joy-filled service in Chester Cathedral and it was great to see that lots of people were there to support her. Heather has been a great addition to the staff team. Heather's ordination as priest will take place on the 3rd October. Covid-19 restrictions mean that the service will have a different form this year, but more people will be able to join in by tuning in online.

**Copy deadline for the December / January magazine is Friday 13th November. Please email any articles and pictures to magazine@christchurchalsager.uk
All pictures of children must have parental permission to publish. Aly**

It was great to spend the best part of a week in early August with a group from Christ Church at New Wine United, which is a unique place of blessing where we worship Jesus, experience the presence of the Father and receive healing, equipping, empowering and re-envisioning as we allow the Holy Spirit to minister to us.

The news that our youth leader, Matt Brown, was leaving to take up a job as a radio presenter at UCB came with mixed feelings. We were sad to see him leaving us but also delighted in the knowledge that he was going to a role in which we knew he would flourish. Of course, he is still with us and playing a full part in the life of the church.

We held interviews at the beginning of December and Sam Parnell started as our new youth leader on 20th January 2020. Sam has already proved to be a great asset to Christ Church bringing skills and experience that have been invaluable as we have had to move church ministries online.

As we moved through Advent and towards Christmas, it was great to take carols out into the community, offering mince pies and inviting people to Christmas events, events that were enjoyed by many people in our community.

Aly and I met a lot of local people in the first ten and half months of our ministry and day to day life in Alsager and feel privileged to call this our home and mission field.

At APCMs I like to look forward to the coming year. At this year's APCM the coming year will be in the final quarter! Before we know where we are Christmas will be upon us. Under the current social distancing rules this Christmas will inevitably be different to what we are used to. I want to encourage us all to see this as an opportunity to push out the walls of the church and be creative in how we communicate and celebrate the real message of Christmas. The Light Trail, that Rachel is organising for the 31st October is an example of how we can re-imagine what we have done in the past (see page 10). We plan to take our Nativity into the community this year – you will have to wait for more news on that. We also want to deliver the Good News of Christmas directly through our neighbours' letter boxes. We hope to create an army of angels to do that (see page 16).

I'm looking forward to Christmas. After all, God so loved the world, that he sent his son into the world to be a visible presence in the world and sign of God's great love for all people.

We live in strange times, we find ourselves doing strange things, and even the places we inhabit can seem strange. But that should not stop us from sharing the Good News of Jesus – it's the best gift we can give.

The psalmist said, "How shall we sing the Lord's song in a strange land?" (Psalm 137.4)

That is our challenge! I hope and I pray that Lord will give us the inspiration to make this the best Christmas in living memory.

Yours in Christ

Daran



What a wonderful time we had praising God at our Open Air Service. God blessed us with sunny weather and the worship could be heard far and wide! Many thanks to Perry (aka Graham) for these lovely pictures and to everyone who made it happen—Ed





Share a little light

Some parents aren't sure quite what to feel about Hallowe'en – is it just harmless fun, or are there aspects of it that don't fit in with how we want to see the world? A child's christening service is very honest about the reality of good and evil, and Hallowe'en can be a good time to talk about those things and how the love of Jesus can be a 'light in the darkness' for everyone.

The word "hallowe'en" actually means "the eve of all hallow's day" – in other words, the night before the church's festival celebrating All Saints. A Saint is sometimes thought to be an exceptionally holy person – someone really special, who did extraordinary things because of their faith in God.

The famous saints are all amazing examples of what it's like to live God's way. But in the Bible, St Paul calls all Christians saints – a saint is simply a friend of God, who seeks to live their life according to God's purposes. When someone is christened, they truly become a Saint, so All Saints' day is a celebration of the whole family of God.

If you'd like to mark Hallowe'en, Rachel has a fantastic Light Trail prepared which you can enjoy on Saturday 31st October. You can read more about it on page 10 and watch our social media for more details.

You could also carve a pumpkin. Did you know that gargoyles (the scary looking faces carved in stone on churches) were originally made in medieval times to scare away evil spirits? The pumpkins with scary faces carved into them at Hallowe'en are a bit like that. But nowadays most people believe that you can't fight evil with evil – you can only fight evil by doing good, and that good will always win in the end. So why not carve your pumpkin with a huge smiley face, and perhaps a cross to show everyone what we believe.



The Poppy

The poppy is a symbol of Remembrance and hope, including hope for a positive future and peaceful world.

They are a show of support for the Armed Forces community, those currently serving, ex-serving personnel and their families; and a symbol of Remembrance for all those who have fallen in conflict.

John McCrae wrote the poem 'In Flanders Fields' which inspired the use of the poppy as a symbol of Remembrance.

In the spring of 1915, shortly after losing a friend in Ypres, a Canadian doctor, Lieutenant Colonel John McCrae wrote his now famous poem after seeing poppies growing in battle-scarred fields.

In Flanders Fields

John McCrae

In Flanders' fields the poppies blow
Between the crosses, row on row,
That mark our place: and in the sky
The larks, still bravely singing, fly
Scarce heard amid the guns below.

We are the dead. Short days ago
We lived, felt dawn, saw sunset glow,
Loved and were loved, and now we lie
In Flanders' fields.

Take up our quarrel with the foe;
To you from failing hands we throw
The torch; be yours to hold it high,
If ye break faith with us who die
We shall not sleep, though poppies grow
In Flanders' Fields.





Christ Church Youth

Sam Parnell
Youth Leader

Email: Youth@Christchurchalsager.uk
Tel: 01270 872291

Whilst the lockdown and subsequent restrictions have made the past few months a challenging time to work with the young people in our town, it has been great to try to come up with a few creative ideas for how to reach and engage with teenagers in new ways.

One way that we managed to connect with a new group of young people over the summer was through a FIFA Football tournament that we held, with support from the Alsager Partnership. We invited young people from across the town to sign up to take part in an online football tournament, and matched them with other players from the area. After two days of online matches, we invited the four semi-finalists to play each other in the semi-finals and final at a socially distanced event held in the Christ Church Hall.

After a couple of hard fought games, James emerged as our winner, and claimed his prize of a pre-ordered copy of FIFA 21, with Nathan coming second, and George coming third.



Looking forward, over the coming weeks we're excited to be able to enable our online youth group to start meeting in person again, as well as running a youth group alongside our Sunday worship services at Christ Church.

We're also excited to be starting some 'detached' youth work, which happens outside of buildings or established youth projects and allows us to meet and engage with young people where they are. If you see our youth volunteers out in the community, please feel free to come and say hi!

It has also been great to re-connect with Alsager High School since their re-opening in September, and we have been invited to engage with some of their Year 10 and 11 students in the town centre at lunch times. We are also planning to partner with the Geography department to work on creating an outdoor Humanities/SEN garden in the school grounds with students, to facilitate outdoor learning and an increased awareness of nature.

Please continue to support our youth work by praying for our staff, volunteers, and young people. If you would like some more information about getting involved with our youth work, please get in touch with Sam at Youth@Christchurchalsager.uk

Singing in this Season

Over lockdown, Dan and I took some time out to do an online worship leaders' training course. It was a special time to listen to worship leaders from other nations share their hearts and the lessons God has taught them.

One simple truth struck me and continues to help me process this season. In Psalm 46:10 the song writer encourages us to 'be still and know that I am God'. Stephanie Gretzinger shared this verse and then highlighted that we can't know God, unless we are still. In the stillness we connect heart to heart with our Heavenly Father.

I liken this to moments when one of our sons climbs on my lap and cuddles up. In that moment of quiet we have a precious moment of connection. Sometimes I sing over our boys in those moments, or quietly speak words of affection and affirmation. Sometimes I don't say anything and simply enjoy the moment.

The Bible says in Zephaniah 3:17 that the Father God sings over us in rejoicing. I wonder what songs He might sing over you in your 'be still' moments? Or what words of affection and encouragement you might hear from Him?

At a conference a while ago, the speakers shared how the Holy Spirit had started to move in their congregation in a stronger way than previously. In worship, people would lay down on the floor in the presence of God. They encouraged people to have a 'be still' moment. The worship team started to worship and we were asked to find a comfy bit of carpet, lay down and close our eyes. I was thankful that they had suggested we bring pillows and I noticed that the ministry team had blankets at the ready! In the stillness I sensed His presence. We can opt to have a 'be still' moment in the musical worship time, close our eyes and invite the Holy Spirit to meet with us and to fill our hearts. We can ask God to speak to us in that moment.

When I lead worship with Dan, I often have pause moments in a song to pray in my head, or just pause to enjoy His company. Sometimes I ask Him if there's anything He wants me to sing, or pray out loud to encourage those present. Whether there's a Bible verse that would be helpful in the moment. Or whether there was a sentence in the song that He wants me to sing again to help embed that truth in someone's heart. Dan also has moments where he just plays and doesn't sing. This provides space for him to listen to God and to give you space to listen to God too.

In the Old Testament (2 Kings 3) there's a great story where a group of Kings don't know what to do concerning whether to go into battle. One of the kings requests for the prophet Elisha to tell them what God is saying. Elisha asks for a musician to play to help him hear from God.

You can use the space of musical worship to tune into the Father and hear His voice. There is a link between musical worship and hearing God's voice. King David even appointed a group of people specifically to the role of prophesying accompanied by instruments (1 Chronicles 25:1).

We pray that you have some really special connection times with God in this season when we are asked not to sing when we are in the congregation. - Sarah Page

Christ Church Families

Lots to do for children and families
All welcome!

Rachel Mason
Children and Families Leader
Email: families@christchurchalsager.uk
Tel: 01270 872291

CHRIST CHURCH FAMILIES

Join us this Autumn online or in-person for fun and faith.

We are excited about being able to start holding some services and activities in our church and church hall again this autumn. Current guidance and restrictions do limit what we are able to do at present and please be aware that services or activities may have to be cancelled if guidance changes, but for now we are beginning to gather in-person once again.

LIGHT TRAIL 4-6pm Saturday 31st October

Join us for this exciting event by coming along to the Christ Church car park anytime between 4-6pm on 31st October. There you will get your trail starter pack and we will set you off on your light trail. When you have completed the trail you will receive a goodie bag with 'light' treats in it. More information to come on our website and social media later in October.

Children's Worship Service

We are holding a **Children's Worship Service alongside the 11am church service each week**. 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. If you would like more information about what this service will look like do get in touch with Rachel for details. If you would like to book a place for your children on a particular Sunday please contact Debbie at the church office either via email: christchurchoffice@hotmail.co.uk or telephone: 01270 872291 by Wednesday midday.

We continue to provide a short video for children not attending the Worship Service which is available on Christ Church Alsager YouTube Channel: [youtube.com/channel/UCD16n5pJD3UjXJXCsuzy08g](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCD16n5pJD3UjXJXCsuzy08g) each Sunday morning, so no one misses out on all the fun!



Christ Church Families

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Mini-Messy Church

We have started a **mini-Messy Church for families** to be able to worship together with social distancing between household bubbles. This runs **on a Sunday afternoon at 3pm** for about 45 minutes, approximately once a month. Places will be limited and pre-booking required. We will have a simple structure, starting with an introduction to the theme, then you will do some activities in your household bubbles, then we may have a household vs. household quiz or game led from the front, then concluding with the usual Bible-based talk and prayer. Each household will have their own space to stay in for the session and social distancing between different households will need to be maintained. All over 11s are required to wear face covering in the church and church hall in line with government guidance. Contact Rachel or Debbie for upcoming dates. If you would like to book a place for your family to attend please contact Debbie at the church office either via email: christchurchoffice@hotmail.co.uk or telephone: 01270 872291.

Toddler Time

Under current guidance we are unable to run a Toddler Group so we will continue to have a **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.

Parent Chat Zoom

We run a group called **Parent Chat** which is at present meets **every Monday on Zoom at 10:30-11:30am**. It is a group of parents with children of all different ages who meet together to encourage and support one another. If you would 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.

God bless

Rachel
Rachel Mason (*Children and Families Leader*)
Email: families@christchurchalsager.uk





Light of the World

How can we shine brightly in the world?

Activities

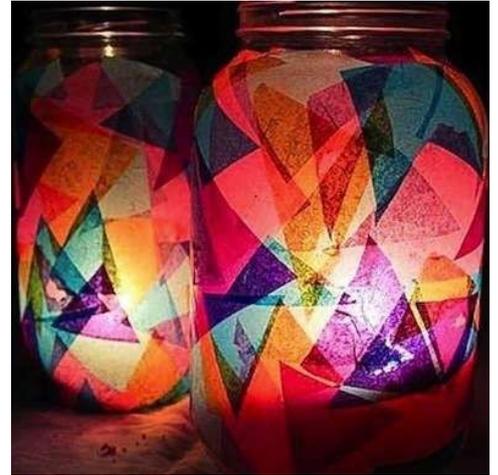
If you can't get exactly these materials, just see what you can find around the house instead!

Tealight Lantern

You will need: clear plastic or glass jar or cup, tissue paper, PVA glue, tealight or LED tealight

What to do: Cut small pieces of different coloured tissue paper. Spread PVA glue over the outside surface of the jar or cup and then stick the pieces of tissue on to the surface. Wait for the glue to dry. Place your tealight inside the jar and light it (if you are using matches only do so under adult supervision).

Talk about the difference light makes in the darkness. How does darkness make you feel? Frightened, lost? How does light make you feel? Safe, happy? Jesus is the light of the world, bringing light into the darkness.



Paper Lantern

You will need: paper, pens, sequins, scissors, tape/glue/stapler

What to do: Take a piece of paper and fold it in half lengthwise. Cut slits at right angle to the folded edge but not all the way to the end. Decorate your lantern with pens and sequins. Take the two ends of the paper and wrap them around to make a round tube shape. Use glue, tape or a stapler to attach it together. Cut a strip of paper to make a handle and secure this to the top of the lantern. Here is a

YouTube tutorial: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CeZKYGmuZn0>

Talk about how we can be lights in the world. We are to let our good deeds shine out. What ways might we do this?

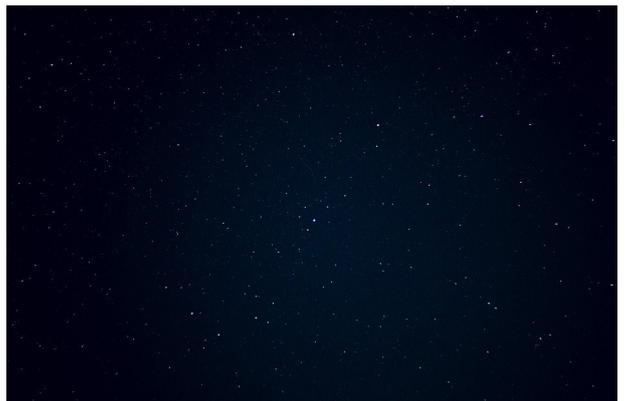


Stars in the Sky

You will need: an outdoor space, a clear night, images of galaxies and stars (optional)

What to do: Spend some time outside on a clear night looking up at the sky looking at the stars. What do you see? You could look at images of stars and galaxies too.

Talk about how we are called to shine like the stars in the sky as we share God's love. What ways might you show God's love this week?



Star Biscuits

You will need: 200g flour, 100g margarine, 100g caster sugar, 1 egg, star shaped cutter or knife, greaseproof baking tray, oven, icing and sprinkles

What to do: Pre-heat oven to 180°C/ gas mark 5. Rub the butter into the flour. Then mix in sugar. Gradually beat in egg. Roll out until ½ cm thick.

Use star cutter or knife to cut star shapes out of the dough. Put on a greaseproof baking tray and bake in



pre-heated oven until golden brown. Place on a cooling rack to cool down. Decorate as you wish with icing and sprinkles.

Talk about how it is the Holy Spirit who keeps us shining every day. Do you need to be re-filled with the Spirit today? Why not ask God to fill you now?

Celebration

Sing the song 'City on a Hill' by Nick and Becky Drake, you can find it on YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ITEadEftdnM>

Read and discuss the following Bible verses:

Jesus spoke to the people once more and said, "I am the light of the world. If you follow me, you won't have to walk in darkness, because you will have the light that leads to life." John 8:12

"You are the light of the world—like a city on a hilltop that cannot be hidden. No one lights a lamp and then puts it under a basket. Instead, a lamp is placed on a stand, where it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your good deeds shine out for all to see, so that everyone will praise your heavenly Father." Matthew 5:14-16

"Do everything without complaining or arguing. Then you will be pure and without blame. You will be children of God without fault among sinful and evil people. Then you will shine among them like stars in the sky. You will shine as you hold on tight to the word of life. Then I will be able to boast about you on the day Christ returns. I can be happy that I didn't run or work for nothing." Philippians 2:14-16

Chat about:

How does it make you feel to know that Jesus is light of the world and that in following him we don't have to walk in darkness but have light to lead us?
What places do you spend your time, that you could shine light this week?
When do you find it hard to shine for Jesus?

Prayer: Write or draw some ways you could be a light in the world. Ask Jesus to help you to be a light in the world by doing these things.

Jesus, thank you that you are the Light of the World. Help us to be lights in the world by doing... Amen.

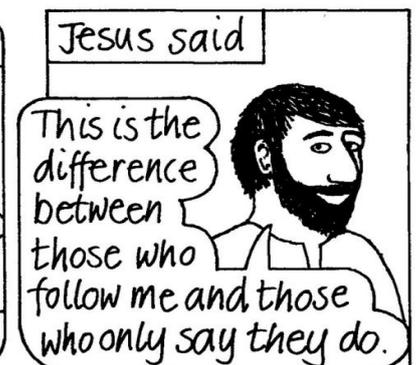
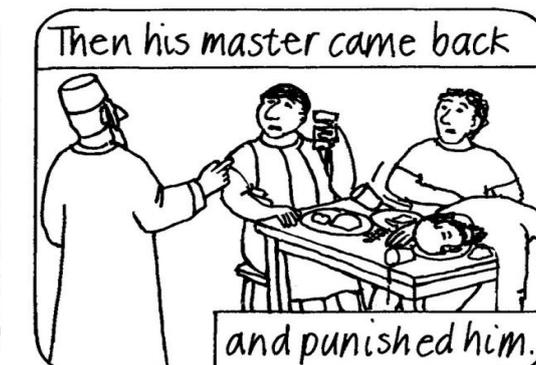
Children's Corner

Bible Bite

A short story from the Bible

It can be read in the Bible in
Matthew 24:44-51, Luke 12:40-46

Jesus warned his disciples to be always ready for his return at the end of time by telling the story of two servants



Children's Corner

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

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ANGELS BRINGING GOOD NEWS!

Do you enjoy knitting or crocheting? This Christmas we want to bring good news to our community. What better way than having angels deliver it! We hope to have 100s of knitted or crocheted angels to post through people's letterboxes with the good news of Jesus, so it's time to get your needles and hooks busy! We have a few different patterns for making angels, knit and crochet, please contact Aly or Rachel for these, but here is one to get you started from www.knitables.co.uk. But if you have a pattern that you'd like to do, please go ahead. The only stipulation is that it will be small enough to fit through a letter box.

Materials

Double knitting wool (various colours), Knitting needles size 3¼mm (UK size 10) - or whatever size you have to hand, sewing needle, good quality washable toy stuffing

Abbreviations

K-Knit, P-Purl, st(s)-stitches, beg-beginning, tog-together, Inc-increase by knitting into the front and back of the stitch, Dec- Decrease by knitting two stitches together, K2tog-Knit two stitches together, P2tog-Purl two stitches together, yb-Yarn back (take yarn to the back before working the next stitch), yf-Yarn forward (bring yarn to the front before working the next stitch), sl-Slip 1 stitch (stitch is passed from the left needle to the right needle without being knitted, slip purl-wise), st-st-Stocking stitch (1 row knit, 1 row purl), g-st-Garter stitch (every row knit), m-st-Moss stitch (knit 1 stitch, purl 1 stitch), B & T-Break yarn, leaving a long end. Thread through remaining stitches on needle, draw up tightly and fasten off, casting off - Always cast off knit wise unless otherwise stated.

These characters have been designed for young children, so please ensure that attached pieces are sewn on very securely and seams are tightly finished off. If a twisted cord is tied in a bow, sew through bow so that it can not be undone if pulled. Use only new, hygienic, washable stuffing that conforms to current safety standards.

Size

Finished height: Approximately 12cm

Body and head

With white cast on 22 sts

Row 1 K4, (inc, K3) 4 times, K2 (26 sts)

Row 2 Purl

Row 3 K3, (inc, K5) 3 times, inc, K4 (30 sts)

Rows 4 - 14 Beg with a P row, st-st 11 rows

Row 15 (K2, K2tog, K1) 6 times (24 sts)

Rows 16 - 20 Beg with a P row, st-st 5 rows



Row 21 (K1, K2tog, K1) 6 times (18 sts)
Rows 22 - 24 Beg with a P row, st-st 3 rows
Row 25 Shape head row Change to peach,
K1 (K1, inc, K2) 4 times, K1 (22 sts)
Rows 26 - 32 Beg with a P row, st-st 7 rows
Row 33 K4, K2tog, K10, K2tog, K4 (20 sts)
Row 34 Purl
Row 35 K4, K2tog, K8, K2tog, K4 (18 sts)
Row 36 Purl
Row 37 K2tog to end B & T

Arms

With white cast on 6 sts
Rows 1 - 12 Beg with a K row, st-st 12 rows
Rows 13 - 18 Change to peach,
beg with a K row, st-st 6 rows
Rows 19 - 30 Change to white,
beg with a K row, st-st 12 rows
Cast off

Halo

With white cast on 18 sts
Row 1 Knit
Cast off

Wings

With white cast on 4 sts. Work in garter
stitch throughout
Rows 1 - 6 Inc 1 at beg of every row (10 sts)
Rows 7 - 14 Garter stitch 8 rows
Rows 15 - 20 K2tog at beg of every row
(4 sts)
Row 21 Knit
Rows 22 - 27 Inc 1 at beg of every row
(10 sts)
Rows 28 - 35 Garter stitch 8 rows
Rows 36 - 41 K2tog at beg of every row
(4 sts) Cast off

To Make Up

Join the side edge on the angel working down from gathered top of head, using peach yarn for head and white yarn for body. Leave cast on edge open and turn right side out. To make the head, work a gathering thread through every stitch on shape head row, draw up and stuff head. Sew the top edges of the arms to body sides, then bring hands together in a praying pose and catch together with a few stitches. Position and sew on the wings.

For the hair, starting at the front hairline, embroider a line of 7 yellow chain stitches across the top of the head, along the seam. Sew three 15cm lengths of yellow yarn through each of these chains to form hair strands. Tie hair strands into a pony tail. Embroider blue eyes and a red mouth. Position and sew on the halo.

Creative Prayer Ideas

Do you find prayer boring? There are so many ways to connect with God. Try some of these simple ideas from 24/7 prayer to creatively express your praise, petition and adoration as you pray.

“For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible...” - Colossians 1:16

1. USE A PAINTBRUSH

Painting – whether you see yourself as artistic or not – is a great way to embrace creativity in your prayers. Even if you don't think of yourself as a painter, let go of trying to make something look beautiful, and focus on the process. You could paint your representation of a Bible verse, paint specific words that God is saying to you, or ask God for a prophetic picture to put onto a piece of paper.

2. USE A CAMERA

Taking photos captures the everyday beauty in the world. Grab your camera and go for a prayer walk with the intention of taking photos of the beauty you see in people, buildings and nature. As you pray, ask God to speak and reveal more of His creativity to you.

3. USE A PEN AND PAPER

Writing is something that we do less and less in our daily lives. However, taking the time to slow down and write is a great way to get creative in your prayer life. Experiment with writing a short prayer poem or haiku. Rewrite a Psalm in your own words, or take the time to write your own liturgy. Connect with God through the written word and allow the words to reach your mind and soul.

4. USE YOUR PHONE

We use our phones every day, so get creative and use yours to spark creative prayer ideas. You might like to get practical and set reminders to stop and pray. Or, take inspiration from this blog, and pray for each person in your phonebook. There are also some great prayer apps to inspire prayer - including their Inner Room Prayer App or their Lectio 365 App <https://www.247prayer.com/dailydevotional> so integrate it into your daily routine.

5. USE YOUR SKILLS IN CREATIVE WAYS

We are all creative in different ways. If you're not sure exactly what your skills are, take some time to pray and ask God what they are. Chatting to a good friend or family member could help too.

Then, figure out a way to turn your skill into prayer. If you're great at baking, use that time to pray for God's presence to reach the people you're baking for. If you love running, integrate prayer into your routes.

There are no limits to our conversation with our creator, creative God: so try getting creative as you pray today!

Ivy – never underestimate its goodness!

Autumn is in full swing but there is at least one plant that is in full bloom. Not spectacular to look at, yet ivy is an important source of nectar for bees, moths, flies and wasps, and while they are not most people's favourite insects, they all play a vital part in Nature's jigsaw.

Ivy produces flowers from September to November. Spherical clusters of greeny-yellow blobs, which on closer inspection have endearing little horns with knobs on! The resulting fruits are dark berries with ridged sections, resembling tiny black footballs each containing five seeds. Poisonous for us, but birds love them.



Ivy is one of the few native climbing plants that can reach a substantial size. Contrary to popular belief, it is not a parasite. Its stems have lots of fibrous, adhesive-covered, roots which cling to buildings, brickwork, trees, telegraph poles, in fact just about anything to help it gain some height. However, when it comes to nourishment, that comes via the roots in the ground. [There's not much nutritional value in a brick.] Although ivy does not normally damage sound buildings or walls, and is rarely a threat to healthy trees, its weight can cause problems.

What a useful plant it can be! Providing shelter, hibernation and nesting sites for birds and insects, its glossy green leaves are happily munched by sheep, goats and deer. These leaves, so familiar, are different shapes according to whether they are on flowering or growing branches. The flowers are surrounded by heart- or spear-shaped leaves, while the rest of the plant has the three- or five-pointed ones we all recognise.

Many legends involve ivy. But has anyone discovered why although mentioned in the first line of the carol 'The Holly and the Ivy', it is absent from the rest of the verses?

The Real Lockdown

We've all missed gathering with our church to worship during lockdown. But, as hard as that's been, it has helped us appreciate the religious freedom we enjoy that countless people around the world have never known. In India, many can't gather to pray in their homes, for fear of attack. In China, even Christians who join online services risk arrest. This is the Real Lockdown, and it's not just temporary.



International Day of Prayer for the Persecuted Church

On Sunday 15th November, we'll be praying for the persecuted Church. Find out more at [csw.org.uk/lockdown](https://www.csw.org.uk/lockdown)

Oakhanger Church

News from Oakhanger



Where were you when 9/11 happened?

Where were you on the 11th September 2001 when two planes were flown by terrorists into the twin towers buildings in New York killing over 300 people?

I remember the event as clear as though it were yesterday. I was driving to work that morning when, at exactly 9am I began to shake and sweat profusely as I saw a vision of a passenger plane exploding. I had to stop my van and recover myself before I could continue driving.

Exactly five hours later, at 2pm UK time and 9am US east time a police officer ran into our office and shouted that there had been a terrible accident involving a plane that had crashed into the twin towers building in New York. I knew at that moment that this was no accident and went cold as the reality of my earlier vision began to dawn. It was later confirmed that a terrorist attack on the east USA had taken place involving two planes that had crashed in to the Twin Towers buildings and a further plane was aimed at the capitol, Washington

I have since questioned the relevance of that vision many times as at the time it was vague and seemed irrational. But is that not the nature of visions? We are told that "your young men shall see visions" Joel 2:20 and Acts 2:17 but the meaning and relevance throughout scripture is often obscure at the time. The visions of John in the book of Revelation have exercised scholars since they were written and the full meaning will only be revealed at the time God chooses.

Please share with us in thanks for a fruitful summer program with children and families. We have been privileged to share canoe and kayak and other activities with all ages and abilities and it is a thrill to see people grow in strength both physically and emotionally as well as enjoy the richness of God's Creation. We pray that the Oakhanger Team and the people we share with will be encouraged through the activities and will come to know the Joy of fellowship with Christ and His church.

Please continue to pray for one another as we move into a changing future.

Let us be open to the Holy Spirit to hear and respond to His call at this time.

Pray that God's people will have the strength to "Stand firm in the day of challenge" (Ephesians 6:10-18)

Please note the following events for your diary

First Friday Prayers

Friday 2nd October 2020 at 7.30pm.

Join together in Prayer between 7.30pm and 9pm.

You are welcome to join us at the Oakhanger Centre or to pray with us wherever you are at that time.

Graham Bushill

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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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.)

THEME—Mission Shaped Living

4th October	Confidence - Luke 5.1-10
9am	Reflective Service with communion
11am	Informal service with Holy Communion. Children's church in the hall
11th October	Courage - John 16.1-15
9am	Reflective Service
11am	Informal service with children's church in the hall
18th October	Compassion - 2 Corinthians 5.11-6.2
9am	Reflective Service
11am	Informal service with children's church in the hall
25th October	Connecting - Luke 15.1-10
9am	Reflective Service
11am	Informal service with children's church in the hall
1st November	Continuing - Luke 19.1-10
9am	Reflective Service with communion
11am	Informal service with Holy Communion. Children's church in the hall
8th November	Remembrance
9am	A Reflective Service of Remembrance with hymns
11am	A service of Remembrance with children's church in the hall
15th November	Giving
9am	Reflective Service
11am	Informal service with children's church in the hall
22nd November	Conversion - Luke 7.36-50
9am	Reflective Service
11am	Informal service with children's church in the hall
29th November	Mission Shaped Living - 1 Peter 3.8-22
9am	Reflective Service
11am	Informal service with children's church in the hall

Online Service

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

<https://tinyurl.com/chchalsager>

We are hoping to live stream services within the next couple of weeks.

Church Office: 01270 872291 admin@christchurchalsager.uk

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



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