

CHRIST CHURCH HIGHER BEBINGTON

NEWS LINK December 2019/January 2020



Church Services

Sunday:

8:30 am	Holy Communion
10:00 am	Parish Communion
10:00 am	Sunday Club
4:00 pm Noisy Church	(1 st Sunday)
6:30 pm Sung Evensong	(2 nd Sunday)
6:30 pm Alternative Service	(4 th Sunday)

Monday:

9:00am Start the Week with Morning Prayer

Tuesday:

6:30pm Pause & Pray

Wednesday:

9:0 am	Morning Prayer
10:30 am	Holy Communion

Thursday:

9:00 am Morning Prayer



<http://www.christchurchbeb.org.uk>

WHO'S WHO

Vicar	Rev. Michael Loach Email: mgloach@gmail.com	0151 609 0943
Associate Minister	Rev. Eunice Blackmore Email: euniceblackmore@talktalk.net	0151 648 5343
Readers	Ted Jones	0151 645 0617
	Pam Hollinshead	07957 880 687
Reader Emeritus	Jill Wright	0151 792 3668
Pastoral Worker	June Fogg	0151 608 5693
Churchwardens	Gary Shaw	0151 608 4927
	Ian Murray	07709 761 781
Hon. Secretary to Church Council	Jane Dalziel	0151 608 4429
Hon. Treasurer	Charles Van Ingen Email: c.vaningen@ntlworld.com	0151 334 1956
Community Centre Administrator	Julie Scarsbrook Email: centremanager@christchurchhigherbebington.org.uk	07473 028 991
Community Centre Supervisor	Sarah Loach	
Parish Secretary (Parish Office)	Victoria Gleave Email: parishoffice@christchurchhigherbebington.org.uk	0151 608 4429

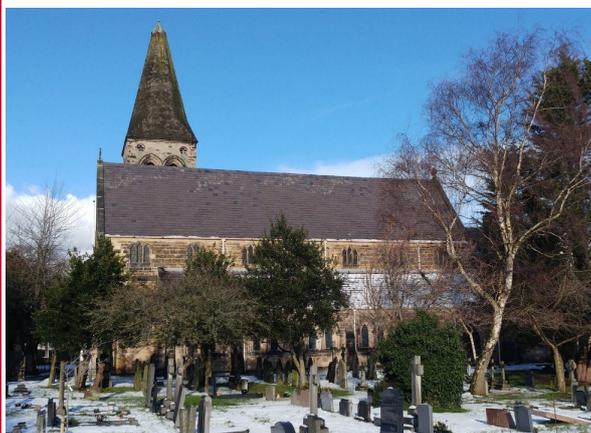
February/March 2020 Magazine

Items for inclusion in the February/March 2020 Magazine should reach the Parish Secretary

(email: parishoffice@christchurchhigherbebington.org.uk) by
Sunday 12th January 2020 who can also be contacted with any queries.

VICAR'S LETTER

This year, Christmas Eve marks 160 years since Christ Church, Higher Bebington was consecrated for worship by the Lord Bishop of Chester, John Graham, in 1859. The church was conceived out of a need to provide for a growing population based around the Storeton Quarry, and so that the owners of Higher Bebington Hall didn't have to endure grubby commoners walking across their land en route to St Peter's, Rock Ferry! We marked this anniversary a month early, with a celebration service in church where present members spoke of what the building and its people mean to them, and had a time of thanksgiving for all God's blessings, past and present. Such moments for reflection are important and, perhaps inevitably, led to wider thoughts about the role of the Church, both in this parish and beyond.



One hundred and sixty years ago, the Parish Church was a very different institution from the one we find today. Within a culture that valued both the principles of the Christian faith and the place of the Church within society, and with much less distraction on a Sunday, there was little need for clergy to engage with the local community in order to attract worshippers. Today, however, the mission field in the UK is quite different and there is certainly no sense of inevitability that people will actively seek out the church for themselves. As average church attendances have dropped over the past 160 years, the onus is on the churches to engage with the places where people now gather, and this is a role that we all must take very seriously.

When I first arrived at Christ Church, I was very happy to inherit a "tag line" that my predecessor, Canon Ann, and the PCC had put together and which still appears alongside our logo – "bringing people together". These words indicate a clear desire to promote a spirit of togetherness in this parish, born out of our desire to follow Jesus' command to love our neighbours and demonstrate hospitality for strangers. This intention is at the heart of our faith, but perhaps more important is the realisation that such "togetherness" does not just happen – we are required to act, we are required to be the ones doing the "bringing".



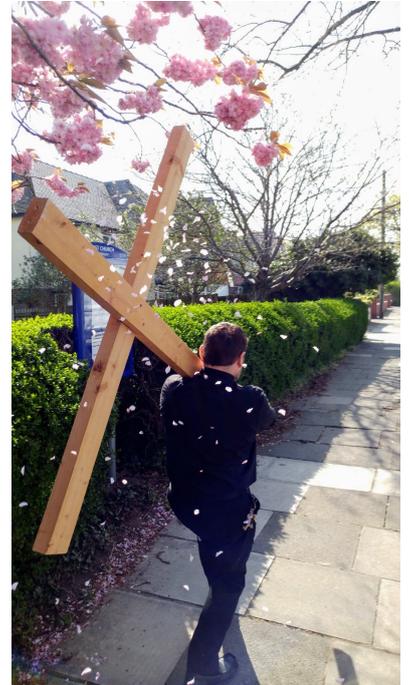
**Christ Church
Higher Bebington**
Bringing People Together

My role, as Vicar, is certainly to fulfil the promises made at my installation to

VICAR'S LETTER (CONTD.)

this parish - to lead worship according to Canon law, to live prayerfully and care for the people of this parish - but it is also to be visible in the community and actively seek to "bring people together". And this is why it is so important for all of us who attend Christ Church to be involved in as many local activities and groups as we can. Taking on roles such as school governor, chaplain, becoming members of various committees and boards or simply just attending events on behalf of the church can sometimes be a real drain on our time, but it is so important that we do these things if we are to keep the parish connected with its church and ensure that this relationship continues into the future.

Christmastide and Advent are obvious times for us to connect with the parish as school nativity services abound, people become a little more community



mindful and the idea of attending church seems almost palatable(!). In recent years, we have actively sought to extend our programme of engagement and now run four external carol services (including one in the pub!), three school services in church, two concerts, a Christmas coffee morning, various assemblies, travelling cribs, sheep in shops, a toddler service, "Noisy Church" Christmas party, Christmas film events, Christmas Day lunch, and a number of "special services" such as the Carol Service, Christingle, Blue Christmas, Nativity Service and Midnight Mass. These are all great opportunities to "bring people together" within the joy and hope and peace of the Christian message.

With love and every blessing,

Mike

AN ASSOCIATE'S MUSINGS

Blue Christmas

Are you looking forward to Christmas? Counting down the sleeps? It may surprise you to know that I'm one of the people who struggles with Christmas. Not with the Christmas message – I love the thought of God

coming to live among people and share in our humanity - but I struggle with all the trimmings and excesses. Being single I find the focus on family can get me down. My mind is filled with questions - who shall I spend Christmas with? What do I write in my Round Robin Christmas letter when everyone else excels the virtues of their children and grandchildren? Who can I take to the pantomime?

But it's not just singles that may find Christmas difficult. For many the long, cold, dark hours of the season gets them down. For others it's a time when loss or separation becomes particularly poignant – the death of a loved one, divorce, illness, or job loss. Others find this celebratory time serves only to enhance their own depressive feelings.

Can we do something to bring a little more encouragement and understanding into everyone's lives at this time? I hope so! This year we are holding our first Blue Christmas Service. It will be a short, quieter service with time for reflection and stillness followed by refreshments and will hopefully remind everyone present that they are not alone and that their feelings are understood.

Even if you thoroughly enjoy Christmas it could be your best opportunity to find stillness in the midst of all the hassle and bustle and be overawed by the sense of simplicity and wonder of the season and the Incarnation.



Why not join us?
Sunday December 15th at 4 pm.
Everyone is very welcome.

Every blessing, *Eunice*



THE ORDINAND-ARY LIFE!

What is an Anglo-Catholic?

This month I have decided to try and answer another of the questions I get asked from time to time, this being "What is an Anglo-Catholic?"

Obviously, a full answer to this question could run to many volumes, but for me, being Anglo-Catholic simply means holding to the spiritual, traditional and liturgical practices that sit closer to the Roman Catholic Church than the church of the Reformation.

Spiritually...I feed from a monastic prayer life which contains a cycle of morning and evening prayer that includes regular silence and meditation. Alongside this, I follow a rich set of devotions from the Catholic Church such as the Divine Mercy, the Rosary, Mary, the Communion of Saints and the Angels. Furthermore, I follow the Book of Common Prayer and have 73 books in my bible as opposed to the 66 in most others.

Traditionally...I draw from the traditions of the whole church, Anglican and Catholic, which have been handed down throughout the centuries. And in doing so, I look primarily towards the Archbishops of Canterbury and York for guidance and oversight, as well as to Pope Francis. I follow the traditions and practices of the seven sacraments, which is also a part of the Anglican Church not just of Rome, and the Catholic creeds, which churches all over the Anglican Communion recite every Sunday.

Liturgically...The Eucharist is of primary importance to my life because I follow a theology that holds the consecrated bread and wine to be the actual, physical and spiritual body and blood of Jesus. (Gospels of Matthew and John). Alongside this, I believe that worship should be as beautiful, reverent and fully ordered as possible, as is reflected in the Book of Revelation with white robes, chanting in praise (Rev. 7: 9-17) and incense (Rev. 8: 3-5) all ordered in the traditions handed down for us (1 Cor 11: 1-2).

"So why are you not a Roman Catholic?" Well, simply put, I do not believe Rome, or any other denomination, can claim full ownership of the church. I do struggle when I hear churches claiming they have it right and others are wrong and that is perhaps why the middle road of Anglicanism has always had such strong appeal. I do believe that we at Christ Church, Higher Bebington, have a gift, and this gift is openness, diversity and exploration. I am sure that we are far from perfect, but I am proud to be a part of a worshipping community where all people are accepted in the name of Jesus. This is spiritually, traditionally and liturgically priceless.

In peace, *George*

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

December 2019

Holy Communion every Wednesday 10.30am

Sunday 1 st	10.00am	Parish Communion
	10.00am	Boulder's 'Talking through Faith' session
	12 noon	Baptisms
	4.00pm	Noisy Church
Tuesday 3 rd	10.00am	Ladies in Stitches
	1.00pm	Eco Group Meeting & 7.30pm
	7.30pm	Men's Group at 25 Regents Way
Wednesday 4 th	10.00am	Connect Café
	1.30pm	Knit & Natter
Thursday 5 th	12.30pm	Befriender's Lunch
	7.30pm	Men's Supper Club Christmas Meal
Sunday 8 th	10.00am	Parish Communion
	6.30pm	Carol Service
Monday 9 th	2.15pm	Happy Reading Group
Tuesday 10 th	10.30am	Film Morning
	10.30am	Vestry Group Meeting
Wednesday 11 th	10.00am	Connect Café
	1.30pm	Ladies in Stitches
	7.00pm	Baptism Preparation
Thursday 12 th	2.30pm	Higher Bebington Junior School Carol Service
	7.45pm	Mothers' Union
	9.00pm	Thirsty Thursday
Friday 13 th	10.00am	Indoor Bowls
	5.00pm	Christmas Film and Food Night
Sunday 15 th	10.00am	Parish Communion
	4.00pm	Blue Christmas - for anyone struggling with the
Monday 16 th	6.00pm	Wirral Schools Concert Band
Tuesday 17 th	10.30am	Singing Café
	12.15pm	4C's Carers Lunch

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY (CONTD).

December 2019 Holy Communion every Wednesday 10.30am

Tuesday 17 th	2.30pm	Higher Bebington Junior School Carol Service
Wednesday 18 th	10.00am	Connect Café
	1.00pm	Brackenwood Infant School Christmas Service
	1.30pm	Knit & Natter
Thursday 19 th	2.00pm	Carol Singing at the Care Homes
	7.30pm	Carol Singing at the Traveller's Rest
Friday 20 th	3.00pm	Carol Singing outside Co-op
	4.30pm	Boulders Social & Christingle Preparation
Sunday 22 nd	10.00am	Service of the Word
	4.00pm	Christingle followed by Vicarage Christmas Party
Tuesday 24 th	4.00pm	Nativity
	11.00pm	Midnight Communion
Wednesday 25 th	10.00am	All Age Communion for Christmas Day
	12 noon	Christmas Day Community Lunch
Sunday 29 th	10.00am	Parish Communion

January 2020 Holy Communion every Wednesday 10.30am

Sunday 5 th	10.00am	Parish Communion
	10.00am	Boulder's 'Talking through Faith' session
	4.00pm	Noisy Church
Monday 6 th	2.15pm	Happy Reading Group
Tuesday 7 th	10.00am	Ladies in Stitches
	1.00pm	Eco Group Meeting & 7.30pm
	7.30pm	Men's Group at 25 Regents Way
Wednesday 8 th	10.00am	Connect Café
	1.30pm	Ladies in Stitches
	1.30pm	Oasis Mental Health Support Group
Thursday 9 th	7.00pm	Alpha Course
	7.45pm	Mothers' Union
	9.00pm	Thirsty Thursday

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY (CONTD).

January 2020

Holy Communion every Wednesday 10.30am

Friday 10 th	10.00am	Indoor Bowls
Sunday 12 th	10.00am	All Age worship
	6.30pm	Sung Evensong
Tuesday 14 th	10.30am	Film Morning
	10.30am	Vestry Group Meeting
Wednesday 15 th	10.00am	Connect Café
	1.30pm	Knit & Natter
Thursday 16 th	7.00pm	Alpha Course
Friday 17 th	7.00pm	Boulders Social
Sunday 19 th	10.00am	Parish Communion
	4.00pm	Meditation Group
Monday 20 th	2.15pm	Happy Reading Group
Tuesday 21 st	10.30am	Singing Café
	12.15pm	4C's Carers Lunch
Wednesday 22 nd	10.00am	Connect Café
Thursday 23 rd	7.00pm	Alpha Course
Friday 24 th	10.00am	Indoor Bowls
Saturday 25 th	6.00pm	Rose Queen Quiz
Sunday 26 th	10.00am	Service of the Word
	6.30pm	Fellowship Service
Wednesday 29 th	10.00am	Connect Café
Thursday 30 th	7.00pm	Alpha Course

The **Week of Prayer for Christian Unity** will start on Monday 20th January, 2020. During the week, prayers will be hosted by different churches within the Bebington area. We are hosting the meeting on Wednesday 22nd January at 10.30am and the United Service on Sunday 26th January at 6.30pm. Please do support this important opportunity to demonstrate our shared commitment to walk in the way of Jesus.

NEWS & EVENTS

Harvest

Once again, Harvest was celebrated at Christ Church with a great deal of fun, laughter and generosity. The Harvest Supper sold out, resulting in a fantastic night of dancing and feasting with the Final Nails Band(!) and we were delighted to welcome Higher Bebington Juniors, Town Lane Infants and Toddler groups into church to hold their special services. Thank you to all who helped to organise the events and all who gave so generously to support local charities.

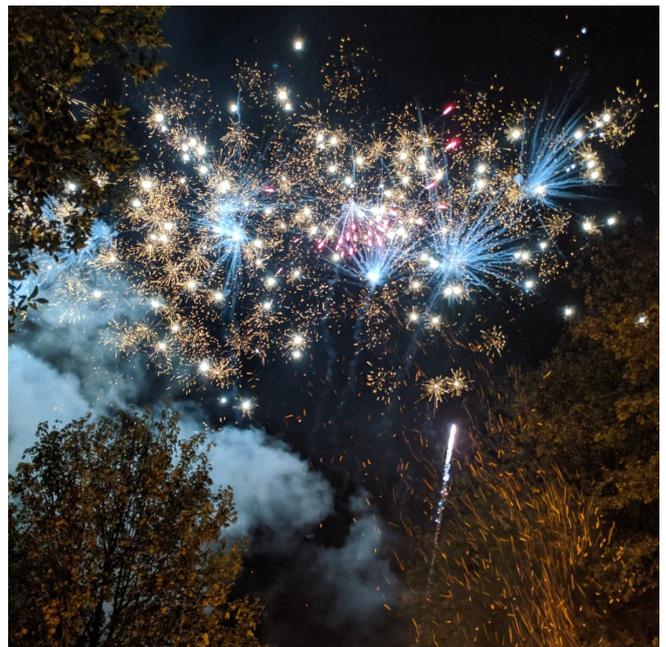


Bonfire Night

Over 600 people came along to our bonfire and fireworks event – another record attendance! It was wonderful to



see so many people enjoying soup, hotdogs, cake and a fantastic firework display organised by Paul Lewis.



Thank you to Vicki Midgely and the catering team, the stewards, and the Men in Sheds for building such an impressive bonfire in the rain!

REMEMBRANCE SUNDAY

After the wonderfully moving displays and events surrounding last year's 100th anniversary of the signing of the armistice that brought an end to the First World War, there was some concern that this year's Remembrance service could fall a little flat. We need not have worried! A record congregation exceeding 400 came together to give thanks for sacrifices made, past and present, and to pray for peace in our world.

We were blessed to have Jay Wheeler with us, who served his country in Bosnia, Iraq and Afghanistan, and who spoke so movingly about the effects of war on those who have lived through it. Jay also shared something about his faith and how, in particular, the word "Love" has helped him to find some peace. It was also wonderful to have so many members of our local community come together – headteachers, local politicians, shopkeepers, uniformed groups and our Community Centre users, all standing as one and committing to working for peace and unity. Members of Vibe Dance Academy performed a beautiful routine for us and local singer, Jessica Garrett, accompanied by Philip Robinson, blessed us with an incredibly moving rendition of Pie Jesu.

Special thanks must go to the team responsible for decorating the church with such eye-catching displays, to the marvellous Sea Cadets' Marching Band who led us to the British Legion Club and, of course, to the Legion Club itself, whose members helped to plan the service and who looked after us so generously after we had gathered outside with Jireh Church and others for the Act of Remembrance. The whole day was a great testimony to the strength of community in our local area.



COMMUNITY CHRISTMAS TREE



Over the past few weeks, Christ Church has joined forces with Brighter Bebington, local Councillors, schools and shopkeepers to make sure that Higher Bebington has some Christmas lights this year! We have raised over two thousand pounds and have already been able to plant and decorate a living tree outside the Acorn pub. Lamppost decorations will be going up shortly and a "switch on" of sorts will take place in early December. We hope to build on this excellent start in years to come! Thank you to all who have given generously of their time and resources to make this possible.



MEN IN SHEDS

Beb Shed has continued to flourish during the last couple of months, with several new members joining us.

We have progressed well with our backlog of orders with only a few now outstanding.

We are very close to offering an opportunity for our less able members to do some assembly work in the Troughton Room, on a Wednesday. This is due to the very generous donation of a powered height-adjustable table, from Walter Penketh. This table will also be available for use by other groups in the centre.



Our collections for TWAM have been very successful, with a large amount of equipment having been picked up for onward shipment to Africa.

The highlight, since the last magazine issue, has been the presentation by the CO-OP, of a cheque for almost £5000. This will help us to expand our offering of activities, and is very much appreciated.



NEWS & EVENTS

4Cs

4Cs Carers Group – 'Carers, Coffee, Cake (and sandwiches!) and Chat'

The 4Cs provides opportunities for carers, and those who have previously been carers, to meet and enjoy friendship and fellowship together.

All are most welcome at our lunchtime meetings on the **3rd Tuesday of each month** apart from August. We meet at 12:15 in the Community Centre.

Last month, we were given a very interesting and informative talk by Lucy and Bev from Home Instead on Scam Awareness. Our next meeting will be on **Tuesday 17th December** when we will be having a Christmas Social. Please bring along some festive food to share. At our meeting in January, we welcome back Christina Spencer who will be continuing the story of her remarkable life growing up in Germany, those who heard her earlier talk will know what an inspirational speaker Christina is.

If you would like information or know of someone who might benefit from a break from caring and in need of friendly support please contact:

Graham: graham.loach@btinternet.com or Rhona: snelson34@btinternet.com



Ladies in Stitches

Ladies in Stitches have been busy hand sewing felt Christmas decorations to be sold at the Christmas coffee morning, to help raise money for our Rose Queen, Charlotte's charity Alder Hey Children's Hospital. Our group has grown and we enjoying meeting, socialising and learning from each other. We meet in the morning on the **first Tuesday of the month at 10am** and the afternoon on the **second Wednesday of the month at 1.30pm**. Please join us, you'd be most welcome.

NEWS & EVENTS



Once again the **Knit & Natter** group have been preparing knitted poppies for sale. This year they were able to send £90 to the Royal British Legion. Poppies that have been made in previous years were used as part of the beautiful display in church for Remembrance Sunday.

Another Time to Remember service was well supported this year. We remembered loved ones and attached hearts bearing their names to a tree which has now been planted in the churchyard. Following the service, the opportunity to have a friendly chat over a cup of tea was appreciated and commented on by many. Befriender's Support Group meets every month on the first Thursday of the month at 12.30pm in the Troughton Room for lunch and supportive conversation.



Our mental health support group **Oasis** continues to meet on the second Wednesday of each month, at 1.30pm in the Community Centre. Some 14 of us met at the November meeting when we were joined by Steve Flatt, psychotherapist, who supports our group on a regular basis. Steve and John Hulme were able to tell us of their recent work to help the homeless in Liverpool – particularly on Mental Health Awareness Day. This work is ongoing and we were all very impressed with their enthusiasm and commitment. We also enjoyed a general discussion focussing in particular on how we will cope with Christmas, which can be a difficult time for some.

We do not have a meeting in December so our next meeting is on **Wed. 8th January** when we will be celebrating 10 years since Jill Wright and Ted Jones first founded the group!! We will be discussing how to cope with anxiety and depression, using material from Jill's new book, My Days of Wine and Roses and also intend to mark the occasion with a party!

Please all do come and bring a small item of party food to share, if you can. All welcome.

Any queries please speak to:- Jill Wright, Helen Byrne or Penny Golby

NEWS & EVENTS

The Mothers' Union meeting in November was our AGM, followed by a flower-arranging demonstration, then refreshments and lots of chat (as usual!) Our next meeting is on 12th December, at 7.45pm. This will be our annual "Pause for Thought", which Heather kindly arranges for us. It's always a lovely, peaceful start to the Christmas season and helps us to remember the true meaning of Christmas.

Looking forward to the New Year, the first three meetings will be on 9th January, 13th February and 12th March. Please note, these will be afternoon meetings, starting at 1.30pm.

The 2020 programme will soon be with you. Best Wishes, Liz



Indoor Bowls

The mat is down on the second and fourth Friday mornings at 10am. We welcome all abilities and the group is steadily starting to grow. Refreshments are provided and all are very welcome. Please come and give it a try.



Friends' Weekend Away

Arrangements are well in hand for another Friends' Weekend at Thornleigh Hotel, Grange over Sands. Friday 29th May – Monday 1st June 2020. The cost for the hotel is £185 per person. Owing to a recent cancellation there is still a single room available. Please see Jill Wright for details asap if you are interested.

Holy Land Pilgrimage

Rev Mike, our Ordinand George Roach, and Jill Wright, are all set to lead another group of Pilgrims to the Holy Land on 2nd November 2020. There are still places available on the pilgrimage – Jill Wright would be very pleased to hear from anyone who may consider joining them! Full programme details available from her.

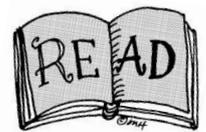


NEWS & EVENTS

We have been enjoying Jill Wright's book 'Sweet Scented Manuscript of Youth', her childhood memories of life in Higher Bebington 1945-1957. We read the last chapter at our meeting at the end of November, 'On the Brink', which brought the book to a close.

We will be reading an excerpt from 'A Child's Christmas in Wales' by Dylan Thomas on Monday 9th December and then next meet in the New Year! We shall meet on Monday 6th January at 2.15pm in the Troughton Room and thereafter every other Monday. We plan to read short stories and poems - all ideas welcome!

A warm welcome and some lively discussions about what we have read, with reviving tea and coffee await you!



Tea Dance

We held our festive Tea Dance at the end of November (a little early but there is no dance in December)!

We enjoyed mince pies, delicious cakes with tea and a Christmas quiz. We also did some barn dancing. The next Tea Dance is **22nd January 2020**, please join us.



ECO CHURCH

We have achieved the SILVER ECO CHURCH AWARD! A huge thank you to you all for making this happen. There will be a presentation soon.

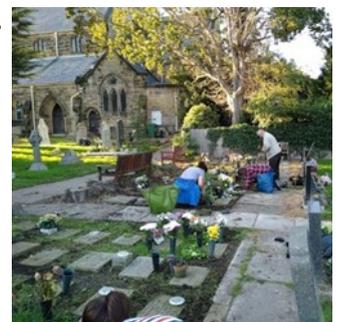
Whatever happened to all those plastic bottle tops?????

Thank you to all who donated those plastic bottle tops – they were delivered to Anglesey Sea Zoo recently where they will be granulated into miniscule pieces of plastics before being sent elsewhere to be made into items of hard plastic outdoor furniture with a life span of around 10 years. Anglesey Sea Zoo took this decision of being thus proactive having witnessed the undeniable effects of the disastrous tide of plastic pollution around the Anglesey coast. We will continue to collect the bottle tops.

Local Soroptimists from around our region of Cheshire North Wales and Wirral also took part in this project - - your bottle tops are in there somewhere!!!!



In early October an enthusiastic working party met together to tidy up part of the graveyard. Many hands make light work! The end result is really pleasing. And our reward waschips! Well done all.



Meanwhile Julie and Duncan have been cutting back overgrowth in the wooded area in preparation for better growth in the Spring.

Barbara and Les Thomas have been looking at the suitability of our cleaning materials from an Eco point of view and will be reporting back in the New Year.

If you would like to know more about ECO Church please talk to Alan or Pam Hollinshead.

MEN'S SUPPER CLUB

AUGUST 2019. Zeera Bangladesh Restaurant, Irby.

This is a month, due to many people having annual holidays, that we don't usually have a supper club meet. This however was an exception, with quite a few of the members requesting a spicy meet by way of a change. Zeera was somewhere we had been before and enjoyed good food, plenty of choice, warm and comfortable surrounding with friendly and efficient service. Once again Zeera lived up to the standard we had experienced before and we enjoyed a fine meal with good wine and beer and a great banter which was enjoyed by all, including a couple of new members. I can recommend the venue, to those who like Bangladesh style food, as there is always something different and tasty on the menu. The premises are small and cosy and you can be guaranteed a good night. Likely to be busy late in the week, and at weekends, so be advised to book. Parking is a little restricted.

SEPTEMBER 2019. Broadway Steak and Wine Restaurant, Bebington.

Once again a venue we had enjoyed before, and one that members frequent regularly with friends and family. Mustapha, the owner, offered us a reduced menu choice and a main for £12.95 and two courses for £15.95. This did not mean you could not have had a choice from the full menu which included the delicious steaks. A we supported night, easy to get to on shanks's pony. The food was good, hot and enjoyable and the service excellent. The atmosphere, and the comfortable surroundings, made for a very enjoyable night. We even had entertainment from a singing guitarist, who sadly we could hardly hear for the general noise and chatter of people enjoying themselves. Another good choice which lived up to our expectations.

OCTOBER 2019. The Sunlight Restaurant in Bromborough Road, Bebington.

Another return visit to a real value for money venue. Monday night is "HALF PRICE NIGHT" and we took full advantage. Not only is there a varied main menu, but the half price deal covers a very good selection of steaks from the grille. Yum yum.

Sixteen attended and we were seated at a double round table set up which suited us nicely. Many chose the steaks for their main course and they were not disappointed at the size a quality of the fair. Overall, a very comfortable and enjoyable evening at a price nobody could complain about given the amount and quality of the food served. Nice surroundings and good service. Can be recommended highly.

PARISH POET

A few weeks back, I travelled down to Dorset to spend a week in a Franciscan Friary. This was partly, I suppose largely, to explore what has started lately to feel like a monastic calling - although, as it turned out, that was the one thing I really didn't seem able to really explore, or even talk about, while I was there. I think it actually turned out to be about something far simpler, as these things all-too-often do...

Did I travel down to read your books?
To feel some wisdom
in a quiet and forgotten place,
reading those words you don't plug in?

Did I travel down to read your leaves?
To read wet colours,
painted starlike by the rain?

Or were those trees too much for me?
A foretaste of heartaches that tug on my soul.

A foretaste of treasures,
still unfound...
teasing my feet from this tapestry ground.

Did I travel down to read your heart?
To feel that kindness?
To feel that touch?
To see the clouds unfurl and weep?
To see the smile that showers me home?
You've woven that word into my feet.

You broke it like morning.
You stripped it like twigs.

You hid it in chalices,
laced with your blood.

Home.

Down every hopeless,
waiting street,
you've woven that word into my feet.

PARISH POET

In many ways, words like "home" and "family" appear to have lost much of their meaning for me in the years since mum died. They are difficult, troublesome words for me, fraught with minefields... which is why the support of those who have welcomed me so warmly at Christ Church has meant so much to me.

To many people, however, words like home and family are bedrock words, pulling them back like the comforting grip of a spring-loaded tentacle when they have strayed too far.

As I say, when I travelled down to Hillfield, I did so with a vague sense of calling in my heart - the hint of a light that might still reveal something spring-loaded, here in this scary, rootless, mismatched world, blessed as it is by the tears of a God who shares our brokenness.

But perhaps all I really needed was the knowledge that (the obvious and immediate winter need for somewhere to keep warm and guzzle mugs of tea aside) I have no real need of a place to call my home, other than this thing that lives in my heart (much like our beloved, rootless Jesus, who often had nowhere to lay His head, yet became a spiritual home for all of us).

If that's the case, there are those who'd really expect me to have stopped being so scared by now. If I am truly wandering through life in His strength, then surely I can feel content in His embrace. But then again, perhaps that's part of the price of being able to write like this, even when a part of me feels too broken to speak. How can I reflect His heart unless I continue to weep at every jagged, rotten, wretched wound?

It seems arrogant of me to claim a communion that sweeps between distant shores. Many would tell me that God does not make such demands of us.

But perhaps it's not a demand at all. Perhaps it's the promise of a strange and deeply countercultural peace that calls to us when all other sources of hope seem to be exhausted, much like the tide, whispering the one word I have no strength to hear anymore, from a place I have no way to resist:

"Come, John..."



MEET THE FAMILY - THE ALLENDERS/SCARSBROOKS

Duncan and I first met in a night club in North London in 1981, just before he was about to embark on a world tour. One year later we were re-introduced via a mutual friend. Our first date was to see a play about corruption in the West Midlands Police Force. That's how political we were, and still are, really. We lived in South London until we moved to the Wirral in September 2009.

I am a Salford lass. I am of mainly Irish descent and was brought up as a Catholic. I went to a wonderful convent run by the Faithful Companions of Jesus, before going to Warwick University to read French. This course offered a year in France, which I spent in Lille, the Manchester of France. I'd applied to go to Nice. Never mind! I had a great time there and came back speaking French with a northern accent. After graduating in 1977 I spent a couple of years in Leamington Spa before following Norman Tebbit's advice and 'getting on my bike' to move to London, where I did a variety of jobs before deciding to become a probation officer and training at Sussex University.

Duncan was born in Loughborough and his family moved to the Wirral when he was a small child, as his Dad had secured a job as an engineer at Lever Brothers. Duncan's dad hailed from Liverpool and his mum was Welsh. Duncan's family were not particularly religious, but he was pressed into attending Sunday school, which was not for him. He moved to London via Manchester when he was 20 and became the conference manager at the YMCA Hotel in Central London after spending 9 months working in the Kitchens. He met many famous bands at the 'Y' including Joy Division, The Smiths and Echo and the Bunnymen amongst many others. Duncan eventually enrolled as a mature student at South Bank Poly to study Sociology.

Duncan and I have always been keen gardeners and have made sure that we had a garden in the various places we have lived. We started with a tiny front plot in a flat in Brixton. We decided to move from there in 1987 having experienced two lots of riots. Our first house in Streatham had a garden which was 100 feet long and 30 feet wide. It had been used as a football pitch by the children who lived there, so was very much a blank canvas. We had great fun building a vegetable garden, putting up a greenhouse and shed and building a raised pond and patio. (By 'we', I really mean that Duncan did most of the grafting. I'm more of an 'ideas' person and like designing, sowing seeds and propagating plants). Duncan moved from community work with pensioners in the late 1980's and trained as a landscape gardener, setting up his own business.

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I keep fantail doves as a hobby. Duncan built a beautiful dovecote, but they wouldn't go in it, so he adapted part of a shed where they are happy. The dovecote is now a garden ornament. We have an aviary for them for when we are not around, because the female sparrow hawk (which is bigger than the male), likes nothing better than a dove snack – not a pretty sight. I have three pairs at the moment. They are lovely birds, but can be cruel to weaker ones – not necessarily the doves of peace we think they are.

I love music and have regular piano lessons. I have joined Port Sunlight Choral Society, which I really enjoy. Duncan has an interest in military history of World War 2 and has four 6th scale tanks, which he has built.

We have not been able to have our own children, which has been a source of sadness for us. We looked into adoption and fostering but were put off by the bureaucracy and 'risk aversion' demonstrated by the various agencies we contacted. We have nieces and nephews to whom we are close. Our 'child substitutes' are our dogs. We have had quite a few over the years, including three boxers. One of the best experiences we had was watching Sally the boxer give birth to a litter of puppies, one of which we kept. We inherited a sweet corgi-cross called Charlie, which belonged to Duncan's parents. He was 17 when he died. We adopted a staffie-cross called Dottie from Battersea dogs' home in 2005. She was a lovely dog but didn't like other dogs, so we had to have eyes in the back of our heads. She lived to the grand old age of 13 and died of cancer last year. We still miss her a lot. Last year, we adopted Bella from Dogs' Trust Merseyside. She was four months old when we got her and had already had three homes. She was like a wild animal when we got her – unsettled and fearful – and it has taken quite a while for her to begin to trust us. We are planning to adopt another dog in due course as we think Bella would benefit from a doggie friend.

Duncan's parents both died within a very short time of each other in 2008. We had been thinking of moving out of London at that time as we were getting tired of the traffic, the noise, the dirt and pollution. They say when you are tired of London, you are tired of life, but we were just tired of London. We wanted to move back North to be nearer my family in Manchester. We decided to sell our house and move into Duncan's parents' house in Beckett Grove, thinking it would take months to happen. However, things moved quickly and on 2nd January 2009, we made the break. We miss our friends and the cultural variety in London but are very glad we made the move. We didn't have any jobs to go to when we first arrived, so I

MEET THE FAMILY - THE ALLENDERS/SCARSBROOKS

enrolled on Wirral Council's 'Ready to Work' temp team, where I did receptionist/administrative duties. I later did some agency probation work, before deciding to apply for the Administrator post in the Community Centre. It's a great job and I feel blessed to be working in such a friendly environment. Duncan had some leaflets printed. He distributed them in the locality and the work started coming in. He has been doing quite a lot of work for the Church recently, planting native trees and a shrub border in the church yard, and a fruit tree orchard in the church grounds. Plans are afoot to convert some of the land into a wild flower meadow and pond.

Duncan and I are very environmentally conscious. We can't help collecting litter when we walk on beaches. I have recently joined the Green Party and am an active member of the Eco-church steering group. Duncan is a volunteer with the Wirral Conservation Volunteers and spends time working at the New Ferry Butterfly Park. We are both members of the Friends of Storeton Woods, where we regularly walk Bella.

In terms of my faith, I have come back to Christianity after many years as an agnostic. I decided not to return to the Catholic Church due to their views on celibacy, women priests and contraception, among other things. However, I am still drawn to the 'bells and smells' of Catholicism, as it is probably in my blood and I attend Mass when I go to visit my Dad in Salford. I walked into Christ Church about three years ago, when I was very ill and depressed. I received lots of support at that time from Mike, Eunice, June Fogg and the Oasis group. I am well now and very grateful for all the help I received.

Duncan and I got married in Wallasey Town Hall on June 9th 2012. It took us a long time to decide and I proposed to him by text on 29th February that year. Despite the weather (a cold wind and rain), we had a lovely day with our family and a few friends. We decided not to change our names. I am sometimes called Mrs. Allender and Duncan is sometimes called Mr. Scarsbrook, but we don't mind.



COMMUNITY CENTRE NEWS

A warm welcome to the Community Centre news page.

At the beginning of December, it will be one year since Sarah and Julie started working at the Centre. Time has certainly flown, we have both learned a lot and there have been quite a few changes in the Centre. We are blessed with a Centre that is always brimming with activity due to the variety of groups and activities which take place and this one of the most enjoyable aspects of working here.

This year, we have lost some groups and gained others. More recently, a **Tai Chi** class has started in the Troughton Room. It takes place on **Mondays at 1pm** for one hour. It is open to all ages and abilities and you can go at your own pace. Each class costs £5 and you don't need to book. In addition, '**On Broadway**', a dance based ladies' exercise class, now runs on **Wednesday evenings at 8pm** for one hour. You will need to sign up online at <http://bit.ly/2nRpm4T> Finally, our **local Labour councillors**, Jerry Williams and Tony Cottier, now have a **drop-in surgery on Friday evenings between 6pm and 7pm**. If you have any issues you would like to discuss with them, please come along and make your views known.

We are always getting requests to run children's birthday parties at the weekend, particularly on a Saturday afternoon. This needs someone to be at the Centre to open up, then check the building has been properly cleaned and secured when everyone has left. You don't need to be present for the whole event, which usually lasts around three hours. Sarah and Julie share this role between them, but some more people are needed to help out. There is a £25 fee for the role. If you are interested, please talk to Sarah or Julie.

It is traditional to make New Year's resolutions as the year draws to an end. We are planning to run wedding receptions for people who marry in the Church, starting in 2020. They will be in the form of either afternoon teas or 'bubbly' receptions in the Centre. Helen Byrne, Eunice, Sarah and Julie are in the process of contacting suppliers, putting ideas together and developing a web page.

Bookings

Do you need a venue for your group to meet? Do you have any ideas for a class or would like to run one? Feel free to contact the Centre Manager by telephone (0151 608 4429), email centremanager@christchurchhigherbebington.org.uk or in person at the Parish Office on Tuesday mornings.

Julie Scarsbrook

Centre Administrator

Sarah Loach

Centre Supervisor

ROSE QUEEN

Many thanks to everyone who came and supported the Christmas Coffee Morning. There was a wonderful atmosphere and the hall was packed throughout the morning.



Rose Queen - Keep the Date Free

Please join us for our next community event - a Fun Family Quiz night on Saturday 25th January 2020. Details will follow in the New Year. Proceeds from the evening will support the Christ Church Community Centre and Alder Hey Children's Charity. ALL are very welcome and I look forward to seeing you there.

Charlotte



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ORGAN UPDATE

Opening Organ Recital

Well over 100 people attended the Opening Recital on our restored organ given by Prof Ian Tracey on Friday 15th November.

Liverpool City Organist Herbert F Ellingford gave the original Opening Recital on the new three-manual Rushworth & Dreaper organ way back in February 1927. Ian is one of his successors in this role and so he was particularly pleased to be asked.

The programme was carefully chosen by Ian to show off the capabilities of the restored instrument with its electro-pneumatic action and additional stops to the Great. Also, Ian took advantage of the new mobile console being placed at the front of the nave (pictured) to build an excellent rapport with



the audience introducing the music and explaining a little of how an organ works.

The restoration of the organ by Liverpool-based David Wells Organ Builders Limited was made possible by a substantial legacy from the late Rob Parker together with many donations, interest-free loans and a wide range of fund-raising events and activities.

We were pleased to welcome our immediate past Vicar, Canon Anne Samuels, together with her husband, Ray. Also present were Canon John Bowers with his grand-daughter, Ina, Diocesan Organ Adviser, Revd Andrew Mannings together with David Wells and members of his team including Adrian Griffiths and Thomas Yeomans.

Following the recital light refreshments, including much cake, were served in the adjoining Kings Hall.

As well as being a most enjoyable occasion, the evening raised £1500 for the organ fund bringing the outstanding total down to £23,500.

TREASURER'S REPORT

Collections: July to October 2019

	Sunday	Planned Giving £	Loose Cash £	Total Giving £	
Pledge Envelopes	7 July	108	128		
	14 July	47	68		
	21 July	126	141		
	28 July	159	82		
	4 August	62	117		
	11 August	56	55		
	18 August	50	109		
	25 August	145	59		
	1 September	43	89		
	Re-dedication of the Organ	8 September	52	124	
		15 September	44	98	
		22 September	48	70	
		29 September	32	69	
	Harvest Festival	6 October	52	111	
		13 October	92	92	
	20 October	99	90		
	27 October	70	97		
Standing Orders & GAYE (direct to bank)		23491			
Misc lump sums - some gift-aided		645			

Totals	25421	1599	27020
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<i>Year to date and comparison with previous year</i>	2019 £	2018 £	Increase %
Standing Orders & GAYE (Give As You Earn)	59377	56929	4
Weekly Envelopes	3882	4027	-4
Misc lump sums - some gift-aided	1355	595	128
Total Planned Giving before Gift Aid	64614	61551	5
Gift Aid from HMRC	14764	14677	1
Total Planned Giving	79378	76228	4
Loose Cash	4289	5499	-22
Total Voluntary Giving	83667	81727	2

PCC Treasurer, Charles Van Ingen, writes: "Overall Planned Giving and the Gift Aid Reclaim has run to plan year-to-date; however, loose cash is significantly lower than in 2018 reflecting a move towards regular giving through the bank. The tax reclaim from HMRC may not change much year on year as the rise in the Personal Allowance has taken some people out of tax this year.

"For the present, expenditure from the General Account is generally in line with expectations though we have had two one-off special costs to install more external noticeboards and to equip the Woodhey Room as a 'Quiet Office' for Victoria Gleave and others".

FROM THE PARISH REGISTERS

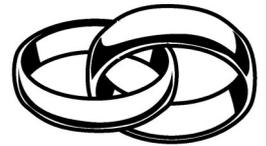
DEPARTED INTO LIFE

22nd October Ann Judith (**Judy**) Blake
1st November Ruby Clementine Hall-Brady



WHOM GOD HAS JOINED

5th October Susan Catherine O'Brien & Christopher Eric Irvine
12th October Sarah Jane Lowe & Ben Francis Taylor
26th October Jane Ann Green & Robert William Barker



BROUGHT WITHIN THE FAMILY

6th October Noah John Carter
27th October Noah James Christopher Lunt
3rd November Oliver James Greer, Harper Jade & Cooper William Dysart



Light of the World

Jesus, the Light of the World, as we celebrate your birth, may we begin to see the world in the light of understanding you give us. As you chose the lowly, the outcasts, and the poor to receive the greatest news the world had ever known, so may we worship you in meekness of heart. May we also remember our brothers and sisters less fortunate than ourselves in this season of giving. Amen.

Karen L. Oberst





Ian Millington,
Partner

Hello everyone,

while some of you may recognise me from church you may not know that my day job is to offer legal advice at Hillyer McKeown solicitors.

It strikes me that our population is living longer so it is important to think about our mental and physical health and wellbeing. Below I have put together some practical steps you can take to protect yourself and your loved ones.

Wills

Making a Will can be a difficult thing to think and talk about, but putting in place well thought out plans can offer peace of mind, knowing your wishes will be carried out in the way you want them to be.

My advice is to not wait until things change, but to plan ahead. Welcoming a grandchild, downsizing your home or thinking about care home fees are life events that can typically remind people to update or make a Will. We also help people through difficult moments in their lives, following the death of a loved one.

Trust and Estate Planning

We regularly support people who are

seeking advice about inheritance and succession planning, or who are unsure what to do if a family member has become ill or can no longer make their own decisions. You might also want to consider a Lasting Power of Attorney legal document. An LPA allows you to choose one or more people to make decisions for you, or act on your behalf if you cannot deal with matters yourself.

Business Wills

Does your current Will protect both your personal and business assets? If you (or a family member) own a business our unique Business Will service can set out detailed plans for you and your business. Speak to us about protecting yourself and your loved ones in the future.

What to do next?

For a free, no obligation discussion to arrange a meeting with a member of our Wills and Probate team in Birkenhead (No. 1 Hamilton Square) or if you prefer, in your own home, call 0151 647 600 or email enquiries@law.uk.com

Thank you, Ian

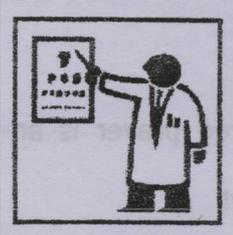


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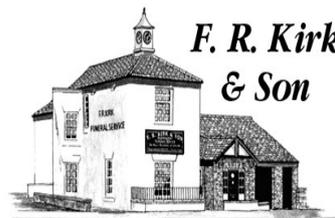
The Besom in Wirral is a Christian charity. It is run by a core team of volunteers who manage the contact with the givers and those in need. Besom collects and delivers donated items using its own van.

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