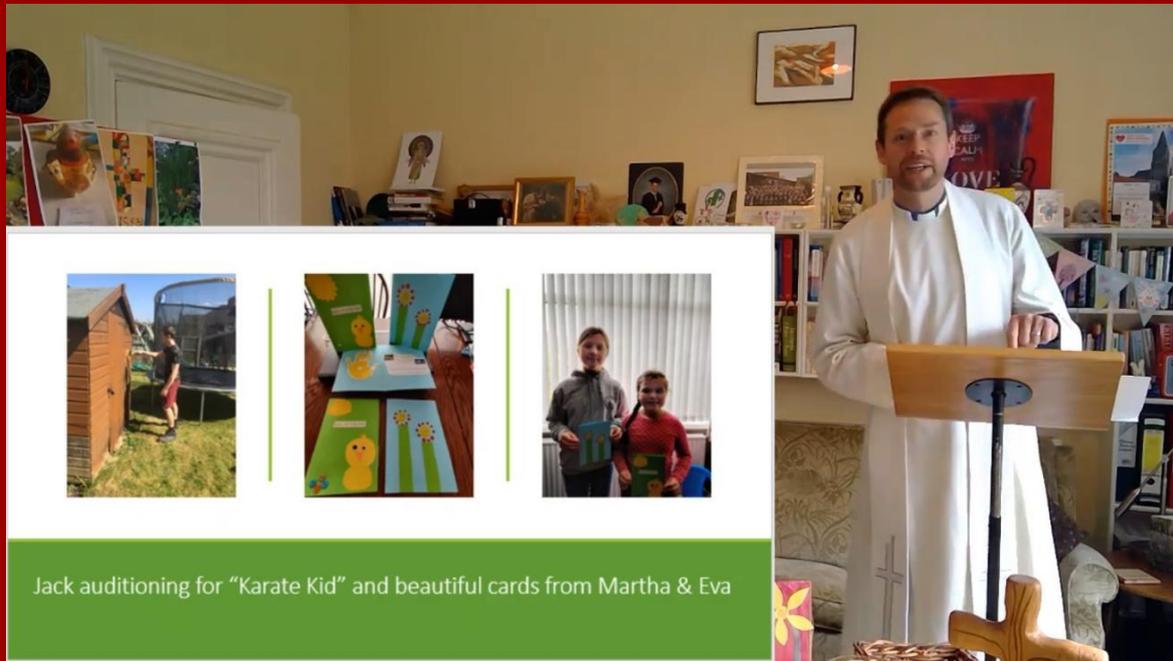


CHRIST CHURCH HIGHER BEBINGTON

NEWS LINK

Lockdown Summer Special



Church Services

Our beautiful church building is now open for private prayer every day from 10am - 7pm.

Public worship will resume on Sunday 5th of July at 8.30am and 10am.

When inside, please ensure that appropriate social distancing is maintained between you and others and please wipe down any surfaces you touch with cleaning equipment found at the entrance. X

Christ Church YouTube channel will continue to live stream our 10am Sunday service every week. Just open YouTube and search for "Christ Church HB" or follow this link:
https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCPD_Phsd0o2MYNudgbzFUzg



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

VICAR'S LETTER

Welcome to the lockdown "summer special" edition of our parish magazine! Clearly, the past few months have been unique in more ways than one. For some, it has been an incredibly challenging time - enduring separation from loved ones, grieving without hugs, working in unbearably stressful circumstances, battling loneliness, juggling home schooling alongside everyday responsibilities. For others, however, there have been notable blessings, with the gift of time and slowness providing opportunity to notice the beauty of Springtime, to identify and acknowledge neighbours, to reflect on priorities in life and to create impossibly tidy homes and gardens!



I suspect that for most of us, elements of challenge and blessing are both present in how we feel about the past four months. As I've called around and shared stories with parishioners, colleagues and community workers, it has become clear that even in our local area, a myriad of experiences and

reflections have been encountered during this period. Under normal circumstances, we would perhaps share these in person, but without knowing when we might be back together, I thought it would be good to hear some of these stories through the pages of this magazine. I do hope that we will all enjoy a further sense of being connected with our church family through the words and pictures.

Hoping to see you all very soon and ever in my prayers, *Mike*

Redefining Church?

On March 23rd, for the first time in 800 years, churches around Britain closed their doors to the public and, for the first time ever, to the clergy. This move prompted a wave of very mixed emotions. Most supported the suspension of public worship, recognising the need for all to do their bit in curtailing the spread of the virus, but some were angry that churches were not available for private prayer at a time of great need. The move also led to a widespread discussion concerning what we mean by "church", with many reminding us that the original Greek word, "ekklesia", simply means "people assembled" and that the buildings we use are very much secondary to the worshipping community.

Within these debates there was plenty of bluster(!), but no clear answer. I personally found it hard to close the doors of the church when takeaways

VICAR'S LETTER (CONTD.)

were so quickly reopened and wanted to emphasise the reality that our spiritual needs are a vital part of our wellbeing. However, I also recognised that we had been given a unique opportunity to examine how we might continue to be the "body of Christ" outside the walls of our buildings.

Like many other churches, we adapted as best we could by broadcasting Sunday services and other useful resources. We made sure we had a daily online presence, offered various wonderful Zoom courses and social events and did our best to ensure that parishioners were receiving regular contact and help with their shopping. Also, a number of creative ideas aimed at connecting the local community emerged, including drawing competitions, charity collections, rainbow flags, bell ringing and the amazing Stone Snake! Each of these initiatives has been a real blessing and I'm very thankful for all those who have given their time and energy to make them possible.

Clearly, our buildings are very important. They are our gathering places, a point of focus for the worshipping community and often serve as landmarks of hope for our parishioners. The prayers of countless generations have soaked into their walls and many local people can track their family histories back through them. The significance of Christ Church to the local community was again made clear to me when we reopened our doors for private prayer and received a steady flow of people throughout the week, all seeking a space to be still, to reflect, to pray. And yet, even when recognising such facts, the thing that has perhaps been most striking for all of us, is not how much we miss the building, but how much we miss the people it houses.



Community matters and what we learn as Christians is that a community built on a commitment to follow in the ways of Jesus - one that seeks to always welcome the stranger, to put others first and to care for the vulnerable - is not, primarily, a source of company, but rather a foundation for how we live our lives. We need to keep such foundations strong in these times and continue to explore new ways in which we can be a "church" when our beloved buildings are not available to us as we would wish. The ecclesiastical "new normal" will most likely contain elements of what we have learnt recently and what we have treasured in our past. May we all work together to ensure that it still projects the light of God's love as brightly, if not brighter, both in our buildings and in our hearts.

CHRIST CHURCH LOCKDOWN PRAYER DIARY

From March 15th until we were able to reopen our doors to the public four months later on June 15th, we made a commitment to post a prayer or a link to worship resources each day on our Facebook page. Rev Mike is hoping to bring these prayers together to form a "lockdown diary" to be printed and made available sometime in July. A few examples of the posts can be seen below...

Loving God, may our pursuit of justice always surpass our self-interest, but never our desire for peace. May our desire for peace always surpass our instinct for revenge, but never our willingness to act for others. And may the love you have planted within us be that which rules over all else. Amen



As we pray for justice and hope in a divided world, these words from the great Mahatma Gandhi speak to us again...

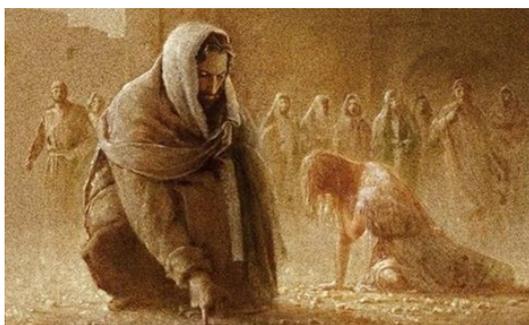


"When I despair, I remember that all through history the way of truth and love have always won. There have been tyrants and murderers, and for a time, they can seem invincible, but in the end, they always fall. Think of it - always." Lord, commit us to work as one, following in the ways of love across nations, cultures and faiths, that your

justice and peace may be known to all. Amen

Lord, for the beauty of creation, we give you thanks. For days filled with sunshine, colour and birdsong, we give you thanks. For lessons learnt about ourselves and how we live, we give you thanks. For an awakening to new friends and those we can rely on, we give you thanks.

Loving God, help us to hold on to the good that has been shown us in these times and use it in building a future that works for all. Amen



Lord, forgive us for the times when we allow frustration and upset to dominate our reactions to others. Forgive us for those times when our anger disables kindness and the need to judge ignores our own weaknesses. Help us to drop our stones and encourage each other to walk in your ways of love. Amen

THE WORLD ACCORDING TO JUMBLE

I know from the humans that I live with that the past few months have been very difficult for many different people, but from a Vicarage doggy's perspective, lockdown has been glorious! For the first time in ages, I've had people around me for most of the day! The boys have been having "school" in their bedrooms and have been working quite hard, though I've occasionally sneaked up in their break and found them playing something on a screen with friends who are all dressed up in strange costumes and intent on building and smashing and shooting! Mum & Dad don't seem to like this game, but I do, as neither of the boys ever notice me stealing their breaktime biscuits! It's been lovely having Mum around a bit more and not always in the Community Centre and even the Vicar has found some time to play outside.



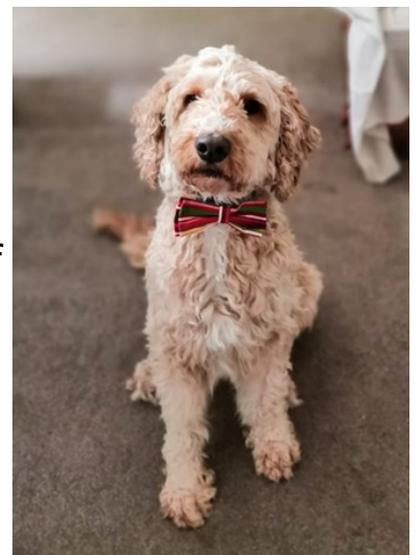
The lovely weather has meant that I've been allowed out more and lockdown seems to have brought more birds and squirrels into the garden for me to chase! Unfortunately, I've still not quite managed to taste squirrel. The upside, however, is that the Vicar seems to have been eating more, which has meant more scraps for me!

I know that humans are very keen to get back to a "normal" way of life, but I do hope that we don't forget the importance of finding time for others and of how nature responded to people slowing down, travelling less and noticing its beauty.

Right, must be off – I've just noticed a beautiful squirrel in the garden!

Woof woof,

Jumble xx



AN ASSOCIATE'S MUSINGS

the
prayer
course

When I was wondering and praying about what I could offer during lockdown, a friend in Scotland said that The Prayer course was the best course they had ever done. Unknown to them I had already been looking at it that morning!

So I took it as God's answer.

I'd also been so encouraged by the way the Youth Alpha (expertly led by Ian & Collette Millington) was progressing by watching a video individually and then coming together on Zoom to discuss it. Maybe not the ideal way to communicate together but in these unprecedented times definitely worth trying!

One of the apostle Paul's prayers (Ephesians 3:14-21) ends with "Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine". The prayer course for me is falling into that category of "immeasurably more than I could ask or imagine". Not only is it great to see people again (virtually) but we're learning so much from each other and often sharing our prayer requests so that we can continue to pray for one another. We don't all find the same points helpful or always agree but that actually stimulates us to think deeper. I come off each Zoom thinking I've been really encouraged and so blessed by those within our Church!

Prayer is something that we will spend all our lives learning about and often struggle with but the more it becomes part of daily living the more our relationship with God, and one another, grows. The best advice from Pete Greig (course leader) is to "Keep it simple, keep it real and keep it up." I've also downloaded the Lectio 365 Prayer App – which follows their recommended pattern of PRAY;

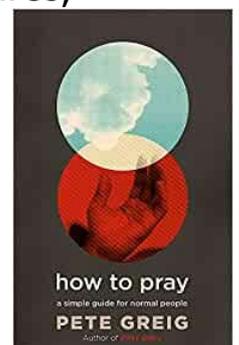
P – pause,

R - rejoice and reflect with verses from a Psalm and other scriptures,

A – ask and

Y – yield – give ourselves to God.

I've a good friend without a smart phone who couldn't access the App – so we now end our daily phone call by listening to it off mine. It's been such a bonus during lockdown and great sharing it with someone else too.



AN ASSOCIATE'S MUSINGS

If you're thinking you've missed out, why not buy the book – How to pray – a simple guide for normal people by Pete Greig (currently the best price from www.aslanchristianbooks.com £7.49 – which I can always purchase for you). But I think there's a strong likelihood that when we are able to meet up again we will be running a face to face course So why not join us?

Patience

This is a big ask, but I dare to ask for patience for myself.

For a sense of the right pace and
the right time.

Help me to develop a deep sense of the way your providence
unfolds, its moments
and its seasons.

Take from me the nervous desire to hasten.

Banish from my lips all unnecessary
talk of urgency or rush.

Remove from my actions all that projects busyness.

Help me to be prompt and punctual without rushing,
and to know when to move on when things are stuck
or time is being squandered.

Lord of all time,
help me to inhabit time calmly, attending to the pulse
of your grace, the season of your
Spirit and not my own
impatient desire.

Give me confidence and dignity
whenever I am required to wait.

Calm my growing agitation when waiting seems long,
and distract me with glimpses of your purpose
and presence.

Reconcile me to the present moment
and the slow but certain dawning
of your new future.

This is an extract from Barefoot Prayers by Stephen Cherry

THE NOT SO - ORDINAND-ARY LIFE!

In March we were hit with the news of a new risk to the people of the UK and indeed the whole world, and, as a result we were pushed into a place where we very quickly had to adjust to a new way of life.

The business and normality of routine suddenly changed to become a slower paced, almost full stop form of existence for us all. Grandparents quickly separated from grandchildren, work colleagues separated from each other, friends were no longer allowed to meet up and those living alone became unable to draw on the human contact that we all naturally need. We have all been affected by this in some way or another, some to a great extent, others much less.

We, as a family in general, have also been affected as older children who have flown the nest can no longer visit and friends have become ever more distant. Furthermore, our four-year-old who has been unable to attend school has become very bored despite the many toys and even his sandpit being brought inside! This boredom and the constant "Dad, Dad, Dad, Dad" has very unhelpfully assisted with my final two college assignments falling into arrears. Praise the Lord for extensions!



THE NOT SO - ORDINARY LIFE!

I must admit, if I am being perfectly honest, I am enjoying one aspect of the lockdown more than I expected - the forced slowing down of all things in life which I have always said is absolutely essential for the wellness and wellbeing of each and every human being—even more so because we have created a culture of working ourselves to death. For example, from an early age we are told to “work hard” to be “constantly busy” and if you are not seen to be a “busy bee” you are sometimes seen to be a “lazy bones”. Furthermore we have lost our rest day, or our Saturday/Sunday sabbath as almost all shops are open, football now replaces church and days off are movable or even optional. This way of life which is work-rush-work is most definitely not what God intended for our lives and he certainly didn't intend us losing that one day of rest which I believe he still commands.

The one area of lockdown life that I have not appreciated at all is the increased difficulty of accessing those everyday essentials that we had all become so used to.

The ease of nipping to the shops, the ability to have friends around, the face to face conversations about everything which makes life and arrangements so much easier. This was never more evident than trying to move house for my curacy, as absolutely nobody from the removal firms, waste management (old wardrobes and beds) through to the Diocese could give me any constructive advice for some time, which was very frustrating, yet fully understandable.

So where is the Roach family now? Well we are in exactly the same position except in a completely different home, as we are now nicely settled into the vicarage of St Paul's with St Luke, all ready for the next stage of training.



THE NOT SO - ORDINAND-ARY LIFE!

Furthermore, my Ordination has been put back to the end of October having originally been set for July the 5th, which should for me be the accumulation of many years of discernment and training as I kneel before the Bishop of Chester and become ordained Deacon in the Church of England. The end of my college and training with St Mellitus should have been a celebration to remember, but, unfortunately the graduation had to be conducted via a very shaky Zoom feed. And I haven't had the opportunity to have a goodbye pint with my friends. However, as frustrating these things are, there are more important matters in life and society at the moment!

A question was given to me recently I'd like to share. It took some thought but I believe it is a profitable exercise:

What is this lockdown teaching you about yourself?

For me, the first thing, as a follower of Benedictine Spirituality, is an invitation to reflect more often upon the Rule of St Benedict and how in his rule and teachings he stresses a life of balance centered around work, prayer and rest. This, I feel, is something we Christians are now being called to reflect upon and, especially, the example of Jesus Christ with his work-prayer and rest balance. It is difficult to see and is somewhat controversial to some, but God is present in this and he is trying to speak to us all.

The second thing I have learnt is to reflect upon something I was recently taught in college relating to the mission of the church. I believe my work is not to pioneer new beginnings, fresh expressions or to convert the masses, but rather to live the example of Jesus and be there for others. I am called to



look for and listen to what God is doing in the world and join in, in my own way, a way in which I know that I can make a personal difference during these very odd times.

Now over to you, what is this lockdown teaching you about yourself in the light of your Christian life and in Jesus Christ?

In Peace,
George

LIFE IN LOCKDOWN - BY JILL WRIGHT

My first reaction on hearing the instructions of our Prime Minister Boris Johnson on 23rd March for us all to 'stay at home' was to have a bit of a meltdown. I was truly flummoxed and bewildered as my daily routine and way of life had been felled entirely in one blow!

What to do?

I live on my own and normally enjoy an active social life. Also as a Lay Minister at Christ Church, Higher Bebington, I am very much involved in church activities and responsibilities even though officially semi-retired. So – no going out with the walking club, playing tennis, calling at the church community centre, leading church groups, attending church worship etc etc... However – help was at hand – supportive phone calls from Rev Eunice helped to put me on track. I also realised that, although I am over 70 years old, I have no underlying health issues so was allowed out of my home provided that I followed the rules.

Once I realised this I experienced a most unexpected feeling – I felt strangely liberated! My former routine had gone but I now had the opportunity to arrange my life again from scratch.

As you have probably gathered my main interests are walking and tennis. I am also a keen gardener and now had the chance to really get stuck into long neglected gardening jobs. Also we have been blessed with day after day of warm sunshine!

I read advice from a former prisoner of war, that in surviving any confinement, it is key to have a routine, exercise, be creative and keep a journal!

So I set about doing just that. Going on a daily walk, practising yoga, planning my meals and going to bed at a reasonable time. I do also keep short notes on my daily doings.

I have to say I have really enjoyed having the freedom to stroll through Storeton Woods, admire the bluebells under the trees at the back of the churchyard at Christ Church and take in the wonderful sight of trees in full blossom. I seem to enjoy nature in a more intense way as I have the time to focus on individual trees, flowers and the uplifting sound of birdsong. In the early days traffic was much reduced and what a blessing it was to enjoy the peace and quiet.

Nature is a great healer as Chris Packham pointed out recently on the TV

LIFE IN LOCKDOWN - BY JILL WRIGHT

programme 'Springwatch'. We even absorb chemicals from trees which help our well being. I was astounded only last week to be visited by a hedgehog in the middle of the afternoon who trotted into my back garden, climbed into a handy flowerbed and went to sleep for the rest of the day! If I had been following my usual busy schedule I would have missed that!



Although I spend a lot of time on my own I also have felt very connected to people, not only via phone calls and emails but by talking to neighbours in our front gardens/over the garden fence. Clapping our key workers together on a Thursday evening, and have had many an interesting conversation with complete strangers on my daily walks. Latterly I have been able to meet with a friend to share a walk together and - great excitement! even get back to playing tennis as my tennis club is now open again! I think that the lockdown has brought people closer together, helped us focus on what is most important and fostered a community spirit which I hope and pray will continue.



We had a wonderful street party here in Mount Park on 8th May to commemorate the 75th Anniversary of VE Day. We kept to the rules, but were able to enjoy cake, music our own drinks and even had a gazebo! I was able to speak to several neighbours for the first time. It really lifted our spirits as we were able to put serious matters to one side for a while.

So where is God in all this? I think he is here amongst our friends, family, neighbours and clergy as we help each other through the pandemic. I am able to follow the church services at Christ Church which are streamed live on YouTube every week.

LIFE IN LOCKDOWN - BY JILL WRIGHT

Rev Mike, Sarah, their boys and the ministry team do so well in keeping us all connected. I sit at my computer every Sunday morning at 10am together with some bread and a glass of wine to follow the communion service. It is one of the highlights of my week!

As a church minister I am also involved in pastoral support which means talking to folk on a daily basis either by phone or through a window at their house or from their front garden

I was privileged to attend George Roach's meditation sessions, held before the lockdown, so each day I make a point of sitting in a 'meditation corner' which I have created in my converted garage; just being open to God – maybe even for only a few minutes.

I do go into shops using gloves/hand gel and my home made mask and again feel that connection to people around me. We are not alone.

I do hope this community spirit continues. I have picked up the odd book left out near people's front gates for folk to take; I also recently collected a lovely material bow in rainbow colours and display it in my window.



Yesterday I painted a stone and placed it on the church wall to help make a 'covid snake'

Maybe you have done some of these things too?

If you are confined indoors I do hope that you have some sight of plants and trees and the sound of birdsong to uplift you! God is still with you wherever you are. If you are out and about maybe I will meet you on one of my walks?

Take care and God bless

YOUTH ALPHA

For those of you who have heard of Alpha or have undertaken the course you will know that this is as an introduction to the Christian faith “where people are excited to bring their friends for a conversation about faith, life and God”. The course was developed by Nicky Gumbel, Vicar at Holy Trinity Church in Brompton.

Youth Alpha follows a similar format as the adult course. Under usual circumstances a group will meet together, share food, watch a video and discuss the content.

So how many of these can be achieved in lockdown...well, we can watch a video, we can meet and we can talk, although not in person but by the power of Zoom!

We weren't really sure how well the course would work without the draw of free food and face to face interaction, but the results have been really positive and we feel really privileged to have shared this time with the children and observe their individual and collective journeys of faith.

We set up a Youth Alpha Whatsapp group to connect everyone and circulate video links. We usually send out the links on Sunday night in advance of the Tuesday meeting. This may seem like a little late in the day, not allowing that much time to watch but trust us, the closer to the discussion the more likely that both we and the teens will remember the content! The video is very much aimed at young people, lasting for around 20 minutes and punctuated with 3 questions. Although we are missing out on a group meal, some of us are still eating when we start, some have just finished dinner but haven't managed the washing up and some are eating after... bit of a problem if the chat goes on too long!

Since the first meeting on Tuesday 14th April, there has been consistently between 12-15 Boulders attending. We decided to invite a special guest too where we can – no celebrities, just a lovely member of the ministry team.

Once we are all connected on Zoom there is a quick hello followed by a round of Heads & Tails. Andrew Potter is our ever reliable coin tosser.

Topics covered include “Jesus: Who is he and why did he die?”, “Why and how do I pray” and “Why and How should I tell others?”. The questions from the video are the starting point for our discussion and the session develops from there. We always endeavour to cover the three questions but often we add our own questions and try to let the discussion flow freely. What comes across from the meetings is how this group of young people respect each

YOUTH ALPHA

other and enjoy challenging each other's perspectives and viewpoints. As leaders, there is so little leading to do and so much to learn from this amazing group of young people. Each and every one is actively encouraged to share their view but if they prefer to just listen, then that too is fine.

The feedback that we have had has been really positive, from both the participants and their family members. We have been told that there have been some lively dinner table chats!

Towards the end of the course, there are sessions focussing on the Holy Spirit. Most groups will cover this during a weekend away. Obviously we couldn't do this but have promised the group an opportunity to do something similar when lockdown measures have been sufficiently relaxed. Although well received in principle, the group expressed a preference to travel to the destination of that week's video...so a log cabin by a lake in British Columbia, Canada here we come!

To supplement the course content we have added a small challenge each week. This can range from looking up a Bible verse, trying to find out facts about someone or even trying to live life a little better through the week ahead and praying for the Holy Spirit to guide and inspire. We usually finish with prayer.

We have just two sessions left of the current course but were touched when the group asked what we can do next to follow on from the course. We have encouraged the children to think and pray about this and use their voice in the Church to express how they want to go forward and continue their journey of faith.

We all continue to face challenging times. It has been particularly difficult for all young people, taken out of school at very short notice, learning about a new and dangerous virus and cut off from friends and family. If ever there was a reason to look for God, then it is now. Please be assured that on Tuesday nights his presence is felt with all of us at Youth Alpha.



God bless, Ian & Colette Millington

JAMES AND CHARLOTTE'S LOCKDOWN

Since the lockdown started school has been closed so we have been at home. Our work has been sent home by school on the internet and we work in the dining room. We have also been enjoying lessons on YouTube. We really like doing PE with Joe Wicks and learning about science with Maddie and Greg on "Let's Go Live!"



We have been doing lots more video calls to our family and friends, and we have started a family quiz night. We have also been doing Church events on Zoom, such as quizzes, bingo and a Eurovision night.



We have been going on lots more walks around Bebington. We like to go to the woods, or to walk past our schools. We have run into lots of people we know also out on walks. Lately, we have been allowed to go further for our walks. We have been to Seacombe to walk and ride our scooters along the promenade, and we have been for a walk along the Wirral Way.

BAKING IN LOCKDOWN WITH ANDREW POTTER

Andrew has been doing a lot of baking during lockdown! He's always been keen on cooking but lockdown took it to a whole new level! It all started when his Explorer Scout leader suggested he do his Chef Badge. Since we weren't going to be going very far and needed things to do, we thought cooking would make a good fun home-school lesson which just happened to result in lots of tasty things for the family to eat or share with neighbours. So it was a win win!! We looked on the Explorer Scout badge website at what he would need to do to achieve his Chef Badge. The list was VERY long so we got started early in lockdown. Flour was like gold-dust at the time and shopping was difficult so we had to make a few changes. But Andrew baked everything on the list which included large cakes x 3 (yes 3-all that flour!!), bread, cupcakes, flatbreads, scones, and a savoury tart. He had to learn a variety of skills including rubbing in, creaming, melting, whisking and the importance of good hygiene and washing up. He was less keen on the washing up!



Andrew's Top tips for baking

It's important to read and follow the instructions. Don't make it up like Mum does!

Wash your hands to get rid of germs.

Wear oven gloves so you don't burn your hands on the hot oven.

When making bread you need to stop the sides of the well (of flour) falling in so you don't get a flood! (we didn't get that bit completely right so had a few floods!!)

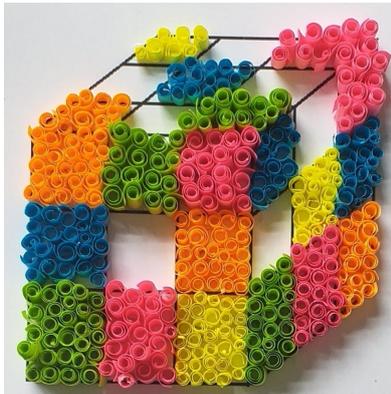
Mix well so you don't get lumps.

Wash up at the end. Not my favourite bit!

My favourite cake was the chocolate cake. I enjoyed weighing out the ingredients and crumbling the mixtures. Baking was fun. Now, I like to cook my own lunch every day.



CREATIVE CORNER



THE NON-EXISTENT SUPPER CLUB AND OTHER STUFF

The Men's Supper Club ground to a halt with the lockdown legislation. The last supper club, at the Mediterranean Kitchen, was destined to have 20 present, but with the announcement that the over 70s should stay at home, only 5 stalwarts attended to enjoy the meal. The following week came the full lockdown and so no supper club and a big NO to a whole lot of other things.

Margaret and I were used to popping out for lunch, when the fancy took us, also evening meals, just the two of us, or with friends and family, and then we found that we couldn't do that anymore. Fortunately we have now found that a number of establishments are doing takeaway and delivering to the door. We have had lovely meals from The Mediterranean Kitchen (345 4060) and Voujon (608 9988) both in Teehey Lane, The Oriental Delight (345 4060) in Bebington Road, and we hear that one of our favourites The Refreshment Rooms (644 5893) in Bedford Road, near the Esplanade, in Rock Ferry is also doing a reduced menu for takeaways up to a 4 mile radius. Do give them a try. We have had our meals delivered and paid cash in a sealed envelope. You can sort by card over the phone or collect yourself and do contactless. It's a credit to them that they have adapted to be able to continue to serve the community, and keep staff in employment, in these difficult times.

We have all had to adapt to the many changes in our living habits during lockdown. We have been self isolating and have been fortunate that our children live locally and have been doing our shopping for us. The weather has been a blessing and we have been using the garden for exercise, extensive weeding and sunbathing. We look like we have been on a continental holiday. Also sorting all kinds of stuff that hasn't been sorted for a long time, and a skip has helped us clear a lot of it. We hope that all of you reading this are keeping well and staying safe and we look forward to seeing you all when things get back to some kind of normality.

Best wishes. John & Margaret.



THE SMITHS IN LOCKDOWN

Since my husband Phil and I retired some years ago we have taken a winter let for weekend and short breaks from October to March at a family run fishing holiday business near Leominster. In late March this year, after a day relaxing by the lakeside, we turned on the TV to hear Boris announcing the country was being put into lockdown! We hastily packed up and returned to Wirral immediately arriving about midnight. We have now been staying home for a longer time than for many years as we usually make regular visits to friends and family around the country so have found life rather different.

However, we soon settled into a daily routine although we quickly lost touch with the actual days of the week. Phil is a great one for lists and every day he would produce a list of 'jobs' to be done that morning, then some time relaxing in our garden before we visited our allotment for our daily 'exercise'. We were very thankful that we have our allotment, the time spent outdoors, appreciating nature while planting seeds and caring for the seedlings and plants is very calming and relieves stress.



We like to keep busy and have found plenty to do;
We tackled the DIY jobs around the house.



I sewed masks for family and friends and made clothes for our grand-daughters.



Phil took up art again and produced some lovely paintings.
We regularly phone family and friends to check they are ok and have a chat
We have trying out lots of new baking recipes, with mixed results.
We celebrated VE Day with our neighbours at a suitable social distance.
We enjoy pottering around our garden and listening to the birds singing, trying to recognise their different calls.

THE SMITHS IN LOCKDOWN

With the USA Masters Tournament cancelled Phil organised our own competition around three golf holes in our garden.



Now restrictions on exercise have eased we have taken to our bikes on a "tour of Wirral," in easy stages.

Mark and I were missing the services and people at Christ Church but found the live streaming of services on YouTube very uplifting. Every Sunday morning we settle down to watch and feel we are joining in with others. The photos of what people have been doing help us to feel we are still in touch with Christ Church, after all the church is the

people, even though the building is beautiful too. Our daughter and family in Buckinghamshire have also been watching as their own church have been unable to provide a similar service.

So we are managing to deal with lockdown with no real problems but the hardest part has been missing time spent with our daughters and grandchildren. We have regular get togethers on Skype and Zoom but virtual hugs and cuddles are not the same. We were recently able to visit our



daughter and granddaughters in Liverpool in their garden for the first time in 10 weeks but Buckinghamshire is still off limits at the moment. This has been especially difficult as Rachael and Tim's first baby arrived six weeks early in January and we have only been able to see Joshua on three occasions, twice while he was still in the neo natal unit. But we are so thankful that all our family have stayed safe and well while many other people have suffered and lost loved ones.

My mother, a very wise lady, always said that if she was ever feeling lonely, sad or depressed she would 'count her blessings' and thank God for all his goodness. I try to follow this advice and believe that in good days and the dark difficult times our Lord will always be beside us to help whatever comes our way.

HAIRCUTS...OR NOT!!



ROSE QUEEN VIRTUAL BINGO

Hello,

I hope you are all keeping well. The lockdown situation means that we are all doing things differently – working from home, remote schooling and social distancing. Plans have changed and this includes plans for fundraising. One of the benefits of being Rose Queen is being able to bring people together to have fun. Unfortunately at the moment this is not possible physically but can happen virtually.....

Virtual Rose Queen Bingo, a first for a Rose Queen at Christ Church, took place on Saturday 30th May. It took a good deal of planning with bingo cards being e-mailed out in advance and of course, there is also the worry of the technology not working on the night!

We played one traditional round and one make your own round with some ropey, but funny bingo calling! A couple of new games helped to mix things up. There was Around the World bingo with pictures of different

worldwide locations - a whistle stop tour for all holiday lovers and the final game was Rock and Roll Bingo, pictures of bands and songs to sing along to. For all participants it was really fun watching everyone dance and from our house even more fun when the singing was about 2 seconds behind the songs! (latency – it's a thing...look it up!).

Apart from having fun the event is also a fundraiser, supporting my chosen charities of Christ Church Community Centre and Alder Hey Children's Charity. A Justgiving page was set up to enable online donations, and thanks to this, and donations from the wider church community the total amount raised was £400.

A very big thank you to all involved. Stay safe.

Charlotte



GARDENING IN LOCKDOWN

One of the phenomena arising from the forced lockdown of the entire population during the Coronavirus pandemic has been the huge rise in interest in gardening, particularly vegetable growing and growing plants from seed. Seed supply companies have seen increased demand and some have closed their doors as supplies run out. Gardening, not only as a hobby, but as a way of putting food on the table, has become more popular, as people have more time to appreciate their outdoor areas. The ungrounded fear of food shortages has also contributed to people growing their own. Gardens are good for the soul and allow us to get in touch with nature. The reduction of air and road traffic has cleaned the air, made the environment quieter, which enables us to be able to savour the beautiful perfumes of plants such as roses, lavenders and sweet peas. Bird song is more audible as we experience a more tranquil environment.



You don't even need a garden to enjoy growing your own plants. A balcony or a window ledge provides great opportunity to sow mixed salad leaves, annual herbs such as basil or some nice flowers such as cornflowers, marigolds or lobelia. Gardening in general is a hobby/occupation where you can get involved at any level you want to, and doesn't need a high level of physical fitness for certain tasks.

Garden centres have been closed until recently and now they have plenty of stock to choose from. Our local garden centre, Port Sunlight Garden Centre has very helpful staff who will be able to give advice on all gardening situations. There are also shops in the area which sell plants and packets of seeds. You will probably have seen the plant trays adorning the pavement.

Gardening also offers the chance to make new friends, with like-minded people, who might be your neighbours, people passing your front garden and stopping for a (socially distanced) chat or you could join a local gardening group. These will be mines of information for the novice, providing good advice on a range of gardening problems. There will be always someone who has been gardening for years and has something to say on a topic, whether you like it or not!!! These groups also give you the opportunity to swap seeds and buy items you may need e.g. fertiliser. Often they advertise in the local paper or online.

GARDENING IN LOCKDOWN

As this year is an unusual time in all our lives due to lockdown, we have decided to grow many more vegetables than normal as the likelihood of having a holiday is very limited. We can keep them all watered and cared for, and look forward to a bumper crop of tomatoes, broad beans, chillies,



courgettes, peas, garlic and spuds. But as in nature, things can go wrong and garden pests and diseases may strike - the weather may turn against you. But that is a gamble you take if you grow your own plants. The pleasure you get from digging up your first crop of spuds is immeasurable, and they taste a lot better than shop bought. You also know they have not had horrible chemicals sprayed on them and come wrapped in plastic, so you are also doing your bit for the environment.

Who knows - you might get 'the bug', and decide this is a pastime that you will continue year after year as a new hobby. If you do, then good luck with your endeavours and may your fingers be forever green, and remember, from small acorns grow majestic oaks.

'The kiss of the sun for pardon,
The song of the birds for mirth,
One is nearer God's heart in the garden,
Than anywhere else on earth.'

Dorothy Gurney

Duncan and Julie



THE LEWIS' LOCKDOWN

Hello everyone, its lovely to have this chance to connect with you all through the magazine and hope that you are safe and well and adapting to this 'new normal' that is lockdown life. As I write this we are approaching 12 weeks living within the restrictions placed upon us all in terms of our usual patterns and routines and I'm going to share with you some of the ways that we as a family have got through that time.

If you don't know us, there's three of us in the Lewis unit – me, Karen, my husband Paul and our 12 year old son Mason. We often read in church and Mason attends Boulders so hopefully you may know us.

Starting with that dreadful announcement back in late March, as both myself and Paul work in the social housing sector we find ourselves busier than ever. The biggest change being that I was working from home full time having gone out to work every day for my whole career prior to that. Paul's situation was different as he has been working from home for many years now in his role and so there was no immediate change to routine for him. Mason was obviously also then joining us through the closure of his school (Wirral Grammar) and suddenly we found all three of us in the same place 24-7!

I think like many people, it felt a little like an extended holiday or honeymoon period at first but that lasted for maybe a week. Then the reality set in. My employer very quickly put in place lots of technology to enable us to meet virtually and stay connected with each other and the school were quick to act and we settled into working and schooling, adapting to the distance from teachers, colleagues and friends the best we could.

I won't say that we found it easy to adapt to all the technology, as we are a family that doesn't heavily rely on it to be honest and we're quite old fashioned in our hobbies, interests and family activities, but if nothing else we have learned how important technology is in keeping us connected and able to carry on working and learning. We have all developed more skills and definitely feel more confident than we did 12 weeks ago. I am now finding myself in Google hang outs with 45 people from all over the world - something that I had never experienced until now. So that's the first positive that has come out of the lockdown for us as we have had to face our technology fears and overcome them.

Mason has adapted to home schooling well and now is in a real rhythm with it, completing his 14 subjects a week by Thursday afternoon and having some well-earned free time to relax and more recently spend time outdoors

THE LEWIS' LOCKDOWN

with some of his friends.

We're now experts in Zoom, my work system is called Blue Jeans, I've already mentioned Google and the Teams system and in my work I have found myself leading conferences and events speaking to upwards of 200 people at a time and not being able to see any of them on my screen. It's been quite surreal at times.

From a more personal perspective, Paul and I were very lucky that neither of our roles were affected by the economic impact or furloughing and this has allowed us to make charitable donations to many good causes that have been highlighted to all of us during this time and we thank God for how lucky we have been in this regard. This aspect is another positive that has arisen from this situation for us.

We've tried to keep engaged with community efforts such as clapping for key workers (although living where we do we haven't had any neighbours to



commune with – just the occasional walker), dancing on our door steps, VE day celebrations, and displaying rainbows.

Being disconnected from friends and family, including our church community has obviously left a big gap in our lives and we have done many



things to fill that. Most importantly I hope I speak for all three of us when I say that the extra time together as a

family unit has been truly wonderful overall. Don't get me wrong, we've had our moments and there's been stress, emotions, frustration, anxiety and worry. But overwhelmingly for us there's been more laughter, lots of fun, lots of fresh air, and lots of hugs, recognition that we need each other and rely on each other more than we probably realised and whilst our resilience is tested we have got to this stage by being there for each other. "No man is an island" after all.

So if we're looking for positives for me you can't get much better than that. Alongside that we have also tried to be there for others where we can. We have socially distanced at all times but had many pavement conversations

THE LEWIS' LOCKDOWN

with people from the parish whilst out on walks, riding our bikes or just doing our essential shopping. We've also written to people, made lots of phone calls and tried as often as we can just to offer a smile or a hello to passers-by.

Some of you may know that before lockdown Paul was awaiting a date for some surgery and obviously that was put on hold to divert resources within the NHS. This has been particularly challenging for him as we would have expected him to have been in hospital and recovered by now, so we have prayed every day for him to be able to manage his pain and get through. We are hopeful that we may hear something soon as our amazing hospitals start to consider their plans for restarting routine operations and helping those whose treatments have been disrupted by this terrible virus.

As we've been at home a lot more we've had the chance for lots of pastimes and interests. Some not as successful as others. We are really keen gardeners and our garden has been an absolute haven for us in these last 3 months. We have spent as much time outdoors (largely thanks to the truly wonderful spell of balmy weather we have had) as possible and enjoyed creating a colourful patch of paradise to enjoy. We've also grown more produce this year as we've had the time to nurture and experiment and so far we've eaten home grown salads and strawberries with cherries, tomatoes, runner beans and rocket yet to be harvested. Surely another positive.

We've done home baking like many people and whilst they may not be the most attractive fayre, we've enjoyed eating the fruits of our labour!! We've tried many sporting activities and Mason has really taken to basketball with the hoop that we have had in the stable for years suddenly being the most used piece of equipment. This has been particularly great as it is something that Paul can do with Mason.



I've tried to keep up with my yoga, had a go at Zumba (let's not talk about that), did a bit of running (again let's not talk about that and the subsequent knee injury), we embraced the daily discipline of Joe Wicks for a few weeks but simply couldn't sustain it with work commitments. But largely we've made use of the open spaces around us with football, walking, cycling and the occasional swing of a golf club. It's been really inspiring for me to see the amount of people making use of the free facilities we have on our doorsteps and being creative with their exercise activity.

THE LEWIS' LOCKDOWN

We've watched loads of live theatre to try and make up for the cancellation or postponement of live entertainment we were meant to be seeing this year. But it means we've got lots to look forward to next year and all the plans are already made so there's no effort required for our 2021 calendar.

In another part of our lives we've also made sure we have kept our spiritual needs met. We have watched live every Sunday morning the 'You Tube' broadcasts from the Vicarage and more recently the church. Mason and I have prayed every night – at first using the Covid 19 resources that we collected before lockdown and more recently the daily Facebook prayers. I also signed up for the Prayer course with Eunice and have enjoyed it tremendously.

So, I guess our lockdown life has been quite a full one and we are thankful for that. We have tried to stay positive wherever possible whilst also staying informed and connected to the reality of the awful impacts in our community, our nation and the world of the Coronavirus. We have worried and are still, but we're finding ways to make the best of this challenging situation. Every week I write a lockdown summary and post it on Facebook. It was originally intended just as something to help me and make me focus on the good things (however small). However, it has grown beyond that and I now publish it weekly in work as well on our intranet and between both platforms I receive many comments about how it also helps other people and has encouraged others to look for what's good in their lives whilst we work to overcome the current crisis.

I guess that's how we've thrived so far, remembering what's good, acknowledging what isn't so good and using love in all its guises as the golden thread that will help all of us whatever our particular situation is to come out of lockdown and be once more our Christ Church family.

I could go on, but will stop now. God bless you all and we pray that we see you all soon when we can celebrate God's love for us once more in person.

Karen, Paul and Mason xx



ECO CHURCH

Great News! Eco church Gardening Club aims to meet up at least once per week, starting on Saturdays at 2pm. Meet up in the woodland area (see below). Don't forget your secateurs, gloves, strong shoes and of course refreshments. We will be socially distanced. We may even develop a second meeting on a Tuesday depending on numbers! Watch this space.



Even during lock-down nature carries on regardless; stinging nettles and blackberry briars have grown in abundance in the orchard area, however they were no match for the determined Eco Gardeners - ably abetted by Sam and Harry on refreshments!



ECO CHURCH

We have all witnessed wild-life returning to our gardens, perhaps more birds now visit, even hedgehogs appear. The garden area at church is no different. We now have pond, thanks to Duncan's hard work, shallow and inviting to wild life.



Our woodland walk is looking good with some interesting additions – the mirror adds an extra dimension to the views along the path possibly even confusing a passing fox in the early morning.

The Spring flowers were spectacular, the woodland floor being carpeted in many bluebells and occasional white bells. Now the foxgloves are towering over the many smaller wild flowers such as burdock, buttercup and campion.



While George's bivouac skills have been put to good use somewhere in the wilderness!

We are continuing to plan the development of this wonderful part of God's Acre so that as many folk as possible will enjoy it. If you would like to be involved in this exciting project be it hands on digging or choosing the next batch of seeds please talk to Mike or Pam.

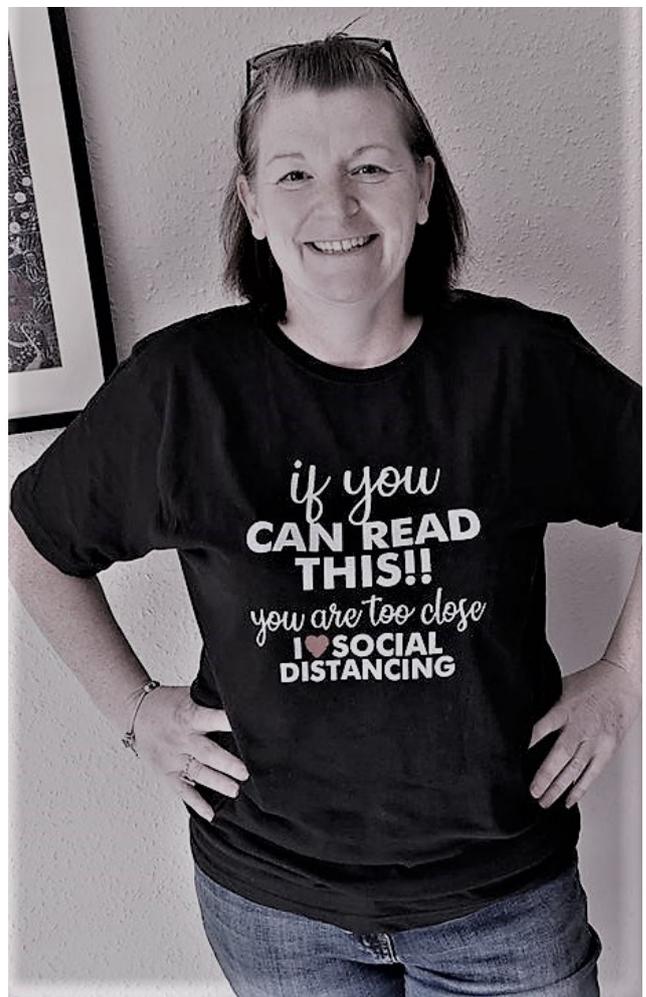
LOCK DOWN LIFE FOR KATE LEWIS

I'm Kate, I've been lurking around the edges of Christ Church life since I moved back to the Wirral 7 years ago. I started off at Play Group and was befriended by my now best friend Vicki. Through her I have been to many of the social events but was adamant the church 'stuff' wasn't for me. When Mike arrived in the Parish, we had a chat about Alpha as I had done a course about 20 years ago and enjoyed it but it didn't really leave me with any desire to become part of a church community. A couple of years later Mike and Eunice started a course and I went along. I really enjoyed it. We carried on meeting following the end of the programme and I now consider my Alpha 'crew' like family. I also started attending services.

I am still working through my faith, what I do believe is that being a Christian is about leading a good life both for yourself and for others. So, I knew that when Covid-19 popped its evil little head up I wanted to make sure that people knew they were not alone and that I would try and help however I could. I have done all sorts since then and I've loved it. I have made lots of new friends that I would never really had got to know.

Specifically, I have been shopping for Joyce, Phil, Bridie and Ian every week since this started. I now know what they do and don't like – Phil even writes his list in the order it is on the shelves and Joyce has a secret love of Kit Kats! I look forward to our weekly chats, both on the phone when I get their orders and when I drop it off. I have also enjoyed seeing people's generosity in donating for the Food Bank when I collect and then drop off massive bags of food each week. I am also finding it rewarding getting involved in applying for funding to support the work of Christ Church in the community, I am in the middle of an incredibly special one – so watch this space!

I will be honest; I feel uncomfortable when people have thanked me for volunteering. I have not done it for that.



LOCK DOWN LIFE FOR KATE LEWIS

Like many I have found lockdown ridiculously hard. I am a single mum to Cleo 15 and Georgie 8. Cleo used the lockdown to spend time with her dad in Sheffield, so much of lockdown I have been alone with Georgie. My mental health has been up and down like a yo-yo. Without the routine of shopping for my new friends, visiting the Foodbank, taking part in weekly Zoom meetings with my Alpha family and talking about exciting new projects with Mike and Eunice, I may not have got through this period in one piece!



So rather than people thanking me, I would prefer to thank the Christ Church family for allowing me to play a part in making things a little easier for people locally and providing me with support and structure when I needed it most.

MY LOCKDOWN EXPERIENCES

As a student in high school, I see my friends near enough all day every day: hanging out before and after school, in lessons, walking past in the corridors, eating lunch together and walking home after school. And then being on the phone to them for a few hours in the evening while you do your homework and pack your bag for another day of school tomorrow.

Quarantine was great at first: I could get up at any time I wanted, I could do my work in pyjamas, not to mention not having to ask permission to go to the toilet! I am finding work a little more difficult when it isn't being verbally explained by a teacher and I definitely miss the classroom environments with my friends.

I was able to meet up with one of my friends while maintaining social distancing measures. We went on a walk around Birkenhead Park and took photos together in the sun which was lovely. I'm finding that I'm not missing my friends too much because we communicate through messages and FaceTime so we are still in touch.

I am really enjoying spending time with my family and being able to work at my own pace - although that means that it's difficult to keep up with work. I am definitely enjoying quarantine and not finding things anywhere near as difficult as I'd expected, I hope you're all keeping safe and well, I can't wait to see you all at church when things go back to normal. Liz x



PARISH POET

Beyond the small voices

Small things,
small voices,
inserting their viral DNA,
their silly playground rumours,
into the sentences we weave
behind our eyes...

Playground bullies,
shaking the shoulders of the creative kids...

We close our doors,
shut down
and hide,
just as we're told.

There's no choice,
no light behind numbers and facts;
bulletins,
falling like acid,
soaking like rain.

We are drenched in them,
stealing the lives we thought we'd won.

But these are small things,
inserting their viral powerplay
into small pieces of the fire...

the fire that lifts us...

the fire we are...

the flames that lick the skyline free...

the untouchable you,

dancing sunbeams in me.



Parish Poet: We are blessed to have a local poet, John Hulme, as a member and friend of Christ Church and are delighted to share his work.

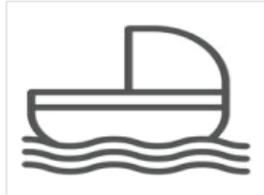
BIBLE QUIZ

Who's Who in the Old Testament?

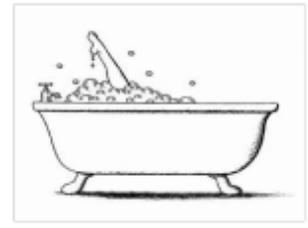
1. Who was the grandson of Adam and Eve?



2. Who was the mother of Moses?



3. Who was Bathsheba's first husband?



4. Who was Jacob's father-in-law?



5. Who was Samuel's mother?



6. Who did the Queen of Sheba famously visit?



7. Who was more of an ass than his donkey?



8. Who was Ahab's wife?



9. Who was Ruth's second husband?



10. Who interpreted the "Writing on the wall"?



Answers: 1. Enosh (Genesis 4:26) 2. Jochabed (Exodus 6:20) 3. Uriah the Hittite (2 Samuel 11:3) 4. Laban (Genesis 29:22 & 23) 5. Hannah (1 Samuel 1:20) 6. Solomon (1 Kings 10:1) 7. Balaam (Numbers 22:21) 8. Jezebel (1 Kings 16:31) 9. Boaz (Ruth 4:10) 10. Daniel (Daniel 5:12)

TREASURER'S NOTES

We may still not be able to gather for public worship but the work of Christ Church goes on – and needs to be paid for!

Thanks are due to many people; everyone who has maintained their standing order and especially those who have increased their monthly contribution. Others have made one-off lumpsum contributions and one person is in the process of starting a standing order. I try to acknowledge all special contributions but sometimes the details are scanty or the contribution is in cash and is deliberately anonymous but thank you all the same.

Contributions by weekly envelopes are still coming through. If you give in this way, please continue putting the money in week by week and bring the envelopes along when the opportunity arises. If you give by cash on the plate, please put the money aside in a handy jam-jar and bring it along when you can. We are quite happy to accept cash; we can always wash our hands after counting it!

As you might imagine, with the Centre closed the income has been zero but we still need to insure the building and keep everything clean and in working order for when we are allowed to re-open. Rest assured that I am making good use of the Government's furlough scheme for our paid part-time staff; I am also seeking grant funding from the Government's Discretionary Business Grant Fund administered locally by Wirral Borough Council.

Thank you for your ongoing support and let's hope that we can soon start the process of re-opening Christ Church and the Community Centre; however, I suspect that it will be some while before "normal service is resumed".



Charles Van Ingen, PCC Treasurer



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



Unrivalled client service.

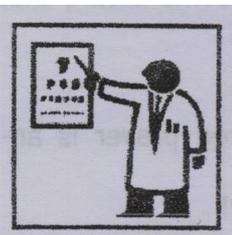
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If you are in need of any **practical support** such as food shopping, picking up prescriptions or dog walking, please call any of the following numbers and we will arrange for someone to help you:

Christ Church Parish Office: 07473 028 991, Rev Mike Loach: 0151 609 0943,
Rev Eunice Blackmore: 0151 648 5343, Sarah Loach: 07828 166 490,
Kate Lewis 07891 590 743.



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