

# CHRIST CHURCH HIGHER BEBINGTON

NEWS LINK

Christmas Special



***Church Services: Our beautiful church building continues to be open for private prayer every day from 10am - 7pm.***

***Current regular services 8.30am & 10.00am on Sundays and 10.30am Wednesday for Holy Communion.***

***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/d0o2MYNudgbzFUzg>***

 **THE CHURCH  
OF ENGLAND**  
Diocese of Chester



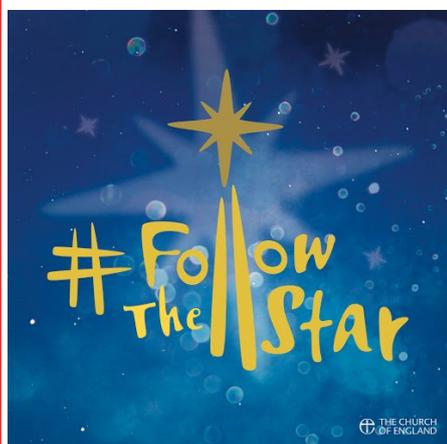
**<http://www.christchurchbeb.org.uk>**

# VICAR'S LETTER

Shining our light in the darkness... Light is a very common theme during Advent and Christmastide and it's easy to see why. As the nights draw in and the weather becomes more challenging, a light to guide the way, to create a sense of warmth or just to simply penetrate the darkness can be a source of comfort, even a source of hope. It should be no surprise that festivals of light feature at this time among several different faiths and have done so for thousands of years. Indeed, many of the light-filled traditions that we hold today can probably trace their origins to pagan beliefs centred around the winter solstice.



Now, if you're anything like the Vicar's wife, from about mid-Autumn, you'll be clamouring for fairy lights and going weak at the knees at the sight of a giant, flashing star! And it's clear that many of us have felt the same way at a time when brightness and joy have felt in short supply. It's been wonderful to see parishioners making an effort to brighten up their neighbourhoods by getting the decorations out early and I have been particularly thrilled by the response to our request to display stars in windows. And then, of course, it's been an absolute delight to

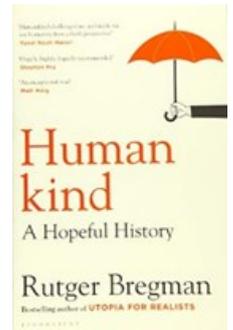


watch and join in with the work of the brilliant Brighter Bebington team who, this year, seem to have gone into overdrive! The additional street decorations (now extending to Broadway!) and trees going up in new locations have certainly brought a smile to many.



## VICAR'S LETTER (CONTD.)

We can all be very cynical about human nature, but I believe that the vast majority of people want to do what they can to brighten the lives of others. I don't think that we are content to sit in the dark – we want to both believe in the light of goodness and shine it for those around us when we can. I've recently started reading a book by the Dutch thinker, Rutger Bregman, titled *Human kind: a hopeful history*. In this he maps out his thesis that human beings are essentially kind, altruistic beings and that our suspicions about each other are generally borne of an addiction to news that almost always carries a negative bias. We are led to believe that when systems break down around us or when we're confronted with disaster, we will inevitably plot a course of self-interest, rather than care for each other.



Yet, so much evidence suggests quite the opposite. When possible causes for division are stripped back – race, politics, religion, nationalism etc. – rather than just take what we can, we tend to care for each other. We can see this in wartime, when natural disasters occur, when terrorists strike and, indeed, when in the middle of a pandemic. When all the layers of human ambition, greed and competitiveness are removed, we see something different in each other, we see something of ourselves, we see something made in holiness. To some extent, this is what happened at the first Christmas. God stripped away all possible marks of human status and allowed us to see His face, a face revealed in poverty and obscurity, but unhidden and available to everyone. In that wholly inclusive moment, God shows us what is possible when we dismantle our faith in worldly ambitions and, instead, trust in His ways of love. At that first Christmas, we are shown what true love looks like and in the life of Jesus we are shown how it can transform our lives, shining brightly to dispel the darkness and enable hope to illuminate the good to be found all around us.



I pray that the light of God's hope will shine for each one of you this Christmas. If there's anything that your church can do to bring some brightness, please don't hesitate to use any of the contact details listed in this magazine.

With love and every blessing,

*Mike*



# CORONAVIRUS HELP

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:** 07473028991

**Rev Mike Loach:** 0151 609 0943

**Pastor Dave Johnson:** 07843201906

**Rev Eunice Blackmore:** 0151 648 5343

**Cllr Tony Cottier:** 07971816596

**Kirsty Johnson:** 07850518154

**Sarah Loach:** 07828166490

If you feel in need of a **chat or just want some advice or reassurance**, please call any of the following people, who will be more than happy to speak with you:

**June Fogg:** 07711180491

**Audrey Clare:** 0151 334 2145

**Heather Whitehead:** 0151 608 7205

**Alan/Vera Jackson:** 0151 608 2466

**Cllr Jerry Williams:** 07926062968

**Cllr Christina Muspratt:** 07762099381

**Laurence Jones:** 0151 608 8053

Further local help & advice can be found on the following webpages:

<https://www.facebook.com/christchurchhigherbebington>

<https://www.facebook.com/compassionatebebington>

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/412914872967379/>

<https://christchurchbeb.org.uk/>

Christ Church, Higher Bebington remains open every day from 10am-7pm as a space for prayer and quiet reflection. Currently, regular services are held on Sunday at 8.30am and 10am and on Wednesday at 10.30am. ALL are very welcome!

## AN ASSOCIATE'S MUSINGS

Christmas 2020

This is going to be my first Christmas/New Year season that I haven't spent some days back in my home county with my family in Kent. I'll really miss my great nephew and great nieces who will have put on at least a year's growth before I see them in person again and already I'm feeling as if I've missed out on a significant part of their childhood. But I know I'm not alone in this. Far from it! I'm sure everyone reading this is now being prompted by their own stories and heart longings!

It's not just distance that's the issue. Even my neighbours who have family living much closer, have already decided to protect their health and limit any further spread of the virus by not having any Christmas meals with their family. This means they'll miss out on their new granddaughter's first Christmas – which is really tough! Yes - it is going to be so different for us all and that's without mentioning the heart-breaking stories of separation from those living in care homes and the despair of those in refugee camps so far from home and estranged from all they once had.

But even as these thoughts, initially of despair, come to mind – so does the first Christmas – which should be the focus of our activities. I don't think I've ever stopped to think before of Mary, a teenage mum giving birth to her firstborn in unhygienic and unfamiliar surroundings without her mum or any of the family being around her. How desperately isolated she must have felt. How she must have longed for things to have been so different. Did she even have a moment of regret that she had ever agreed to be "the Lord's handmaiden". But into that situation, and ours, I'm reminded that God comes to us, He is with us and He understands – whatever our situation – as He has been there already.

And then I smile when I think of God's humour in sending along, at that moment, a group of rough, uneducated shepherds whose lives are being transformed by overflowing joy and amazement of the inclusion of God ... and I start to wonder who He may send to my doorstep ... or is He asking me to go and make a difference to someone this Christmas?

Every Blessing, *Eunice*



BLUE CHRISTMAS

# Blue Christmas



**This Christmas is going to be so different! Everyone will be missing someone and much of what we normally look forward to won't be happening. At this quiet, reflective service we will acknowledge these feelings of loss and seek to rediscover hope as we marvel at the wonder of God coming to us.**

**Sunday December 20<sup>th</sup> 10 am**  
**Christ Church Higher Bebington**  
**You are very welcome!**



## NO LONGER AN ORDINAND-ARY LIFE!

So as you can see, the title of this page has now changed from "The Ordinandary-life" to the "No longer an ordianand-ary life" because (finally!!) I was actually ordained on the 24<sup>th</sup> October by Bishop Mark at Chester Cathedral. Maybe I will now take over the "Curate's corner" - as long as Eunice hasn't had it copyrighted!

It has been an odd journey, to say the least, but it has been a very welcome one for many reasons, such as our move into the vicarage of St Paul's in Tranmere, the building of a stronger relationship with the parish area and people around St Paul's, the change of identity (getting used to the collar!) and many others. So where am I now on this journey?

At present, my work alongside Mike and Eunice is mostly about building up local relationships around St Paul's, which, as you know, we are close to joining with as a new parish. I am making it a priority to visit the local shops, saying hello to the residents and keeping in touch with the congregation, all of which are vital for getting the work and message of Jesus Christ and of the church outside our walls. I am also trying to push the Christmas present appeal and form links with one of the local schools, whilst filling in the blanks on the church's opening times for personal prayer. As I write during the second lockdown period, much of this, along with weddings & baptisms, is on hold, but I'm hoping we can restart in Advent.

Alongside this, I am still giving a couple of hours a week acting as chaplain to the North West Ambulance Service and as a first responder. The latter I do to keep my hand in with medical skills for both my own enjoyment and for the benefit of patients and paramedic emergency services during this difficult winter.

And what about that vital cord that keeps me going? My wife and kids! Well Jeanette is part way through the Foundations for Ministry course and is really enjoying it - other than the dreaded Zoom meetings with her class, which just doesn't have the same effect as being in real human company does it? And the kids are all great, albeit we have had a serious challenge keeping them indoors whilst in lockdown, something which is obviously a problem for families all over.

So I have got a lot to be thankful for right now, with ordination, family, friends, work etc. but I have also a couple of prayer needs, if I may put these out there?

# NO LONGER AN ORDINAND-ARY LIFE!

1) As some of you may know I value structure and routine, in fact as a Benedictine (someone who follows the spirituality of St Benedict of Nursia) rules, tradition, order and routine has always been vital to me. Unfortunately, over the past few months my order has begun to fall apart which has made daily prayer, personal study and contemplation somewhat of a struggle and I have at times found this difficult to deal with. Yet, I know I am not alone in this struggle, both internally and within the world, and I gain comfort knowing that God uses all things for the outworking of His Spirit so that the bigger picture we do not see is played out for his greater glory. If you have found your routines and rules have fallen apart during this COVID madness, then this message of struggle is also for you - do not worry, but rather use the times of silence to ask the Lord to reveal to you what it is that he is trying to tell you, so that you may grow in these times of uncertainty.

2) The second prayer request is for my time here on site at St Paul's. Please pray that clergy may become closer to the local community and enable all those they meet to see the church visibly around the streets, so that the congregation may begin to grow and the name of Jesus become better known among all.

So this is my journey so far, and these are my prayer requests. If you have prayers please do not forget that we are here for you, for your prayers, struggles and petitions, you have but to ask and we will pray for you.

May the Lord sustain and guide us as a shepherd tends to his flock now and over the coming weeks and months ahead...Amen.

In Peace,  
*George*



## CHRISTMAS SERVICES

# Christmas Services



**Sunday 13th**

4pm Christingle Service

**Sunday 20th**

10am 'Blue Christmas' - for anyone struggling with the festive season

6.30pm Carols by Candlelight

**Christmas Eve**

4pm The Nativity Service

11pm Midnight Communion

**Christmas Day**

10am Family Celebration with communion

If you'd like to attend any of these services  
please book your place through the parish office: 0151 608 4429  
or email: [parishoffice@christchurchhigherbebington.org.uk](mailto:parishoffice@christchurchhigherbebington.org.uk)

All services will be livestreamed on YouTube at Christ Church HB



# CHRISTMAS DAY LUNCH



Very sadly, this year we won't be able to gather as usual in the Community Centre, but we would still like to provide festive food and a Christmas Day greeting for anyone who would welcome this. If you or anyone you know would appreciate a doorstep visit and/or some food, please do let us know.

at **Christ Church Parish Office: 608 4429**  
or **parishoffice@christchurchhigherbebington.org.uk**  
or **Revd Mike Loach:609 0943** or **mgloach@gmail.com**

# REMEMBRANCE SUNDAY

Although we weren't able to hold our usual day Remembrance Service in church this year, you can see from the photographs that we were able to display our beautiful poppy cascade near our war memorial and a smaller one at the font. The poppies were made by various individuals and groups in the parish and our local Soroptimists attached them to netting to create the cascade two years ago. Thank you to everyone who helped to put it in place again this year especially



Diane Shaw, Barbara Mayers, Jan Cowell and our man with a ladder, Terry Cunningham.

Next year is a very special year for the British Legion.. it's the 100 year anniversary. To commemorate that event and to honour those who have lost their lives whilst protecting us, we are planning to create

a poppy installation outside... A cascade of poppies that will fall from the bell tower. But we need your help...we need a lot of poppies!

If you can knit, crochet or sew as many poppies as you can between now and September 2021 we will gratefully receive them all. A box will be placed in church where you can place your creations throughout the year. All shapes and sizes will be welcome...they just need to be red. Regular progress updates will appear in future newsletters.

Next October we will be asking for volunteers to come and attach the poppies to the netting so that it will be a real community enterprise and something that will honour the memory of lives lost but never forgotten. Good luck and God Bless!

Helen Byrne



## NEWS & EVENTS

Although members of our mental well being group, **Oasis**, are unable to meet in person at present, we continue to support each other by phone, email or text. Anyone who wishes to be included in the group please contact Jill Wright – either by tel:- 792 3668 or Mobile 0774848021 or email:- jill.wright3@homecall.co.uk

### **Mary's Meals: [www.marysmeals.org.uk](http://www.marysmeals.org.uk)**

Thank you for your continuing support of this charity. Requested items appear regularly in the box in the church porch and are gratefully received. There is a list of requested items. Please also give any cash donations to **Jill Wright**. At present, and until 31<sup>st</sup> January 2021, every donation will be doubled by the UK government up to £2 million. £15.90 usually feeds one child for a whole year, so now, because of this doubling it will feed TWO children. The website has all the details.

**Sue Donovan – Charity Fundraiser**

### **Happy Reading Group**

We have not been able to meet for a long time, because of the coronavirus. When we did meet in the Church Centre, we would read a poem, also a short story, and discuss our views about these. While enjoying tea or coffee and biscuits, our discussions would wander about in a variety of directions, and there was much laughter. So we are looking forward to when we will be able to meet up again. At present we are communicating via email, about what we have been reading . Anyone who enjoys reading and a chat is very welcome to join us.

My email address is: p.golby45@gmail.com Penny Golby

### **Holy Land Pilgrimage 8<sup>th</sup>- 18<sup>th</sup> November 2021**

We are still going to the Holy Land! Sadly our Pilgrimage was not able to take place this year, because of the Pandemic. Thankfully, we have been able to rebook for 2021 and, all being well, will be jetting off to Tel Aviv on 8<sup>th</sup> November 2021. At the time of writing, the government have just opened up Israel and Jerusalem as a 'travel corridor'. So far 33 of us have booked to go, which includes our three leaders:- **Rev's Mike Loach, George Roach and Lay Minister Jill Wright.**

If you are interested and have not booked please contact one of the above leaders for further information.

# LIFE IN LOCKDOWN - BY JILL WRIGHT

'You're joking, Not another one!!'

As we prepared for our second national lockdown I remembered those immortal words of the pensioner in 2017 when she heard we were to have another general election!

What to do?

I remembered from last time, various handy tips to help me through – not least to count my blessings every day, as also recommended recently by Marjorie Wells in a recent BBC interview.



I resolved to focus on what I could do rather than what I couldn't!



Sadly no tennis club or walking club for me to engage with but thankfully, this time we are allowed to walk with one other person outside, and even sit on a bench together! Social distancing of course. I set about organising local walks with individual friends. Sometimes the weather is kind – sometimes not! but fresh air, exercise and friendship are the key. Also the opportunity to enjoy God's creation first hand. I show a photo of Penny Golby and me on one of our walks. I confess some footpaths are a bit of a mud bath! We can laugh about them afterwards when we are home and dry.

My garden also beckoned. Gone was the warm and sunny weather of Spring and summer, but lots still needs doing to prepare for winter and plan for Spring. I bought a new wheelbarrow and set to work.

I enjoy good exercise and a sense of achievement when done!

Our church is still open for private prayer – I open up on a Saturday morning which gives me a lovely sense of connection. I also watch the church services on You Tube, joining in communion with a glass of wine and piece of bread.



## LIFE IN LOCKDOWN - BY JILL WRIGHT

In possibly a rash moment, I volunteered to come out of retirement and preach again, as a lay Reader, so I am on the rota now. Planning and preparing sermons and prayers gives me a real sense of fulfilment and purpose. Of necessity I have also been involved with rearranging the church Pilgrimage to the Holy Land for next year. (Yes really! we are going to the Holy Land!) I also try to connect with church folk who may be isolating at home.

I do confess that I enjoy watching TV in the evenings – ‘Strictly Come Dancing’ and ‘The Repair Shop’ being a couple of favourites. Radio Merseyside is also a good source of entertainment. I do heed advice not to listen too often to the news! When government officials (otherwise known as The Chuckle Brothers) regale us with grim graphs and statistics I limit my viewing and catch the main points on the main news later.

It is also a good idea to be creative, if possible. I am in admiration of the plan to have a cascade of poppies from the church tower for Remembrance Sunday next year. I have obtained a simple knitting pattern (thank you Joan!) and resolve to make use of those long winter evenings producing lots of poppies!

I do hope all of you are able to keep occupied in some way too. We are certainly having a challenging time but I take comfort from this prayer which I read in a Mothers’ Union publication recently:-

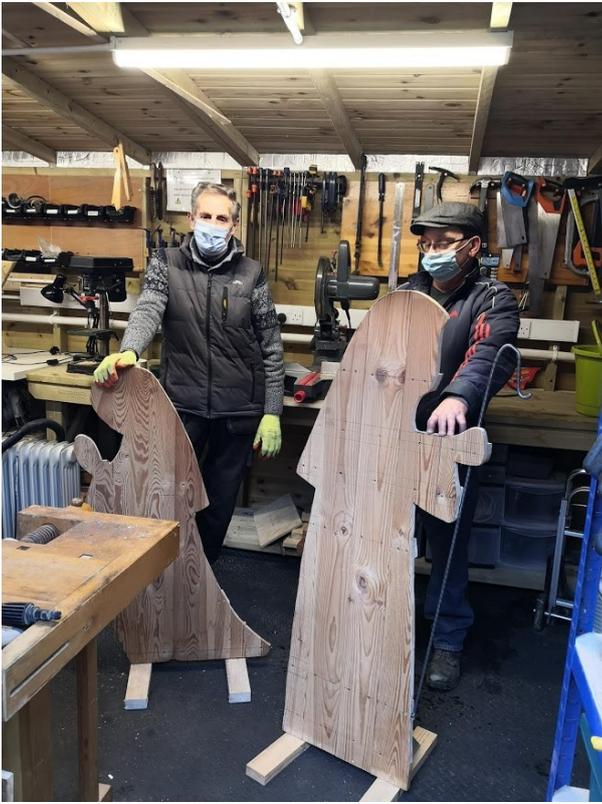
Prayer for Protection Written in 1940  
by James Dillet Freeman

‘The light of God surrounds me,  
the love of God enfolds me,  
the power of God protects me;  
the presence of God watches over me.  
Wherever I am, God is!’

May God bless you all. Jill



# MEN IN SHEDS



As with all other groups, Beb Shed has been badly affected by the pandemic and resultant restrictions. However, we have still managed to get the shed open on occasions and have started work on some festive projects, as can be seen in the adjacent photograph. We were also involved in constructing the frames for the highly successful scarecrow festival. Several of our members are still avoiding gatherings, so our attendance has been quite reduced and our output limited. The patio extension has been completed and we are looking forward to receiving the second shed early in 2021. Once established, we should then be able to offer some additional activities such as

crafts and photographic & IT skills.

Since the last news, we completed the conversion of the telephone box on Teehey Lane (outside Smorgasbord) to house a Community Defibrillator. The defibrillator has been deployed once but fortunately was not required to be used.

Due to the lockdowns, we have not had any pick-ups of tools for TWAM, so currently have a shed full! Hopefully, we can return to some normality in the new year and get them sent off to those in great need, in Africa.

Continuing with the festive theme, we have installed some additional electrics on the centre roof, to power the polar bear, penguins and new Christmas lights which should be all be in place by the start of December.



Lastly, we were very saddened to learn that one of our founding members, Bob Baxter, has recently passed away. A "larger than life" character, Bob has been involved in most of the community type projects that have been undertaken locally, over several years and thus became a well known figure. He will be sadly missed.

# ST PAUL'S PRAYER DIARY

St Paul's has a history of publishing books for our Church family. In Lent 1977, Fr Alex Murray who was curate at the church gave everyone a book, in the introduction he said "Make of it what you will. Use it as you will. It is a notebook of things that make sense to me, and are precious to me – and because they are so dear to me, I want you to have those things which make me rejoice in Our Lord Jesus Christ." As I look at that first book I realise that its ethos is similar to our 2020 book.

In 2014 we produced 'The Vicar's Tarts and Other Recipes'. The book contained contributions of favourite recipes from Church members, friends, family, local councillors, the then MP for Birkenhead Frank Field, and the Bishop of Chester.

When Rev Jane Parry came up with the idea in 2018 of 'Give 365' she said "Give 365 is inspiring us to create a better, happier world by developing a habit of giving – one person, one give, one day at a time." The idea was that if 30 members of the Church pledged to GIVE something to someone, or something somehow, every day for a year .....

$30 \times 365 = 10,950$  ...Givings

Have you ever sat and thought of 365 gifts to give to people, and then for them to do something with them? It is a challenge, but these gifts could be as simple as giving someone a hug, raising awareness of a cause, or reusing a plastic bottle.

The 2020 book 'Hope, Peace, Joy, Love' is a compilation of prayers, Bible verses, poetry and quotes from the St Paul's family.

The 2021 joint publication for St Paul's and Christ Church is a diary. But it is a different type of diary to the norm – not one that you can write in every day, of what you have achieved, appointments to be kept, birthdays, anniversaries or holidays to look forward to. Usually our personal diaries are used to record dates to remember, which under normal circumstances need to be known.

Instead the St Paul's and Christ Church diary is one of Bible verses, with contributions from the church family of both churches. This diary includes favourite short passages selected for each day of 2021 which have some meaning, a special memory or speaks personally to the contributor. We therefore hope you enjoy this special diary as we journey through 2021.

But what of the future? Yes, I'm already thinking of the 2022 book and what it should be!!

Elaine Newall

# ST PAUL'S CHRISTMAS TREE FESTIVAL

Parish of St Paul with St Luke,  
Tranmere



Your Church is open, so why not come  
and see our Christmas Tree display?

**Sunday 29 November to Wednesday 6 January**

The trees are decorated by local schools, businesses  
& church groups



**Sunday\* – Wednesday 10:00 - Noon**

*(\*If Covid restrictions are lifted and public worship resumes Sunday opening will be 11:00am – Noon.)*

**Monday – Wednesday 2:00 – 4:00**



Come in for quietness, private prayer, reflection, meditation, to  
think, dream or to light a candle. Why not take a couple of minutes  
out of your busy day to enjoy the peace and quiet with us?

Old Chester Road, Rock Ferry, Birkenhead, Wirral CH42 3XD

Please follow the Covid-19 safety guidelines when entering

# ST PAUL'S CHRISTMAS TREE FESTIVAL

In 2018, Rev Jane mooted the idea of holding a Christmas Tree Festival. Highfield URC, in Rock Ferry already held one, which St Pauls had supported decorating two trees for Ss Paul and Luke.

The notion was to ask Well Lane Primary and Bedford Drive Primary Schools, as well as local businesses together with Church groups, to each have a Christmas tree and decorate it. How creative people chose to be was up to them.

For a first attempt this proved to be a success, with willing contributors, but lessons were learned. Trees look better if they were all the same standard size and shape. Fairy lights were definitely required as they made a real difference and added to the ambience of the occasion. Also, always ensure that the control for the fairy lights is at the base of the tree not the top. Sounds obvious I know!!

The 2019 Festival brought uniform trees and lights, but all individually decorated by the different community group, local business or school. The local café provided an ingenious star as part of their decorations using plastic cutlery.

This year, although we will be observing Covid restrictions, we are holding a socially distanced Festival. The two primary schools again wish to take part. The local café, the community supermarket, Pals Fellowship, Rosary Group, Al-Anon, Christ Church and neighbourhood chemist to name but a few also want to be involved.

This is a chance to celebrate the spirit of Christmas within our community and to be inspired by what local people and organisations can achieve, showing how creative they can be.

The 2020 Festival begins on Advent Sunday (29 November) and continues to the Feast of Epiphany (Wednesday 6 January). The Church will be open for viewing Sunday\* to Wednesday 10:00am – Noon, and Monday to Wednesday 2:00pm - 4:00pm. Admission is free. You are very welcome to enjoy our Christmas Tree Festival.

\*If Covid restrictions are lifted and public worships resumes Sunday opening will be 11:00am – Noon.

Elaine Newall

# REMEMBRANCE AT ST PAUL'S

This time of year always feels sadder; - is it the shorter, darker, dreich days that make us feel more mournful? Or is it the dying of the leaves from the deciduous trees after the riot of autumn colours, and the bare fields as the harvest is all 'safely gathered in' for the winter months? There are also the mass migrations of birds as those that visit us for the summer leave our shores and others such as geese arrive from colder climates to overwinter in the UK. However, for many people it is the numerous anniversaries of departed loved and missed family and friends which take place during the last three months of the year, which brings on the feeling of melancholy.

All Soul's Day (2<sup>nd</sup> November) or the Sunday nearest to that date is an opportunity for Roman Catholics and Anglo-Catholic churches to commemorate the faithful departed. At St Paul's we hold a service of 'Thanksgiving and commemoration'; - this is a time to remember those we have loved in quietness and reflection. The service is exactly what it says.



There is a hymn or two, and readings, but it is full of silences to enable those gathered to think their own thoughts and reflect upon their feelings. To feel at peace and remember those who have passed into God's care. It gives people the opportunity to pause and give thanks for the lives of people they love but they no longer see.

As well as the names of the departed contributed by the St Paul's family, we invite to church the families of those whose funerals have been officiated at by one of the clergy team to hear their loved one prayed for. The names are read aloud during the service, as all the congregation is invited to come forward and light one of the many tea lights laid out at the front of the church. This can be longest part of the service, and possibly the most moving, watching all the flames flicker in the semi-darkness.

Eternal rest grant unto them, O Lord, and let perpetual light shine upon them. May they rest in peace and rise in glory. Amen

Elaine Newall

# REMEMBRANCE AT ST PAUL'S

Remembrance Sunday and Armistice Day are both honoured at St Paul's, when fallen armed forces personnel are remembered. The Union Flag is flown outside the church and St George's Chapel is dressed with poppies. The chapel contains memorials of the St Paul's fallen as well as those from the former St Luke's Church which was amalgamated with St Paul's in June 1971.



Ten Perspex® figures each wearing a poppy sit silently around the church, like ghostly figures, seeing, listening, but never moving. These are the 'There But Not There' figures which were launched to mark 100 years since the end of WWI in 2018. The figures were obtained by Rev Jane via the Diocese of Chester. These figures can be easily missed, but it is hoped in 2021 to give them more meaning by adding the names to them from the war memorials with each figure representing approximately 18 of their fallen comrades.

The Service of Remembrance concludes with the Act of Remembrance within St George's Chapel. The wreath of poppies is laid between the memorial plaques in tribute to those who did not return from war. The last post is sounded and silence falls. We think of those who never came back, while the church clock can be heard striking the hour and the birds sing and the cooing of the pigeons reverberates around the building. Reveille arouses us out of the stillness. The 'Ode of Remembrance' taken from the poem 'For the Fallen' by Laurence Binyon, first published in The Times in September 1914, is said as is The Kohima Epitaph. After the singing of the National Anthem we can go home, have our lunch, and then during the evening watch the highlights on television of the Royal Family, the Government and the Armed Forces as they laid wreaths at the Cenotaph in London earlier in the day. But ten Perspex® figures sit in St Paul's; - 'There But Not There', representing a total of 177 men who never returned to Rock Ferry and Tranmere.

# ST PAUL'S WARDENS' REPORT

St. Pauls Church on Old Chester Road Rock Ferry has been the Parish Church of Tranmere for over 160 years. In 1971, the church was merged with St. Luke's Church which was built further along Old Chester Road near to Mersey Walks. The service is traditional Church of England with modern Catholic worship. We are a small but enthusiastic congregation. When not in lockdown we have Eucharistic services on a Sunday morning and a Wednesday evening.

During the year we arrange various fundraising events. On the second Saturday of the month we hold a Coffee Morning selling homemade cakes together with different goods every time. In the summer and at Christmas we have our fairs which are very popular, especially the Christmas Fair when Father Christmas makes his annual appearance.

The Parish hall is also available for hire.

The church is currently open for private prayer on a Sunday from 10am - 12 noon, Monday to Wednesday 10am – 12noon and 2 – 4pm.

We also have an evening Eucharist every Wednesday at 7.30pm.

All are welcome at any of these times of opening.

During December we will be holding our annual Christmas Tree Festival so why not take a few minutes out of your busy day and come along. You will be made very welcome.

You are more than welcome to light a candle if you wish to do so.

If you would like any more information about the church please don't hesitate to get in touch with one of the Churchwardens,  
Wally Randle  
0151 513 2645 or  
Beryl Smith  
0151 352 4415.



## CHRIST CHURCH WARDENS' REPORT

The last few months have been interesting to say the least. Being in and out of lockdowns and moving between tiers have caused us major issues as to services in church. It is great to report that throughout this traumatic time we were able to ensure that not only was our church open for private prayer every day but also the Sunday / Wednesday services carried on either by live streaming and/or with a socially distanced congregation. We even managed, within the regulations, to have a choir, a youth band and live organ music.

A huge thanks to all who contributed to this programme, particularly the ministry team and the Loach family.

Somehow we also managed to hold two special services – 'Time To Remember' and 'Remembrance'.

The stone cairn that was created after the Time to Remember service was populated with stones marked with the names of loved ones who have passed on. This was a most moving service and tribute. Grateful thanks to all who contributed.

The church was beautifully decorated for Remembrance Sunday with a sea of poppies cascading over the Roll of Honour. Many thanks to Helen and helpers for putting this tribute together and also all who contributed to this very important service.

As well as the services we have also managed to continue to help those less fortunate than us. We have been able to support:- Wirral Foodbank, The Ark, Forum Housing, Mary's Meal's Backpack Project, local care homes, Fair Trade and The Salvation Army's Toy Appeal. Your generosity is fantastic. Thanks to all for giving their time to support these charities.

Our Christmas tree has arrived, the church is decorated and we will continue to do as much as we can to spread the Good News to our community. Thank you all for your support, patience and even good humour during these troubled times. Let us hope that the gift of a vaccine this Christmas will allow us all to return to something close to normal early in the New Year.

May we wish you all a Happy Christmas and peaceful New Year.



# COMMUNITY CENTRE NEWS

Despite the centre being closed for much of this year, it has been heartening to see people keen to return. Vibe Dance School and Baby Sensory came back at the beginning of the Autumn term. Sit Fit also ran a few classes and they were full of people keen to get out and get fit! A new group started in September – Weight Watchers - which runs on a Saturday morning. This is a drop-in class, so no need to book.

Connect café held a couple of sessions after Wednesday communion at the beginning of September – socially distanced, in groups of six and with all the doors open. It was a bit chilly but nice to get together!

Ladies in Stitches also met in person, as opposed to via Zoom. They made cot sheets for Besom and Rhona demonstrated the delights of overlocking on her snazzy machine!

Men in Sheds have been meeting outdoors and are currently making crib figures.

Some groups planned to return but the constant uncertainty of the tiering system and lockdowns means that planning is very difficult and most commercial users and uniformed groups are now considering returning in the New Year, if they can.

The Centre has remained open during the current lockdown as it is important to maintain a community presence, particularly in these uncertain times. People are coming in with gift donations for our Christmas appeal and knitted crib figures. Decorations, lights and stars are going up, so the spirit of preparation which is Advent is being felt.

We are sure we all share the same hope of a return to some sort of normality at the Centre in 2021.

We wish Season's greetings to everyone.

Sarah Loach –  
Centre Supervisor

Julie Scarsbrook –  
Centre Administrator



# CURSILLO



The word Cursillo pronounced 'kooor-see-yo', derives from the Spanish "Cursillos de Cristiandad" meaning 'short courses in Christian Living' and is based on a simple discipline of prayer, study and action which empowers Christians to

grow and enable them to share Gods love with everyone.

I decided to go on a Cursillo weekend in October 2018 after a discussion with a devoted Christian lady named Susan who had just joined St. Paul with St. Luke church and had done a Cursillo course a couple of years before.

After filling the form in and posting it I began to look forward to the weekend. Soon it was October and I felt both excited and a little bit apprehensive because I wasn't sure what it was about.

I boarded a train at Chester and arrived at Frodsham then made my way to Foxhill Retreat House for the Cursillo weekend, as that was where it was being held. I received a lovely welcome and was shown to my room.

There are talks, meditations and some craft exercises. It was a thoroughly spirit filled weekend where I learned a lot and made some good friends. We have groups that meet monthly, though we have met more frequently during lockdown to support each other.

My faith has grown since that Cursillo weekend and I can thoroughly recommend it to everyone.

Beryl Smith



## A NOTE FROM THE ORGANIST

Greetings from the organ stool! I've been playing for occasional services at Christ Church (mostly around Christmas) for a few years now so it was with great pleasure that I started playing for regular worship a couple of months ago. It's been lovely to get to know some of you a bit better and although with the unique times it's not the easiest to get to know new people - please do come and say 'hello'.

I'm a freelance musician, writer, composer and accompanist. I also teach singing, piano and violin and I'm Musical Director for a number of local theatre groups including Chester Operatic, Castaway Youth Theatre and Bentley Operatic in Liverpool.

I grew up on the Wirral: as a teenager I could usually be found playing violin for the Merseyside and Wirral Youth Orchestras and piano at my local church. I studied law at the University of Sheffield and whilst there I took up an organ scholarship and was first taught organ at Sheffield Cathedral. I then got my first Director of Music post at St Mark's Church in Broomhill. I moved to London a few years later and went more into theatre and writing – although I've always freelanced on the organ. I have written several musicals, along with a growing number of plays and have won some awards for my compositions both nationally and internationally.

I moved back up to the Wirral a few years ago and live in Greasby. In my free time, I enjoy reading and walking – and spending time with my family, especially my nieces and nephews.

It's great to now be a more permanent part of the church community in Higher Bebington and am excited to see music in the church continuing to grow.

Wendy Dickinson



## MEET THE FAMILY - THE WILKINSONS

Hi, we are the Wilkinson family; Dave, Linda, Jack, Eva and Martha-Rose.

Myself and Linda met in the George on Village Road on Christmas night many moons ago. Yes it was the George at the time not the Tut and Shive! We both lived locally, Linda in Bebington, myself in Spital, and after a few years together we got married in August 2003.

We used to live in Eastham so we were married in St Mary's church in Eastham village and then had our wedding reception at the Hollins Hey in New Brighton. Before having children we moved back to Bebington in 2004 and then went on to have Jack (15), Eva (12) and Martha (8).

Family life is usually quite busy for us between both working full time, running the children around to whatever activities they are involved with and trying to cram in everything else. In "normal" times we usually plan a few camping trips throughout the year. As the children have grown older it gets more difficult to find something that all the children want to do, but, camping is one of those few things they all love....even though Linda is not so keen.

Thankfully we all like rollercoasters and fast rides (including Linda) so we often frequent theme parks. We had planned to visit Disney World this year to indulge this "hobby" but for obvious reasons that wasn't to be. We have instead made do with a trip to Alton Towers and Blackpool Pleasure Beach....oh well.

Linda used to go to Christ Church regularly as a child, attended Sunday school and was also confirmed here. We started re-engaging with the church through our children. Jack and Eva were christened at Christ Church. Martha was due to be christened earlier this year, but we hope to rearrange this sometime soon. We have also found the church a source of support and comfort when we lost our baby May.

By re-engaging with the church we then started becoming involved more in some of the events and attending some of the services. We found everyone so welcoming, friendly and showing a particular understanding of children. We recognised that Christ Church does so much for the community, promotes acceptance of everyone, has brilliant social activities for all ages, is fun to be involved with and meet nice people through. This has spread to Parents / Grandparents who have also experienced the Christ Church magic through enjoying events such as Christingle and the nativity service.

## MEET THE FAMILY - THE WILKINSONS



We have made lots of friends through Christ Church and love the feeling of being part of a community and church family. The great thing as well is that's not just Linda and I that feel this. Our children have been involved with activities such as the boulders group, quiz nights, Karaoke, beetle drives,

church bands, gardening, litter picks, parish weekend, making scarecrows and many other things. Through these activities they have made great friends, had a laugh and learnt a sense of community spirit.

Looking forward...(isn't that all everyone is doing right now?) We are looking forward to when circumstances allow for the church family to mix again. Definitely looking forward to getting Martha christened as soon as circumstances allow. Also, who knows, we might even be lucky enough to see grandchildren christened at Christ Church one day.



# FOLLOW THE STAR

The Scarecrow Festival saw homes and businesses across Higher Bebington make and display many wonderful creations. We would like to encourage our community to come together once more!

Christmas this year brings us the opportunity to focus on the future and share the joy of the festive season, together. The Christmas Star is a wonderful sign of hope and of celebration. FOLLOW THE STAR is about Higher Bebington's hope for the future and also a chance to virtually celebrate this Christmas together. We would love to see your windows filled with stars - home-made ones, painted ones, ones that glow or flash on and off. We will be posting craft ideas for you to try in the lead up to the big day. It would also be wonderful to share some photographs of your own stars. Please email your photographs to Victoria at [parishoffice@christchurchhigherbebington.org.uk](mailto:parishoffice@christchurchhigherbebington.org.uk). You can also message them to our Facebook Page [Christ Church Higher Bebington \(facebook.com\)](https://www.facebook.com/ChristChurchHigherBebington)

It will be a beautiful sight and a lovely opportunity to wrap up warm and explore your neighbourhood – Following the Star. Let us come together and show that we are celebrating Christmas as a community and we are hoping, together, for a happy and healthy New Year.



# ECO CHURCH



Eco church continues Going for Gold - from Arocha - a great deal of pruning and cutting back of overgrown shrubbery was achieved in the summer months, socially distanced of course - we still managed cups of tea and choccie biscuits to keep us going, thanks Sarah!!

Weeding continues in the graveyard on an ad hoc basis with folk simply tidying their own plot, thank you all.

Our Boulders group of young people worked hard to bring in the large harvest of apples from the Vicarage garden plus the church plot. There are still some apples in the entrance hall if anyone would like any.



Work has continued on the Nature reserve area, thanks go to Duncan and Julie for their hard work there.

Although there are many things on hold, nature continues to flourish around us. The beautiful autumn colours have brightened up our lives recently while the temperature drop reminds us that winter is not far away - a time to hibernate as many plants and animals do; a time to regenerate. So wrap up warmly, venture out for a walk safely and enjoy the coming delights of Christmas trees and lights in our part of God's Acre.



# PARISH POET

I have been through so much stuff the past few years... and I've seen some searing glimpses of the burdens others have been carrying, too...often invisibly. This time of year, a lot of those burdens can feel harder to carry. Or perhaps this is simply when the truth of hope is clearest, standing in a cold place, waiting for something only a heart can warm...

What if I love you was something like snow?  
Something in flurries and blizzards and ice -  
something too cracked to be careful... an avalanche that won't let go.

Falling like soldiers and leaflets and bombs but  
landing like feathers and snow...  
like something we drop from a big empty space that used to be our place.

What if I love you was breaking the law?  
Cracking its head on a steel prison door.  
And I'm a million, million miles away,  
with a version of love I can't write anymore.



What if I love you was gears in your head?  
Screaming for somewhere your heart wants to go...  
and the world says no...and the world says no... and the world says... snow

What if I love you was nothing like life?  
What if it all froze up, fell down; made a hard, driving rain and then left you  
to drown?

What if I love you was nowhere and nothing and  
darkness and stones?  
And the stars breaking through...still burning you.  
But they've stolen someone just like me, just  
when I thought I was free.

So what if I love you was breaking the law?  
Cracking its head on a steel prison door.  
And I'm a million, million miles away,  
with a version of love I can't write anymore.



**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.

## EVERY PICTURE TELLS A STORY...

We are often asked how we came to have a hand in designing and making the friezes for the display board in the church porch.

One Christmas-time, some many years ago, with ideas for classroom decorations still charging round in my head, I looked afresh at the sorry state of the church porch notice board. The dusty, green baize cover was adorned with yellowing, time-expired A4 notices, each one dog-eared and suspended at one corner by a solitary, rusty drawing pin. The board was also home to a thriving and particularly active family of spiders.

As I stared and shuddered, Canon Peter Christensen happened to be passing and I enquired if he had any plans to decorate it for Christmas. "No." he replied, somewhat defensively, "Have you?" When I responded that, well actually, I did have, he said, "OK, go ahead!" Since then our role as Christ Church 'visual aid' providers has rather grown and the spiders have long since been banished to the churchyard to provide food for the birds.



It is usually me who has the ideas for a display and I then run them past John, and a number get turned down on grounds of practicality! Next we take a trip to 'Abakhan' where suitable materials are searched for, agonised over and finally bought. Once home, then John takes over. He is the artistic one of us. He is able to cut out shapes and hand-sew beautifully.

(His mother was a domestic science teacher and had been determined that her children were going to be self-sufficient in domestic accomplishments.) Eventually, after much arranging, pinning and sewing, the piece is finished and displayed. Any 'quotes' required become my responsibility. Unlike posters, the friezes are not usually 'commissioned', but we design them, usually according to the appropriate season, and with whatever our imagination has brought to mind.

Posters are also a classroom 'hang-over'. I often needed displays and visual aids for school and I have a total lack of drawing ability! John frequently had to bring home his work lap top, and, with the aid of 'floppy discs', I taught myself some very basic computer usage. Once retired, we bought our own machine and then I was completely free to experiment and we purchased the 'Serif' equivalent of desk-top-publishing software. Since I cannot draw and have always yearned to, this facility has provided me with the means to satisfy these longings but still use my own creative ideas.

To create a poster, I first have an 'idea'. Then I trawl through dozens of likely clip-art sites, each with hundreds of clip art pictures until one or more pictures inspire me. I then adapt them until they fit the required subject of the poster. Then I experiment with suitable fonts, bevels and colour combinations for any required 'writing' until the 'muse' is satisfied. I need to bear in mind that a poster has to speak for itself and that too much writing detracts from the visual impact. All this can take some time!

During the restrictions that we have been living under, like many others, John and I have felt that owing to our advanced years, we would join in the church services on YouTube rather than attending in person. The updating of our displays and posters has been a much needed means of keeping in touch, both with our friends at Christ Church and also with keeping the local community aware that we are still very much in business and are still there for them.

And - we still get a kick from spotting someone stop in front of our notice boards to read the posters!

Barbara & John Champion

## COMMUNITY FUNDRAISING

We are thrilled to have been selected to be part of the Co-op Local Community Fund. The fund supports projects across the UK that Co-op members care about. Each time a member buys selected Co-op branded products and services; the Co-op will give us funding. We are delighted to be joined by Brighter Bebington and Wirral Hospice St John's as the other local causes. It is your choice who to support, or you may wish not to select a cause at all, and the funds will be split equally. Please just sign up so our community can benefit. If you aren't a part of the scheme, please follow this link to become a Co-op member, or visit the shops on Tee Hey Lane or Cross Lane. Co-op Funeralcare is also part of the Community Fund. This is our Co-op Profile page. <https://membership.coop.co.uk/causes/51786>.

Any funds we are fortunate enough to receive, will be spent on activities that will help us to enjoy the church grounds and the parish as a whole. We want to put in seating areas for the community to meet friends or to relax and watch the world go by. It is also hoped to use the area as a start and end point for walks; exploring local history, getting fit and enjoying a socially distanced hot drink with friends at the end. We would welcome any other ideas that you may have! For further details or to share your thoughts please contact Kate Lewis on 07891590743.

# TREASURER'S NOTES

Let's get the bad news out of the way first; income from events and activities in the Community Centre is over £20,000 less than budget and income from "cash on the plate" on Sundays will be £5,000 lower. However, the good news is that, almost without exception, income from standing orders and envelopes has kept on coming in; thank you! Indeed, several people have generously increased their standing orders, others have given "one-off" lump sums. And we continue to receive envelopes containing cash (often pristine £20 notes) but with no name so we haven't been able to acknowledge safe receipt and say a proper "thank you".

Of course, we have taken the prudent measures that you would expect in terms of turning off the main heating in the Centre whilst keeping the Parish Office suitably warm. Cleaning in the Centre has been reduced with the spare resource being redeployed to the church building. Also, we have used the Government's furlough arrangements and made a number of claims on the HMRC Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme. In addition, we were successful in obtaining a £10,000 grant from Wirral Borough Council's discretionary grant scheme (funded by the Government) for "not-for-profit" community operations such as our Community Centre.

However, overall our day-to-day expenditure during 2020 is likely to be around £7,000 more than the corresponding income stream.

Fortunately, thanks principally to legacies from past members of our congregation, we have sufficient reserves to see us through this very challenging year and into 2021.

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](mailto:enquiries@law.uk.com)

*Thank you, Ian*



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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,  
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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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