

Swindon Old Town Partnership of Churches
Anglican - United Reformed - Methodist - Est. 1969

PARTNERSHIP MAGAZINE

APRIL 2022

80 PENCE



Photo: Janet French

Charles Vince
celebrating 60 years as a chorister

One in Christ - Together in Mission



The Ukrainian flag which will be flying outside Christ Church for the duration of the war to encourage people to pray for peace and to give generous support to our Ukrainian brothers and sisters.

Dear God we pray for peace in Ukraine this Easter.

Photo taken by Hugo Stevenette



STAINER'S CRUCIFIXION

will be performed by our

Partnership Choirs

on

Good Friday 15th April, 7.00 pm

at Christ Church

Soloists: Sir Peter Beale (Tenor)
Clifford Friend (Bass)

Organist: Tim Eyles

Conductor: Geoff Glead

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WORKING TOGETHER WITH OTHER CHURCHES IN OLD TOWN

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Partnership Letter

Christ Church Vicarage

Dear Friends,

Many years ago I was greatly helped by words from the commentator Rhidian Brooke on Radio 4's 'Thought for the Day' as he had returned from investigating HIV Aids across Africa on behalf of the Salvation Army.

'The world is in a very, very bad state but is being held together by countless acts of loving human kindness.'

It is absolutely heartbreaking seeing the effects of the Russian invasion in the Ukraine with so many people, towns, cities and villages being affected.

Thank you for your prayers, thoughts and compassionate acts which, added together, make such an enormous difference to our fellow human beings in their hour of need.

Where is God in the midst of human suffering and pain? This is the question we will return to ever more honestly, openly and compassionately this coming, never to be repeated, Holy Week and Easter 2022. We are all facing challenges and we need to be reminded that the joy of the Lord is our strength. (Nehemiah 8, v.10.)

I have been enormously helped by a film which was aired for the first time on BBC4 on Wednesday 23rd February, the night before the war began.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/iplayer/episode/m0014rhk/mission-joy-with-archbishop-desmond-tutu-and-the-dalai-lama>

bbc iPlayer - Mission: Joy - with Archbishop Desmond Tutu and the Dalai Lama.

A feel-good film that follows the meeting between the Dalai Lama and Archbishop Tutu in 2015 during which they show how it is possible to find joy despite life's challenges. www.bbc.co.uk



I have shared it with colleagues and friends across Swindon and it has been enormously well received. The film shares the distilled wisdom from two spiritual leaders about how they have found joy to be God's gift, infectious and long-lasting in the midst of the tremendous suffering they have faced during their lives. It is my prayer that we will receive afresh God's comforting joy in Jesus Christ this Easter, remembering that 'We are Easter people and Alleluia is our song'.

I found these words below outside Monmouth Priory Church the morning after watching the film. I was struck immediately by their poignancy, coming from an anonymous Irish poet remembering the vision of the Corrymeela Community, 'It is better to light a candle than to curse the darkness'.

Take Time

Take time to think;
it is the source of power.

Take time to read;
it is the foundation of wisdom.

Take time to play;
it is the secret of staying young.

Take time to be quiet;
it is the opportunity to see God.

Take time to be aware;
it is the opportunity to help others.

Take time to love and be loved;
it is God's greatest gift.

Take time to laugh;
it is the music of the soul.

Take time to be friendly;
it is the road to happiness.

Take time to dream;
it is what the future is made of.

Take time to pray;
It is the greatest power on earth.

As we continue to pray for peace in the world, beginning in our own hearts and lives, it will be a privilege to have the Ukrainian flag flying outside Christ Church, reminding us of God's presence in Jesus Christ with all our sisters and brothers who are suffering there and in other situations of conflict across the world. Never has Jesus' ecumenical passion, shared by Archbishop Desmond Tutu and the Dalai Lama, been so important and necessary. I am proud to share with you in being part of the oldest Ecumenical Partnership of Churches in the country. I am very conscious of those who have gone before us and those who will come after us.

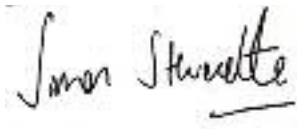
Christ has died.
Christ is risen and Christ will come again.

As the Ukrainian poet Taras Shevchenko wrote:

The sun sets, the mountains fade
Into the darkness, the birds note is stilled
And in the shadowy blue appears
A star
O star...My star

May this be prophetic for the people of Ukraine at home and welcomed around the world in their hour of need as refugees and asylum seekers, prophetic of the triumph of light over darkness.

God bless all those who suffer in Ukraine and Russia and throughout the world with the presence of the crucified, risen Lord Jesus Christ this Holy Week and Easter.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Simon Sturtevant". The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned above a short horizontal line.

FAMILY EVENTS

BAPTISMS

We welcome into the family of the Church

CHRIST CHURCH

Feb 27 Lottie Bee Barrett and Marnie Jules Barrett

DEATHS

We extend our sympathy to the loved ones

CHRIST CHURCH

Feb 7 Paul Andrew William Moss, 60 years
Feb 19 Peter Claude Smith, 92 years
Feb 28 Tanya Julianne Rose, 45 years
Mar 4 Alyson Julia Chllds, 71 years
Mar 4 Sylvester Leonard Banton, 97 years

IMMANUEL

Jan 26 David Edward William Maslen, 76 years
Iris Louisa Quinn, 100 years

FLOODLIGHTING

Mar 16 In memory of Margaret Lee.
Mar 21 Remembering my dearest son Ian Brown on his 60th birthday.
So loved and missed by all the family.
Mar 30 Remembering our dear Adrian on his birthday.
Andrea, John and Philip Downing.
Apr 18 James Lovegrove (Jeweller) and Doris Lovegrove, 23.12.1993.
Sadly missed by Jeanette and husband Chris Penney.

If you would like to sponsor the floodlighting of Christ Church in celebration of a birthday, wedding anniversary, special occasion, to advertise your Company, or in memory of a loved one, the minimum gift per evening is **£30.00**. Please visit www.christchurchswindon.co.uk/flood to book and pay. If paying by cheque, please make it payable to 'Christ Church PCC' and mark the envelope 'The Treasurer'. Requests should be made at least a week before the date of the floodlighting. GIFT AID: If you are a UK taxpayer and wish Christ Church to reclaim the tax, you may Gift Aid your donation.

CHRISTIAN AID WEEK 2022 - MAY 15th to 21st

The theme for this year's Christian Aid Week is "Hungry to provide". It focuses on three women from Zimbabwe who have been affected by drought due to climate change. Janice is struggling to provide for her family whereas Janet has already been provided with help to grow drought resistant crops and is now thriving. The third, Jerina, has diversified and trained to become a welder along with her husband.

Last year's Christian Aid Week raised £5.7m despite all the restrictions and difficulties in place at the time. The Old Town Partnership's contribution to this amazing total was £2,870. Christian Aid have a set a target for this year of £7m and we would like to do our bit to help meet this target.

There are a number of ways that you can help us do this:

- Whilst we do not think that the traditional house-to-house collection is appropriate now, there is an alternative - delivery only envelopes, which are delivered with details of where to return them. Specific envelopes are available for this purpose. Feedback from other places shows that, while you may not get many envelopes back, those that are returned have more in them (and are more likely to have the Gift Aid completed). This means that the overall total collected is very similar. If you would be prepared to deliver these envelopes in your own road, or nearby roads, and have them returned to your home then please let us know.
- As for the last two years there will be e-envelopes which you set up on-line and send to family, friends and colleagues. These have been improved for this year.
- You could hold a coffee morning or afternoon tea at your home or in your garden.
- You could take part in the 300,000 steps challenge for the month of May. This was introduced last year and was very successful.
- You could organise or take part in some other sort of sponsored event or activity (the more imaginative the better!).
- You could hold one of Christian Aid's Big Brekkies for which they have an information pack.
- You could hold a sale of items such as books or jigsaws. ➤

These are just a few suggestions and ideas that we hope will stimulate you to get involved. We do hope that you will want to play your part. If you would like to take up any of these suggestions, or have any others of your own, then do please let us know and we can provide you with appropriate information and advice. In particular, do please let us know if you would like to use the delivery only envelopes.

Thank you in anticipation.

Lindsey Miller (Immanuel) - linandave@btinternet.com, Tel: 01793 535855

Mike Palmer (Christ Church) – michaelailsa03@gmail.com, Tel: 01793

George and Dorothy Kennedy (Bath Road) –

george.kennedy@mybroadbandmail.com, Tel: 01793 772589

A mother stirs a single bowl of porridge for her children but she knows they're hungry for more. One bowl of porridge is all she and her family can eat today: 'My children crave a decent meal, but I can't provide. We often go to bed on an empty stomach. It pains me to send them to bed hungry. 'My children give me the power to go ahead... I pray they have a better future.'

You can help this loving mum, and others like her, turn hunger into hope

It's unjust that drought robs Jessica of the power to provide for her family. Her husband is unwell, so she's the only breadwinner. Her children look up to her, but she has nothing left to give. Once before, when things were desperate, Jessica asked her neighbours for food, but she came home with nothing. But Jessica is anything but helpless. In the face of drought, her love for her family gives her courage to stand strong - and we stand with Jessica. Together, we can restore justice to our world.



Bath Road

Services at Bath Road in April (all at 10am):

3rd April – Deacon Stephen Roe

10th April Palm Sunday – Rev'd. Tony Barnes

17th April Easter Sunday – Rev'd. Mark Barrett – Holy Communion

24th April – Worship Leaders (Simon Dixon)

The Mayor's Chaplain

The Mayor elect for Swindon is Councillor Abdul Amin and he has asked The Rev'd. Mark Barrett to be his Chaplain during his year of office. Mark has accepted and feels honoured to have been asked.

Matthew Cammish memorabilia



Martin and Eunice Robins

Matthew Cammish (1920-2018) was a lifelong Methodist preacher who joined Bath Road Methodist Church in 1956. His sermons were all typed and recorded in a meticulous manner and span his lifetime.

All sermons and associated papers are now on display at Glebe Farm, Lower Stanton St. Quintin near Malmesbury and there is to be a Matthew Cammish day. Please email: martinrobins@btinternet.com for details.

MOPS (MOPS stands for Mix Of People)

We meet on the 1st and 3rd Thursdays of the month from 2.30pm to 3.30 pm in the Crossland Room at Bath Road Methodist Church.

The usual format is to spend the first half hour chatting and the second half listening to a speaker or doing an activity.

April	7th	The Harbour Project, Kate Linnegar
April	21st	Chatting

MOPS???

How many of you must wonder when you read this what it is all about. MOPS has been running for some time but maybe newcomers are mystified as to what it is all about. We are in fact not a group of miserable old people but a mix of folk as when we originally started we had one gentleman as well.

We managed to start again in September 2021 inspite of Covid and we meet every other Thursday at 2.30 pm. We start off with a good old cup of tea and a chat and then we have either a speaker or we do an activity.

At the first meeting of this session we were all given an earthenware pot and bulbs to take home and put in the dark. I put mine away in the cupboard in the bathroom and forgot all about it. Of course, when I looked it was a sorry sight. All the other members have been very successful with theirs.

We have had a number of speakers, including George and Dorothy 'A Journey through the Orkneys' and David Sinclair told us about being an Eco Church. Besides other speakers, we have also done our own activities. We have spoken about our favourite poems, chosen and sung carols. We have just made Easter cards and on 17th March our good friend Tony Barnes came to speak to us.

If perhaps after reading this I might have whetted your appetite to join us, we are a jolly lot and will be pleased to welcome you.

Margaret Jones

see photo overleaf



Making Easter cards at MOPS

Bath Road Church Community Breakfast

9.00 am to 11.00 am

Saturday 9th April, Saturday 14th May

£1.00 for a bacon roll with tea or coffee

All are welcome.



Storm Eunice

Storm Eunice blew one of our minor stone decorations off its pinnacle and it took out a number of tiles on the way down. Thankfully it's all covered by our insurance and gives us the rare opportunity to carry out some additional maintenance at very little cost to us! An Act of God indeed. I recently scaled the scaffolding with the stonemason and thought you'd like to see some pictures of our church and town you don't usually see. *Steve Sparkes*

Photos overleaf...

Photos taken by Steve Sparkes from the roof of Bath Road Church



Looking towards Swindon: King William Street School in the near distance and beyond that the David Murray John Tower in the town.



A busy Bath Road.



A close up of one of our pair of Grotesques

A Christmas Treat



Margaret Jones and I had a trouble-free drive today up to Worcester to visit Kathryn and Adrian Read. The drive was my Christmas treat for Margaret, my friend of 60 years. Linking it to the visit really put the cream on top for us both!

Kathryn and Adrian were long time members of our Church before moving a few years ago to their forever home at Worcester with its stunning views of the Malvern Hills.

They made us very welcome and we spent a relaxing 3 hours swapping news of our friends and family. The time flew by and the lunch, prepared by Kathryn and helped by Adrian was great as was the sponge, freshly made by Kathryn.

They told us that daughter Sara is soon to complete her 2 years rotation training as a graduate Doctor and is then thinking of having a break before deciding on what speciality she wants to follow. Son Thomas is happily engaged on his job sorting out the complexities of supermarket club card scanning for discounted purchases.

Mum and Dad are still active with daily chores and Adrian is shortly to retire at 60. He then plans to reduce his radiology work to 2 days a week to give more time to help out at home.

Kathryn has retired due to ill health but in her own quiet, determined way still achieves a great deal and keeps going. The front garden was full of spring flowers and her sponge was 1st class!!

They send their best wishes to all in Swindon.

Eric Sparkes

The photo shows the view of the Malvern Hills from Kathryn and Adrian's back garden.

INTERNATIONALLY RENOWNED ART COLLECTION COMES TO BEWDLEY

A selection of art from the internationally renowned Methodist Modern Art Collection, one of the UK's most significant collections of modern religious art, will be on display in the Wyre Forest Gallery at Bewdley Museum each day from Saturday 26 March until Sunday 24 April 2022. Opening hours are 11.00am to 3.00pm and admission is free.

The total Collection features fifty works, including some by well-known artists such as Graham Sutherland, Elisabeth Frink, William Roberts and Maggi Hambling. Some of the artists were or are Christian, while others are not, but together they offer widely differing perspectives on the Christian story. An extensive conservation programme has recently been completed to return these important paintings to their full glory and to ensure they are available for future generations.

Twenty works have been chosen for the Bewdley exhibition, depicting scenes from different stages of the life of Jesus before focussing on his crucifixion and resurrection.

A programme of exciting creative events, including workshops, talks and reflections has also been planned over the duration of the exhibition. Full details can be found at: www.forallpeoplebewdley.com

This exhibition has been organised by the ecumenical group, Bewdley Churches Together, consisting of six local churches, and is financially supported by several local organisations.

Jim Ineson from Bewdley Churches Together commented "It is a privilege to have this Collection here in Bewdley. The works that we have on display offer a thought provoking and sometimes challenging perspective on Christ's life. Whether you are a person of faith or not, Christian or non-Christian, you will find yourself challenged in intriguing new ways through this exhibition appropriately called 'For All People'."

For further information contact Jim Ineson at 01299 405645 or email: jim.ineson@gmail.com

Christ Church with St. Mary's

Charles Vince, celebrating 60 years as a chorister

My parents Len (1924-2013) and Doreen (1927-2002) were married at Christ Church on the 13th October 1951. My Christian journey and what was to be my very long association with Christ Church began in 1954.

I first entered Christ Church choir in April 1962 following an invitation from choirmaster Gordon Crabbe. I began a period of three months' probation which was successful. At the end of this trial I was presented by Gordon to the vicar Canon Frank Thomas to be admitted a full member of the choir. I sung in the soprano section of the choir until my voice broke in 1967. I was confirmed, with several other boy sopranos, in 1966 by Bishop Oliver Tomkins.

It was in 1963 that I began taking lessons on the piano. The second school I attended held one or two services at the old St. Mary's church building in The Mall. The priest in charge of St Mary's at the time was the Rev'd. John Stephens. I had not received any formal training on the organ at that time. It was not until much later, in about 1985, that I began to receive formal training on the organ.

In 1972, I returned to sing in the adult section of the choir, but in 1982 I decided that I would like to branch out on my own as an organist as I was receiving a lot of requests to play for services in other churches.

It was from 1982 to 1985 that I was organist of St. Leonard's Church in Blunsdon. In 1985 I went to All Saints at Lydiard and in 1990 returned to Blunsdon church. It was while I was at Blunsdon that I accompanied the choir singing the sacred works Olivet to Calvary, Stainer's Crucifixion and Lloyd Webber's, The Saviour.

In the year 2000 I decided to take a break from organ playing and I sang Tenor for a while for Dr. John Henderson at Wroughton Church. It was during this time that another organist's post became vacant, this time at Cricklade, and I was invited to apply.

In 2009 I was on the move again and my final posting was at Bath Road Methodist Church. In January 2017 I returned once again to Christ Church to sing in the choir. Although I have been organist and director of music in other churches, I have also sung in them when the opportunities have arisen. ►

During my 60 years as a chorister at Christ Church, two editions of the BBC Songs of Praise programme were recorded. The first was in 1966 and the second in 1976. These were in the more traditional format, very different from the style of the programme today.

It was between about 1985 and 1992 that I undertook some formal training on the organ at Marlborough College Chapel that supported a very fine Hill Norman and Beard four manual organ. My tutor was Christopher Rathbone a former organist of Carlisle Cathedral. During this time, I took some grade examinations on the organ. In previous years I had taken grade examinations on the Piano as well as the Theory of Music.

During my time as a boy chorister, we were invited out to sing carols at various venues around Swindon at Christmas time, including the old British Railway Works canteen. The full choir also joined us at some of the venues at Christmas. Traditionally, until recently, the choir has always sung carols at the main hospital every year.

My earliest recollections at Christ Church are that I attended Sunday School in King William Street School. We always attended a service once a month in Christ Church at 2.30pm on a Sunday afternoon. After leaving the Sunday School, I progressed on to what was then called Junior Church. As time went on, the time of 2.30pm was becoming increasingly unpopular, so Sunday Schools were held on a Sunday morning and, as a result, attendances rose accordingly.

At Christ Church we used to be a training parish, so there was a regular “turnover” of clergy as every three years curates would come and go. Some continued their training elsewhere while others were promoted to higher positions in other parishes.

I have seen many changes in hymn books and service books used over time. Alternative versions of the Prayer Book came about in 1965 and 1966 and a period of experimentation with more modern services began, culminating in the Alternative Service Book in 1980 which, in the course of time, became defunct and was replaced by Common Worship.

There is just one other story that I recall from my time at Christ Church: we sang at a wedding in the 1960s which was led by Rev'd. Ted Farley, a curate at the time. The wedding service was completed in just 20 – 25 minutes! Nothing was missed out and it is a record that has never been surpassed! Here's to the next 60!

Charles Vince

Christ Church with St Mary's Church Family Weekend at Home 16th-18th September 2022

The PCC are delighted to announce that, after several years, they are organising a Church Family Weekend at Home this September. Please make a note of the dates now. There will be activities on Friday evening, all day Saturday and Sunday, mostly on the Christ Church site.

The theme will be "The Glory of God is a human being fully alive;" St Irenaeus. This takes forward our Parish Bible verse for the year; 'Arise, Shine, for your light has come and the glory of the Lord is rising upon you'. *Isaiah 60:1*

We would welcome your ideas about fun activities as we learn together and enjoy building new friendships, particularly with those who have joined us recently.

We are blessed to have leading us a wonderfully experienced Christian couple, The Rev'd. Douglas and Ann Holt who know Christ Church and Swindon well. Amongst other things, Douglas was the Director of Training for the Bristol Diocese and Simon's Work Consultant for 12 years. Ann was the Deputy Chief Executive for the Bible Society and then the Director of Education for the Chichester Diocese. They are now living in retirement in Malmesbury.

Please remember them both and all the preparations for the weekend in your prayers.

Thank you gratefully,
Simon on behalf of the Staff Team.

Tea & Chat at the Goddard Arms Hotel Tuesday 5th April, 2.30 pm



Tea & Chat made a welcome return to the Goddard Arms Hotel last month, following the pandemic. Everyone is welcome to this monthly event and we look forward to seeing you. If you would like to know more, please phone Margaret Williams, 421102.

DREAMS, PRAYERS AND PLANS

Where to begin is my first thought. Ally and I met each other when we were living in a hostel for the homeless. Ally moved in 1 or 2 months after I did. We became close friends very quickly with our interests in music and art, nature and the outdoors as well as our survival stories. I had been attending Christ Church almost daily, starting Alpha and looking at my life as a Christian.



Ally started coming with me when I went to pray in the Lady Chapel and then started coming with me on Sundays. Afterwards we would talk for hours about what we had heard in church that day. It always seemed that when we had a question about something in life that we were facing, the answer was always there in what we heard at Christ Church. For the first time in both our lives we felt accepted and loved. After a few months, Ally and I completed the Alpha course and I had my Confirmation. Ally had her Christening and by then we had fallen in love with each other. Neither of us were really looking for a champion. For me, after my marriage breakdown, I was closed off to relationships and I thought that part of my heart had hardened. I am so grateful for God's grace and Jesus Christ transforming a hardened heart into an open heart is my proof that miracles do happen.

Ally and I were working at a restaurant part time as part of rebuilding our lives. I had many years experience running restaurants and Ally soon mastered the key skills in hospitality. So together we looked into running a pub. This would give us employment and a place to live that would just be for us. It is really hard being in a shared house, living with strangers, so it seemed to be a good plan.

We put together our CVs and it wasn't long before we got a call to attend an interview. Our first interview, we were so nervous and excited at the same time. We got right down to planning our train journey to Trimley St Mary, a village near Felixstowe, Suffolk.. We met with the owners of the pub, Melissa and Terry. We didn't think we would get the job but we were happy to have had a day out and some practice of being interviewed. ►

To our surprise, we got a phone call from Melissa the next day offering us the position as Management couple at The Mariners. WOW!!! we had got it. We walked to Christ Church where we prayed and gave thanks to God for His grace and blessing. This is it, our big opportunity, so we celebrated our news with our friends and family.

Moving day, van rented and belongings packed ready for transport. Ally and I set off again for Trimley St. Mary but this time we drove. I prayed constantly that morning, Ally and I were physically exhausted from working, packing and organising the van. We set out early for our 3 hr. 30 mins drive to Trimley. On the drive, my hayfever was acting up, which was odd as i only really suffer from hayfever in June and this was August. We pushed on, asking Jesus Christ to keep me strong and alert so that we could arrive safe and sound.

We arrived at The Mariners and started moving our boxes into our new flat above the pub. It was an amazing feeling, having our own place together. We met Melissa again and had a lovely chat about the area and how much we were going to enjoy being a part of the community. Ally and I then drove down to the sea front and had fish and chips. By this time, I was feeling really rough, so I prayed for clear roads as I drove back to Swindon.

The next day, Ally started feeling the same and that is when it hit us, we have COVID!!!! So all our belongings were in Trimley and we were going into 10 days of isolation, what a test. Being isolated together and very unwell was a tough trial. The starting date of our new job had to be pushed back, plus all the other arrangements.

Our first night was a Friday and we sat in the pub with Terry and Melissa being introduced to staff and guests. We were exhausted by the end of the evening so we went into our flat and started unpacking.

Work started at 10am the next day, so we unpacked enough to be comfortable, prayed and went to sleep, feeling so grateful for all that God had given us. The next day, Ally and I worked very hard and tried our very best. By that evening I was summoned to Terry and Melissa's table and I was told that we were not good enough and they were unhappy with what they saw in us. I asked what they wanted done better and i assured them we will do better tomorrow and that it was a case of being new to the building and staff. The next day Ally and I gave it everything we had and by the end of that day Terry and Melissa were happy with us. ➤

Over the next few weeks leading up to Christmas and the New Year, the working conditions became very difficult. Christmas parties being booked and organised, then being cancelled due to Covid and staff having to isolate, also due to Covid. Ally and I were the only members of staff who didn't get it. Thank you, Jesus. Then the chef quit 3 days before Christmas Day with 60 people booked in for a 7 course dinner. I stepped in as Head Chef. I hadn't worked in a kitchen for over 15 years and it was hard going. However it did give me lots of time to listen to some of my favourite Gospel singers and, best of all, every Sunday while I was roasting potatoes and making giant Yorkshire Puddings, I got to listen to the Sunday Service from Christ Church.

After an exhausting Christmas period, it was nice to slow down and relax. Ally and I had only 2 full days off in and our next day off was New Year's Day.

Sadly, things didn't work out in our relationship with the owners and we gave in our resignation.

This has been a true test for Ally and I not having the free time to go to church, but in more ways it has strengthened us. We pray together more and when one of us is low, the other will pray for both of us. When we have been so exhausted, we have prayed just to get through the day - and we did!

My quote would be, "We can make our plans but the Lord determines our steps."

Simon Giles

**Partnership Good Friday Three Hours Service
15th April, 12 noon to 3.00 pm
at Christ Church**

Led by The Rev'd Josette Crane, a Methodist Minister from Keynsham and Chaplain to the oldest Methodist building in the world, John Wesley's New Room in Bristol.

Using a variety of Christian spirituality traditions, we will explore how one Friday became Good Friday.



Letter to the clergy from the Bishop of Bristol, *adapted for the magazine*

Dear Friends,

As I am sure you know, the Church of England has a Diocese in Europe with 295 churches and chaplaincies and 159 clergy. I have been briefed on their perspectives on the current tragedy, on their response to the millions of refugees who are or will be flowing across Europe and on our government's planned responses. The situation both here and in mainland Europe is changing rapidly, but this brief outline is to inform your prayers and your ministry.

The Diocese in Europe is planning both for the immediate response (we heard from chaplains in Warsaw, Budapest and Brussels) and for the medium to longterm response.

The Diocese in Europe is working with USPG, which ensures a response that is informed by USPG's experience of mission in global conflicts and the impact of conflict on all the peoples of the world. While our media focus on Ukraine, war rages also in (for example) Eritrea, South Sudan and Yemen, and Afghanistan remains in turmoil. The Diocese in Europe has extensive experience of working with refugees from the global south, as well as from Syria, and is appealing for funds.

There is currently great generosity being shown by churches and the wider UK community, with clothes, food and pharmaceuticals being shipped from the UK by road to Eastern Europe. But it is hard to ensure that the right stuff is in the place where it is needed.

On the other hand, financial donations can be given directly to those in need so they can buy what is required locally.

USPG: <https://europe.anglican.org/main/latest-news/post/1784-ukraine-appeal-to-churches> and <http://www.uspg.org.uk/ukraine>

One of the chaplains commented on how a gift of cash could be used to buy a coffee, pay for another night in a hotel while waiting for a visa, or buy what their baby needs; that cash restores a little self esteem for those who have lost everything.

The Diocese in Europe chaplaincies are, in addition to being part of the emergency response, also preparing for the longterm support of refugees from Ukraine. ►

We are at the beginning of a complex new social context. When the media have moved on, the churches will still be present.

So how can we respond:

By giving to USPG Ukraine appeal:
<https://ukraine-emergency-appeal.raisely.com/>

By signing up on Sanctuary's pledge site:
<https://www.sanctuaryfoundation.org.uk>

By considering whether you or your church may be able to offer accommodation.

By continuing to pray.

Vulnerable God, you challenge the powers that rule this world through the needy, the compassionate and those who are filled with longing. Make us hunger and thirst to see right prevail and single-minded in seeking peace; that we may see your face and be satisfied in you, through Jesus Christ. Amen.



**Passiontide Recital by our Director of Music
Tim Eyles**

Wednesday 13th April 1.00pm - 1.45pm

**J.S. Bach's Sublime Chorale Prelude
'O Mensch, beweine deine Sünde groß'**

**Free entry with a retiring collection
in aid of Christ Church**

April Diary

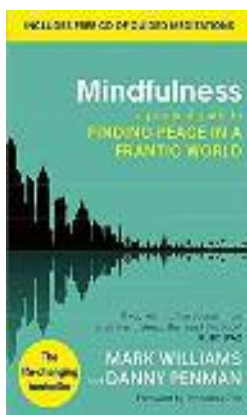
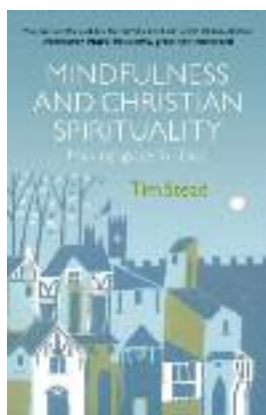
02 Sat		No Men's Breakfast (it was held on 26th March)
03 Sun	8.00 am	Christ Church, 1662 Holy Communion
	9.00 am	St. Mary's, Holy Communion/Morning Prayer
	10.00 am	Christ Church, All Age service
	12 noon	Jubilee Memorial Garden, Opening Ceremony and Reception.
	6.30 pm	Christ Church, Holy Communion
05 Tues	2.30 pm	Tea & Chat at the Goddard Arms
	7.30 pm	Partnership Lent Group at Bath Road Church
06 Wed	10.30 am	Christ Church, Christ in Quiet, often with Communion
	6.30 pm	Healing Prayer Group
09 Sat	12 noon	to 10.00 pm Jazz and Soul Festival in Christ Church
10 Sun		Palm Sunday
	8.00 am	Christ Church, Holy Communion
9.00 am	9.00 am	St. Mary's, Holy Communion
	10.00 am	Christ Church, Holy Communion
13 Wed	10.30 am	Christ Church, Christ in Quiet, often with Communion
13 Wed	1.00 pm	to 1.45 pm Passiontide Recital by our Director of Music, Tim Eyles.
14		Maundy Thursday
	7.00 pm	Partnership Holy Communion at Immanuel , followed by a meal of soup and bread roll.
15		Good Friday
	12 noon	to 3.00 pm Partnership Service at Christ Church , 'Three Hours at the Cross' <i>see page 19</i>
	7.00 pm	Partnership Choirs , Stainer's Crucifixion, Christ Church
17 Sun		Easter Sunday
	5.30 am	Dawn Partnership Service at Holy Rood on the Lawn
	8.00 am	Christ Church, Common Worship Holy Communion
	9.00 am	St. Mary's, Holy Communion
	10.00 am	Christ Church, Informal Holy Communion
	6.30 pm	Christ Church, Easter Praise
20 Wed	10.30 am	Christ Church, Christ in Quiet, often with Communion
24 Sun	8.00 am	Christ Church, Holy Communion
	9.00 am	St. Mary's, Informal Holy Communion
	10.00 am	Christ Church Family Holy Communion followed by Annual Parochial Church meeting
27 Wed	10.30 am	Christ Church, Christ in Quiet, often with Communion

MINDFULNESS AND SPIRITUAL GROWTH

A Quiet Day with Tim Stead

Saturday 2nd April 2022 9.45am-4pm

St Mary's Church Commonweal Rd, Old Town Swindon



An introduction to Mindfulness with reflections on how it relates to Christian spirituality.

Tim Stead is a former Vicar and an accredited mindfulness teacher who trained with the Oxford Mindfulness Centre. He is also the author of *Mindfulness and Christian Spirituality* (SPCK 2016) and *See Love Be* (SPCK 2018).

This will be a practical day with guided meditations with an opportunity to explore our experience of the meditations and including reflections on how these practices relate to the Christian tradition of prayer & spirituality, especially the Christian contemplative tradition.

The cost of the day is: £20 (Financial Assistance available)

Tea, coffee and biscuits will be provided. Please bring a packed lunch.

For more information : susan@tredget.com 07770583987

To Book a place : parishoffice@christchurchswindon.co.uk 01793 522832

MINDFULNESS AND CHRISTIAN SPIRITUALITY, April 2nd 2022

Tim Stead, the Course leader, is an accredited mindfulness teacher who trained with the Oxford Mindfulness Centre. He was a Church of England vicar for 23 years and now operates as a freelance mindfulness teacher, leading eight week courses, retreats and quiet days. His books, “Mindfulness and Christian Spiritually” and “See, Love, Be” – mindfulness and the spiritual life, are published by SPCK. He has also published a Grove Booklet: “Mindfulness and Prayer”.
www.timsteadmindfulness.org

Intentions for the day

- i. Give a basic experiential introduction to what mindfulness is.
2. Explore how mindfulness practice can engage with and support the spiritual journey with particular reference to the Christian contemplative tradition.
3. Serve as a quiet day where participants go away feeling they have had space for deep reflection.
4. Share ways that mindfulness could be taken forward for those who choose to.

Programme

The programme for the day starts with a short introduction, then mixes guided mindfulness practices with reflecting on our experience and linking them with our spiritual journey. A basic timetable is offered but this can be adjusted.

Venue, numbers and other practicalities.

We can accept up to approximately. 20 participants. The day will be held at St Mary’s Church, Commonweal Rd, Old Town Swindon. St Mary’s provides a quiet, light and airy space with good ventilation and a small kitchen and a toilet .We will sit in a loose circle in comfortable upright chairs. Coffee, tea and biscuits are provided at the start, lunchtime and mid-afternoon. Participants are asked to bring their own packed lunches.

Costs and charging: The cost of the day is £20 and for those in financial hardship there is help available.

Any Questions? Please do get in touch :

Susan Tredget 07770 583 987 or email: susan@tredget.com

To book a place, contact:

Helen Parker Drabble 01793 522832.

parishoffice@christchurchswindon.co.uk

Immanuel

Services at Immanuel

10.00 am every Sunday morning

Maundy Thursday, 14th April, 7.00 pm Partnership Holy Communion



We are so pleased to host (once again!) a celebration of Holy Communion at Immanuel on Thursday 14th April at 7:00 pm, followed by a simple meal of soup and roll based on the theme 'Those round the table'.



A prayer for Ukraine

Holy God, We hold before you all who live close to war and conflict; and all who live close to the threat of war and violence. We remember, especially at this time, people in Ukraine and Russia. We pray for non-violent and peaceful resolutions of conflict. Give us hearts of hospitality and sanctuary, forgive us all our hostility and hatred. Bring all people to the humanity you give us and to the reconciliation and healing for which you gave your life. Strengthen us all to work with you to build justice and peace, reconciliation and healing, in our hearts and homes, in our streets, in all communities, neighbourhoods and nations. Bless all who live lives for the peace and wellbeing of others and make their service fruitful. In the name of Christ. Amen

By the Revd Inderjit Bhogal, Honorary President,
The Fellowship of Reconciliation <https://for.org.uk/>

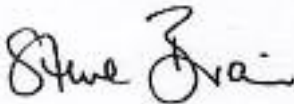
Post Covid blues....?

As Immanuel's church secretary, I am currently beginning to think about my report to the church AGM in a few weeks time. This year, like no other, I am struggling to find the right message to bring to the meeting....after all it has indeed been a year like no other!

Our church membership roll stands at the smallest number in at least 6 decades, attendance at our morning service is down, on average, to 40/ 45 - half of what it was in pre-pandemic days, our church meeting has just taken the decision to discontinue Evening Worship on a regular basis, because of the poor attendance, and church organisations are struggling to get back on their feet. Our Sunday morning congregation will have seen the depleted numbers in the church choir that make part singing very difficult indeed (shortage of sopranos and absence of tenors); our Women's Fellowship does not feel ready to start up again yet; and a shortage of volunteers means that even offering a post-worship cup of coffee or tea is increasingly more difficult to arrange.

Of course there are many reasons for these issues: we are aware that not everyone feels ready to resume 'normal' habits - people still feel vulnerable and are out of the habit of Sunday church or meeting together. We completely understand that...but it means that life as we knew it has not yet got back to normal!

BUT - and there is a big but - lest this become a depressing view of life at Immanuel, I do have to say that our church buildings here on Upham Road are still very much the centre for so many community activities and groups. The premises resound throughout the week with all manner of music makers and singers, as choirs rehearse and ukelele groups practice; U3A groups meet and learn together, various committees meet to discuss and plan, children's groups meet and have fun and their laughter echoes around the site; and, for those who didn't know, our Romanian friends are worshipping and studying together several times a week here at Immanuel. A small group of Nepalese Christians gather on a Sunday afternoon to worship in their own traditions and language. So there is much to give thanks for and some wonderful opportunities for real outreach..

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Steve Frai". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

It was an Old Rugged Cross



Please don't go a step further until you are absolutely sure you are on your way to heaven! Don't continue believing everyone goes to heaven regardless. It is when you can say, and believe in your heart, that Jesus Christ died on the cross to save YOU from your sins and rose again on the third day. It's not a matter of going to church or doing good deeds. God has said He will pour out His Spirit on all flesh – and that means yours and that He loves you enough to die for you and look for you to welcome you into heaven. He loves you and you are precious to Him.

It is the Father's business to judge people, as He only knows the heart. Ours is to love them and make sure they know what the text book says. I am amazed at how many of my lovely friends think that they are born Christian or become so by doing good and going to church. It is God, not us, who will draw them unto Himself.

Our Bible says it clearly, "All have sinned and come short of the glory of God."
Romans 3:23.

"But as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, to those that believe on His name." *John 1:12*

Barbara Furguson



Due to Covid, please check nearer the time that these events are taking place.

Wednesday 6th April, 1.05 pm at the Wyvern Theatre

Paul Turner *piano*

Beethoven Moonlight Sonata Op 27 No. 2, Andante favori, WoO 57,
Pathétique Sonata Op. 13

Wednesday 4th May, 1.05 pm at the Wyvern Theatre

Paul Sheehan *baritone*, Paul Turner *piano*

Beethoven 'An Die Ferne Geliebte' Schumann 'Dichterliebe'

Saturday 7th May, 7.30 pm at the Arts Centre, Devizes Road

Owen Trio: Martin Owen *horn*, Miranda Dale *violin*, Paul Turner *piano*

Beethoven 'Les Adieu' piano sonata Op.81a, Ligetti horn trio
(Hommage à Brahms) Brahms horn trio in Eb Op. 40

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The play is a comedy and will be just the thing to chase away the winter blues after the festive season is over.

“Bernard is married to Jacqueline who is having an affair with Robert who pays a call girl to pose as his wife. Add a surprise appearance by Robert’s actual wife Juliette, mix in a maid who can only cater with what she finds left in the freezer and you have the perfect recipe for a very awkward dinner party”. Rehearsals have been beset with problems for our cast; COVID, a broken shoulder and a hospital stay to name just a few but rehearsals are going well and we can’t wait to get to the Arts Centre and put on a fab show.

Ticket prices are £12 with concessions at £10 and can be reserved from Pauline on 07517 698083 or by e-mail bookings@phoenix-players.com.

For payment by credit/debit card, please go to swindontheatres.co.uk

How to have some happiness this April

‘April is the cruellest month,’ wrote T.S. Eliot at the beginning of his magisterial poem, ‘The Wasteland’. And it is a good description of what April may bring us between the war in Ukraine and soaring energy prices.

But apparently, major problems do not mean that we can’t enjoy anything. According to the ‘science of happiness,’ fuelled by advances in brain-scanning technology and a cultural shift towards seeing happiness as a key index in human development, there is a way through the deep gloom that hangs over this month.

Neuroscientists suggest that even while we are dealing with the big problems of life, we can also make room for ‘small, fleeting moments of fulfilment’. These can range from holding the hand of a loved one, to appreciating the daffodils in your garden, to enjoying a cup of tea with a good friend. Such moments of quiet contentment are ‘joyful vignettes’ which can be the bread and butter of our daily human happiness. As one writer has said: “Hold on to the small moments and the bigger picture of gloom doesn’t have to be as overwhelming as it first seems.”

1st April: Fooling Around

Probably the most famous April Fool’s joke of all time was the 1960’s BBC TV broadcast feature on the spaghetti farms of Italy. A BBC reporter interviewed Italian farmers about their work and the progress of the spaghetti plants in great detail. Spaghetti plants were filmed being carefully planted, and then being harvested. And all in the BBC’s most serious documentary manner. It took a while to appreciate that this was ‘Aunty’ playing games. Whatever next!

The odd thing is that no one is quite sure of the origin of this very British tradition. Most attribute it to changes in Britain’s calendar in the 1700s, when New Year’s Day moved from 25th March to 1st January. Not surprisingly, the change caused a lot of confusion and mistakes around the start of April. Others look even further back, to the ancient Roman feast of Hilaria, when the goddess Cybele was celebrated with pranks and jokes around the Spring Equinox, 25th March.

With AGMs at church in mind...

A conference is a gathering of people who singly can do nothing, but together can decide that nothing can be done.

What a hoot

One evening a bird-loving vicar strolled over to his huge country churchyard and, just for fun, hooted softly, like an owl. To his delight, an owl hooted softly back. The next night the same thing happened, and again, the night after that. Soon it became a regular habit and every night for the following year, no matter what the weather, the vicar would go to the churchyard and hoot back and forth with his feathered friend. The hoots became longer and more complicated and the vicar kept a careful log of the 'conversation'.

Just as he thought he was on the verge of a real breakthrough in interspecies communication, his wife had a chat with the neighbour who lived in a big house and garden next door to the church. "My husband comes here each night," she said, to "hoot to the owl in the churchyard." "That's odd," the neighbour replied, "so does my husband."

Advice to gardeners:

The easiest way to tell the difference between young plants and weeds is to pull up everything. If they come up again, they're weeds. - Anon

5th April is end of the tax year. so you may want to reflect that...

A fine is a tax for doing wrong. A tax is a fine for doing well.

A few more deductions, and your take-home pay isn't going to be enough to get you there.

A penny saved is a government oversight.

It should be easy for any government to please the people. All we want is lower taxes and more spending.

The government not only has the bad habit of living beyond its income but also beyond ours.



Phoenix Returns

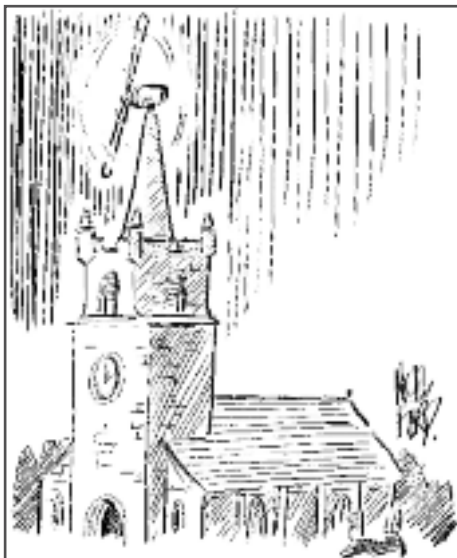
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