

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

PARTNERSHIP MAGAZINE

JULY/AUGUST 2022

80 PENCE



**Blakeney,
Norfolk**

Barbados



Home or Away, we wish you a Happy Holiday

One in Christ - Together in Mission

WILTSHIRE HISTORIC CHURCHES TRUST



Saturday 10th September, 10.00 am - 6.00 pm

This is an annual national sponsored event, organised locally by County Historic Churches Trust. Wiltshire Ride + Stride (or its predecessor the Great Cycle Ride) has been going since 1984 and has raised over £1.5 million for the county's churches. 50% of the money raised goes to the participant's chosen church and the other half to the County Historic Churches Trust.

Participants may be cyclists, walkers, horse-riders or drivers of mobility scooters. They can be of any age, but under-13s must be accompanied by an adult.

All denominations are welcome.

Visit as many churches as you like, planning your own route.

Seek sponsorship from friends, relations and colleagues, so much per church visited or a lump sum.

Sponsor forms, instructions and details of places of worship that are open can be downloaded from the Wiltshire Historic Churches Trust web site or get in touch with your church's local contact. You can also take part on your mobility scooter.

Bath Road

David Sinclair phone 07768775288 email: .sinclair.302@btinternet.com

Christ Church with St Mary's

Arline Stovell phone 520691 email: royandarline@gmail.com

Immanuel

Liz Gleed phone 721364 email: liz.gleed@gmail.com

Your Contacts

BATH ROAD METHODIST CHURCH

Minister: The Revd. Mark Barrett, 147 Drove Road, SN1 3AQ

Tel: 529263 e-mail: markrev55@aol.com

Web site: www.bathroadmethodistchurch.org.uk

News items: allison_davies_1@yahoo.co.uk

CHRIST CHURCH with ST. MARY'S, Cricklade Street

St. Mary's, Commonweal Road (off The Mall)

Vicar: The Revd. Canon Simon Stevenette, The Vicarage,

26 Cricklade Street, SN1 3HG. Tel. 529166

e-mail: simon@christchurchswindon.co.uk

Associate Ministers::

Revd. Daphne Hardwick. T. 693721; daphne@christchurchswindon.co.uk

Revd. Norma McKemey. T. 845917; norma@christchurchswindon.co.uk

Web site: www.christchurchswindon.co.uk

Weekly news items: parishoffice@christchurchswindon.co.uk

Friends of Christ Church: c/o The Parish Office. email: sec.focc@gmail.com

PARISH OFFICE: at the Community Centre, SN1 3HB. Mon & Fri 9am-1pm

Tel. 522832. e-mail: parishoffice@christchurchswindon.co.uk.

PARISH CLERK: To book an appointment, please phone 07746 415477,

Thursday evening 5.30-8.00pm, Saturday 9.30am-1.00pm or

email: parishclerk@christchurchswindon.co.uk

COMMUNITY CENTRE: Manager: Chris Smith, T.617237 or 07582 305760

email: chris@christchurchswindon.co.uk

IMMANUEL UNITED REFORMED CHURCH, Upham Road

Minister: The Revd. Robert Jordan, 152 Drove Road, SN1 3AG

Tel. 513039. email: robert.jordan1@btconnect.com

Secretary: Stephen Brain, Tel. 524514. email: sbrainstev@aol.com

Web site: www.immanuelurc.org

Weekly news items: immanuelweeklynews@yahoo.co.uk

WORKING TOGETHER WITH OTHER CHURCHES IN OLD TOWN

MAGAZINE DISTRIBUTOR:

Mr. George Kennedy, Tel. 772589. george.kennedy@mybroadbandmail.com

MAGAZINE EDITORS:

Mrs. Diana Swann, 58 Sandown Avenue, SN3 1QQ. Tel. 529897

e-mail: d.swann6a@gmail.com

Mrs. Margaret Williams MBE, 39 Sandown Avenue, SN3 1QQ. Tel. 421102

e-mail: margaret@christchurchswindon.co.uk

PARTNERSHIP COUNCIL:

Chairman: Daniel Pitt, Tel. 521732; email: fdpitt@yahoo.co.uk

Treasurer: David Bevan, Tel. 336667; email: david04bevan@yahoo.co.uk

PARTNERSHIP WEB SITE; www.sotpc.org.uk

Partnership Letter

Christ Church Vicarage

Dear Friends,

One in three and three in one

I have just completed 30 seasons as a football club chaplain, 6 years with Bristol Rovers while I was Vicar in Keynsham and 24 years at Swindon Town since I became Vicar of Christ Church.

I am grateful to my new friend John Sibley, (a Liverpool football fan, like the Stevenettes!) who taught me this illustration which I used at Christ Church on Trinity Sunday and I would like us to reflect on as an Old Town Partnership as over this Summer we look to the future and how God is guiding us in our common mission and ministry.

Imagine two footballs, one extremely flat and the other fully pumped up. I took the inflated football and explained that this represented God who is present in the world which is round just like the football. The panels on the footballs are stitched together to hold it all in place, just as God holds everything in place.



The valve in the football represents Jesus, who is together with God, and they are one and the same. However, Jesus, as the valve (in the football) allows us to access the power of The Holy Spirit which is represented by the air inside the football.

I then took the flat football and attempted to bounce it which of course it does not. The football may look like any football but without air it is of no use. You need all three to make a football bounce: the outer ball, the valve and the air. So if we are to be fully in tune with God, we need his love surrounding us, we need to follow the example of Jesus and we need the Holy Spirit to give us our Christian bounce!! Finally, I then bounced the inflated ball to show the difference the Holy Spirit can make in our lives.

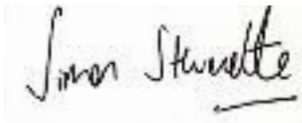
As Swindon Town prepares for the new football season, which starts in the end of July, and as England and Wales prepare for the World Cup beginning in Qatar in November, we have much to learn. However good these football teams are, however strong our Old Town Partnership of Churches is, the greatest team ever

is God's Holy Trinity. The wonderful truth that God shows his loving purpose for the whole of creation for every single person in this world as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Whether or not you like football, all of us live in community in relationships, with communication being of central importance. God is calling us to keep learning from him whatever age we are as lifelong learners called into his service.

Please join me in praying that, like the football in Christ Church on Trinity Sunday, we will go on and on being refilled with the Holy Spirit: Ephesians 5;18, bouncing along as Jesus's players, whatever we do and wherever we are.

Thank you O my Father
For giving us your Son
And leaving your Spirit
Til the work on earth is done

Every blessing,



**Swindon Commercial Chaplaincy,
a Registered Charity, is seeking a Secretary
to assist Sheila Wright the Commercial
Chaplain.**

Do you have some secretarial skills?
Do you have some time on your hands?
Do you have basic computer skills?

If so, then you might be interested in becoming the secretary to the Swindon Chaplaincy team. Based mainly at The Pilgrim Centre, Regent Circus (but working from home is a possibility), this post is of a voluntary nature and could give the successful applicant an interesting insight to the shops and businesses of Swindon. A full job description and more information is available from Mrs. Sheila Wright, The Pilgrim Centre, Regent Circus, Swindon SN1 1PX, email: scschaplaincy@gmail.com or Phone Sheila on 07715 667019

Enquiries by July 31st, please.

FAMILY EVENTS

BAPTISMS

We welcome into the family of the Church

May 29 Harriet Grace Peart

RENEWAL OF MARRIAGE VOWS

June 3 Mark and Theresa Sutton

DEATHS

We extend our sympathy to the loved ones

CHRIST CHURCH

April 18 Christine Greta Pearce, 89 years

May 31 Geoffrey Alan Clements, 89 years

FLOODLIGHTING

Apr 10 In memory of a dear father, David John Heavens, on his 80th birthday.

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**.

Cheques to be made payable to 'Christ Church PCC'. Please write to the PARISH OFFICE, COMMUNITY CENTRE AT CHRIST CHURCH, SWINDON, SN1 3HB 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. email: parishoffice@christchurchswindon.co.uk Tel. 522832

CHURCH MAGAZINE: If you are experiencing difficulty in getting your magazine, you can always purchase one from Rose Earle, Newsagent, Newport Street, who kindly sells them for us throughout the year.

Bath Road

Services at Bath Road

JULY

3rd	10.00 am Morning Worship, Islay Roberts
10th	10.00 am Service taken by the Worship Leaders
17th	10.00 am Holy Communion, Rev'd. Mark Barrett
24th	10.00 am Morning Worship, Geoff Rhodes
31st	10.00 am Morning Worship, Rev'd. Tony Barnes

AUGUST

7th	10.00 am Morning Worship, Eric Hewitt
14th	10.00 am Morning Worship, Mrs. Sandra Wylie
21st	10.00 am Service taken by the Worship Leaders
28th	10.00 am Morning Service, Mrs. Sheila Pickering

Bath Road Church Community Breakfast

9.00 am to 11.00 am

Saturday 2nd July and 13th August

£1.00 for a bacon roll with tea or coffee

All are welcome



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 hour listening to a speaker or doing an activity.

July 7th Chatting

July 21st Lydiard Park

No meetings in August. We will meet in September on the 1st and 15th.

Sisters and brothers in Christ,

As you may, or may not, know I am "sitting down" from the end of August. That is the Methodist term for retiring. I know you are shocked as I don't look old enough to! We are not going far, in fact we are moving to live near Immanuel Church, someone has to keep an eye on Robert. Though 'sitting down' I will be back preaching in the Circuit from January 2023 and from September offering my gifts to the Circuit and District as, and if, they require.

I plan to be involved in the many things that interest me and Gill will continue her role as Principal at Loddon School. We will both be busier from November as Leah, our daughter, and Tom are expecting their first child - again I know I look too young to be a grandfather.

My thank you's and goodbyes will be made to Bath Road at my final service on 17th July. I will be around and you will still see me, but I just want to say how much my time with you in the partnership has meant; worshipping together, sharing work in the projects and seeking to represent Christ to the community together has been a joy.

I thank Robert and Simon for their fellowship and friendship, along with so many of you who have 'aided and abetted' my ministry amongst you. You will always remain in my prayers, but as I said you will still see us around as we have found that here is where we want to make our home.

Every blessing,



Summer guide to modern science around the house

1. If it's green or it wiggles, it's Biology.
2. If it stinks or explodes, it's Chemistry.
3. If it doesn't work, it's Physics

Our Ukrainian family



Things have moved on since our last sharing of news about the family. Schools have been visited to check for spaces and suitability. The older members of the family have painted much of their new temporary accommodation at Gorse Hill. Beds and bedding, a sewing machine with some fabric, a lovely set of practically brand-new saucepans – all gratefully received. There's also been a delivery of home knitted teddies (1 for each of the children), all complete with their own carry bag in the colour of the Ukrainian flag – lovely!

And so to the next phase. Moving on...

Gemma was taken for a sleepover at Barbara's Mums on the Thursday evening prior to the move. She has had some lovely times with them as they have walked and played with her but there have been anxious times for her when she has sought out her 'safe space' to just have a rest! She has been absolutely brilliant with them and has not once shown any anger or upset and they have loved having her around – stopping to stroke her every time they passed her. We didn't want her upset by seeing boxes and bags being packed so off to Mum's she went. The children said their goodbyes with the promise of her visiting them or them returning here for a visit to see her some time.

With Gemma safely ensconced, some packing started – it's amazing how much they have accrued in their short time with us – a continuing reflection of people's

generosity. Toys, games, books and clothing all ready to go. The rest would need to wait until Friday morning.

Moving Day, Friday 13th.



Everyone was up bright and early, especially because 5 of the younger children were off to school for the morning! Chiseldon Primary School had been keen to help and were then to bus them across to the flat at the end of school at 1pm. The photo on the previous page shows them as they are about to leave. The youngest, David, 3 years old, started putting on his shoes as he wanted to go too but had to stay behind.

Alison and Steve turned up with their vans and we began filling them up. By just after 10am the two vans set off fully loaded (9 bikes, a tall freezer and a bed settee helping to fill up the space). We needed one more trip with one of the vans to complete the move with mainly mattresses and bedding and then it was over to them to sort themselves into their independent living space.

The flat is another temporary solution but this time for a year rather than a month. We are standing as guarantors to ensure the rent is covered – they won't receive enough in benefits to cover the rent. Work is being sought and hopefully things will improve as the year progresses.

We are now trying to raise funds to cover that first year's rent. So far, we have managed, with your help, to fund 7 months rent. This has come from the monies raised in answer to our plea to provide food, clothes, heat and other basic necessities, along with Swindon Rotary Club who are kindly covering 2 months and the Council providing the initial month's rent and deposit.

If you feel able to help with the remaining 5 months rent (it's £1,250 per month) then any amounts however small or large would be gratefully received. ■

Matthew J. Cammish Open Day, held at Glebe Farm, Lower Stanton St Quintin near Malmesbury.

We are happy to report an excellent attendance with lovely June weather. Many visitors came as result of reading the monthly sermon that appears in the Malmesbury area 'Parish Life' magazine, others came as result of the weekly sermon emailed every Sunday morning. Most of the residents in this village came.



All were amazed at the meticulous record-keeping, stretching back to wartime, and the clearly demonstrated enthusiasm of M.J.Cammish to advance his Lord's interests. He had made the decision in his earliest days not to further his teaching career but to devote his energies to a higher calling.

The photo, taken on the day, shows a gentleman holding papers. The others in the photo are his wife, my wife and myself. This gentleman lived here during wartime. His father, a Squadron Leader, was based in a local aerodrome and was to die in active service.

The Squadron Leader and his family were previously based in Plymouth until 1943, when they came here. The son is holding a book called 'It came to our door'. The authorities in Plymouth had decided that there was no need to plan for the possibility of Germany bombing their city - they were too far away. How wrong they were - hence the title of the book.

We are well advanced with regard to the third booklet of M J Cammish's sermons, to be called 'Yet More From My Headmaster's Study'. Dr Richard J Teal, an ex-president of the Methodist Conference, has kindly written the Foreword and Lord Mackay of Clashfern, Lord Advocate 1979-1984 and Lord High Chancellor of Great Britain 1987-1997, has kindly written the Introduction. We have received a significant number of requests for this third edition, both in this country and from overseas.

Martin Robins.



On Saturday afternoon we had pleasure in welcoming fourteen church friends to share afternoon tea. Unlike last year, when the rain poured down, the weather was fine and dry. We sat in the garden and enjoyed home made cake, scones with jam and cream, plenty of tea and coffee and lots of chat. All too soon it was time to say goodbye and remark that we should do it more often.

Janet and Noel Hunt

Bees need your help. And we need their help.



Not only do bees help provide the honey, propolis and beeswax, but they also help to keep us all fed and watered. Without bees, more than a third of everything we eat would disappear from our tables. The majority of our honey here in the UK is imported (85%), but there are also many beekeepers on our doorstep, so why not visit a near-by farm shop or deli and enjoy the precious produce of local beekeepers for breakfast? You can also help bees by planting wildflower seeds that will provide a food supply.

Christ Church with St. Mary's

ORGAN RECITAL BY JOHN RENÉ ANDRÉ ORGANIST OF RENNES CATHEDRAL, BRITTANY

Saturday 23rd July, 7.30 pm at Christ Church



Programme will include Toccata and Fugue in D Minor (J.S. Bach).

Nimrod from the Enigma Variations by Elgar.

Other composers featured include Mendelssohn, John Stanley, Guilmant, Widor and Duruflé.

He will also be playing one of his own compositions written during lockdown.

There will be an interval for refreshments, for which there will be a donation plate.

Admission £10.



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

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.

No meeting in August

**Christ Church with St Mary's Weekend at Home
Friday 16th, Saturday 17th and Sunday 18th September
Theme: Kingdom Calling, Life in all its fullness.
Activities for all ages.**

Please put the dates in your diaries and encourage others to be involved.

Please continue to pray for the preparations of this important weekend. We are delighted that our main speakers Douglas and Ann Holt will be coming to Christ Church on Sunday 24th July to get to know us. We are looking forward to them both leading our Weekend at Home From Friday 16th September to Sunday 18th September in Christ Church.

Please let us know your ideas, especially how we can have fun together. The theme will be around Jesus's words from John 10.10: 'I have come to have life, life in all its fullness'.

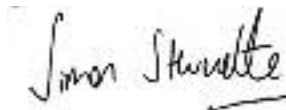
How is God involved in the world?
How does God share our joys and challenges?
What does God want us to do now?
How can we live and share this love with others?

Thank you gratefully,
Simon, Jim and Nitin
On behalf of the Staff Team and PCC.

Thank you from the Stevenette family

We are enormously grateful for all the love and prayers we have received since John's death on 7th May. We had a wonderful funeral service with Holy Communion at St Leonard's, Sunningwell on 6th June. All the family were directly involved in various ways, the only sadness being that Nicola was absent due to having Covid. We are especially grateful to Margaret, Ailsa and Geoff and those behind the scenes who organised such a moving parallel service at Christ Church at the same time. We are deeply touched by your prayers and support which were answered as we were overwhelmed with God's love, presence, and Resurrection hope.

Every blessing,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Simon Stevenette". The signature is written in a cursive style and is underlined.

Our churchyard

It has been wonderful to see the growth of wild flowers in our churchyard that we have never seen quite like this before. They are a real gift from God to us. Many have been encouraging about what we are trying to do. It is also true that some people are finding this difficult. Please do all you can to communicate why we are doing what we are doing. The wild areas, around the church and Community Centre form the first part of our land management plan to encourage wildlife by improving plant diversity.

On advice from a local ecologist, we are encouraging certain older parts of the churchyard to recover by not intensively mowing. We have been advised that some of our green areas contain ancient original grassland and are worthy of protection. This will encourage more, rare native species of plants to thrive which in turn helps pollinators and smaller animals.

If you are interested in the ecology of our church grounds and would like to comment or take a more active role in helping us to preserve our environment please contact the parish office 01793 522832 or parishoffice@christchurchswindon.co.uk

The Civic Service held at Christ Church on Sunday 5th June in celebration of the Queen's Platinum Jubilee



I. to r. Mrs. Margaret Williams MBE who preached at the service, the Mayor of Swindon, Abdul Amin, the Lord-Lieutenant of Wiltshire, Sarah Troughton, the Rev'd. Simon Stevenette, Vicar of Christ Church.

Two weddings for the Stevenette family.

The Banns have been read and we as a family are looking forward to two family weddings this summer! Firstly, on Saturday 9th July Tom and Rae are getting married at Christ Church, Attenborough near Nottingham, then, on Saturday 13th August, Will and Elise are getting married at St. John the Baptist Church, Morton, near Bourne, Lincolnshire. I shall be officiating at both weddings.



Tom and Rae



Will and Elise

Church of England has good skills, says new bishop...

The next Bishop of Bath and Wells, Dr Michael Beasley, has said that the Church of England learned valuable lessons during the pandemic. “There’s been a huge amount that we’ve seen in our response to an emergency. It shows we have a flexibility and a resilience and an ability to respond to situations that we might not have known we have, but now we do.”

He said that such resilience will be needed to cope in these ‘challenging times’, with the world still emerging from the pandemic, the war in Ukraine, and the cost-of-living crisis, ‘which is only to become increasingly urgent.’

He said, ‘Addressing these issues is going to demand everyone’s faith and experiences, their creativity and skill.’ ■

Recently Nicola submitted a poem for the Swindon Carers Week (6th-12th June). It was chosen to go on the Swindon Carers website and was read out during the 'Walk a Mile' event on 10th June through Swindon Town Centre. Carers Week aims to raise awareness of unpaid carers. A special thank you to Nicola Stevenette for responding to our call-out for creative writing pieces and sharing her thoughts to help others understand what it is like to be a carer.

This is our world

There is a world out there,
which few people know,
until they find themselves in the middle of it.
It's a hidden place of unanticipated losses.
It's in the look of a loved one who no longer recognises who you are,
It's in the answering of the repeated questions,
It's in the measuring of daily medication,
It's the dressing, and the changing, and the dressing again
It's in the night in which sleep is broken,
It's in the lonely days which are homebound,
It's in the middle of forgetting who they are.
Yet in this world there are glimpses
of living in the present moment,
the flicker of recognition,
the remembered song,
the joy of the simple things.
This is the world which those who care understand.
This is our world.

Nicola Stevenette

The kiss

An honest seven-year-old calmly announced to her parents that Billy Brown had kissed her after church. "How did that happen?" gasped her mother.

"Well, it wasn't easy," admitted the young lady, "but three girls helped me catch him."

Janet French has a photographic record of memorials in the churchyard at Christ Church particularly those of well known 'Swindonians' from the past. Several of the headstones, relatives of Richard Jefferies, have recently been cleaned. Many of you will be aware of Richard Jefferies who wrote about nature and English rural life. Bevisland, Eldene is named after one of his books "Bevis" a children's story of life growing up on his father's farm at Coate, He died at Goring by Sea, Sussex on 14th August 1887, having suffered from tuberculosis, and is buried at Worthing Cemetery.



Top left: John Lockett Jefferies

Top right: John Jefferies

Left: Sarah Jefferies

July Diary

- 02 Sat 7.30 am Christ Church Men's Breakfast
1.00 pm Wedding
- 03 Sun** 8.00 am 1662 Holy Communion
9.00 am St. Mary's, Holy Communion
10.00 am All Age Service
6.30 pm Holy Communion
- 05 Tues 2.30 pm Tea & Chat at the Goddard Arms Hotel
- 06 Wed 10.30 am Christ in Quiet with Holy Communion
- 09 Sat 7.00 pm Aldbourne Brass Band and Reading Phoenix
Choir Concert
- 10 Sun 8.00 am Holy Communion
9.00am St. Mary's, Holy Communion
10.00 am Family Holy Communion
- 13 Wed 10.30 am Christ in Quiet with Holy Communion
- 16 Sat Evening Brunel Brass Concert
- 17 Sun** 8.00 am Common Worship Holy Communion
9.00 am St. Mary's, Holy Communion
10.00 am Informal Family Holy Communion
6.30 pm Choral Evensong
- 20 Wed 1.30 pm King William Street Leavers' Service
- 23 Sat 7.30 pm Organ Recital by John René André, Organist of
Rennes Cathedral, Brittany. *See page 11*
- 24 Sun** 8.00 am Holy Communion
9.00 am St. Mary's, Informal Holy Communion
10.00 am Family Holy Communion with visit from the
Rev'd. Douglas and Ann Holt.
- 27 Wed 10.30 am Christ in Quiet with Holy Communion
- 30 Sat 6.00 pm onwards, Jazz Festival Summer fundraiser concert
- 31 Sun** 8.00 am Holy Communion
9.00 am St. Mary's Holy Communion
10.00 am Family Holy Communion

Please Note: There will not be a service of Christ in Quiet with Holy Communion on 20th July.

August Diary

- 03 Wed 10.30 am Christ in Quiet with Holy Communion
06 7.30 am Men's Breakfast
- 07 Sun** 8.00 am 1662 Holy Communion
9.00 am St. Mary's Holy Communion
10.00 am All Age Service with Baptism
6.30 pm Holy Communion
- 14 Sun** 8.00 am Holy Communion
9.00 am St. Mary's, Holy Communion
10.00 am Family Holy Communion
- 17 Wed 10.30 am Christ in Quiet with Holy Communion
- 21 Sun 8.00 am Common Worship Holy Communion
9.00 am St. Mary's, Holy Communion
10.00 am Informal Family Holy Communion
6.30 pm Evensong
- 24 Wed 10.30 am Christ in Quiet with Holy Communion
- 28 Sun 8.00 am Holy Communion
9.00 am St. Mary's, Informal Holy Communion
10.00 am Family Holy Communion
- 31 Wed 10.30 am Christ in Quiet with Holy Communion



In past years we have always gone around the Partnership Churches for the Sunday evening services in August as well as having an Open Air Service at Holy Rood on the Lawn but we are not holding any joint services in August this year.

Immanuel

Services every Sunday at 10.30 am with Holy Communion on the third Sunday of the month.



On Saturday 24th September, 2:30pm at Immanuel there will be a celebration for the 50 years of the United Reformed Church with the participation of the churches in the area. The Synod Moderator has agreed to preach at this service. It will be followed by a time to meet and chat with other people over a cup of tea or coffee and cake.

Moderator speaks out on asylum plans

The Rev'd. Clare Downing, Moderator of the United Reformed Church General Assembly, has issued a statement regarding recent developments around immigration policy, saying "to fail to speak out would be a denial of our gospel calling".

On 14th April the government announced a plan to send some asylum seekers arriving in the UK to Rwanda, prompting widespread criticism, including from the Archbishop of Canterbury in his Easter sermon.

Then on 20th April MPs voted to reject amendments to the Nationality and Borders Bill made by the House of Lords which would have expanded and protected family reunion rights, enabled asylum seekers to work, established a target for resettlement and amended the discriminatory two-tier system proposed for asylum seekers. Ahead of that vote, church leaders had urged MPs to support the amendments.

This is one of the paragraphs of the statement: 'As we said in our letter to MPs ahead of the vote in parliament, we will not stop advocating for love to be shown to our neighbour through the policies and practices in our asylum system. Our churches will continue to come alongside those who remain in desperate need of our friendship and welcome.' ■

Greenbelt Festival is set for a jubilant return this year with a long weekend of artistry, activism and belief in the East Midlands in the beautiful grounds of Boughton House.

Musicians Brian Eno, Martyn Joseph and The Magic Numbers and speakers Simon Armitage, John Bell, Caroline Lucas, Renni Eddo-Lodge and Archbishop Rowan Williams are just a fraction of the line-up already announced, with more to follow.

The United Reformed Church (URC) is playing a key part, taking “Revolting Christians” as its theme. Revolting Christians stand up to injustice, confront oppression and seek lasting change for good, following the example of Jesus.

Alongside delicious drinks, treats and affordable meals, the URC café will host worship, discussion, music, bedtime stories and superb crafts, all celebrating revolting Christians from history and encouraging and equipping us to be revolting Christians now!

There will also be a special service on Sunday 28th August to mark our 50th Jubilee, celebrating the rich diversity of the URC with a memorable birthday party. You can come alone, in families or in groups, for a day or for the duration. The programme promises an unforgettable time for everyone. Please consider coming along to the festival on this special day!!

The URC website details lots of ways to get involved:

- Bring your church group or congregation
- Volunteer to help run the URC’s activities at Greenbelt and receive a free ticket
- Play your part even if you can’t attend by crafting paper beads or bunting
- Share photographs for the URC collage and help show off the vastness of the URC
- Come along for the special anniversary service on Sunday 28th August.

HABAKKUK

How about that for a name! It might have been ok in the 7th century but you wouldn't call your darling little baby boy that today, would you? However, our 7th century man does have a lot to say that is up to date and relevant.

"How long, Lord, must I call for help, but You do not listen? Why do you make me look at injustice? Destruction and violence are before me, strife and conflict abound.' It was not just academic. There were major wars and people in trouble and dying unnecessarily.

He was also in despair as to why the Lord was allowing people to drift away and He was not intervening.

And how about the times when everybody I know seems to be enjoying life while I have to live by the maxim, 'Why pray when you can worry?' Committing it all to God is a turning point.

Psalms 46 'Be still and know that I am God.' Be still is, literally, let go.'

Firstly, we must agree with the psalmist when he says 'Wait for the Lord; be strong, take heart and wait for the Lord.' Wait means wait and it is hard.

Secondly and equally important, a lifetime habit is to read the Bible expectantly. Expect God to speak. Be desperate to hear what He says.

Habakkuk 2: 'I will stand upon my watchtower and look to see what He will say to me.' Not my timescale but His'. Let it go, all of it, and pray we may receive faith like Job, 'Though He slay me, yet will I trust Him.'

'Though the fig tree does not blossom and there be no grapes on the vines, Though the olive crop fails and the fields produce no food, Though there be no sheep in the sheepfold and no cattle in the stalls, Yet I will rejoice in the Lord and be joyful in God my Saviour.'

Barbara Fergusson, Immanuel

MINDFULNESS – WAKING UP TO LIFE

Recovering from the pandemic? Dealing with stress, low mood, chronic pain?
Looking for skills which help you both navigate life and enjoy it more fully?

THIS AUTUMN, EXPLORE MINDFULNESS WITH TRAINED, EXPERIENCED TEACHERS

With funding to subsidise costs for Swindon people
and in collaboration with Christ Church Community Centre

**On-line course, beginning Wednesday October 8th between 10am-12.15pm
for 8 weeks until 30th November (no session 25th Oct) to include a half day
on Sat 19th November.**

**COST: Sliding Scale of £120 to £220
(further reductions available)**

Try before you sign up - FREE TASTER SESSIONS

Wednesday 13th July: 10am to 11am

Wednesday 7th September: 10am to 11am

We are also looking to support other people and groups. If you are involved in a particular group who you think would benefit from mindfulness sessions (one off or more than one), please do get in touch. Again, these will be subsidised to suit the group or individual.

To express your interest and for further information, please contact:

Chris Smith, Christ Church Community Centre Manager
Mob: 07582 305760. Email: chris@christchurchswindon.co.uk

Our Pets and what we can learn from them



Many of us enjoy the companionship of our pets and for those who live alone pets give us more than just company; we talk to them; stroke them and for some it is a reason to go out to take them for a walk so affording exercise for the owner as well as the pet. But there is much we can learn from our pets, we learn to love without expecting anything in return except a purr or a lick, we learn to enjoy moments which would otherwise pass us by as there is no such word in our pets' vocabulary as "ought"! So often we think that we should like to sit and relax but into our minds comes that word "ought" (I ought to be doing this or that), we feel that we must be

doing things all the time, Pets do not usually have this in their minds; when they want to sleep they just curl up and sleep without any feelings of guilt.

Down through the years we have learned how useful to humans dogs can be as we marvel at the abilities of guide dogs, hearing dogs, police dogs and the like but what about cats? It would seem that there is very little we can train a cat to do; for centuries their task has been to control vermin but new research has discovered that there is something we can learn from cats. We all know the effect catmint has on cats; they love it and rub themselves in catmint leaves and scientists have now discovered that in so doing when the leaves of the catmint are broken, a powerful mosquito repellent is released. This can lead to important developments in insect repellents for humans.



Apart from all this, children can learn much from pets such as kindness, caring and also coping with grief when a pet dies. So thank God for our pets and for all they mean to us.



Phoenix Returns

An affordable professional
accounts and
tax returns service

Lloyd James BSc (Hons) ATT
I have 20 years experience with
accountancy firms from one of the
big four to local practices and
HMRC.

Telephone 01793 827620

Email:

phoenixreturns@mail.com



Full
enhanced
DBS
and
fully insured

I can offer help with

- light cleaning
- shopping
- personal care
- light gardening
- medication
- meal preparation
- companionship
- outings

Tel: 07743 067503

Email:

tmhomehelp@gmail.com

ADVERTISEMENTS

To advertise in this magazine, please contact Mr. David Bevan
telephone 01793 336667; email: david04bevan@yahoo.co.uk

Whilst care has been taken, no responsibility can be accepted for statements
made by the advertisers, neither can we be responsible for any losses
caused by any errors or omissions in the advertisements.

**COPY for the SEPTEMBER MAGAZINE
by FRIDAY 12th AUGUST, please.**

Contributions ahead of the deadline are always welcome.

Please send to: Mrs. Diana Swann, 58 Sandown Avenue, SN3 1QQ
email: d.swann6a@gmail.com

The views expressed in this magazine are not necessarily the views of
those held by the Old Town Partnership of Churches.

Hillier Funeral Service

A tradition of caring since 1923

- Family run and independent
- 24 hour service every day
- Pre-payment plans
- Hillier Bereavement Care

A caring support service for the bereaved



www.hillierfuneralservice.co.uk



HEAD OFFICE

170 Victoria Road, Swindon SN1 3DF
Telephone: 01793 522797

CHAPEL OF REST

The Broadway, Whitworth Road,
Swindon SN25 3BL
Telephone: 01793 522145

EMAIL

enquiries@hillierfuneralservice.co.uk

Established in 1900, today's Hills Group is a dynamic Wiltshire business that covers a wide area of western and southern England.

The Group's operations remain dedicated to three core activities:

- Specialist waste management services and recycling solutions
- Production and sale of ready-mixed concrete, sand, stone and gravel
- Building high quality new homes and undertaking contract building projects

Working today...
...for a better tomorrow



Hills

www.hills-group.co.uk

T: 01793 781200

DEACONS *for* DIAMONDS



Come and view our superb range of new, bespoke and second hand diamond rings.

DEACON & SON (SWINDON) LTD

Established 1848

Items featured subject to stock availability

11 - 15 WOOD STREET, OLD TOWN, SWINDON, SN1 4AN

TELEPHONE: 01793 522072/527530

www.deacons-jewellers.com

B&C MORSE

Painting • Decorating • Property Maintenance

- Local family business
- Interior and exterior painting and decorating specialists
- Wallpaper
- Coving
- Window frames and boards repainted
- Facias and soffits painted or replaced
- Associated building and maintenance work
- Discounts for OAP's
- Competitive rates
- No job too small



For a FREE quotation please call us on: 01793 536867 OR
CHRIS MOBILE: 07754 498760 • BRIAN MOBILE: 07876 074759
EMAIL: chrismorse1974@yahoo.co.uk