



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

# PARTNERSHIP MAGAZINE

DECEMBER/JANUARY 2020

80 PENCE



One in Christ - Together in Mission



**Are you alone on  
Christmas Day?**

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**3 course traditional Christmas dinner**

**Christmas carols    Queens Speech**

**Fun and laughter**

**Where: The Community Centre**

**@ Christ Church**

**When: Christmas Day**

**Time: 12noon-3.30pm**

**To reserve your space by giving  
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**Chris Smith**

**Tel: 01793 617237**

**Email: [chris.smith@cccccwindon.co.uk](mailto:chris.smith@cccccwindon.co.uk)**

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Usually the Parish Office is open Monday-Friday, 9.00am to 1.00pm,  
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# Partnership Letter

The Manse  
147 Drove Road

Dear brothers and sister in Christ,

Sometimes we are brought up short by people's view of 'the church' and equally by people's view of 'Christians'. We can look to history, and sadly also to the present age, for poor examples of both that as 'workers in the vineyard' we find dispiriting and difficult to overcome.

I recently came across a quote by a Christian American Senator, Corey Brooker, that I found challenging and uplifting, because it points the way forward, not by telling us what to do or what we are not doing, but by encouraging us to share what WE ARE doing in the name of Jesus and for all God's people.

“Before you speak to me about your religion, first show it to me in how you treat other people;

before you tell me how much you love your God, show me in how much you love all His children;

before you preach to me of your passion for your faith, teach me about it through your compassion for your neighbours.

In the end, I'm not as interested in what you have to tell or sell as I am in how you choose to live and give.”

May God bless us all,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Alan Barrett". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned below the main body of the letter.

## **FAMILY EVENTS**

### **BAPTISMS**

*We welcome into the family of the Church*

#### **CHRIST CHURCH**

Nov 3 William James George Jackson

### **MARRIAGE**

*We wish joy and happiness to*

#### **CHRIST CHURCH**

Oct 26 Joseph Brooke and Emily Bengé

### **RENEWAL OF VOWS**

#### **CHRIST CHURCH**

Oct 25 Derek and Angela Viveash (50 years)

### **DEATHS**

*We extend our sympathy to the loved ones of*

#### **CHRIST CHURCH**

Oct 21 Marion Humphreys, 90 years

Oct 26 June Tucker, 79 years

#### **IMMANUEL**

Margaret (Bette) Huntley

### **FLOODLIGHTING**

Oct 24 For World Polio Day (arranged by the Rotary Club)

Oct 25 50th Wedding Anniversary of Derek Viveash and Angela Keay

Dec 1 For Ray on his Birthday. Always dearly loved and missed by Pat and all his family.

Dec 13 Remembering Beryl and Hector Hobbs beloved parents of Pauline and Derek and in-laws of Mary and Ian - Rest in peace

Jan 30 Remembering, with love, my dear Mum and Dad, Phyl and Harry Dyer, on their wedding anniversary.

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.

## **OLD TOWN CHRISTMAS TREE FESTIVAL**

### **Walks on Sundays 1 and 8 December 2019**

The Festival rounds off our celebrations of 50 years of the Old Town Partnership of Churches working together.

Guided walks, linking the churches and starting at St Mary's, are planned on Sundays 1st and 8th December. The walks allow time at each church to admire the Christmas Tree displays. The timings are the same for both Sundays. There will be refreshments.

#### **Opening – 4.00 pm, St Mary's, Sunday 1 December, by our Mayor.**

- 3.45 Meet at St Mary's Church in Commonweal Road for refreshments
- 4.00 The first walk on Sunday 1 December will start the Christmas Tree Festival, and our Mayor, Councillor Kevin Parry, will open the event, at St Mary's.
- 4.10 Leave St Mary's
- 4.45 Depart from Bath Road
- 5.45 Depart from Christ Church
- 6.00 Arrive at Immanuel

**Provision will be made for wheelchair users**, please contact one of the organisers to make sure that suitable arrangements are in place.

The total distance of the walk is 1¼ miles, all along pavements. Most of the walk will be in darkness, but there will be street lighting. All major roads will be crossed via pedestrian controlled crossings. **The walks pass through Old Town and we will see the Old Town Christmas lights on our way.**

#### **Organisers**

Anne Macmillan	St Mary's 617237
Martin Limburn	Bath Road 537537
Eddie and Helen Thomas	Immanuel 534404 or 535072
Chris Smith	Christ Church and Community Centre@ Christ Church 617237
Daniel Pitt	Christ Church 521732 mobile 07834 704350

For details of events at each church and times of public opening hours, please see the OTPC website on [www.sotpc.org.uk](http://www.sotpc.org.uk)

**Any donations from the public who visit the festival will go to two local children's charities: CALM, which supports families where a child is suffering with cancer and SWINDON & NORTH WILTS DEAF CHILDREN'S SOCIETY.**



## CHRISTMAS SERVICES

### BATH ROAD

Sunday	15th	10.00 am	Nativity Gift Service
Thursday	19th	6.00 pm	Carols on the steps
Sunday	22nd	6.30 pm	Carol Service
Tuesday	24th	6.00 pm	Candlelit Carols and Christingle Service
Wednesday	25th	10.30 am	Christmas Day Family Service

### CHRIST CHURCH

Sunday	1st	10.00 am	Christingle Service
Sunday	22nd	6.30 pm	Candlelit Carol Service
Tuesday	24th	3.00 pm	Christmas Eve Crib Service
		5.00 pm	Christmas Eve Crib Service
		11.30 pm	Christmas Eve Midnight Mass
Wednesday	25th	8.00 am	Christmas Day Holy Communion
		10.00 am	Christmas Day Family Holy Communion

### ST. MARY'S

Sunday	15th	4.00 pm	Carol Service (No 9am service)
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### IMMANUEL

Sunday	1st	<b>6.30 pm</b>	<b>Partnership Advent Service</b>
Sunday	15th	10.30 am	Toy Gift Service
		6.30 pm	Lessons and Carols by Candlelight with special music from the choir.
Monday	16th	6.00 pm	Carols on the Carpet, join folk of the local community for 45 minutes of carols and songs for all the family.
Sunday	22nd	10.30 am	Carols by Daylight, Readings and Poems
Tuesday	24th	11.30 pm	Communion Service
Wednesday	25th	10.30 am	Family Service



**O**ur cover photo, taken by Janet French, shows detail of the Nativity Window in the North Transept at Christ Church.

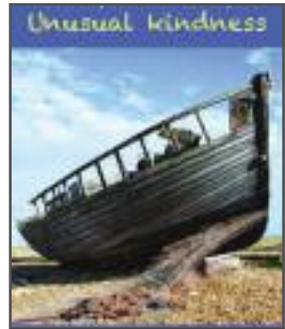
This photo has been reproduced as a card and is being sold to raise funds for The Friends of Christ Church. It is blank inside, so can be used not only as an ideal Christmas card but also throughout the year.

Priced at 50p each or 6 for £2.50, the cards can be purchased from Caroline and Daniel Pitt (tel 01793 521732) or email [carolinempitt@googlemail.com](mailto:carolinempitt@googlemail.com)) or after services at Christ Church.

## Week of Prayer for Christian Unity 18th-25th January 2020

The materials for the 2020 Week of Prayer for Christian Unity have been prepared by the Christian churches in Malta and Gozo (Christians Together in Malta).

On 10th February many Christians in Malta celebrate the Feast of the Shipwreck of St. Paul, marking and giving thanks for the arrival of Christian faith on these islands. The reading from the Acts of the Apostles used for the feast is the text chosen for this year's Week of Prayer.



Hospitality is a much needed virtue in our search for Christian unity. It calls us to a greater generosity to those in need. The people who showed unusual kindness to Paul and his companions did not yet know Christ, and yet it is through their unusual kindness that a divided people were drawn closer together.

Our own Christian unity will be discovered, not only through showing hospitality to one another, but also through loving encounters with those who do not share our language, culture or faith.

In such tempestuous journeys and chance encounters, God's will for his Church and all people comes to fulfilment. As Paul will proclaim in Rome, this salvation of God has been sent to all peoples (see Acts 28:28). ■

**Our Partnership Service will be on Sunday 19th January, 6.30 pm at Christ Church.**

# Bath Road



A photo from 27th November as my daughter Leah completed the Frankfurt marathon in a time of 5.09.03. Later, she wrote on Facebook:

“Thank you so much for all the support and sponsorship! The marathon was absolutely incredible. If you would still like to sponsor me, the link is below:

@ Frankfurt Marathon #runtheskyline:

<https://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/leah-marathon...>

“I chose to run for the Loddon School as I've seen first-hand the incredible work all the staff put in to ensure that the young people in their care, regardless of having the most severe and complex learning difficulties, are able to experience a high quality, fulfilled life.”

The final total for the concert in aid of The Harbour Project was £570.

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Bath Road MOPS invite you to a</b> <b>CHRISTMAS CONCERT</b> by the Close Harmony Singing Group <b>ENCORE</b> with Geoff Walters <b>TUESDAY 17th DECEMBER 7.30 pm</b> at Bath Road Methodist Church</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Admission FREE but a collection will be taken for the</b> <b>Great Western Hospital Brighter Futures Radiotherapy Appeal</b></p>	
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**MOPS group:** 10.30 am on Thursdays December 5th and 19th, January 2nd and 16th. The Rev'd. Tony Barnes will be the speaker on 16th January. Arrangements are currently being made for our group to go out to lunch on Thursday 23rd January.

## **‘God For All’: consultation continues to refine new evangelism and growth strategy**

Around 250 representatives from across the Connexion came together at Methodist Central Hall, Westminster to be part of a consultation to refine the new Evangelism and Growth strategy entitled ‘God For All’.

Mark North is a minister who works in the former mining community of Bolsover in the Sheffield district and said much of his community work is with people who are experiencing addiction, poverty and deprivation. He said it was his privilege to be part of that: “In evangelism we learn as much from the communities we live in as we give to them” and concluded by saying that he was “meeting God in the beauty of brokenness.”

The Rev’d. Trey Hall, Director of Evangelism and Growth, talked about how evangelism is a crucial and non-negotiable part of Our Calling to respond to the gospel of God’s love in Jesus Christ. He explained that the strategy had come from conversations that have been taking place around the Connexion over the past year, but ultimately the stories come from God.

Also present were representatives from other denominations; the United Reformed Church, the Salvation Army, the Baptist Union and the Methodist Church in Ireland.

All were invited to contribute to the conversation and presented their own thoughts on the Evangelism and Growth Strategy from an ecumenical perspective.

Simon Goddard, representing the Baptist Union and a pioneer for Fresh Expressions, commented: “Methodism needs to take a risk and let the next generation take the lead.” ■

## **Methodist artist creates artwork illustrating core values of the British Army...**

The Methodist Church has commissioned Methodist Presbyterian Ric Stott, an accomplished artist and pioneer minister, to produce six pieces of art on the British Army Core Values.

The Core Values illustrated by the art are: courage, discipline, respect for others, integrity, loyalty, and selfless commitment. Army chaplains will be

encouraged to use the art to reflect with soldiers on the meaning of these values and how each one applies to them. Questions that might be prompted from the artwork include: What helps you to find the courage to overcome fear? What inspires you to put the needs of others above your own?

Speaking on the background to the project, Doug Swanney, Chair of the Methodist Forces Board, said: "This resource was prompted by a Methodist army chaplain who saw the potential for art to help chaplains in drawing out soldiers' experiences and understanding of the British Army's Core Values. A talented Methodist minister spent time listening to soldiers' stories of how the Core Values are lived out in their work and lives. Inspired by these stories, he used his God-given gifts to create the artwork."

The collection has been named 'The Watkins Collection' after the Rev'd. Owen Spencer Watkins, the first Methodist Army Chaplain to serve in the field and who was instrumental in the formation of the Royal Army Chaplains' Department. ■

## **CARERS REQUIRED**

for private assignment in Old Town

Experienced carers (with DRB certificate) sought for a well-known Swindon character, now in her mid-nineties, to provide easily-prepared meals, minor personal assistance and help with light housework in addition to companionship.

£10.00 per hour, 5-6 hours per week including alternate weekends.

### **Also standby carer**

for emergency cover required on 2-hour retention.

### **References essential**

For more information and an informal chat please call  
07770 583223

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# Immanuel

## Remembrance Sunday

As has been our custom now for several years, in the lead up to the two minutes silence during our Remembrance Service, we linked up to the BBC broadcast, via the radio, and were thus able to join in with the whole nation in that solemn act. I am sure our congregation felt as moved as me when the bell of Big Ben resounded through the church, and even more so when the buglers of the Royal Marines sounded out the Last Post.

One sight many of the congregation would not have spotted during our morning worship, was the glorious picture presented to the choir in the windows of the prayer corner as the sun, in the most spectacular way, filtered through the leaves of the copper beech tree out in the grounds of Charlton House.

Our evening service was once again an Act of Remembrance as we recalled those recently departed from our own congregation or whose funerals have been conducted by either Robert or Geoff over the past year. Candles were lit in a simple act of remembrance and we were all uplifted by some very moving music from the choir.

*Steve Brain*

*See photos on inside back cover*



## **CAROLS on the CARPET** **Monday 16th December, 6.00 pm** **at Immanuel**

A happy time for all your family and friends to come along and enjoy 45 minutes singing Carols and Christmas songs.

**FOLLOWED BY A WARM DRINK - NO CHARGE**

I have been invited to deliver a paper at the Joint Public Issue Team Theology Listening Day on November 20th in London. The paper I will present is called "This is not a pipe", which is the title of a Rene Magritte painting.

The Joint Public Issues Team, an ecumenical partnership between four church denominations (Methodist, Baptist, URC and Church of Scotland), works together on issues of social justice and political life. It seeks to resource our churches and to represent them in public life on key issues in society.

A key part of their work plan going forward is considering a 'just economy that enables the flourishing of all life' and to consider what the church can offer into conversations about how the economy and the environment go together. The purpose of the Listening Day is for different theologians and Christian practitioners to consider what it would mean to re-imagine the economy in a way which is positive for the environment, with an emphasis on theology.

*Robert Jordan*



### ***Congratulations to Tom Wheeler***

Immanuel Choir Member Tom Wheeler has been awarded the Chapel Scholarship at Canterbury University. This is no small achievement and we are sure his family are very pleased and proud for him. Well done, Tom!

## **ALDBOURNE BAND CONCERT**

**with guests, the Aldbourne Youth Band**



**Saturday 25th January, 7.00 pm**  
**at Immanuel Church**

**Tickets £10.00, under 16s free.**

# Christ Church with St. Mary's

## WILTSHIRE HISTORIC CHURCHES TRUST



### We raised £519

We had a good turn out from Christ Church this year and I was able to send off sponsorship of £519.40 and have received a cheque for £259.20 for our parish. Thank you to everyone who supported this event.

### New Ashes Burial Garden



Christ Church with St Mary's has one of the largest bereavement ministries in the diocese. The closure of our current Rose Garden means that we needed to build a new Garden of Remembrance for the interment of ashes.

We have created a new, level grassed area to the south-east corner of the church. The new area has been carefully landscaped and will provide space for the burial of ashes for years to come.

To find out more about the burial of ashes at Christ Church, please contact the parish office or call 01793 522832.

### **TEA/COFFEE and CHAT at the Goddard Arms,**

**Please note: We will NOT be meeting in December.**

**Our next meeting will be on Tuesday 7th January, 2.30 pm to 4.00 pm**



The Mothers' Union branch at Christ Church with St Mary's in Swindon will be closing at the end of 2019 with a Celebration and Thanksgiving Service on Wednesday 11th December at 2.00 pm in Christ Church to which all are welcome. Browsing through the old files revealed a lot of history.

The branch was started in 1906 with 87 members. In its heyday there were over 300 members who took it in turns to be branch leader, secretary and treasurer. Meetings were held on Wednesday afternoons, originally fortnightly, with the singing of a hymn, prayers and a speaker, followed by tea. Speakers covered religious questions, MU business, local issues, travelogues or musical afternoons. Worship included yearly corporate communion and in the 1960s a prayer group met monthly. The branch has always supported the Wave of Prayer which goes around the world at lunchtime, when every diocese is prayed for by all MU members.

The MU branch always supported church events such as the summer bazaar, often with a stall of handmade handicrafts or cake. The Sunshine Fund was started in the 1940s to provide gifts of flowers and fruit for members in need. 22 Christmas parcels were delivered in 1954.

Each year there was an outing to a local beauty spot, including Symonds Yat and Tintern Abbey. In 2008 a bequest was spent on a trip to the walled garden at Lydiard Park; summer garden parties were also popular.

Two groups of Young Wives were started, one at Christ Church and one at the new estate at St Andrew's, Walcot but not many of them joined MU. A morning group was started as a mother and toddler group in 1983. This subsequently became an evening group and then a support group without meetings.

Events have included a pageant celebrating the MU centenary in 1976, a party for 90 years of the branch in 1996 and a lunch for the branch centenary in 2006, attended by the Mayor of Swindon and local and MU dignitaries. A further celebration of 140 years of MU took place in 2016 with a Festive Choral Evensong at Christ Church featuring the first performance of a specially commissioned setting of Mary Sumner's prayer. ►

Branch members have been involved in cleaning and putting flowers in the Lady Chapel. The banner in the Lady Chapel was made by Wippels of Exeter in 1957 at a total cost of £102 6s 6d and has been paraded at special services and festivals. The kneelers in the Lady Chapel were made by branch members between 1989 and 1991.

Several families from Swindon have been given a week's caravan holiday under the "Away From It All" scheme, resulting in lovely thank you letters. More recently a coach trip to Weston-super-Mare has been organised for about 90 people from Parks and Penhill, giving a treat to more people. Branch members have also contributed to other local projects.

Over 30 years ago the then Dean of Bristol Cathedral asked MU members to be welcomers in the Cathedral as they were the only people who could be relied on to smile! Branch members have helped here, as well as contributing tea and coffee to the Friends for Parents room at the Bristol Children's Hospital.

In 1914 MU received a letter of thanks from Belgian refugees for making them welcome in Swindon. The link branch in St Stephen's, Normanhurst, Sydney, Australia was started in 1984. Other overseas projects have also been supported.

I pay tribute to those who have supported and organised the MU branch over the years, and thank those who have been members during my 13 years as branch leader.

*Caroline Pitt, Branch Leader 2006-2019*



## **New Year's Day Partnership Ramble, Wednesday 1st January 2020**

**All are welcome to join the walk** – first done in the year 2000! Meet at Christ Church car park in time to start walking at 2.00 p.m. We walk via Newport Street, Signal Way, west along the old railway track as far as Beavan's Bridge over the canal, and back. 4 1/2 miles total, easy pace. Please wear warm clothing and suitable footwear (trainers are fine). **We toast the New Year on the bridge. Return to Christ Church, by 4.30 pm, or via 39 Okus Road, where all are invited for tea and mince pies.**

Walk leader is Daniel Pitt – home 521732, mobile – 07834 704350

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At the community centre

# Reflections on Central Asia

by Alistair Senior



I recently embarked on a two-week holiday with a difference to a country in Central Asia, which you've probably never heard of, with the aim of meeting those who seek to share the good news of Jesus with the locals and seeing how the message is proclaimed.

The country in question has a Muslim majority which means that openly preaching the gospel can lead to great persecution. As a foreigner, I could have been told to leave, and to protect the work of those I visited I can't specify where exactly I stayed.

I spent the first week in the capital city, characterised by its bleak Soviet architecture, beautiful mountains in the background and black smoke coming out of seemingly every vehicle. The pollution in the city was the worst I've ever experienced and it made it physically hard to exercise. But this is to be expected in a developing country that only has access to cheap dirty fuel, and where cost is the priority, not the environment.

There was, however, an emerging western presence in the city with western style cafés, shopping centres and restaurants coming in to complement the traditional markets. It seems that the western lifestyle is idolised by many of the people and perceived as a sign of wealth and a way of showing off to your neighbours. In this culture, honour and displaying your wealth is a large motivation to direct life choices.

This culture makes the work of spreading the good news of Jesus hard. The message of Jesus, though promising great rewards of knowing God now and spending eternity with him, does not promise honour or worldly success and so for many people, even if they initially receive the gospel, the pressure of family and cultural values can prevent it from taking root.

One of the biggest issues the country faces is that of providing work for the people; education is poor and people lack the ingenuity to start businesses ►

and create work. The result is that most people resort to farming or taxi-driving as a source of income. The majority of people with any form of good education end up leaving the country to pursue careers elsewhere.

One of the projects I visited seeks to help bridge this gap by providing work for the people and at the same time enabling local Christians to reach out to the rural areas that are often the hardest to access, and they have seen plenty of fruit in this work. It demonstrated to me the great need for skilled workers to go out on the mission field, using their vocation as a means of blessing the country and equipping locals to share the gospel; the harvest is plentiful but the workers are few.

I spent my final week in a city in the south of the country. Here it was clear to see the influence Islam has on the people, more mosques than schools. While there the neighbours of my hosts came back for the Haj, spending, most likely, all their life savings to make that trip. The church in this region was tiny but it was encouraging to hear about work going on in the universities and be able to meet local believers.

During my time there, I was also able to visit the beautiful mountains that characterise much of the country. Here the air was thankfully much fresher, and I was also given an insight into the more traditional lifestyle of the rural mountain people. It gave me the opportunity to appreciate God's good creation, and surely it is a reminder of why he is worthy of our whole lives as worship. He has revealed himself for all to see.

*“Worthy are you, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honour and power, for you created all things, and by your will they existed and were created.”*

Revelation 4:11

.....  
I believe that we musicians, poets and artists have particular responsibilities as we use our gifts in worship. Our songs, poems and images can touch the heart in a way that mere words cannot. More than that, those who profess to have little or no faith are often moved to tears by the music they sing. Many years ago, when I first became Director of Music at a cathedral, the Bishop of the diocese told me: “Your task is to give people splashes of glory.” I have never forgotten this injunction.  
.....  
*Geoff Weaver,*  
a former Director of Studies for the Royal School of Church Music  
.....

## **The Way Things Were**

*The last in the series.*

***Margaret Williams writes about growing up in the city described by Dylan Thomas as that “lovely, ugly town, Swansea”***

Things were very different when I was a child, everyone knew everyone else in the street, knowing them by their surnames, not first names. In our street there was Mr. Davies, the caretaker (the school caretaker), Mr Davies, Evening Post (he worked for the local paper), Mr Davies, the fireman, and my father was known as Mr. Green, the shop, for we lived behind and above a shop selling groceries and sweets etc.

We played out in the street and in the summer we went down to the beach and played in the lovely fine sand. It seemed a safe environment. The milkman delivered the milk with his horse and cart and you took a jug out to receive it. On Saturdays the cockle woman came around from Penclawdd selling cockles and laverbread.

Sundays were different; there were no shops open and the whole place had a quiet atmosphere. We went to church (in our best clothes) and then to Sunday school. After church we would go for a walk or stay indoors. Sometimes someone would come to the back door of our house to ask my father if he would sell them some tea or some butter as they had run out; this had to be done surreptitiously as it was an offence to sell groceries on a Sunday!

At school we sat in rows of desks each having an inkwell, and a much coveted task on a Monday morning was to be the ink monitor and fill all the inkwells.

Then, one Sunday, we came home from church to hear on the radio that we were at war. Little did we realise how this would change our lives! Soon people were talking about gas masks and air raid shelters and ration books and identity cards. At first all this seemed exciting, but all too soon the reality of it all became apparent when the air raids happened.

I was in the “Scholarship” class, which meant I was about to take the 11 plus exam, when the Swansea blitz happened; we had been on the receiving end of many air raids and we would spend the air raids in the shelter which my father and other neighbours had dug in the garden. If the bombing had gone on for a long time, not many children would be at school the following morning and those of us who turned up would recount the stories of the previous

night's raid, each trying to outdo the other in the tales of the bombing. I remember letting our imaginations run wild when we saw a house on the hill in the distance where a light continually shone out and we were convinced that a German spy lived there! It was probably only someone whose blackout curtains were not very good!

In February 1941 we had three nights consecutive bombing raids which lasted all night and the centre of Swansea was completely destroyed; we suffered windows broken and the ceiling in one bedroom came down all over the bed where my sister and I slept; fortunately we were in the shelter at the time! After the first of these raids we had no running water for a day and we had to take bottles and containers to a lorry distributing water (shops did not sell plastic bottles of water in those days).

The way we shopped was quite different; there were no supermarkets and people would come to my father's shop for their groceries and take them home in a shopping bag or basket----imagine carrying your weekly shopping home from a supermarket in a shopping bag today! Maybe we didn't eat as much as we do today; we certainly didn't waste anything!

Times have certainly changed, life has changed, the world has changed. Modern technology has brought some wonderful possibilities into our lives but are we happier people as a result of all this? When I was growing up we were not rich in material things but, in spite of the war, I think we were happy. We didn't expect lots of material things but we were far more interested in people and we seemed to have more time for one another, we talked to one another face to face (not on a mobile phone or by a text) and we seemed to be genuinely more interested in each other as people and I don't think this was just our natural Welsh trait of being inquisitive!

This is how things were years ago. Times change, we change but we can all thank God that He never changes and He continues to love us in spite of everything; what patience He must have!

**PS. Thank you to all who have contributed to this series. Look out for a new series in 2020.**



It was good to see so many of our friends this month, together with some new families, coming to celebrate our Harvest Festival with the theme 'I am the true vine.'

It was not long before Grape Vine cards were made using string with green and purple buttons. Then a balloon prayer vine was gradually produced when prayers written on sticky labels were stuck to a balloon and added to the string 'vine', a reminder that Jesus is the true vine and that we stay close to Him with our prayers.

Of course, fruit and vegetables are an essential part of Harvest so corn on the cob was made and foam fruit and vegetable shapes were decorated, some having faces! Then, at another table, 'stained glass' fruit and vegetables were produced, reminding us of their wonderful shapes and colours. Some attractive paper plate baskets were filled with imitation fruit and vegetables. All of this reminded us that they are good for us and we should remember to thank God for what He gives us.

Many of our fruit and vegetables are produced by farmers whom we should not forget as they work so hard to produce our food, using tractors to plough the land, so 'junk' was used to see if our young people could produce a tractor!

After all these activities, it was time for our Act of Worship when thought was given to all those things that grow on vines – melons, kiwi, tomatoes, grapes and it also looks as if strawberries with their little 'plantlets' grow on vines! The vine supports all the growing fruit and the more the vine grows, the more fruit you get. At the end, starting with the children at the front of the hall, everyone around the room joined hands and once we were linked together, we were all one!

With so many of us being there for Messy Church it was not long before all the sandwiches, cakes and fruit were being thoroughly enjoyed.

**We meet on the third Sunday in the month at King William Street School. Our next meeting is on Sunday 15th December at 3.30 pm. with the theme of Christingles. We look forward to welcoming you. In 2020, we will meet on the 19th January. - same time, same place!**

## Wake up! It's Christmas!



Do you remember the excitement of Christmas Eve when you were a child? There was so much to look forward to the next day, and when you went to bed that night, probably later than usual, you were buzzing with excitement. Eventually you fell asleep and then the next morning you were woken by either a sibling or a parent, saying 'Wake up! It's Christmas!'

As we get older, the excitement of Christmas probably fades somewhat and we perhaps feel overwhelmed by all that has to be done and worn out by the busyness around us. But still it is good to 'wake up to Christmas' in the sense of becoming conscious again of what the Christmas season is all about.

What are we celebrating really? We are celebrating the coming of the Saviour of the world, born as a little babe in the stable at Bethlehem; God's salvation plan coming to pass and the opportunity for us to be brought into relationship with Him again. These are wondrous truths, and we need to wake up again to the meaning of Christmas.

Bethlehem was a busy place when Christ was born. The inns were full with visitors returning for the census and there was no room for the young couple from Nazareth. In the busyness, many must have missed what was happening right before their eyes that night as the babe was born. The greatest event in history but because they were not 'awake' they missed it!

Don't be asleep this Christmas time. Don't be so busy that you fail to notice the significance of what we are celebrating. Let the wonder of it capture your heart again and create in you a sense of gratitude and thankfulness for all that God has done for you. The Saviour has come, rejoice and be glad! ■



**Our Partnership Council met on  
Wednesday 16th October at Immanuel.**

**We highlight below some of the items  
discussed...**

**PARTNERSHIP PROJECT 2020**  
*Raising funds for*  
**The Desai Memorial School in Nairobi, Kenya**

This is in conjunction with the Swindon Old Town Rotary Club members who have been working with the school for many years. It is a primary school that helps the poorest children to receive an education as well as receiving much needed food at lunchtimes.

All monies raised will go directly to the school and a sum of £7,200 would actually run the school for a whole year, so please do get your fund raising hats on and keep us posted on events to support. It would be great if we could help these children - many of whom are orphans - to learn and grow with the possibility of a better future.

You can find out more details at: <http://desaimemorialschool.co.uk/>

**LENT GROUPS 2020**

**We have decided to run a series of Lent groups put together by Martin Palmer and the World Wildlife Fund. *It will be a pilot scheme that will then be made available to Churches and Faith Communities across the world.***

The course will be looking at putting forward a positive understanding of Climate Change and how Faith communities can respond to those changes.

We would therefore love to have your help with this exciting project. We need leaders, hosts and venues at various times on different days so that everyone has a chance of attending at a time that suits them. Some venues may be homes, others Churches. Can you offer to lead with the materials provided? Would you be happy to host Lent groups either at your home or to book a space in your Church? We need to circulate a list of names, places, days and times in January 2020 so that people can sign up to a group that fits their diary. ➤

Please contact Barbara [barbaraaftelak@ntlworld.com](mailto:barbaraaftelak@ntlworld.com) 01793 536815 if you would like to offer your help. We will need your name, contact details, permission to use your contact details for people to get in touch with you if you're offering to host, and the day and time you will be running your group.

## SWINDON POVERTY ACTION FUND

A small group of committed people is setting up a charity to fill a gap for people in need in Swindon. The charity will give grants of small amounts (up to £250) within a very short time scale (probably 2 days) to help cover costs that are not covered by benefits already available. This type of fund already runs successfully in Oxford and St Martin-in-the-Fields, London. It is an emergency fund and can help to buy a school uniform or avoid eviction from a home whilst awaiting benefits to be approved.

The Old Town Partnership Council has agreed to support this project by trying to find people with the skills and energy to get involved. The Fund will, eventually, need money, but at the present time it is people who have time to commit and are able to get involved in setting up the charity. There will be no financial obligation on the Trustees of the Charity.

If you are interested and would like more information, please either get in touch with the OTPC Secretary, Barbara Aftelak, [barbaraaftelak@ntlworld.com](mailto:barbaraaftelak@ntlworld.com) 01793 536815, or you can speak directly to the main lead on the project, Steve Russell, [lindsay.russell@talktalk.net](mailto:lindsay.russell@talktalk.net) 0754 839 4580 and mention to him that you have picked this up from the Old Town Partnership magazine.

Many thanks,  
Barbara, Secretary, OTPC



**Sunday 1st December, 6.30 pm at Immanuel URC**

***Partnership Service to mark the ending of this special year and the launch of our Christmas Tree Festival.***



## Looking to the future

As some of you will be aware, Christian Aid, in common with many other charities, is facing challenging times. In October, we attended a meeting at Purton Methodist Church for a presentation from our Wiltshire representative, Yvonne Penn, to hear more about these challenges. Whilst Christian Aid's income has never been higher, much of it is in restricted funds, meaning that for unrestricted funds they had a deficit of £7 million last year. The result of this is that changes are necessary and proposals are currently being consulted on. Whatever the outcome of the consultation, which ends on 9th December, Christian Aid will need our support in terms of time and money more than ever, especially in Christian Aid Week which will be carrying on. They will also need our prayers, particularly those facing the uncertainty of possible redundancy.

*George and Dorothy Kennedy*

**Extracts giving the salient points from the letter received from Amanda Mukwashi the Chief Executive of Christian Aid are given below.**

I am motivated by our new global strategy 'Standing Together' which calls us to focus our work so that every programme reflects Christian Aid's commitment to the very poorest, speaking truth to power and working, as we always have, with and through local organisations. This will help us to amplify the voice and agency of local partners and ensure long lasting resilient communities able to stand in the face of multiple challenges.

In Britain and Ireland, we aim to be more effective in our church relationships. We want to retain a local presence, but we will reduce our regional and national offices. The focus will be on deepening our partnership with sponsoring churches by increasing the capacity of the team working on national church relationships. We will have home-based on the ground staff to support those churches and groups that need face-to-face support and a central Supporter Engagement Team supporting the remaining groups.

As such, the way that Christian Aid supports you may change slightly. We are in a period of consultation with our staff until later this year, so until that is completed we can't provide exact details of what the new support will look like. But we are committed to working in partnership with you, and your regional contact will remain in touch throughout this period. ►

Globally, we will continue a global humanitarian programme, with capacity and mandate to respond to emergencies where the most marginalised are so often the worst affected. We will continue to invest in a focused programme of policy, advocacy and campaigning work and to play an active role in wider movements that seek to address the root causes of poverty.

We have announced to staff that we will start the process of exiting our programmes in Angola, Egypt, Zambia, Mali, South Africa, Ghana, the Philippines, Nepal, Bolivia, Guatemala and El Salvador. Our work in Latin America will be managed as a regional programme and our work in the Middle East will be run as a regional programme from London. We have started a process of consultation with staff to establish the best way of managing each transition in each of the countries where our presence will be changing.

Overall, up to 200 staff may be at risk of redundancy and we will be doing absolutely everything we can to support them through first a consultation and then an implementation process, and to manage the change in a way that honours our values.

At the end of this difficult but necessary process, I hope you will be able to see a Christian Aid delivering deeper impact for those who are suffering and in extreme poverty. I hope, too, that you will be able to hear a stronger and more focused prophetic voice calling out injustices that keep people in situations of poverty, high risk and vulnerability.

Thank you for all your ongoing support and prayer for Christian Aid. If you have any specific questions, please don't hesitate to ask your local contact.■



**Collectors needed for  
Christian Aid collection at Tesco  
Wednesday 11th December**

The annual tin collection for Christian Aid at Tesco's, Ocotal Way will take place on Wednesday 11th December. We need collectors, so if you would like to help by holding a tin/bucket for an hour at some time between 9am and 5pm (as part of a team), then please contact Dorothy Kennedy on 01793 772589 or email [Dorothy.kennedy@mybroadbandmail.com](mailto:Dorothy.kennedy@mybroadbandmail.com).

Thank you, *George and Dorothy Kennedy*  
on behalf of the Swindon and District Christian Aid Committee.



## More than just a game of rugby...

When Siya Kolisi, captain of the South African Rugby Team held aloft the World Cup trophy, it must have meant so much to him. His country's first black captain, he was born in a very poor township and grew up in extreme poverty in a country that had suffered under the oppression of apartheid. Yet here he was, with his team, in the stadium in Tokyo, hearing the applause of thousands, regardless of their race, colour or creed. When being interviewed after his team's

victory, he was asked if he had dreamt of this moment when growing up. His reply, 'No, I wondered where my next meal was coming from.'

Although England didn't emerge victorious from that game, let us be happy for the people of South Africa to whom it meant so much more than just a game of rugby. ■



## The Phoenix Players present **SAILOR BEWARE**

*by Philip King and  
Falkland Cary*

**Wed 29th January –  
Sat 1st February, 7.30 pm**

**at the Arts Centre, Devizes Road, Old Town  
Tickets £12.00 and £10.00**

Group bookings: 1 free ticket for every 10 booked.

**Tickets available** by phone: 07517 698083

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For payment by credit/debit card please go to

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Providing food, warmth and hospitality for homeless and vulnerable from 11am on 24th December until mid-morning on 28th December

**Donations in kind to Buckhurst Park Community Centre on**

Saturday 14th December, 10.00 am - 2.00 pm

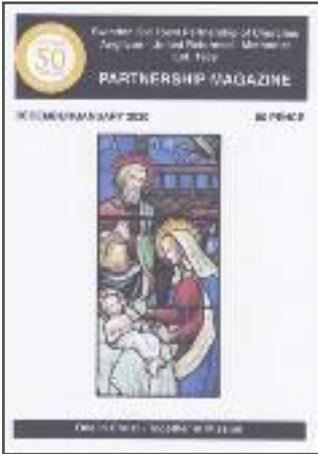
Saturday 21st December, 10.00 am - 2.00 pm

- Adult clothing only and shoes in good condition; new underwear & socks
- Toiletries and towels
- Cleaning materials, e.g. washing up liquid, bleach, tea towels
- Food (which must all have 'Use by' dates which are after Christmas): tinned food, eg meat, fish, beans, tomatoes, other veg, rice pudding dried food - rice, pasta, breakfast cereals, biscuits, tea, coffee, sugar, drinking chocolate etc.
- Long shelf-like packets - mince pies, Christmas puddings, jams and marmalade, cook-in and table sauces, sandwich fillers, custard.

**How to donate money**

- **Online donations (+Gift Aid):** Individuals can donate to us online, using Givey. This enables UK tax payers to use Gift Aid to increase their donation by 25%
- **Cheque:** Please make cheques payable to *Christmas Care* and send to: Treasurer, Christmas Care, c/o 8 Hadrians Close, Swindon, SN3 4BE.
- **Cash:** Please put into an envelope and give directly to a Trustee. Receipts will be issued as soon as possible after a cash donation is made.
- **Direct to our account:** Barclays Bank, Regent Street, Swindon SN1 1QB  
Sort code: 20-84-58 Account No. 00884219. Account name:  
Thamesdown Christians Against Homelessness Christmas Care.  
Reference: Please use your name

**FOR MORE INFORMATION**  
[christmascareswindon.org.uk](http://christmascareswindon.org.uk)



**The Annual Subscription for the Partnership Magazine for 2020 is now due. The price remains the same: £8 for 10 issues.** December and July copies are double issues, covering 2 months each.

Please pay by cheque, if possible, made out to 'Partnership of Churches' and give to your distributor. Please do not hand cheques in at the Parish Office; our distributor will call back at a convenient time.

We can send you the magazine by email for the same price, £8 for 10 issues.

**If you receive your magazine by email or post**, please send your cheque, made payable to 'Partnership of Churches', to Mr. Eric Sparkes, 14 Mill Court, Old Mill Lane, Swindon SN3 1QX.

**Please Note:** Mr. George Kennedy, a member of Bath Road Church, has kindly agreed to take over from Eric for the local distribution of the magazine. His address is 31 Vasterne Close, Purton, SN5 4EZ. Tel. 772589. email: [george.kennedy@mybroadbandmail.com](mailto:george.kennedy@mybroadbandmail.com)

We thank Eric for all he has done so efficiently as magazine distributor for the past nine years, latterly alongside caring for his wife Gillian.

We thank everyone who has given us articles for the magazine in 2019.

**The magazine is an important visible sign of our Partnership of Churches, so please feel part of it and send us your contributions of articles and photographs. We do so want to make the magazine an interesting read for you every month and this is difficult to achieve without your support in sending us items, so please THINK MAGAZINE!**

Thank you to Rose Earle who sells copies of the magazine for us each month by displaying them on the counter of her shop in Newport Street, and also to our advertisers for their support.

## PARTNERSHIP DIARY FOR DECEMBER

- |               |                |   |
|---------------|----------------|---|
| <b>01 Sun</b> | 8.00 am        | Christ Church, 1662 Holy Communion  |
|               | 9.00 am        | St. Mary's, Holy Communion  |
|               | 10.00 am       | Bath Road, Holy Communion, Rev'd. Pamela Stranks  |
|               | 10.00 am       | Christ Church, Christingle Service  |
|               | 10.30 am       | Immanuel, Morning Service, Rev'd. Robert Jordan   |
|               | 4.00 pm        | Christmas Tree Festival walk begins at St. Mary's   |
|               | <b>6.30 pm</b> | <b>Partnership Advent Service at Immanuel</b>   |
|               |                | <b>No evening service at Bath Road or Christ Church.</b>  |
|               |                |   |
| 03 Tues       | 7.00 pm        | Swindon Carers Christmas Concert at Christ Church   |
| 04 Wed        | 10.30 am       | Christ Church, Holy Communion   |
| 05 Thur       | 10.00 am       | Lawn Primary School Christmas Service at Christ Church  |
| 06 Fri        | 12 noon        | Wiltshire County Council Carol Service at Christ Church   |
|               | 7.00 pm        | Charity Christmas Choir Concert in aid of the Prospect Hospice at Christ Church                         |
| 07 Sat        | 7.30 am        | Christ Church Men's Breakfast   |
|               | 6.30 pm        | Swindon Choral Society with Aldbourne Brass Band and Aldbourne Primary School at Christ Church          |
|               |                |   |
| <b>08 Sun</b> | 8.00 am        | Christ Church, Holy Communion   |
|               | 9.00 am        | St. Mary's, Holy Communion  |
|               | 10.00 am       | Bath Road, Morning Service, Sandra Wylie  |
|               | 10.00 am       | Christ Church, Family Holy Communion  |
|               | 10.30 am       | Immanuel, Holy Communion, Rev'd. Robert Jordan  |
|               | 4.00 pm        | Another Christmas Tree Festival walk from St. Mary's  |
|               | 6.30 pm        | Bath Road, Evening Service, Rev'd. Mark Barrett   |
|               | 6.30 pm        | Christ Church, Book of Common Prayer Evensong   |
|               | 6.30 pm        | Immanuel, Evening Service, Rev'd. Robert Jordan   |
|               |                |   |
| 10 Tues       | 1.30 pm        | Lawn Manor Academy Christmas Service at Christ Ch.  |
| 11 Wed        | 10.30 am       | Christ Church, Holy Communion   |
|               | 2.00 pm        | Celebration and Thanksgiving Service for the closing of Christ Church Mothers' Union in the Lady Chapel |
|               | 7.30 pm        | Bath Road Church Council  |
| 12 Thur       | 10.00 am       | Lainesmead Primary School service at Christ Church  |
| 13 Fri        | 10.00 am       | King William Street School Nativity Service, Christ Church  |

- 14 Sat 9.00 am to 11.00 am Community Breakfast at Bath Road  
2.00 pm Pantomime 'Cinderella' in Christ Church, *see page 15*
- 15 Sun** 8.00 am Christ Church, Holy Communion  
**No Morning Service at St. Mary's**  
10.00 am Bath Road, Nativity Gift Service, Rev'd. Mark Barrett  
10.00 am Christ Church, Informal Holy Communion  
10.30 am Immanuel, Toy Gift Service, Rev'd. Geoff Glead  
**3.30 pm Messy Church at King William Street School**  
4.00 pm St. Mary's, Carol Service  
6.30 pm Bath Road, Holy Communion, Rev'd. Tony Barnes  
6.30 pm Christ Church, Healing Service  
6.30 pm Immanuel, Lessons and Carols by Candlelight,  
Rev'd. Geoff Glead and Rev'd. Roy Lowes
- 16 Mon 6.00 pm Immanuel, Carols on the Carpet, followed by warm drink  
7.00 pm Commonweal School Carol Service at Christ Church
- 17 Tues 10.00 am Lethbridge Primary School Service at Christ Church  
7.30 pm Encore Concert at Bath Road, *see page 7*
- 18 Wed 10.30 am Christ Church, Holy Communion  
7.30 pm Avebury Vocal Ensemble concert at Christ Church
- 19 Thur 6.00 pm Bath Road, Carols on the steps, followed by mince pies  
and a hot drink.
- 20 Fri 7.00 pm Swindon Male Voice Choir concert at Christ Church
- 22 Sun** 8.00 am Christ Church, Holy Communion  
9.00 am St. Mary's, Informal Holy Communion  
10.00 am Bath Road, Morning Service, Rev'd. Stephen Skinner  
10.00 am Christ Church, Family Holy Communion  
10.30 am Immanuel, Carols by Daylight, Readings and Poems  
Rev'd. Geoff Glead and Rev'd. Roy Lowes  
6.30 pm Bath Road, Carol Service, taken by the Worship Leaders  
6.30 pm Christ Church, Candlelit Carol Service followed by  
mulled wine and light refreshments in the church.  
**No Evening Service at Immanuel**



**24 Tues**

**Christmas Eve**

- 3.00 pm King William Street School Crib Service at Christ Church  
Open to all.
- 5.00 pm Christ Church, Crib Service
- 6.00 pm Bath Road, Carols by Candlelight and Christingle Service
- 11.30 pm Christ Church, Midnight Mass
- 11.30 pm Immanuel, Communion Service, Rev'd. Geoff Glead

**25 Wed**

**Christmas Day**

- 8.00 am Christ Church, Holy Communion
- 10.00 am Christ Church, Holy Communion
- 10.30 am Bath Road, Family Service
- 10.30 am Immanuel, Family Service, Stuart Benjamin
- 12 noon to 3.30 pm Christmas Lunch and Party at Christ Church  
Community Centre

**28 Sat**

- 3.00 pm Christ Church, Holy Baptism

**29 Sun**

- 8.00 am Christ Church, Holy Communion
- 9.00 am St. Mary's, Informal Holy Communion
- 10.00 am Bath Road, Morning Service, Rev'd. Mark Barrett
- 10.00 am Christ Church, Family Holy Communion
- 10.30 am Immanuel, Morning Service, Margaret Williams

**No Evening Service at Bath Road, Christ Church  
or Immanuel**

**31 Tues**

**New Year's Eve**

- 11.00 pm Christ Church, Watchnight Service

## PARTNERSHIP DIARY FOR JANUARY

- 01 Wed 10.30 am Christ Church, Holy Communion  
 2.00 pm New Year's Day Partnership Ramble, *see page 14*
- 04 Sat 7.30 am Christ Church Men's Breakfast
- 05 Sun** 8.00 am Christ Church, 1662 Holy Communion  
 9.00 am St. Mary's, Holy Communion  
 10.00 am Bath Road, Morning Service, Rachel Browning  
 10.00 am Christ Church, All Age Service  
 10.30 am Immanuel, Morning Service, Rev'd. Daphne Hardwick  
 6.30 pm Bath Road, Evening Service, Adrian German  
 6.30 pm Christ Church, Holy Cmmunion Service  
 6.30 pm Immanuel, Evening Service,
- 07 Tues 2.30 pm Tea/Coffee and Chat at the Goddard Arms Hotel
- 08 Wed 10.30 am Christ Church, Holy Communion  
 7.30 pm Healing Prayer Group at 39 Sandown Avenue
- 11 Sat 9.00 am to 11.00 am Bath Road Community Breakfast
- 12 Sun** 8.00 am Christ Church, Holy Communion  
 9.00 am St. Mary's, Holy Communion  
 10.00 am Bath Road, All Age Service, Frederique Green  
 10.00 am Christ Church, Family Holy Communion  
 10.30 am Immanuel, Holy Communion, Rev'd. Robert Jordan  
 6.30 pm Bath Road, Evening Service, Godfrey Room  
 6.30 pm Christ Church, Book of Common Prayer Evensong  
 6.30 pm Immanuel, Evening Service, Rev'd. Robert Jordan
- 15 Wed 10.30 am Christ Church, Holy Communion
- 19 Sun** 8.00 am Christ Church, Holy Communion  
 9.00 am St. Mary's, Holy Communion  
 10.00 am Bath Road, Holy Communion, Rev'd. Mark Barrett  
 10.00 am Christ Church, Informal Holy Communion  
 10.30 am Immanuel, Morning Service, Rev'd. Robert Jordan  
**3.30 pm Messy Church at King William Street School**  
**6.30 pm Partnership service at Christ Church to celebrate  
 the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity.  
 No service at Bath Road and Immanuel**

- 22 Wed 10.30 am Christ Church, Holy Communion  
 25 Sat 7.00 pm Aldbourne Band Concert at Immanuel, *see page 11*
- 26 Sun** 8.00 am Christ Church, Holy Communion  
 9.00 am St. Mary's, Informal Holy Communion  
 10.00 am Bath Road, Morning Service, Andrew Trowbridge  
 10.00 am Christ Church, Family Holy Communion  
 10.30 am Immanuel, Christingle Service  
 1.00 pm Christ Church, Holy Baptism  
 6.30 pm Bath Road, Evening Service, Godfrey Room  
 6.30 pm Christ Church, Common Worship Evensong  
 6.30 pm Immanuel Evening Service, Rev'd. Robert Jordan
- 27 Mon 7.30 pm Christ Church PCC meeting  
 29 Wed 10.30 am Christ Church, Holy Communion
- 31 Saturday to Sunday 2nd February Bath Road Weekend at Home

## WEEKLY EVENTS

**WALKING FOR HEALTH**, every Monday, 10.30 am, starting and finishing at Christ Church, followed by refreshments. Excluding Bank Holidays.

**OPEN HOUSE** every Monday morning, at Bath Road Methodist Church between 10.30 am and 12 noon. Excluding Bank Holidays.  
*Come and join us for drinks and a chat.*

**BRIGHT LIGHTS PARENT & TODDLER GROUP**, every Monday during term time, 1.30 pm to 3.00 pm in the Community Centre at Christ Church.

**AFTERNOON GROUP** every Tuesday, 2.00 pm-4.00 pm in the Community Centre at Christ Church for tea, cake and chat, activities or a speaker.

## ADVERTISEMENTS

To advertise in this magazine, please contact

Mrs. Diana Swann,  
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Contributions ahead of the deadline are always welcome.

Please send to: Mrs. Diana Swann, 58 Sandown Avenue, SN3 1QQ  
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The views expressed in this magazine are not necessarily the views of those held by the Old Town Partnership of Churches.

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