



# Christ Church Link

Winter 2010 Issue 3

We're an open-minded Christian community exploring our faith together



## Tis the season...

This third issue of Christ Church Link is brought to you by guest editors, Janet Mahto and Emma Elliott. We're delighted to be at the helm and grateful to all the people who have contributed articles. You can find out more about one of our guest editors in "Big Questions" and we hope that one or more of our Christmas services will provide all members of our congregation with an opportunity to immerse themselves in the message of Christmas. You will find full details of services on page 7. Christmas is always a time of many mixed emotions. Among the joy, laughter and excitement there may also be feelings of trepidation, loss, sadness or loneliness. Back in 1949, John Cheever wrote a short story for the New York Times, "Christmas is a sad season for the poor." It's a moving tale of Charlie; a bell-hop in a New York apartment block; and it explores the very contagious nature of generosity. If you can spare 10 minutes and would like to read it, you'll find it online. We have many opportunities to remember and help the poor in our own city, and on page 4 you can find out more about the work of Open Christmas. Lets all give what support we can and, in the words of one very famous frog (with apologies to Mr Dickens) God bless us, everyone!

## From Darkness to Light

Rev'd Angela Berners-Wilson

As the evenings draw in and the clocks change we are reminded once more of the coming of winter – the season of longer hours of darkness than light. We also look forward to Advent, that season of waiting for the coming of the Christ Child, that the Church keeps for the four weeks leading up to Christmas. During these four Sundays a candle is lit on the Advent wreath, to symbolise the Prophets, Patriarchs, John the Baptist and Mary, Mother of Jesus. Then the final white candle in the centre of the ring is lit at Midnight Mass to symbolise the light of Christ Himself.

50p

Light in the darkness, Jesus the light of the world, the light of Christ – all these phrases are part of our Christian consciousness. Yet perhaps, in the past, we have taken them for granted, without fully understanding the enormous significance of the phrase 'light in our darkness'.

But since the events in a mine several thousand metres below the Atacama Desert in Chile, the whole world has had an amazing opportunity to reflect on what light in darkness really does mean.

33 miners were trapped nearly 2 miles below the earth's surface, surviving for 17 days with nothing but hope and an ever dwindling supply of meagre food rations. What utter joy when the probe that was searching for them picked up a note saying that all 33 of them were alive and relatively well.

Shortly thereafter they were told that it would probably be Christmas before they could be rescued, as it would take weeks and months to drill a channel sufficiently large to take them back up to ground level.

Well, as we know now, fortunately it didn't take that long in the end, just another 46 days. But for those men living in appalling conditions of 90% humidity and 90 degrees Fahrenheit temperatures, each day in the semi darkness must have seemed like an eternity. But what kept them going were two things: firstly, many if not all of them were Christians. Chile is a very Catholic country, and their faith really did sustain them; those who had a stronger faith encouraging those of a weaker or more buried faith. And secondly of course, after day 17 of their ordeal, they had hope. They could communicate with the surface, food and above all water could be sent down the subterranean tube, together with medicines, and notes from their families and loved ones, waiting so anxiously above in what became known as Camp Esparanzo – Camp Hope. The partner of one of the men even gave birth during those days, and although she had named the child, the father sent up a message saying, no, call her Hope. Such was the spirit and determination of

Cont'd on page 2



## ... Continued from page one

everyone that they would, against all the odds, survive.

On Wednesday 13<sup>th</sup> October I happened to wake quite early, and knowing what was going on in Chile, I got up and went downstairs to switch the TV on, where I witnessed the 4<sup>th</sup> miner just getting out of the probe. I'm not normally given to great outbursts of emotion, but I had tears streaming down my face as I watched first the rescuers, then the President, then the family members, hug and embrace the miner under his hard hat and strong dark glasses to protect his eyes from all the flash lights, after 63 days in virtual darkness.

What an amazing picture of love, scientific precision and prowess in reaching the trapped miners, and life against all the odds. Almost all of them made some allusion to their faith, or thanked God quite openly, or looked to the sky or kissed the earth. What a witness to love, hope and endurance. Light had certainly come out of the darkness on that day. Thanks be to God.

### Mothers' Union News

Sylvia Ayers

It was with much sadness that we learned of the loss of Laura Gardner, who died on September 23<sup>rd</sup> at the ripe old age of 96. She was a member of our Christ Church branch for over twenty years during which time her support of all our endeavours was always whole-hearted. Her

wartime

reminiscences were a joy to hear. We will

continue to

remember her

cheerful demeanour and will miss her greatly.

We sincerely thank all the members of the congregation who so generously supported our Autumn Women's Refuge Appeal by donating such generous amounts of domestic items.

A list of donations, over a hundred in total, is displayed on the M.U. noticeboard. The House Manager was overjoyed to receive so many welcome gifts. We must also thank Jane Nicholson for the donation of £20 she raised

from her garden produce sale.

I have now been notified that the annual subscription to the Mothers Union is due on 1st January 2011. I would be grateful if current and potential members could let me have a cheque for £15.00 made payable to 'The Mothers' Union' as soon as possible for me to forward to the Deanery Treasurer. This amount covers £8.00 for Mary Sumner House, £6.00 for MU

Bath and Wells, 50p

for each members copy of 'Springs' magazine and an essential 50p per member to cover our own expenses.

**Mothers' UNION**  
Christian care for families

Members can, of course, attend Bath and District Deanery Branch meetings without further payment.

In December we hope to join St. Luke's MU for their Service of Christmas lessons and carols which is always followed by a splendid tea.

In conclusion, may we with all Christ Church friends a very happy Christmas and successful New Year.

### Cleaning of our Church

Jane Nicholson

Several people have put their names down. Thank you very much. However, we do require more volunteers. Over the last few weeks we have made a good start on giving the church a "spring clean". The choir stalls were done last Friday. Thank you very much, Tony. This week, we've started on the pews and



have completed the first three rows, floors and all! The idea is to steadily work through these areas and every Friday, if anyone would like to come between 11 am and 3 pm, you would be most welcome; perhaps earning yourself a coffee break at the Cedar Tree. There is no need to bring anything but, perhaps, your rubber gloves and plenty of elbow grease. Do let me know if you can come!

## Our Friends in the North

### Nicky Gladstone

We wanted to write and share our progress with our friends at Christ Church, however I am concerned that this may read like a Christmas Round Robin letter (“Joshua has been awarded level seven hundreds in all of his preliminary SATS tests and Eliza simply can’t decide between the ukelele and the sitar for her fifth instrument...”) I will do my best to avoid such horrors. Apologies if I fail.

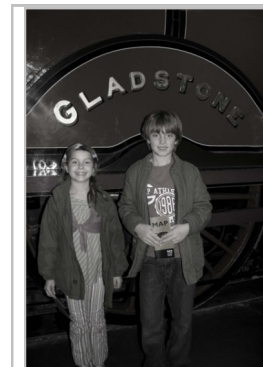
We have been here for 16 weeks now but everything still feels new. We’ve been told it takes two years to truly feel settled somewhere and maybe that’s true, but the settling in period is a lot of fun. Joshua and Eliza love their new school – there are 38 children in total. They are both enjoying being in the Junior Class, and have made lots of new friends. They have started pony riding lessons, and now we know the meaning of a “rising trot,” we will fit in with the Pony Club Set in no time at all.

Chris and Allie are rising to the challenges of their new jobs, and David is enjoying working from home. Lots of projects have started – digging vegetable patches to plant in the spring, clearing the greenhouse, choosing a spot for a duck pond, building a compost heap and lots more besides. We will never need to buy apples again, and if all of our sloe gin and cider making efforts pay off, festive cheer will be in plentiful supply this Christmas!

The Southerners amongst us are overcoming the language barrier (the children enjoy playing “Tig” instead of “Tag” and eating a “Pack-Up” whenever they take sandwiches) and there are a great many things to learn – what to do when the septic tank backs up (try not to panic, and phone Uncle Richard), what to do when the warning light flashes on the Heating Oil Indicator (try not to panic and phone Uncle Richard) and what to do if the burglar alarm goes off (good old Uncle Richard).

There are many local churches, and we intended to tour round all of them for the first few months at least, however the children immediately fell in love with the church in Dunnington, and so our tourism was short-lived. Unsurprisingly, given our Christ Church background, the church we’ve chosen is liberal Catholic, family friendly, and does a nice line in post-service coffee and chat. We feel very much at home there.

We miss all of our friends at Christ Church very much and have been thrilled that a number of people have already made the journey up North to see us, or have written, emailed, or texted. We think about you often, and it’s good to know that you think about us too.



Josh and Lizzy at the National Rail Museum in York

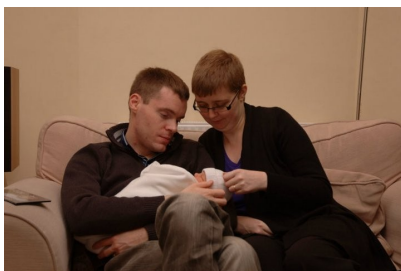


Enjoying the countryside With friends

## Hope and Expectation

### Emma Elliott

The long wait is over and it is a great pleasure to announce that Timothy Barnabas Jones arrived safely on the evening of 21st November.



That all-important weight (to some people) was 6lb 12oz! As we enter the season of Advent, and the hope and expectation of the coming of the Christ Child it is so lovely to be able to welcome the newest and tiniest member of our own church family, and we all look forward to meeting him really soon. Our love, best wishes and prayers go to Sarah and Matthew and Timothy at this very special time in all their lives. Baby Timothy is a very lucky little chap to have such devoted and loving parents.



## Open Christmas

Open Christmas needs helpers. Can anybody help with:

- ◆ Preparation on Christmas Eve
- ◆ Transport
- ◆ Caring for Guests at Open Christmas
- ◆ Helping in the kitchen etc. on 25th Dec
- ◆ Serving meals
- ◆ Cleaning and Tidying on Monday 27th Dec

There is a HELPERS INFORMATION EVENING on Tuesday 14th December at 8.00pm Central United Reformed Church Hall Grove Street, Bath . If you can offer help please contact ANNE – Tel: 01225 316360 You can also give a contribution to Open Christmas in the loose collections at our Christmas services, and also in the plate at the back of church.

Guests of Open Christmas are invited to spend Christmas Day in the beautiful dining hall of Kingswood School, Lansdown. A

traditional Christmas Lunch is provided, as well as afternoon entertainment, a light tea and even a visit from Father Christmas! Transport is provided to and from the event. There is no charge to guests. Open Christmas is organised by Churches Together in Bath. Sylvia Ayers, one of our reps, has compiled some notes from a recent CTB meeting, with news of other forthcoming CTB events. Visit our website or pick up a paper copy from the back of the church for more information.



## Belief is not Transformational

Margaret Heath

It is not what we believe but who we are which matters, I think. A "Do you believe..." and "Then You Are Not one of US " seems to me tribal, exclusive and wide of the mark. Much of what I have heard and read recently has pointed in the same direction. A talk by Marcus Braybrooke at Ammerdown on Global Spirituality referring to Keith Ward's four stages in humanity's religious history, moves from the local, to the Canonical, the Critical and then the age of spiritual exploration, the conscious relation to a supreme value, that is God. The emphasis is on transformation of the person, of society and of the church. The church would place less emphasis on belief and more on interiority, outreach, caring, welcome to all. At a study weekend with Canon Melvyn Matthews, also with ESF at Ammerdown, we also looked at a church for the post-modern world. Modernism is roughly defined as a time of reason and rules, rationalism, Reformation, enlightenment. "The trains ran on time but they ran to Auschwitz". There is currently disillusion with reason; a reversion to mysticism. Science has NOT all the answers. We can live with uncertainty, launch, like an Odile Redon mystical boat into the unknown. I commend, "Awake to God". I see a swing from west back to east (see Parkinson, who was a historian before he invented his Law and has written on the swings between eastern and western dominance). For me the rediscovery of the mystical way, of the huge riches of the Anglican mystical tradition, is wonderfully exciting and enriching. Poetry, art, literature, music contribute to a wealth of religious experience far richer than creeds and rules, to my, possibly mildly heretical, mind. There are some stunning courses at Sarum on these matters. Progressive Christianity has a flourishing Bath branch, based on the U.R.C. The P C network promotes a fresh approach, where, I quote, "contemporary thought and understanding matter as much as scripture and tradition". I find this a breath of welcome fresh air. For me, it is disaster to take the bible literally. There are contradictions galore. Some of my friends heard Marcus Borg in Edinburgh and we have listened to his tapes; he asserts that many common Christian words have become distorted, eg "salvation", "saved" "saviour"; salvation should mean TRANSFORMATION, he argues. So we have gone full circle. True religion is not grimly believing; it is about relationships with God and neighbour. This all makes exciting sense to me at least. Christ church, with its lack of parochial commitments, seems to me ideally paced as a peculiar to express a C21st Christianity.

## Big Questions: Little Answers

This time, in the hot-seat is one of this issue's Guest Editors, Janet Mahto. Janet is a regular member of our 10 am congregation, attends (and sometimes provides hospitality for) our Thursday Group, and also helps out with Genesis Sunday lunches. She has recently returned from a trip to India to visit members of her family.

### **What are your hobbies?**

Gardening, tennis and bridge, to name a few.

### **What car do you drive?**

A very dented Peugeot 206

### **What is your favourite film, and why?**

Lagaan - an epic film made in India but screened in England. It contains a brilliant cricket match, love story and a bit of Bollywood

### **What is your favourite kind of music?**

Plain-chant and choral

### **What is your favourite kind of meal / food?**

Traditional 'roast dinner' eaten at my kitchen table with all the family.

### **What has been your proudest moment?**

Being with my late husband when he received his FRCS in Edinburgh - he had worked so hard to achieve it.

### **What is the most amazing place you have visited?**

The Pinjore Gardens - mogul gardens in the Punjab.

### **What famous person, dead or alive, would you like to meet?**

(This has given me the most problem!) Gandhi

### **What's your pet hate?**

Having to be inside for a whole day without any exercise.

### **What's your favourite book?**

The Summer Book by Tove Jansson. Its set on an island in Finland and is a delightful gentle story. (I have a copy if anyone wants to borrow it.)

### **Tell us a little known fact about yourself**

I am completely useless with a mobile phone and my writing is totally illegible. Tessa will testify to the former!

## Christ Church Website

### Matthew Jones

Have you ever wondered who the Christ Church Trustees are and what they get up to? Or what was said at the last Church Council meeting? Perhaps you'd like to know what the Home Group are talking about this week or to see some photos of a recent Christ Church event.

You can find all this information and more on the Christ Church website. The site had a face lift over the summer to give it a new look in line with our new corporate identity (thank you Mark) and during the Autumn has had a lot of new content added. There are new pages about the Trustees and Church Council, our youth group HR, the Mothers' Union, weddings, baptisms and funerals and using Christ Church as a concert venue. Already this work is proving worthwhile, with several enquiries about weddings and concerts having been received via the website.

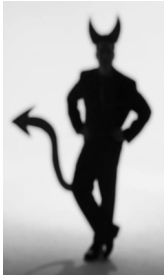
You can also download copies of the various pieces of paper handed out on a Sunday morning - the notices, the readings, the prayer cycle, the monthly music list and even this very magazine. Very often these are available online before they are "in the shops" which can be especially useful if you'd like to practise your reading!

So if you can, get online and have a look - you never know what you might find:

[www.christchurchbath.org](http://www.christchurchbath.org) If there's something else you'd like to see added to the website, please let me know - [matthew.jones@christchurchbath.org](mailto:matthew.jones@christchurchbath.org).



## Devil's Advocate



They always tell you when going to a job interview to arrive early so you've got time to prepare your mind for what's coming up. Perhaps we should do the same before a service, otherwise aren't we making it harder for ourselves to get something valuable out of our time in church? Yet it always surprises me how empty the church seems to be at 10am on a Sunday morning and how much fuller it appears at 10:10am. Just a thought...

### Devil's advocate

(noun, idiomatic)

One who debates from a view which they may not actually hold, usually to determine its validity, or simply for the sake of argument.

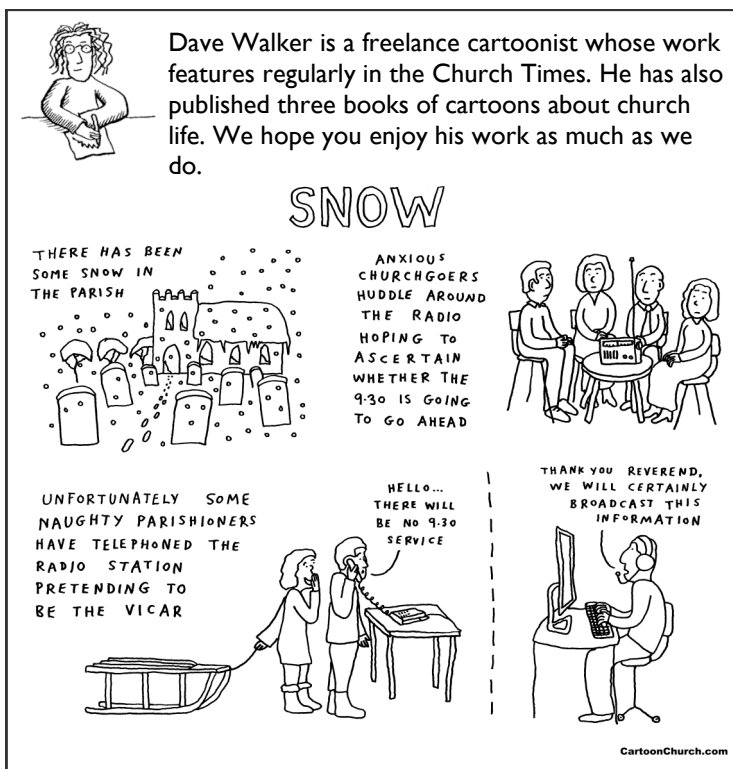
## The Mission to Seafarers

Caring for seafarers around the world



As an island nation we are reliant more than most on the work of seafarers, for example, those that bring imported goods into the country. They often work in some of the toughest conditions around our own shores and across the globe. The Mission to Seafarers works 365 days a year in over 230 ports around the world to give help and support in every way that they can to this vulnerable community of workers. They provide Seafarers' Centres, contact with loved ones, help for abandoned crews, spiritual support and help in emergencies. You can find out more about this worthwhile charity, including how you can offer your support by visiting their website, [www.missiontoseafarers.org](http://www.missiontoseafarers.org).

In her article below, Sylvia gives us another easy way to help—by saving stamps. Thank you Sylvia for all the work you do in supporting this charitable organisation and bringing it to our attention, especially in this Christmas season, when many seafarers will be separated from loved ones.



## Stamps for Seafarers

### Sylvia Ayers

Before consigning your Christmas stamps to your green box, please take a moment or two to carefully cut off the pictorial stamps with a pair of scissors leaving a half inch border all round. If they are just torn off the stamps may get damaged.

I do most sincerely thank those regular, if anonymous, contributors to this cause who continue to leave me their parcels during the year. All pictorial stamps, including those from abroad, are still very warmly welcomed, but I have been advised that the Mission can no longer accept ANY GB first or second class stamps. Unfortunately I have no option but to throw these away.

## Coming up at Christ Church—Christmas Services

<b>Wednesday 1st December</b>	2.00pm	King Edwards School Christingle
<b>Sunday December 5th</b>	4.30pm	Choral Evensong
<b>Friday December 17th</b>		Norland College Carol Service
<b>Sunday December 19th</b>	6.30pm	Christmas Carol Service
<b>Friday 24th December</b>	3.00pm	Crib Service
	11.30pm	Midnight Mass
<b>Saturday 25th December</b>	10.00am	Family Communion
<b>Sunday 26th December</b> <b>Sunday 2nd January 2011</b>		No service at Christ Church but we're invited to join St Stephens for their Patronal festival at 11 am.

## Who's who

Officiating Minister	Vacant	Organist	David Wrigley 01761 439355
Reader Chairman of Trustees Director of Music	Mark Elliott 01225 445360 mark.elliott@christchurchbath.org	Magazine editors and publicity coordination	Matthew & Sarah Jones 01225 443284 sarah.jones@christchurchbath.org
Reader	Cyril Selmes 01225 420039	Concert bookings Weekly notice sheet	Judith Bishop 01225 869409 concerts@christchurchbath.org notices@christchurchbath.org
Churchwarden Home group leader	Lewis Boyd 01225 329190 lewis.boyd@christchurchbath.org	USPG	Adrian Pegg 01225 858809
Churchwarden	Malcolm Wall malcolm.wall@christchurchbath.org	Mothers' Union	Margaret Burrows 01225 334743
Verger	Angela Soboslay 01225 333297	Deanery Synod CTB	Margaret Heath 01225 428272
Treasurer	David Bishop 01225 869409 david.bishop@christchurchbath.org	Deanery Synod	Andrew Sillett
Secretary to Church Council	Hazel Boyd 01225 329190	Churches Together in Bath	Sylvia Ayers 01225 463976
Junior Church Laity rotas	Sarah Cade 01225 339305	Mothers' Union Mission to Seafarers Church Calendar	

## Regular Sunday Services

- 8am Holy Communion using the text from the Book of Common Prayer.  
Usually the second Sunday of every month but see website or notice board for details
- 10am Sung Holy Communion  
With Junior Church activities for children and young people
- 4:30pm Choral Evensong once a month  
Usually the first Sunday of every month but see website or notice board for details

The church also aims to be a place of spiritual welcome when marking particular points in life's journey. If you would like to discuss holding a service of marriage, baptism or a funeral here, please use the details below to contact us.

## About Christ Church

Christ Church has an unusual history out of which has developed a distinctive ministry. It was built at the end of the 18th century, founded by socially concerned clergy & lay people for those excluded from worship through the system of pew rents. It was probably the first church at that time to provide seating free of charge. Early supporters included the Archbishop of Canterbury, the great evangelical and campaigner against slavery, William Wilberforce and Martin Stafford Smith, godfather of John Keble, a founder of the Oxford Movement.

It is not a parish church and does not have a paid vicar. This has led to the development of a shared ministry where clergy and laity both make important contributions to worship and church life.

Christ Church today is part of the Anglican diocese of Bath and Wells, although it still sits outside the normal parish system. We see ourselves as a traditional and liberal Anglican church. Worship is led by our clergy, and music is provided by our robed choir and organist. There are separate activities for children in Junior Church groups.

As well as worship on a Sunday morning, there are many other activities going on in our community. We support the Genesis Sunday Centre and have our own community café. The musical tradition of the church continues to thrive and we have an active choir. Our ecumenical home group provides a space for exploration and discussion of faith in an open and non-judgmental setting.

If you are considering whether Christ Church is a place where you would feel comfortable in exploring the Christian faith, we would be delighted to welcome you, please come along to a service or get in touch with us (see below). If you feel you are looking for a different Christian community we wish you well with God's blessing and we would be happy to tell you of other churches in the area.

## How to find or contact us

Christ Church  
Julian Road  
Bath  
BA1 2RH

Telephone: 01225 338869 (answer phone)

Email: [admin@christchurchbath.org](mailto:admin@christchurchbath.org)

Website: [www.christchurchbath.org](http://www.christchurchbath.org)

