



We're a liberal, inclusive and open church, seeking God through beauty in our worship, honesty in our faith and doubt and support in our community.

Where sold

## Celebrating Christmas

Canon Angela Townshend

The image of Christmas is one of light and joy, gifts and excitement.

When I was a child I remember the excitement of looking in shop windows dreaming of what Father Christmas would bring me. I remember the thrill of seeing the Christmas tree lit up for the first time a few days before Christmas and the smell of the pine. Earlier this month I was with my grandchildren and they were looking, not in the shops but on the internet for what they might like. I have seen the same delight as I experienced in children today at the sight of the newly decorated tree, but not necessarily with the smell of the pine.

The world has changed but the message of Christmas is still the same. It is still one of light and joy, gifts and excitement.

The light is the light of Christ which shines in our world, illuminating the darkness of winter and bringing us hope during the darkest part of the year.

The joy is of the promise of sins forgiven and new hope for the world. That hope can sustain us in the difficult times of our lives, in the grief of the loss of a relationship, or a death; in the worry we have over financial issues or our family; in concern about the war in the Holy Land, the very place where Jesus was born, or Afghanistan or of the future.

The gift is that of the child Jesus, born of a young and innocent girl in the poorest of surroundings, who came to bring the knowledge of the love of God to men and women in every place and every time.



Excitement! Why wouldn't we be excited? Christmas offers us the possibility of heaven! Not pie in the sky when you die, but the deep sense of God in our lives, offering us the opportunity to live now, in the fullness of God's love and care for us.

We may be grown up, we may think we are adult, but inside of each of us is the child who longs for

Christmas. Can we allow the child in us to experience the light and joy and the excitement of giving and receiving at this very special time?

## Sad News from Synod

Matthew and Sarah Jones

As this edition went to press, we heard the news that General Synod had rejected (by the narrowest of margins) the motion in favour of the appointment of women bishops. For us, this is sad news and we are sure it will be to many others at Christ Church as well.

The coming months will be difficult for the Church of England, so we pray that all sides of the debate will speak and act gracefully and in love.

In the meantime, we would like to go on record to say how much the ministry of women has meant in our lives and how much we value and appreciate the work and ministry of Angela T and Angela B-W in the life of Christ Church.

## New music makers

Many of you will have noticed some new faces in the front row of the choir. Isaac, Lily and Emily have made a flying start and already have their favourite pieces (as anyone in the choir vestry after last Sunday will be able to testify!) And, although we haven't included their photo here, we have also been delighted recently to welcome James, Rory and Finn to the back row of the stalls.

We thank them all for their time and dedication in enhancing our worship through music.

Photo removed from Internet version

## Mothers' Union News

**Margaret Burrows and Sylvia Ayers**

We would like to thank the Christ Church congregation very much indeed for your extremely generous response to our annual appeal for gifts for the Bath Women's Refuge. As you will be aware, most of these ladies arrive at the refuge house with their children, bringing only what they could quickly pick up from their homes during their often hurried departures. They are all very grateful for anything that we can give them, and the realisation that we do care, gives them the confidence to carry on, to try to make the best of things and to regain their self-respect. So, once again, thank you everyone for your help.

It was wonderful to get such a splendid response from those who have plenty; so from that abundance, we can give to those who have very little. You can be sure that the hostesses are very appreciative of the little we can do for them, and a list of your 90 donations is on the MU notice board for all to read. Further donations are always welcome, especially in the toiletries and food lines, but some advance notification will be needed as, owing to the secrecy surrounding the location of the refuge, an appointment is always required before any gifts can be delivered.



Another aspect of the Mother's Union work is providing practical advice to UK families and to this end they have recently extended their 'Bye Buy Childhood' campaign to include suggestions to help families manage children's expectations at Christmas. You can read more at [www.themothersunion.org/managingchildrensexpectationschristmas.aspx](http://www.themothersunion.org/managingchildrensexpectationschristmas.aspx) They conclude:

At this time of expectation - the anticipation of the coming of Christ, we want to encourage families to have a Christmas which is not just a time of material satisfaction and where the gift of giving is the not the sandbag against disappointment, but a time when parents and children alike feel that special magic of giving to one another as God gave to us

## Meditation

Daphne Radenhurst

In a talk to the Pope and Roman Catholic church leaders at the Vatican on 10<sup>th</sup> October, Archbishop Rowan Williams talked about the benefits of meditation. Meditation, he said, is the key to living in this insane world. He urged the Church to revive the traditions of silent prayer and meditation, as practiced by the Benedictine monks.

Bede Griffiths was a Benedictine monk who went out to India to find, as he put it, the other half of his soul. This is what he wrote in 1990 about meditation:

“Meditation is an art whereby we seek to go beyond the body and the senses. We try to calm the body, by the practice of yoga, if necessary, and then to calm the senses. We do not suppress the senses, but we learn to harmonise them so that the body is in peace. Then we have to face the mind as it wanders all over the place, and we have to harmonise the mind. Again we do not suppress the mind, nor do we indulge it, but we try to bring it to stillness and to oneness, often by using a mantra. At that point we go beyond the body and beyond the mind and we encounter the divine reality.”

John Main was another Benedictine monk who discovered meditation whilst serving in the Far East. He later found out that meditation had been practiced by the early Desert Fathers in the fourth century and he introduced meditation into his catholic community. This later became the World Community for Christian Meditation.

The term meditation is here used to describe a period of silent prayer with the use of a mantra, with the aim of bringing the mind to silence, as opposed to a period of discursive thought based on a sacred verse or theme.

Meditation is now seen as being very beneficial to children, and some schools have introduced it into their curriculum. A beautiful book called *Born Contemplative* by Madeline Simon was published in 1993. Dr. Montessori said long ago, when she was working with children, that children naturally love silence and she used to carry out experiments with them to prove this. Parents may not agree about this! There are now courses available for teaching meditation to children.

If anyone is interested in meditation or in joining a group, they can contact me either by phone: 01225 429398, or by email: [daphneraden@btinternet.com](mailto:daphneraden@btinternet.com)



## Publicity update: read all about it!

Matthew and Sarah Jones

As previously reported, we have been investigating the options for new notice boards on the exterior of the building to show our neighbours and passers-by that we are an active community, not an empty church building. All being well, we should have our new boards in place in early 2013, allowing us to better display information about our services and other events.

You may also have seen the adverts in both the *Bath Magazine* and *Bath Life* promoting our Christmas services and our music making. Many thanks are due to Mark Elliott for creating some great advertising material that will be seen by tens of thousands of people across the city.

Almost as we type, we are also in the process of creating the Christmas publicity for 2012 and we would very much appreciate your help in distributing postcards to our neighbours after the 10am service on Sunday 16th December.

Finally, the choir will once again be singing at the Bath Christmas Market this year on Saturday 8th December for an hour from 8pm. If you would like to come and listen, shake a bucket for charitable donations and hand out some publicity postcards, you would be very welcome.

## Bishop of Bath and Wells to retire



Speaking at the Diocesan Synod held in Wells Cathedral on 3rd November, Bishop Peter told the congregation:

“In June of next year I will be into my 70th year and have proffered my resignation of the See of Bath and Wells as from June 30th 2013.

I have had the privilege of serving this diocese as its bishop for nearly 11 years. It has been among the most special periods of my life and I thank you for all that you have been and done in support of that ministry.”

Peter Price became Bishop of Bath and Wells in 2002 and a member of the House of Lords in 2008 where he takes particular interest in international aid and foreign affairs. For many years Bishop Peter has been active in issues of reconciliation, contributing to peace-making in Northern Ireland, Iraq and Zimbabwe. In 2011 he was able to revisit friends in El Salvador, including one Bishop he was instrumental in saving from execution 20 years ago.

The Archdeacon of Taunton, the Venerable John Reed, who has worked alongside Bishop Peter since 2002, praised his ministry:

“Bishop Peter’s passion for the truths of Jesus Christ has been transparent to us all. Reconciliation, justice, peace and love are key words for the Bishop. It has been a privilege and joy to serve under his leadership. Peter and his wife Dee together have lived out their commitment to hospitality and the building-up of relationships and community through their ministry and life here in Somerset. I thank God for them and will miss them greatly.”

## A watchful Advent

Do you follow the themes which are woven into our worship week by week? The lectionary (the set pattern of readings), the music and the liturgy (the words we use in worship) are carefully chosen to develop themes (although on some occasions the links are harder than others!)

Here is how *Common Worship* introduces the season of Advent:

Advent is a season of expectation and preparation, as the Church prepares to celebrate the coming (adventus) of Christ in his incarnation, and also looks ahead to his final advent as judge at the end of time. The readings and liturgies not only direct us towards Christ’s birth, they also challenge the modern reluctance to confront the theme of divine judgement.

The Four Last Things – Death, Judgement, Heaven and Hell – have been traditional themes for Advent meditation. The characteristic note of Advent is therefore expectation, rather than penitence, although the character of the season is easily coloured by an analogy with Lent. The anticipation of Christmas under commercial pressure has also made it harder to sustain the appropriate sense of alert watchfulness, but the fundamental Advent prayer remains ‘Maranatha’ – ‘Our Lord, come’ (1 Corinthians 16.22)

Church decorations are simple and spare, and purple is the traditional liturgical colour. In the northern hemisphere, the Advent season falls at the darkest time of the year, and the natural symbols of darkness and light are powerfully at work throughout Advent and Christmas.

How will you keep a watchful Advent? Perhaps a short prayer when you open a door on the advent calendar could be a good place to start?

Come, Lord Jesus, do not delay;

give new courage to your people, who trust in your love.

By your coming, raise us to share in the joy of your kingdom on earth as in heaven, Amen.



## Churches Together in Bath

Sylvia Ayers

A meeting was held on 11th October 2012 at St Mary's Bathwick. After an opening prayer, the following news items were announced:



- The service listing leaflet has now been completed, and was brought to the meeting by Rev. Kieran Bourne, who has worked very hard on this project. The 1,000 copies were given to members for display in their various churches and also for distribution to local Bath hotels.
- There was no report from the CTB executive committee secretary.
- The service for the Women's World Day of Prayer will be written by women in France. The WWDP committee has appealed for a male or female native speaker.
- The original glass cross in the window at Haycombe Cemetery has now gone and has been replaced by a Bethlehem wood cross hung in front of the plain glass window.
- The Salvation Army citadel is now open again for normal services. In addition, a splendid cafe, highly recommended and available to all, has opened in the building.

After the business of the meeting was completed, we were addressed by Gabrielle Grace, the county Ecumenical Officer. The idea behind this departure from our normal programme, was to work out ways in which the CTB can broaden its activities in service to the community. Gaby worked in London for some years first for the USPG, then for the Methodist Mission recruiting and training volunteers to work overseas. She then moved to Wellington in Somerset, where she serves on their Churches Together group, while continuing with her missionary work.

She then gave us her personal take on our mission work saying that we should try to look forward and not back. We should involve ourselves in all aspects of mission in the city, and move outside our own comfort zones and our individual churches, as renewal brings unity. We are channels of God's mission to each other, and if this involves change, then we must still keep faith with each other. After the talk, members formed small discussion groups, and they reported back that several churches already cooperate in running the drop-in-centre, the soup run, the night shelter and Open Christmas among other projects. We are therefore on the right track, but support from more church members would definitely be welcome.

It was with sadness that the meeting then said goodbye to our chairman, Colin Hunt, as this was his last meeting before he moves to France. Our next meeting will be taken by Rev. Kieran Bourne (a previous chairman) but he assures us this is a one-off and we will need to elect a new chair for the following season of meetings.

The next meeting will be at 7:30pm on Wednesday 6th February 2013 at our neighbours: St Mary's. Mary's. Roman Catholic Church, Julian Road. It will be an AGM followed by an ordinary committee meeting.

## New ways to worship

Sarah Jones

A small group lead by Canon Angela have been meeting to talk about worship at Christ Church and how we can develop and deepen it. When the new format order of service was introduced in Spring 2011, it was always intended that this would be a short term measure until our new priest-in-charge had the opportunity to make their suggestions about our patterns of worship.

This process is now underway and the plan is to produce several different service booklets for the different church seasons (still based on the format we currently use). By having a larger number of seasonal orders of service, we can make greater use of the wealth of variety in the text of *Common Worship* whilst retaining a booklet that is easy to navigate.

If you have any comments about the current orders of service (either practical or liturgical!) please speak to Mark, myself or Canon Angela.



Dave Walker is a freelance cartoonist and has published three books of cartoons about church life, you can even now buy tea towels displaying his work! We hope you enjoy his scribbles as much as we do.

# STOLES

THE VICAR USES THESE TO COMMUNICATE WITH THE CONGREGATION

PATTERN →



WHAT THE VICAR INTENDS IT TO MEAN →

CHRISTIANITY BRINGS NEW GROWTH

THE SPIRIT IS AT WORK

THE BIBLE IS VERY IMPORTANT

WE ARE ALL ON A JOURNEY OF FAITH

WHAT THE CONGREGATION THINKS IT MEANS →

WE COULD DO WITH SOME HELP WITH THE OVERGROWN CHURCHYARD

ONE DAY WE WILL GET SOME PROPER HEATING

IN SOME WAYS A STOLE LOOKS SIMILAR TO A VERY LARGE BOOKMARK

I LIKE TRAINS

CartoonChurch.com



## From the editors' laptop Matthew and Sarah Jones

It is a year since we celebrated the start of Canon Angela's ministry with us, but looking through this edition of *Christ Church Link* it is clear that change continues: new choir members, improved church publicity, a new CTB chair, changes to how we worship and, at some point soon, a new Bishop of Bath and Wells. There is more to come: a group is considering plans for developing the church building and we now have permanent use of the ground floor of the newly renamed Christ Church Mews (the old school building), which opens up all sorts of new opportunities for us. On top of this, there are potential changes to how Church Council operates and following the exciting news that Sarah and Iain are expecting a baby, we'll soon need a new Junior Church leader as well as a new magazine editor. We think this makes it an exciting time to be part of Christ Church, as we

**The deadline for articles for the Spring edition is Sunday 10th March**

develop a new vision for our future.

But change can be unsettling too and it's likely that all of us will find a few changes that we don't like. We therefore all need to be careful that we act prayerfully and with sensitivity to the needs of our brothers and sisters in the church: we know from our own experience how a few poorly chosen words can discourage those who work so hard to develop and run our church, or make someone happy with current arrangements feel undervalued. This prayer seemed to us to express these things well:

*Assist us, Lord, in living hopefully into the future. In the face of change, help us to set unnecessary fears aside and to recognise our potential for*

*creative response. Help us to develop a reasonable optimism when confronted by "the new" and to guard against our own defensiveness. Be with us as we remember and celebrate former times, and keep us from unreasonable yearning for them, which takes us from the work you have set before us in our time. All this we ask in the name of your Child, our Saviour, Jesus Christ. Amen*

The Rev. Linda C. Smith-Criddle (Women's Uncommon Prayers)

## Coming up at Christ Church

**Sunday 9th December 6:30pm**

Advent Carol Service

*Note the date! A week later than in previous years.*

**Sunday 23rd December**

**10am**

Family Eucharist and Nativity Play

**6:30pm**

Christmas Carol Service

**Christmas Eve**

**4:30pm**

The Christmas Story: a short, all age service

**11:30pm**

Midnight Mass

**Christmas Day**

**8am**

Book of Common Prayer Holy Communion

**10am**

Sung Eucharist

## Who's who at Christ Church

Priest-in-charge	Canon Angela Townshend 01225 464194 angela.townshend@christchurchbath.org	Junior Church Laity rotas	Sarah Cade
Supporting clergy	Rev'd Cliff Burrows Preb Angela Berners-Wilson	Organist	David Wrigley 01761 439355
Reader Chair of Trustees Director of Music	Mark Elliott 01225 445360 mark.elliott@christchurchbath.org	Pastoral care coordinator	Keri Chivers 01225 421265 keri.chivers@christchurchbath.org
Churchwarden	Malcolm Wall 01225 864933 malcolm.wall@christchurchbath.org	Magazine editors and publicity coordination	Matthew & Sarah Jones 01225 443284 sarah.jones@christchurchbath.org
Churchwarden Chair of Church Council Home Group leader	Lewis Boyd 07739 989639 lewis.boyd@christchurchbath.org	Concert bookings Weekly notice sheet	Judith Bishop 01225 869409 concerts@christchurchbath.org notices@christchurchbath.org
Verger	Angela Soboslay 01225 333297	USPG	Adrian Pegg 01225 858809
Treasurer	David Bishop 01225 869409 david.bishop@christchurchbath.org	Mothers' Union	Margaret Burrows 01225 334743
Secretary to Church Council	Brenda Wall 01225 864933	CTB	Sylvia Ayers 01225 463976 Margaret Heath 01225 428272
Deanery Synod	Morny Davison Andrew Sillett Brenda Wall	Mothers' Union Mission to Seafarers	Sylvia Ayers 01225 463976

## Regular Sunday Services

- 8am Holy Communion using the text from the Book of Common Prayer.  
On the second and fourth Sunday of every month
- 10am Sung Eucharist  
With Junior Church activities for children and young people
- 4:30pm Choral Evensong  
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  
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Bath  
BA1 2RH

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

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

