

# The now and the forever

*From the priest-in-charge...*

**Revd Lore Chumbley writes:**

As we welcome 2024 I know from experience that writing the new date will feel strange for a few days or weeks until I become accustomed to it and it flows freely from my pen or on the keyboard. This year, though, I write the year with a frisson of excitement. Dionysius Exiguus invented our BC/AD system in the 6th century. It is generally accepted that he misjudged the date of the first Christmas by around six years. It probably took place in 6BC and so this year, 2024, which is two thousand and thirty years on from that, may be the two thousandth anniversary of the Crucifixion.

The numbers don't really matter but they remind us that we are not talking about "cleverly devised myths", as the author of Peter's second letter calls them, but that the Crucifixion and Resurrection are real events embedded in the history and culture of their own

time as well as holding eternal resonance for ours.

At Christmas the Christ Church choir sang the Latin "O Antiphons" as Christians have for centuries but we also celebrated with a brand new setting by David Winters of the Canadian Huron carol. Our worship is both old and ever new – just like our God, who is both a child playing with the gifts of the magi and also the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end of all things.

In January we will celebrate both the feast of the Epiphany and the Baptism of Christ, and welcome a new member of Christ Church on 7 January when Perla is baptised. As this bleak winter continues with its unremitting rain, I remind myself that God is faithful, renewing the church through raising up new members and renewing the earth with the rains necessary for summer growth.

Happy New Year!



*Each year, the three wise men symbolically traverse the window sills to pay homage to the Christ child.*

# Charitable giving 2024

## **Jonathan Stead writes:**

Christ Church Council has approved the Charitable Giving Group recommendations for supporting charities in 2024. Most of our charities are now local so that we can engage with them more directly. Each will receive our giving over two months, meaning there is time to publicise the charity to the congregation effectively and a more substantial amount reaches these smaller charities.

These are the charities we are supporting in 2024:

■ January/February: **Jessie May Children's Hospice at Home**. This relatively local charity supports children who need hospice care in their own home. It works throughout Bristol, Gloucester and the South West and has provided support for around 300 children. More information below.

■ March/April: a charity to be selected by our Youth Church.

■ May/June: **Combe Down Holiday Trust**. This Bath based charity provides respite for clients with disabilities and/or severe illness and their carers. The respite

may be a holiday, short break or respite care or a day out. Most clients are on low incomes.

■ July/August: **USPG Malawi Project**: This is a commitment we have made over recent years to support USPG's work among women and girls in developing education, health and in economic self-sufficiency in poverty-stricken Malawi.

■ September/October: **Lux Youth Project** is the Bath offshoot of Youth for Christ, and like Youth for Christ it delivers community youth work, mentoring and small group work in schools and chaplaincy. It runs open access drop-in clubs, a dance academy, breakfast club, 1:1 mentoring and enrichment courses in Bath particularly in areas of deprivation. Currently much of its work takes place in the Southdown area of Bath but as it grows it may expand into other areas of need.

■ November/December: this would again be split evenly between **Julian House** and **Genesis Trust**, local charities for the homeless and those in need, which we have supported at this time of the year for several years, recognising it is a time of peak need.

## This month's charity: Jessie May Hospice

*The loose collection on the second and fourth Sundays of the next two months – 14 and 28 January, then 11 and 25 February – will go to the Jessie May Trust. (Donations in collection envelopes will continue to go to Christ Church.)*

Specialist Jessie May nurses provide at-home nursing and respite care for children and young people throughout the South West that have a terminal or life-limiting condition.

Every child has a small dedicated team of Jessie May nurses to be there for them and their family throughout their journey, from diagnosis, during day-to-day life, at times of crisis and through bereavement, in the comfort and familiarity of their own homes. They offer end-of-life care and bereavement support, as well as vital respite sessions and emotional support to the children's families.

The charity has been providing free specialist at-home support since 1996, and has supported more than 300 children and their families across Bristol, South Gloucestershire, North Somerset, Bath & North East Somerset, and Swindon & Wiltshire. Find out more at <https://jessiemay.org.uk>.



# Taking action for good

## **From the Diocese of Bath and Wells:**

Christian communities across Bath and Wells support the neighbourhoods they serve in a host of different ways – from the traditional support for initiatives such as foodbanks that address food poverty, to walking alongside their community and fostering community growth in more unexpected places like football clubs and workplaces.

In Bath, individual churches from different denominations have come together in a new network facilitated by the Genesis Trust, recognising that by linking their community hubs they can collectively offer “good help” to individuals and families in every part of the city.

Pippa Page, Reader at All Saints Weston, says, “‘Good Help’ is helping people move forward with their lives in whatever way is right for them – in contrast to not-good help, which is well-meaning social action that per-



As a lay pioneer in Whiteway, Rachel Spence journeys alongside her community in a host of ways, which include helping to set up her local community football team, Whiteway FC. “It is a special team,” Rachel says, “established by a local man who caused trouble in his community in the past and now wants to give back. He set up the football team to give the young men in his community all the benefits of being part of a team and hopefully prevent them going down the path he went down.” See more on the Diocesan website at <https://bit.ly/bath-whiteway-fc>.

petuates dependency. By connecting via a Churches Hublink Network, our network of 23 churches from Bath can support each other and learn from each other to offer just that. Every church will continue to offer its communities help through its own community hub, but by coming together we can become a shared mission of the church, a shared resource for the city.”

We may live in challenging times, but there are Christian communities – in churches, in workplaces and in schools – who are taking action for good. You can find other stories of church communities in action at the Diocesan website [www.bathandwells.org.uk/news](http://www.bathandwells.org.uk/news).

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## Same-sex blessing



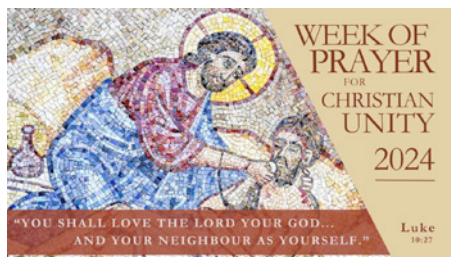
Two vicars have become possibly the first same-sex couple to be blessed at a Church of England service, just days after the House of Bishops authorised the “Prayers of Love and Faith” for same-sex couples. Revd Catherine Bond and Revd Jane Pearce had their union blessed on Sunday 17 December at St John the Baptist church in Felixstowe, where both are associate priests. Photo: Joe Giddens/PA via AP.

The House of Bishops’ decision came after a six-year process of listening and discernment about issues of identity, sexuality and relationships under the heading of Living in Love and Faith. The Church of England website has information and resources at <https://www.churchofengland.org/resources/living-love-and-faith>.

# Week of Prayer for Christian Unity 2024

The Week of Prayer for Christian Unity is traditionally observed from 18 to 25 January – the octave of St. Peter and St. Paul – though some areas observe it at other times.

This year the theme “You shall love the Lord your God... and your neighbour as yourself” (Luke 10:27) has come from an ecumenical team from Burkina Faso. They have reflected on the familiar story of the Good Samaritan, and all are encouraged to *Go and do likewise*. It is a story about crossing boundaries that calls our attention to the bonds



that unite the whole human family.

Communities in Britain and Ireland may be less vulnerable to acts of mass violence than in Burkina Faso, but there are still many living with the memory and/or the threat of serious violence, centred on issues of identity and belonging. There are also groups, including people from ethnic minority backgrounds and people seeking asylum, who feel particularly vulnerable to violence or being displaced by the threat of violence.

Our neighbours in Burkina Faso call us to reconnect to God’s dream for us – a dream of a unity formed of ties of love and compassion. What can we learn from people of other faiths, from those whose backgrounds are most different from our own, and what do we need from each other?

You can find resources and further information at <https://cte.org.uk/wpcu2024>.

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## Curate’s Corner

### **Revd Kara Maylor writes:**

Change is often hard... And right now there is so much on the cards

Lore will leave and every one of us will grieve  
Her leadership and wisdom are beyond all measure

The time I have had with her I will always treasure

But God gives and as we all know He takes away

And is preparing us for another day.

Psalm 127 reminds us plain that unless the Lord builds the house, the builder labours in vain.

So let’s make 2024 a year of hope and prayer for so much more

God’s love and impact we want to share

In our Church, in our community and with all out there who do not know what it is to have Love, Joy and Peace, which through Christ and in the power of the Holy Spirit is ours to give.

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## Parking at Christ Church

When you come to church **on Sunday**, feel free to park in any available space *except*

(1) the space on the ramp to the left of the Lower Mews, and

(2) the spaces to the right of the Lower Mews kitchen and behind it.

If you think your car might be in the way of others, particularly (1) above, then please leave your details on your dashboard so that you can be contacted in an emergency.

**Monday to Saturday**, Christ Church rents out most of the car parking spaces, and the only spaces *available* for church use are:

(1) the two marked spaces behind the church, adjacent to the Lower Mews kitchen, and

(2) three spaces in front of the main church doors, *excluding* the space nearest Julian Road. Bear in mind that the top space (marked with a disabled symbol) is for those who need level access to the building – please respect this at all times.

From Monday to Saturday, please remember also to display your parking permit to verify that you are parking with permission.

# Bishop's Message for January

*Hope in deed*



**From the Rt Revd Michael Beasley,  
Bishop of Bath and Wells**

I'd love to be writing a sunny New Year's article reflecting a boundless global optimism about the future. Yet the reality is very different. War in Ukraine drags on, and tensions in the Middle East remain dangerous. The cost-of-living crisis continues and many are finding things tough. Pessimism rather than optimism is the order of our day.

In such circumstances, where can hope be found? For Christians, confidence and assurance rest in the promise of the future that God has in store for us. In the Bible God says: "See, I am making all things new. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end" (Revelation 21:5-6). Christian hope is that whatever may be happening to us now, God has a very different and favourable future in store for us.

Critically, the point of such hope is not just to enable us to say "Well, don't worry about present circumstances. It's all going to be all right eventually." Hope's purpose is to shape how we live and what we do now. It's to enable us to live out the words of the old Christian Aid poster that said "We believe in life before death".

Towards the end of last year, I had the privilege of visiting a number of the deaneries of our diocese. On those visits I heard at first hand how through the work of our parishes, schools and chaplaincies, Christian hope translates into practical action for good amongst the everyday lives of local communities. We are offering debt counselling and food banks, support for families and care of the lonely and isolated. All these and many more were amazing examples of how we can join with God to "make all things new" right here, right now.

So, as we start a new year, please can I encourage us all not to stare into our glasses, lamenting their being half full? Rather, through how we live and what we do, let us fill them with the new wine of God's kingdom – overflowing to the brim. For that is hope in deed.

**+Michael**

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## Cedar Tree is open

The Cedar Tree community café is open every Friday from 11am to 1:30pm. All are welcome! If you live or work in the area, do consider dropping in for a chat, a cup of tea, homemade cake or a light snack, to support this important part of our outreach to the local community. If you can help on a Friday or make a cake we can sell, then please contact Jenny Hesketh. Your offers will be very gratefully received.



*'Under it every kind of bird will live'*

Bath  
**Julian Road**

# Churchgoing up but still below pre-Covid level

The Church of England continued its post-pandemic bounce-back in 2022, according to its annual Statistics for Mission report released in November 2023, covering the calendar year 2022. By most measures, levels of attendance and participation in 2022 were higher than in 2021 but remain lower than in 2019, before the pandemic.

The Church of England's all-age average weekly attendance, which includes Sunday and midweek attendance, was 654,000 people in 2022, up from 605,000 in 2021. In 2019 the figure was 854,000. In 2020, the year of the pandemic, it fell to just 345,000.

The Worshipping Community – the number of regular worshippers – was 984,000 in 2022, up from 966,000 in 2021 but still below the pre-pandemic level of 1,113,000 in 2019.

The Worshipping Community total includes people who “entirely or predominantly” take part through “Church at Home” services – those offered online, by phone, post, e-mail and “other means”. The proportion of churches offering such services fell from 51% in October 2021 to 36% in October 2022.

“Covid-19 was still with us in 2022 – indeed, official figures suggest that rates were higher in October 2022 than in 2021,” the report comments. “So although for many people things were getting back to normal, churches were still experiencing Covid-19-related disruption, including cancellation of services because of illness. It is impossible to quantify precisely the effect of this disruption on Church of England attendance and participation figures.”

The report notes that, even though there

was a sharp fall in church attendance caused by the pandemic in 2020, followed by a steep rise in 2021 and then a further increase in 2022, “most measures of attendance and participation were showing a gradual decline prior to 2020. It is impossible to say what would have happened if there had not been a pandemic, but it is reasonable to assume that the decline would have continued. We would therefore not necessarily expect numbers to return to their 2019 values, even once all pandemic effects are over.”

Adult average weekly attendance in 2022 was 7% higher than in 2021 but 23% lower than in 2019. Child average weekly attendance in 2022 was 17% higher than in 2021 but 28% lower than in 2019. The total Worshipping Community in 2022 was 2% higher than in 2021 but 12% lower than in 2019.

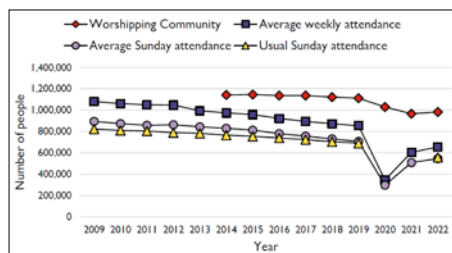
Interestingly, the number of people on church electoral rolls in 2022 was 1% lower than in 2021 and 2% lower than in 2019. This suggests that the core of committed worshippers is barely changed. In line with this, the number of confirmations in 2022 was a huge 70% higher than in 2021, although still 19% lower than in 2019.

Easter attendance in 2022 was up 65% over 2021, and Christmas attendance up 67%. Baptisms and thanksgivings were up 48%. All these, however, are below their 2019 levels.

By contrast, the number of marriages in 2022 was very similar to the number in 2019, and 18% higher than in 2021.

The number of funerals held in churches in 2022 was 9% lower than in 2019, and 5% lower than in 2021. However, the shift of funerals back to churches continued in 2022, the report comments. “There was a pandemic-associated shift of funerals away from churches and to crematoria/cemeteries in 2020, but this shift seems to have been temporary, with the percentage of funerals that took place in church having returned to pre-pandemic levels (62% were in church in 2019, 42% in 2020, 58% in 2021, and 64% in 2022).”

The full report is available for download at <https://bit.ly/c-of-e-data-2022>.



Church of England attendance, 2009-2022.

# Christ Church calendar January 2024

1	Mon	<i>New Year's Day / The Naming and Circumcision of Jesus</i>
4	Thu	11am Eucharist
5	Fri	Cedar Tree café, 11am – 1:30pm
6	Sat	<i>The Epiphany</i>
7	Sun	<i>The First Sunday of Epiphany / The Baptism of Christ</i> 10am Eucharist
11	Thu	11am Eucharist
12	Fri	Cedar Tree café, 11am – 1:30pm
14	Sun	<i>The Second Sunday of Epiphany</i> 8am Holy Communion (BCP) 10am Eucharist
18	Thu	11am Eucharist <i>Week of Prayer for Christian Unity begins (ends Thu 25th)</i>
19	Fri	Cedar Tree café, 11am – 1:30pm
21	Sun	<i>The Third Sunday of Epiphany</i> 10am Eucharist 4:30pm Choral Evensong
25	Thu	<i>The Conversion of Paul</i> 11am Eucharist
26	Fri	<i>Timothy and Titus, companions of Paul</i> Cedar Tree café, 11am – 1:30pm
28	Sun	<i>Candlemas / The Fourth Sunday of Epiphany</i> 10am Eucharist 5pm Iona Contemplative Service
<b>Feb</b>	1	Thu 11am Eucharist
	2	Fri Cedar Tree café, 11am – 1:30pm
	4	Sun <i>The Second Sunday before Lent</i> 10am Eucharist

**Our Sunday 10am Eucharist, and other services as advertised, continue to be live-streamed at** [www.facebook.com/christchurchbath/live](https://www.facebook.com/christchurchbath/live)  
**and** [www.youtube.com/@ChristChurchBath1798/streams](https://www.youtube.com/@ChristChurchBath1798/streams)

# Prayer Cycle for January 2024

<b>Monday</b>	<b>1</b>	For Bible scholars and theologians
<b>Tuesday</b>	<b>2</b>	We give thanks for family and friends
<b>Wednesday</b>	<b>3</b>	For the safeguarding ministry at Christ Church
<b>Thursday</b>	<b>4</b>	That we may be open to encounters with God
<b>Friday</b>	<b>5</b>	For those in slavery or bonded labour
<b>Saturday</b>	<b>6</b>	For our church environment group
<b>Sunday</b>	<b>7</b>	For our Diocese of Bath and Wells
<b>Monday</b>	<b>8</b>	For those who work in the transport industry
<b>Tuesday</b>	<b>9</b>	That we may have the gift of hope
<b>Wednesday</b>	<b>10</b>	For countries with economic problems
<b>Thursday</b>	<b>11</b>	For peace
<b>Friday</b>	<b>12</b>	For those who live or work in care homes
<b>Saturday</b>	<b>13</b>	For adoptive and foster families
<b>Sunday</b>	<b>14</b>	For Lore and Colin
<b>Monday</b>	<b>15</b>	For those who work in the legal profession
<b>Tuesday</b>	<b>16</b>	For our charity of the month
<b>Wednesday</b>	<b>17</b>	For those with addictions
<b>Thursday</b>	<b>18</b>	For our Pilgrim Group
<b>Friday</b>	<b>19</b>	For all who face tragedy
<b>Saturday</b>	<b>20</b>	For those on our church rotas
<b>Sunday</b>	<b>21</b>	For Mark, David and the choir
<b>Monday</b>	<b>22</b>	For our King and other heads of state
<b>Tuesday</b>	<b>23</b>	For Christian unity



<b>Wednesday 24</b>	We give thanks for those who inspire us
<b>Thursday 25</b>	For those on our long-term prayer list
<b>Friday 26</b>	For the ministry of the Cedar Tree
<b>Saturday 27</b>	For those who have lost their faith
<b>Sunday 28</b>	For former members of Christ Church who have moved away
<b>Monday 29</b>	For prisoners and prison workers
<b>Tuesday 30</b>	For all at school
<b>Wednesday 31</b>	That we may have grace to forgive

## Long-term Prayer List

*Please remember those we've been asked to pray for...*

Chris  
David  
Hui Tao Ling  
Jean and John  
Joyce K  
John and Sheila  
Kat  
A J Kninchi  
Roger and Francis  
Evelyn  
Mary Elizabeth Bull  
Natalia Bull  
Sheila  
Win  
Jon and family  
Margaret

Doug  
Jason  
Frankie  
The Allen family  
Margaret and family  
The Brown family  
Romey and Roger  
The Jones family  
The Tapper family  
Peter and Margaret

**Want to add a name to the prayer list, long-term or short-term, or remove one? Please use the lists at the back of the church, or speak to Lore, the Verger or one of the Churchwardens.**

# Rotas for January 2024

*Readers and readings, Sunday 10am Eucharist*

	Old Testament	New Testament	Gospel
<b>7 Jan.</b> Epiphany	<b>Emma Elliott</b> Isaiah 60:1-6	<b>Angela Soboslay</b> Ephesians 3:1-12	<b>Kara Maylor</b> Matthew 2:1-12
	Intercessions: <b>Jonathan Stead</b>		
<b>14 Jan.</b> 2nd Sunday of Epiphany	<b>Beryl Bowes</b> 1 Samuel 3:1-10	<b>Judith Anderson</b> Revelation 5:1-10	<b>Rachel Preston</b> John 1:43-end
	Intercessions: <b>Georgina Bowman</b>		
<b>21 Jan.</b> 3rd Sunday of Epiphany	<b>Nick Wells</b> Genesis 14:17-20	<b>Marcus Bull</b> Revelation 19:6-10	<b>Virginia Knight</b> John 2:1-11
	Intercessions: <b>Beryl Bowes</b>		
<b>28 Jan.</b> Candle- mas	<b>Richard Gabe</b> Malachi 3:1-5	<b>Jane Hoe</b> Hebrews 2:14-18	<b>Malcolm Wall</b> Luke 2:22-40
	Intercessions: <b>Peter Bowes</b>		
<b>4 Feb.</b> 2nd Sunday before Lent	<b>Robin Kerr</b> Proverbs 8:1,22-31	<b>Brenda Wall</b> Colossians 1:15-20	<b>Mark Elliott</b> John 1:1-14
	Intercessions: <b>Kara Maylor</b>		

# Who's who at Christ Church

<b>Priest-in-charge</b>	Revd Lore Chumbley 07595 294146 lore.chumbley@me.com	<b>Organist and Assistant Director of Music</b>	David Winters david.winters@christchurchbath.org
<b>Curate</b>	Revd Kara Maylor	<b>Deanery Synod Reps</b>	Brenda Wall Pauline Swaby-Wallace
<b>Supporting clergy</b>	Revd Canon Simon Tatton-Brown 01225 835404 simon@tattonbrown.myzen.co.uk	<b>Christ Church Link editor</b>	Alex Soboslay 07769 655927 alexs@christchurchbath.org
	Revd Beryl Bowes Revd Dr Peter Bowes	<b>Tower Captain, Ringing Master</b>	Will Willans
<b>Reader, Director of Music</b>	Mark Elliott 01225 445360 mark.elliott@christchurchbath.org	<b>Tower Secretary</b>	Maggie Willans 07773 244024 maggiewillans@hotmail.com
<b>Churchwarden</b>	Jane Nicholson 07990 552413 jane@janemnicholson.com	<b>Steeple Keeper</b>	David Kelly
<b>Churchwarden</b>	Jonathan Stead jonathanstead20@gmail.com	<b>Cedar Tree café organiser</b>	Jenny Hesketh jenny.hesketh@me.com
<b>Verger</b>	Angela Soboslay 01225 333297 angela.soboslay@christchurchbath.org	<b>Junior Church</b>	Emma Elliott
<b>Chair of Trustees</b>	Nick Wells 07774 104584 chair@christchurchbath.org	<b>Laity rotas</b>	Judith Bishop
<b>Treasurer</b>	Zoë Bushell zoe.bushell@christchurchbath.org	<b>Prayer cycle</b>	Virginia Knight
<b>Event/concert bookings, weekly notice sheet</b>	Judith Bishop 01225 858816 concerts@christchurchbath.org notices@christchurchbath.org	<b>Charitable Giving co-ordinator</b>	Jonathan Stead
<b>Safeguarding officer</b>	Virginia Knight 07896 916840 christchbathsafeguarding@gmail.com	<b>Mission to Seafarers</b>	Sylvia Ayers

## Christ Church Link

This magazine is published on the first Sunday of each month. Please send any contributions of news and articles by the 15th of the preceding month to the editor, Alex Soboslay, or by e-mail to [magazine@christchurchbath.org](mailto:magazine@christchurchbath.org)



THE CHURCH  
OF ENGLAND

# About Christ Church

*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*

Christ Church has an unusual history, out of which has developed a distinctive ministry. It was founded at the end of the 18th century by a group of socially concerned clergy and lay people for those excluded from worship through the system of pew rents. It was probably the first church in England since the Reformation to provide seating for all free of charge. Early supporters included John Moore, Archbishop of Canterbury, and William Wilberforce, the great evangelical and campaigner against slavery. We must recognise, however, that much of Bath's wealth at the time derived, directly or indirectly, from the trafficking and exploitation of enslaved human beings, so that inevitably some of the funds donated ultimately derived from this source.

Christ Church is not a parish church and does not have a full-time 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 is part of the Anglican diocese of Bath and Wells, although it still sits outside the Church of England

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. New singers of all ages are always very welcome.

As well as worship on Sundays and Thursdays, there are many other activities going on in our community, including our weekly community café every Friday. Our ecumenical Pilgrim Group provides a space for exploration and discussion of faith in an open and non-judgemental setting. Visit the website to check service times and events.

## Regular Sunday services

- 8am Holy Communion (Book of Common Prayer) – *On the second Sunday of every month*
- 10am Sung Eucharist with Junior Church activities for children and young people – *Every Sunday – also streamed at [www.facebook.com/christchurchbath](http://www.facebook.com/christchurchbath)*
- 4:30pm Choral Evensong – *Usually on the third Sunday of each month*
- 5pm Contemplative Quiet Service (Iona) – *On the fourth Sunday of every month*

Baptisms, marriages and funerals by arrangement – please contact us!

## Contacting us

Christ Church,  
Julian Road,  
Bath BA1 2RH  
Phone: 01225 338869  
(answer phone)

Email: [admin@christchurchbath.org](mailto:admin@christchurchbath.org)  
Website: [www.christchurchbath.org](http://www.christchurchbath.org)

