

## Seeds of hope

*Looking ahead at the start of a new year*

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

The start of a new year brings with it a sense of possibility. It's often a time to take stock of where we've been and think about where we are heading. While the challenges of the past year may still linger, the beginning of a new year offers us an opportunity to look forward with hope and optimism.

Hope isn't always about certainty; it's about belief that things are possible. Like seeds carefully planted in spring, hope starts small but, with nurturing, it can grow and flourish.

Revd Debbi Turley, Vicar of St Peter's Church, Taunton, tells a story of hope fulfilled. "The outpouring of love from the community was great after I discovered that vandals had smashed and damaged windows at the church, leaving us facing a large bill for repairs.

"In the hope of raising funds towards the repair costs, I set up an online fundraising page. I thought it would

just get a few donations, but within hours, there was an overwhelming response from the local community. We even had people from as far away as America contributing to the fund. Before long we had raised the exact amount needed to repair the window.

"This could have been a sad story, but it turned into a good news story. It brought the community together."

Hope for the new year doesn't always require grand resolutions or sweeping changes. Instead, it can come from small steps. It is about progress, however modest, being possible. As the new year begins, may we all look ahead with a renewed hope, a hope which is rooted in God's love for us all.

■ At Christ Church, we look forward to the Licensing of our new Priest-in-Charge, Revd Heather Smith, in Christ Church on Tuesday 4 February at 7pm. All are very welcome.



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

# Week of Prayer for Christian Unity 2025

The year 2025 marks the 1,700th anniversary of the first Christian Ecumenical Council, held in Nicaea, near Constantinople, in the year 325 AD. The Council of Nicaea led to the adoption of the Nicene Creed as an expression of the common faith of Christians. This commemoration provides a unique opportunity to reflect on and celebrate the common faith of Christians as expressed in the Nicene Creed.

The Week of Prayer for Christian Unity 2025 offers an invitation to draw on this shared heritage and to enter more deeply into the faith that unites all Christians.

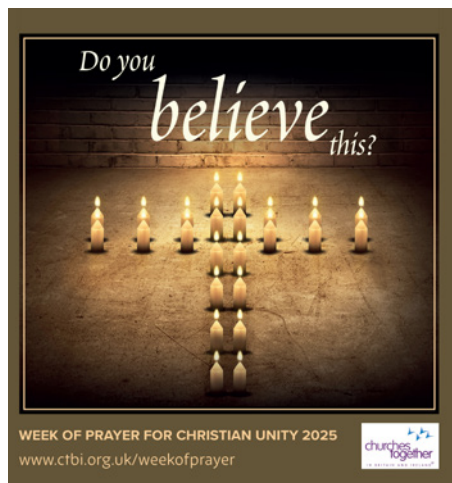
The Week of Prayer for Christian Unity is traditionally observed from 18 to 25 January – the octave of St. Peter and St. Paul – though some areas observe it at other times.

The guiding biblical text for the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity 2025 comes from John 11:17-27 [below]. The theme for the week, “Do you believe this?”, takes its cue from the dialogue between Jesus and Martha when Jesus visited the home of Martha and Mary in Bethany following the death of their brother Lazarus.

*When Jesus arrived, he found that Lazarus had already been in the tomb for four days. Now*

*Bethany was near Jerusalem, some two miles away, and many of the Jews had come to Martha and Mary to console them about their brother. When Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went and met him, while Mary stayed at home. Martha said to Jesus, “Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died. But even now I know that God will give you whatever you ask of him.” Jesus said to her, “Your brother will rise again.” Martha said to him, “I know that he will rise again in the resurrection on the last day.” Jesus said to her, “I am the resurrection and the life. Those who believe in me, even though they die, will live, and everyone who lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?” She said to him, “Yes, Lord, I believe that you are the Messiah, the Son of God, the one coming into the world.”*

For 2025, the prayers and reflections for the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity were prepared by the brothers and sisters of the monastic community of Bose in northern Italy. The resources are jointly published by the Dicastery for Promoting Christian Unity and the World Council of Churches. Find the resources and information at [www.ctbi.org.uk/weekofprayer](http://www.ctbi.org.uk/weekofprayer).



---

## Stamps for Seafarers

### **Sylvia and Steven Ayers write:**

Thank you to everyone who responded so generously to our request for used Christmas stamps! They will be gratefully received by the Missions to Seafarers office in London, who can sell them to collectors to raise funds. It's not too late if you come across more when clearing your Christmas decorations – used stamps are welcome at any time of year. They can be any value except for the ordinary first and second class stamps, which are not wanted by collectors. Please cut **AROUND** the used stamps, leaving a 2cm frame, and leave them in the box on the table at the back of the church. Thank you again!

## Wells organ appeal

For Brenda Staples from Exmoor, a recent birthday turned into an unforgettable occasion when she was treated to the opportunity to play the Grand Organ at Wells Cathedral. Brenda, who regularly plays the organ for five churches in the Exmoor Benefice, had been treated to the organ experience as a birthday gift by her children.

The much-loved, historic cathedral organ, originally installed by “Father” Henry Willis in 1857, is in need of restoration. The Wells Grand Organ Appeal has been set up to help pay for the work. All 5,000 existing pipes will be removed for repair, cleaning or replacement, and the console will be overhauled, together with all the pedals and stops. The organ will then be revoiced and rebalanced.

Find out more on the Diocesan website at <https://bit.ly/wells-organ-experience>. This page has a link to donate to the appeal and also one to find out how you, like Brenda Staples, can get to play the Wells Cathedral organ for £500 (of which £430 will form a donation to the Friends of Wells Cathedral Grand Organ Appeal).

There is also a video tour of the organ – read about it at [www.wells cathedral.org.uk/archives/112734595](http://www.wells cathedral.org.uk/archives/112734595) and view it at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PvQ708Fmdm0>.



Photo courtesy of Friends of Wells Cathedral Grand Organ Appeal

## Last month



In December Janet Mahto, a stalwart of the Christ Church community, celebrated her 80th birthday. Congratulations and best wishes, Janet!

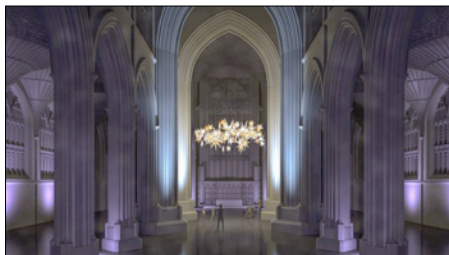
---

### “The Light of Stars” at Bath Abbey

*What is it?* The Light of Stars is a brand new installation, a vast constellation of love and light, held within the centre of the Abbey. Warm and welcoming, the Light of Stars will contain up to 103 individual stars of different sizes and geometries, all surrounding the largest, central star, which represents Christ never dimmed, the constant.

*When is it?* Until Saturday 11 January, during Abbey opening hours, normally 10am–5pm.

*Admission:* no charge for Discovery Card holders or BA1 and BA2 residents, with proof of address.



# Churchgoing up in 2023 for the third year but still below pre-pandemic level

The Church of England continued its post-pandemic bounce-back in 2023, recording a third consecutive year of growth, according to the latest annual Statistics for Mission report released in November 2024, covering the calendar year 2023. By most measures, levels of attendance and participation in 2023 were higher than in 2022 but remain lower than in 2019, before the pandemic.

It's notable that nearly two million people (1.96m) attended services on Christmas Eve and Christmas Day in 2023, a rise of 20% over the year before, and the number of worshippers at Easter was up 8.6% year-over-year. These rises come on top of even bigger increases in the previous year: Christmas attendance in 2022 was up 67% over 2021, and Easter attendance up 65%. Both Christmas and Easter attendance in 2023, however, remained below their 2019 levels.

The number of regular worshippers – those who attend worship once a month or more (whether in-person, “at home” or some combination of the two) – edged above one million for the first time since the Covid-19 pandemic, reaching 1,007,000 people in 2023. This was a rise of 2.5% over 2022's figure, but

still 10% lower than 2019's. It is also equivalent to just 1.7% of the population of England.

Adult average weekly attendance in 2023, based on in-person attendance in October (the baseline month each year), was 4.5% higher than in 2022, but 19% lower than in 2019; child (under-16) average weekly attendance in 2023 was 4.9% higher than in 2022 but 24% lower than in 2019.

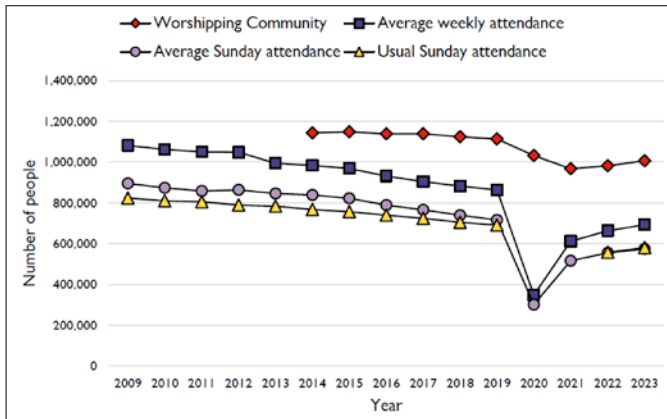
The report points out that most measures of attendance and participation were showing a steady decline over many decades before the pandemic, and numbers would not be expected to return automatically to pre-2019 levels even after the effects of the pandemic are over. Even so, average Sunday adult attendance at CofE services in October was still 8% lower than the figure projected by the pre-pandemic trend. Child average Sunday attendance, however, was 1% higher than the projected pre-pandemic trend.

Baptisms were 20% higher and marriages 26% higher than the projected figures, suggesting that during 2023 there was some further catching-up of baptisms and marriages that were postponed because of pandemic-related disruption. However, there wasn't as much of

this as in the previous year, and the numbers of both baptisms and marriages were lower in 2023 than 2022.

The post-pandemic shift of funerals back to churches from crematoria/cemeteries continued in 2023: 62% of funerals were in church in 2019, 42% in 2020, 58% in 2021, 64% in 2022, and 66% in 2023.

The complete report (in PDF format) is available for download free of charge from <https://bit.ly/c-of-e-stats-2023>.



Church of England attendance, 2009-2023. Worshipping Community = regular worshippers in-person or “at home”.

# Bishop's Message for January

*Bringing hope*



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

“A leader,” said Napoleon Bonaparte, “is a dealer in hope.” At the start of 2025, this is a tough challenge for leaders everywhere! Conflicts continue around the world. The climate emergency is ongoing. At the polls, voters in many countries express their dissatisfaction with the status quo. As we look around us, can hope mean anything more than mere wishful thinking? As we look on all the challenges that exist, have we anything more to say than “I hope that somehow, somewhere, something will turn up”?

More than ever, the Christian understanding of hope is what we need. Christian hope is broader, deeper, stronger altogether than any “wishful thinking”. In scripture, hope is not just a vague desire that something good in the future will somehow happen. Rather, the Biblical understanding of hope is of a confident expectation and desire that good in the future will come. It’s an assurance based in our pre-existing experience of God’s goodness, God’s love, the faithfulness that he has already shown towards us.

Scripture also contains the idea that while hope is something which comes primarily from God, it is also something in which human beings have a part to play, a contribution to make. The letter

to the Hebrews says this: “God is not unjust; he will not forget your work and the love you have shown him as you have helped his people and continue to help them. We want each of you to show this same diligence to the very end, so that what you hope for may be fully realised” (Hebrews 6:10-11).

God graciously calls us to join in bringing hope into the world. Our work, our love, our diligence matter. The contribution we make is important in bringing into being the future that God wants for us. At the start of this new year, we are called to take the lead: to be signs, symbols, dealers in the hope for which our world longs today.

**+Michael**

---

## Assisted Dying statement

Following the vote in the House of Commons in late November to give the Terminally Ill Adults (End of Life) Bill a second reading, the Bishop of London, Sarah Mullally, the Church of England's lead bishop for health and social care, issued this statement:

“I have been deeply moved watching proceedings unfold in the House of Commons today. My prayers are with all those who have been affected, who have shared and heard their stories and facilitated this debate.

“The Church of England believes that the compassionate response at the end of life lies in the provision of high quality palliative care services to all who need them.

“Today’s vote still leaves the question of how this could be implemented in an overstretched and under-funded NHS, social care and legal system.

“Safeguarding the most vulnerable must be at the heart of the coming Parliamentary process. This vote is not the end of the debate.”

# This month's charity: Bath Welcomes Refugees

*The loose collection in the plate on the second and fourth Sunday of the month – 12 and 26 January – will go to Bath Welcomes Refugees. (Donations in collection envelopes will continue to go to Christ Church.)*

At this time of year, when most if not all of us have been enjoying good food, warmth, security and freedom from persecution, it's timely to remember those who do not have those blessings or who have fled to this country to escape hardship of many kinds. We remember too that the Holy Family fled persecution when Jesus was still an infant and became refugees. So our charity this month is Bath Welcomes Refugees (BWR).

Founded in 2015, BWR became a registered charity in 2017, and is staffed almost completely by volunteers. They believe that ordinary people can make a difference and they harness the goodwill of the Bath community to help refugees and asylum seekers feel welcome, access resources and find a new home and community.

BWR activities include the delivery of integrated social support; help and protection for physical, mental and financial hardship; befriending; fundraising; tuition, particularly in relation to English language support; the finding, furnishing, and renovation of homes and gardens; the protection of data and every aspect of safeguarding; and the enhancement of the lives of those it supports.

As a group BWR has no religious or political affiliations. It relies upon donations, good-

will and the funds it raises locally. BWR is committed to aiding and relieving the plight of refugees both in the city and beyond. Its "Beyond Bath" team focuses on the wider refugee situation and regularly sends donations and volunteers to Calais.

Find out more about the charity and its work at [www.bathwelcomesrefugees.org.uk](http://www.bathwelcomesrefugees.org.uk).

---

## "Space" at Wells Cathedral

*What is it?* A stunning new light show, "Space" by Luxmuralis, comes to Wells Cathedral this month. "Space" will be a spectacular immersive journey for visitors to walk through and explore the space of Wells Cathedral in a new light. The son-et-lumière artwork encourages reflection on humanity's place in the universe as vibrant light is projected around the Cathedral, transforming its interior and turning the space into a stunning cosmic display.

Luxmuralis is an artistic collaboration between sculptor Peter Walker and composer David Harper, who specialise in immersive fine art, light and sound installations around the UK and abroad.

*When is it?* Tuesday 28 January – Saturday 1 February 2025, 6pm – 9pm (entry every 15 minutes, last entry at 8:15pm). Duration 45 minutes to 1 hour per show.

*Tickets:* £12 Adults (18+); £6 Children (4–17). Tickets at the door subject to availability, or book at <https://www.wells cathedral.org.uk/archives/106562637>



Photo: Bath Welcomes Refugees



"Space" at Durham Cathedral in 2024. Photo: Peter Walker

# Christ Church calendar Jan. 2025

**5** Sun *Epiphany / The Second Sunday of Christmas*  
10am Eucharist

6 Mon *The Epiphany*

9 Thu 11am Eucharist

10 Fri Cedar Tree café, 11am – 1:30pm

**12** Sun *The First Sunday of Epiphany / The Baptism of Christ*  
10am Eucharist

16 Thu 11am Eucharist

17 Fri Cedar Tree café, 11am – 1:30pm

18 Sat *Week of Prayer for Christian Unity begins*

**19** Sun *The Second Sunday of Epiphany*  
10am Eucharist  
4:30pm Choral Evensong

23 Thu 11am Eucharist  
Trustees meeting, 7:30pm

24 Fri Cedar Tree café, 11am – 1:30pm

25 Sat *The Conversion of Paul*

**26** Sun *The Third Sunday of Epiphany*  
10am Eucharist  
5pm Iona Contemplative Service

30 Thu 11am Eucharist

31 Fri Cedar Tree café, 11am – 1:30pm

**Feb 2** Sun *The Presentation of Christ in the Temple (Candlemas)*  
10am Eucharist

4 Tue 7pm Licensing and Installation of Revd Heather Smith

6 Thu 11am Eucharist

7 Fri Cedar Tree café, 11am – 1:30pm

**9** Sun *The Fourth Sunday before Lent*  
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 2025

<b>Wednesday</b>	<b>1</b>	For children and their families
<b>Thursday</b>	<b>2</b>	For the ministry of hospices
<b>Friday</b>	<b>3</b>	For those who use and run food banks
<b>Saturday</b>	<b>4</b>	We give thanks for family and friends
<b>Sunday</b>	<b>5</b>	For Heather and Jeremy as they prepare to join us
<b>Monday</b>	<b>6</b>	For those who teach
<b>Tuesday</b>	<b>7</b>	For the local Deanery Synod
<b>Wednesday</b>	<b>8</b>	For good use to be made of this prayer cycle
<b>Thursday</b>	<b>9</b>	For all who produce publicity for Christ Church
<b>Friday</b>	<b>10</b>	For those finding it hard to earn a living
<b>Saturday</b>	<b>11</b>	That we may work for the kingdom of heaven
<b>Sunday</b>	<b>12</b>	For Mark our Lay Reader
<b>Monday</b>	<b>13</b>	For architects and designers
<b>Tuesday</b>	<b>14</b>	For former members of Christ Church who have moved away
<b>Wednesday</b>	<b>15</b>	We give thanks for artists, poets and musicians
<b>Thursday</b>	<b>16</b>	For peace
<b>Friday</b>	<b>17</b>	For the sick and suffering
<b>Saturday</b>	<b>18</b>	For Christian unity
<b>Sunday</b>	<b>19</b>	For the Trustees of Christ Church
<b>Monday</b>	<b>20</b>	For those who work in local government
<b>Tuesday</b>	<b>21</b>	For those on our long-term prayer list
<b>Wednesday</b>	<b>22</b>	That we may have the gift of faithfulness



<b>Thursday</b>	<b>23</b>	For our charity of the month, Bath Welcomes Refugees
<b>Friday</b>	<b>24</b>	For countries experiencing economic problems
<b>Saturday</b>	<b>25</b>	For new members to be added to Christ Church
<b>Sunday</b>	<b>26</b>	For our bishops and clergy
<b>Monday</b>	<b>27</b>	For those in the legal profession
<b>Tuesday</b>	<b>28</b>	For our church environment group
<b>Wednesday</b>	<b>29</b>	We give thanks for beauty in the world around us
<b>Thursday</b>	<b>30</b>	For those preparing for marriage or recently married
<b>Friday</b>	<b>31</b>	For those who are confined to their homes

## Long-term Prayer List

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

Geoff	Chris & David
Daniel	John
Milo	Win
Naomi	Chris
Frankie	Ken
John & Sheila	Christine
Margaret	Larry
Sheila W	Joanna
John & Jean	Kat
Stewart & Lillian	
AJ	

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

## 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 coffee, home-made 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.



# Rotas for January 2025

*Readers and readings, Sunday 10am Eucharist*

	<b>Old Testament</b>	<b>New Testament</b>	<b>Gospel</b>
<b>5 January</b> Epiphany	<b>Graham Reaper-Brown</b> Isaiah 60:1-6	<b>Beryl Bowes</b> Ephesians 3:1-12	<b>David Bishop</b> Matthew 2:1-12
	Intercessions: <b>Jonathan Stead</b>		
<b>12 Jan</b> Baptism of Christ	<b>Virginia Knight</b> Isaiah 43:1-7	<b>Graeme Stacey</b> Acts 8:14-17	<b>Morny Davison</b> Luke 3:15-17,21-22
	Intercessions: <b>Peter Bowes</b>		
<b>19 Jan</b> Second Sunday of Epiphany	<b>Malcolm Wall</b> Isaiah 62:1-5	<b>Judith Anderson</b> 1 Corinthians 12:1-11	<b>Djemila Cope</b> John 2:1-11
	Intercessions: <b>Georgina Bowman</b>		
<b>26 Jan</b> Third Sunday of Epiphany	<b>Robin Kerr</b> Nehemiah 8:1-3, 5-6,8-10	<b>Nicky Mathieson</b> 1 Corinthians 12:12-31a	<b>Ben Elliott</b> Luke 4:14-21
	Intercessions: <b>Simon Tatton-Brown</b>		
<b>2 Feb</b> Candlemas	<b>Zoë Bushell</b> Malachi 3:1-5	<b>Peter Bowes</b> Hebrews 2:14-end	<b>Nick Wells</b> Luke 2:22-40
	Intercessions: <b>Beryl Bowes</b>		

# Who's who at Christ Church

**Priest-in-charge**

(Vacant)

**Supporting clergy**

Revd Canon Simon Tatton-Brown  
01225 835404  
simon.tatton-brown@christchurchbath.org

Revd Beryl Bowes  
Revd Dr Peter Bowes

**Reader, Director of Music** Mark Elliott  
01225 445360  
mark.elliott@christchurchbath.org

**Churchwarden** Jane Nicholson  
07990 552413  
jane@janemnicholson.com

**Churchwarden** Jonathan Stead  
jonathanstead20@gmail.com

**Verger** Angela Soboslay  
01225 333297  
angela.soboslay@christchurchbath.org

**Chair of Trustees** Nick Wells  
07774 104584  
chair@christchurchbath.org

**Treasurer** Zoë Bushell  
zoe.bushell@christchurchbath.org

**Organist and Assistant  
Director of Music** David Winters  
david.winters@christchurchbath.org

**Christ Church Link editor** Alex Soboslay  
07769 655927  
alexs@christchurchbath.org

**Safeguarding officer** Virginia Knight  
07896 916840  
christchbathsafeguarding@gmail.com

**Event/concert bookings,  
weekly notice sheet**

Judith Bishop  
01225 858816  
concerts@christchurchbath.org  
notices@christchurchbath.org

**Deanery Synod Reps** Brenda Wall  
Pauline Swaby-Wallace

**Tower Captain,  
Ringing Master** Will Willans

**Tower Secretary** Maggie Willans  
07773 244024  
maggiewillans@hotmail.com

**Steeple Keeper** David Guy

**Cedar Tree café organiser**  
Jenny Hesketh  
jenny.hesketh@me.com

**Junior Church** Emma Elliott

**Laity rotas** Judith Bishop

**Prayer cycle** Virginia Knight

**Charitable Giving co-ordinator**  
Jonathan Stead

**Mission to Seafarers** 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) – *Suspended while we are in Vacancy*
- 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)

