

**To worship God, to share Jesus,
and to serve the community**

Christ Church Birkenhead

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**Contributions for our next magazine
by the end of June please.**

*Paul Rees, Editor,
oxtonrees@gmail.com*



CHRIST CHURCH
BIRKENHEAD



Parish Magazine
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Services in Church

**All Sundays at 9am:
Holy Communion (BCP)**

Main services at 10.30am

1st May: *Third Sunday of Easter*
Morning Prayer with Baptism

8th May: *Fourth Sunday of Easter*
Holy Communion

15th May: *Fifth Sunday of Easter*
Morning Prayer, followed by APCM

22nd May: *Sixth Sunday of Easter*
Morning Prayer with Baptism

29th May: *Seventh Sunday of Easter*
Holy Communion

5th June: *Pentecost*
Morning Prayer

12th June: *Trinity Sunday*
Holy Communion

19th June: *First Sunday after Trinity*
Morning Prayer

26th June: *Second Sunday after Trinity*
Holy Communion

You can also keep up to date on our website or via our Facebook page at www.facebook.com/christchurchbirkenhead.

Church of England to pump £3.6bn into parishes and fund more social action

Money will support projects such as food banks, as church seeks to 'raise its game in its service to the nation'. The Church of England is to pump £3.6bn into its 12,500 parishes over the next nine years in an effort to halt its decline by increasing "mission activity" among young people and disadvantaged communities. The money – a 30% increase in funding from the church commissioners, who look after the C of E's central assets – will support social action projects such as food banks, and help the church achieve its target to be carbon net zero by 2030.

The archbishop of Canterbury, Justin Welby, and the archbishop of York, Stephen Cottrell, admitted the C of E had been heavy-handed in concentrating funds on urban churches in recent years. "Allocating money in the past was perhaps, if we're honest, a bit too driven from the centre. Now we're trusting the dioceses much more," said Cottrell.

Rural parishes have complained that they have been starved of cash, which has been diverted to inner-city churches. As a result, churches have closed and clergy jobs have been lost, according to a campaign group, Save the Parish.

Welby said: "Over the last few years, the priority has been very much for the more heavily populated areas. Having listened carefully to what people were saying, this [funding] is for everyone, including the rural areas."

The core of the extra funding will be used for programmes that focus on young and disadvantaged people, deliver social action work, address racism and cut the church's carbon footprint. It will support churches in the poorest areas of the country and fund more clergy in frontline ministries, including chaplaincies. "This funding will help the C of E raise its game in its service to the nation," said Cottrell.

An extract from an article in the Guardian newspaper, 11 May 2022.

Whether we feel Christ Church is rural or inner-city, this is a vision we might well be wanting to think about.

Remember going to Evensong?

From my childhood I can remember attending evensong, most particularly when I had been sent off to boarding school at the age of eleven. Every Sunday, 120 teenage boys were marched up the road to Lancaster Christ Church and expected to sit still, pray and listen quietly to the sermon. The service was taken from the Book of Common Prayer with its beautiful euphonic language, especially written to be spoken aloud hundreds of years ago. (Compare it with the language of Common Worship, perhaps?)

If nothing else, those words are ingrained in my mind—I can follow the service without a book. And the music is wonderful. Over the years since then, having settled into Sunday morning churchgoing, I listened irregularly to the evensong service on Radio Three transmitted on Wednesdays and Sundays.

Then, during this Lent, I was exploring YouTube and realised that a number of our cathedrals broadcast services on their dedicated channels. Being in the diocese of Chester, I became a regular attender of our own cathedral's evening service—watching (attending?) it live or later in the evening. May I recommend this to you?



Go to YouTube and search for the 'Chester Cathedral'.

The Rev writes...

Alleluia, Christ is risen. He is risen indeed, Alleluia

Our Easter acclamation continues to ring out at our church services on Sunday mornings. For Easter is celebrated as Eastertide - 50 days from Easter Sunday to Pentecost. As if in recognition it takes time for the good news of Christ's resurrection to sink in, take hold of our minds, to make any sense. Many find the whole story difficult to believe, speak of it as nonsense. They are in good company.

For such was the case with those who first heard the angel voice that acclamation at the empty tomb. We read their responses in the earliest Gospel accounts. In Mark 16 we read of the women who were the first to appear at the tomb early morning, that they were *trembling* and *bewildered* as they heard the acclamation and fled from the tomb saying nothing to anyone because they were *afraid*. In Matthew 28 the women again are *fearful* – though *joyful*. By the end of the 50 days in Matthew some *worship* while some still *doubt*. In Luke 24, the women again are *frightened* – and when they rush to tell the disciples what they have seen and heard, “their words seemed to them like *nonsense*”.

The Jews are an occupied people. Under a foreign military power. There is resistance and social unrest. This is the context for Jesus' ministry. The disciples had three years of following Jesus amidst growing confrontation with the established authorities, political and religious. No wonder the crowds flocked to witness in thousands to hear Jesus speak; “hypocrites” he called the Jewish religious establishment. And always present was the Jewish expectation of a messiah who would overturn the injustice of occupation and set his people free. At the end of the 50 days the disciples ask Jesus: “Are you at this time going to restore the kingdom to Israel?” And this emotional and political turmoil - all of this has come to nothing as the powers of oppression crush all hope, desire and expectation as they crucify Jesus. His disciples? They all flee into hiding – except the women. In John 21 the disciples are resigned to the fact that nothing has changed. Everything is back to how it was before. And they return to their old trades as fishermen.

Does it sound familiar? Occupied peoples. Oppressive military presence. Self-serving government. A hypocritical establishment. People anxious and

frightened. Hopes dashed. Why bother? Against this we join with the angel to cry, *Alleluia, Christ is risen. He is risen indeed, Alleluia*. This cry stirs embers of hope in the early Christians - felt as *joy* and *worship* - which embers burst into the flames of Pentecost, which we will celebrate June 5th. At Pentecost the disciples are now bold, energetic, expectant, voices full of hope as they speak publicly of the Risen Christ. And their audience cut to the heart asks, "What shall we do?" Hope renewed stirs a renewed desire to act. This is the heart of the Easter story whose narrative reveals the fallen world is as it is; embodies a vision of how it could be better; and invites all to commit to play their part in making it better. *Alleluia, Christ is risen. He is risen indeed, Alleluia* is both an affirmation and a motivation.

Jesus is the "light of the world" and those who follow him are to be in turn light (Matthew 5.14). Light struggles against what at times seems an all-pervading darkness. This was true for the first disciples. It is no less true for us now – darkness from the *global perspective* of war, occupied territories, the earth's warming; from the *social perspectives* with costs of living rises, inflation threatening incomes, embedded racism and sexism; from the *personal perspectives* of anxiety and stress, illness, death of loved ones, addictions.

But 1 John 2 encourages, "God is light; In him there is no darkness at all". No darkness is our direction of travel. The Risen Christ invites co-operation in his work to bring light as we can. Light in the *personal* as we repent – that is turn to God – that we might be re-created into a people characterised by love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control (Galatians 5). Light in the *social*. See how the early Christians gather into communities (Acts 2): "All the believers were together and had everything in common. Selling their possessions and goods, they gave to anyone as he had need". Light in the *global*. See how Paul urges (Romans 8) that "the creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the glorious freedom of the children of God".

Alleluia, Christ is risen. He is risen indeed, Alleluia. During Eastertide – and throughout our journey of faith – we are called to embrace this cry evermore deeply as a call to engage with ourselves and the world that each might be different. That in the face of darkness, we might be light. In the face of despair, hope. In the face of anxiety, reassured. In the face of apathy, energised.

Rev Allan Goode

My World

An endless stream taking over our land
Paper bags, plastic bottles, tin cans,
Too many boxes of unopened mail.

No room, no space
Where will it end?
Where are the open spaces?
Green oasis in a dry land.

What will we tell the children?
Time will tell
The earth will die.
Will we have left it too late?

A poem by Anne Roberts and printed in *Earthly Matters* twenty-three years ago, well before recycling became the norm and climate change so desperate.

Be still and know that I am God (Psalm 46:10)

Why does everyone rush around?
Pushing, running, hurry.
What is the rush for?
Busy people, busy streets.
Why not stop and think.
Is this right?
We were not meant to be in constant motion.
Just rest a while.
Look at the beauty around us.
A flower, a child's face,
Caught up in wonder, a new-born baby
A miracle of life.
So slow down, rest a while
'Come to me, all who are weary',
Jesus said, 'and I will give you rest.'

Offered by MaryJo Blades

Protecting our Cathedrals

In its latest newsletter Historic England lists eight cathedrals which it thinks are the most beautiful, and illustrates them with photographs from the Historic England Archive. They are Carlisle, Wells, Lichfield, Coventry, St Sophia's London, Clifton Bristol, Durham and Peterborough.

Historic England rightly tells us that cathedrals have a special place in national life. Attracting large congregations and tourists, they are important in public life for their scale and splendour as well as their significance as places of worship.

From Norman to Modernist, there are many different architectural styles on show in cathedrals. Historic England provides funding to support many of England's cathedrals and churches as well as buildings of all sorts around the country.



Carlisle Cathedral

You can explore the cathedrals and other places supported by English Heritage at <https://historicengland.org.uk/>.

Recently...

Baptisms

March – Lisa Hughes

April – April Rae Byrne

Confirmations

In March – Lisa Hughes and Charlotte Fenwick



Coming Soon...

In celebration of the Queen's Platinum Jubilee

On Sunday 5th June, about 12noon
after our morning service

Afternoon Tea

do come and join us for this special event.
Booking essential!

A vision for our future...

PCC members are participating in a series of meetings between now and July with Peter Froggatt, the Diocesan Outreach Officer, to discuss and look for ways forward for our Christ Church, its congregation and its community. If you've got some ideas please come and share them! And have a look at the extract from the Guardian newspaper on page 11.

The Cathedral Chickens

On my recent walk along the Camino de Santiago, I saw and heard many interesting things. One of the most amazing was in the Cathedral of Santo Domingo de la Calzada. Above the stairs to the crypt was a hen coop with a live rooster and hen in residence.

Legend has it that many years ago, a pilgrim couple were walking along the Camino trail to Santiago with their son. They stopped at an inn within this town and the innkeeper's daughter took an interest in the young son. However, he was a devout young man and thwarted her advances.

The young maid was incensed by his lack of interest so hid a silver goblet in his backpack and reported to the authorities that he had stolen. The son was caught and condemned to hang with the speedy efficiency of the law. Meanwhile his parents, unaware of his plight, continued their pilgrimage to Santiago.



Returning home and wondering where their son had got to, the couple recalled that they had last seen him in Santo Domingo. They went to the local magistrate, about to tuck into his chicken dinner, and told him of their missing son. He, being a kindly sort, laughed and said their son was no more alive than the chicken on his plate. Immediately, the chicken jumped up from the plate, crowing loudly. The man realised his mistake, jumped up and rushed to the gallows, with the parents following and found the boy hanging but alive.

The son was declared innocent and the chicken and its partner subsequently installed in the cathedral. Even more amazing is that the two chickens now living in the cathedral are the direct descendants of the original chickens. Evidence of this blood-line is that in the garden of the hostel where I stayed the night, which neighboured the cathedral, was a hen coop with the next generation awaiting their starring role.