

The Messenger

"Do not be afraid, for I know that you are looking for Jesus, who was crucified. He is not here; he has risen, just as he said."

Matthew 28:5

Christ Church Barnstaple
Methodist & United Reformed Church

April 2021

Earth Hour: Saturday 27th March at 8:30 pm



Lambs at Croyde Hoe Farm

Read how we can help protect our beautiful environment by supporting Earth Hour—Page 9

New Life & New Hope this Easter



1-3: Isabella's bunnies are pleased to see her daffodils have bloomed

The flowers from the Tete-a-Tete bulbs that were planted by Sunday Club

4: Devlin's daffodils



April 2021

All activities are cancelled or postponed until further notice.

As the church magazine is printed once a month you may find more up to date information on the church website. I strongly recommend that, if you are able to, you have a look there for updates.

Our family matters

Christ Church Family News

Sadly we report the death of Maisie Allan at the beginning of March. Please remember her family and friends in your prayers.

Congratulations to Reg & Muriel on their 70th wedding anniversary in April and Pat on a noteworthy birthday also in April.

While we are not meeting together please look out for each other and let our Church Friends coordinator know of any concerns.

World Day of Prayer -

which took place on Friday 5th March 2021 at 2.30pm.

This year's service was different as it took place by Zoom.

It was very well-organised by Sophie Read on behalf of the

Salvation Army, with representatives from local churches taking part.

There was a good attendance of 50 screens, more than 50 people. A

good number from Christ Church and our circuit attended as well as people from a variety of denominations.

The women of Vanuatu gave us plenty to think about in their thoughtfully planned order of service. We heard of a family who could only afford an

education for the first child, a boy, and how the second child, a girl, worked to educate herself through Bible Studies and women's ministry.

Education for all is not mandatory. Many children in rural areas walk long distances to go to school and some have to leave home to attend

boarding school from a very young age. At the time of writing, we're pleased to know that our children and young people are returning to school after a break because of the Coronavirus.

Thank you to all who supported this venture and apologies to those who tried but were unable to log in. Let's hope for a "live" service next year, planned by people from England, Wales and Northern Ireland on the theme "I know the plans I have for you".

Eff Poole



Message

Dear friends,

If all goes to plan this edition of the Messenger will arrive through your letterbox or in your email or posted on the Christ Church website in Holy Week, a few days after Palm Sunday and just before the darkness of Good Friday.

April begins in sombre mood as we remember how the revelation of God's love in Jesus was rejected so violently by those who tried to destroy it. It's a terrible thought, that the created could respond with such anger and hatred against God who in pure and perfect love had made them, and nailed Jesus to a cross to die. And yet, all went to plan and God's love for us proved stronger than anger or hatred or death itself as the darkness and endings of Good Friday gave way to the light and new life of Easter morning.

Endings can be painful but in faith, with the light of Christ in our lives, we know that with God's blessing what follows can be so much better than we could have imagined. And so I would like to end my letter on a personal note to Jo Grant who has worked alongside me for six years as a colleague and friend in her role as our Young Families Worker.

It really seems impossible that Jo has been in the role for so long, or at least it does until I think of all the things Jo has achieved in that time. We already knew of Jo's musical talents which she brought into her work in Sunday Club, Café Church, Parents and Toddlers, Holiday Clubs, New Years Eve celebrations and Social Events, as well as Sunday morning worship. But there is so much more and although I promised not to make a fuss I have two images in my mind as I give thanks for Jo's ministry to us and to the young families in the church and local community.



The first image is of something called "The didgeridoo of doom". At the end of Holiday Clubs a didgeridoo would be brought in hung with balloons filled with different substances; foam, water, flour.

Enthusiastic volunteers were invited to sit under balloons and answer questions. If they got the answer wrong Jo would burst the balloon hanging over their head with a pin. The result was sheer joy as everyone roared with laughter (including the volunteer) as whatever substance it was landed on the person's head.

The second image couldn't be more different. It is of Jo kneeling on the floor in the centre of the Alan Finch Room, the lights are off and Jo is lit by lots of nightlights placed on a mirror in front of her. On seats around the room children and young people are sat, completely still and silent as Jo leads us all in prayer.

Here are two images which, for me, say so much about Jo as a person and about her work as our Young Families Worker. Using her talents and imagination Jo presented her faith in ways that were both fun and deeply profound and touched people's lives.

I know Jo prayed a great deal before knowing that after six years God is calling her to use her talents in different ways. As any minister knows God's calling is never static but always moving us on as we seek to follow Christ.

Jo, on behalf of all of us, thank you for your ministry, for your extraordinary creativity, for your friendship and, above all, for your faith. We look forward to the shared future God is calling us all to and that truly, together, we are Easter People.

Happy Easter!
Every blessing,



AN OPEN LETTER TO JO FROM ANTHEA

My dear Jo

Where does one start? – there is so much to thank you for, so much to say - so little space to fit it all in...

I am delighted to write and express deep gratitude for all you have done for us at Christ Church – for the difference you have made to many of our lives. You have taken us all on an adventure for the past six years as our young Families Worker and there is much to tell. We are sad that you are stepping down from your present role, but understand and are incredibly grateful for all you have achieved in your time with us. You came to us to help us build on Young Families Work and under your guidance it has grown, developed, and flourished. You have been at the heart of this key area of Christ Church's life and you have been loved and respected for it.

It has been a joy, a delight, and a privilege to accompany you during your time with us. You have been an inspiration and I have learnt a lot from you. The special skills and experience brought have greatly enhanced many of our regular activities, have widened the scope of the work and helped us take a fresh approach to the way we run things. I can think of Holiday Clubs with new and imaginative themes and new and innovative way of running and exploring them – dance and drama, singing and drumming, refreshingly different crafts - sometimes ending with lunch and a short presentation to parents. I have never met anyone who could transform an area or room so magically into a most attractive,

welcoming, and comfortable environment for the children and the volunteers to spend time in.

We have all, whatever our age responded to your warmth and sense of fun and been carried along by your boundless energy and enthusiasm. We have marvelled at the way that you have seen opportunities and quickly responded to them where you were able. Thanks to your perceiving a real need you started a thriving Stay and Play, organised a New Year Party at a time to allow the young families and older people to come. Toddler Praise with its Bible stories and activities soon became an established part of the Parents and Toddlers afternoon (and how the children loved the parachute games as well!). Thank you too for helping us move towards intergenerational activities. It was great to welcome Norah Bellot Court residents to Holiday Club and also to join us at some Café Church sessions. You also invited those who came on Tuesdays for coffee to chat with the children and families. We look forward to continuing these ideas.

There are many many stories to tell for which I would need to write a book...! I think of the relationships you built up with the children and young people, the families, and many others inside and outside the church – the thoughtfulness and sensitivity you brought to everything you did. This takes me on to your wonderful musical ability so generously shared. I remember one Christmas you playing Silent Night whilst the children remained still for their Nativity tableau – oh so haunting and beautiful. And then of course other images follow – all different parts of the adventure: you playing your violin many times at Parents and Toddlers, at Café Church, and when the Zig Zags pre-school came to visit; you playing jauntily in the car park to attract people to the Church Fairs; and gentle times with the children. And other events, the concert with the Military Wives Choir, Hosanna Rock, encouraging the children to find skills and confidence in singing, reading, acting, playing; the brilliant drumming; your amazing Pathfield choir; and last but not least the patient, caring help you gave individually to some of the children in Sunday Club and Café Church to fulfil their desire to play the piano or the violin or the keyboard.

When I think of all you have achieved, I am breathless! And I have written so little of it all here and certainly not adequately...but thank you for so much to continue and build on and do in the future. Thank you for the stories and images we will always have of you stored in our minds and hearts from our adventures with you.

We have experienced a very special ministry with you that we will never forget, and will always be immensely grateful. But we know that it is time to let you go now to discover and follow wherever God is leading you.

So a huge THANK YOU JO from your Line Manager - who feels very privileged to have worked with you. It has been a joy. We shall all greatly miss you in your role as our Young Families Worker, but we are so glad that you will still remain a much valued, loved and active part of our church family.

With much love and every blessing,

Anthea



Sept 2019

Jo exploring the properties of ice with the little ones



Great cookies!

Serena's keeping busy—making cookies



Sowing
Sweet peas



Look out Monty Don!



July 2019

**Celebrating activities with the children and young families,
both past and present**

Devlin's poster was made after a conversation with granny about Captain Tom, a day or two after Captain Tom's death. Apparently they had been looking at a picture of him in the newspaper. Devlin knew all about Captain Tom as he had seen him so much on the TV.



Young Families Work

Message from Jo Grant

It has been a privilege to serve as Young Families Worker for Christ Church over the last six years, but the time has come to 'pass on the baton' to somebody new. Much prayer and seeking of God's will has enabled me to come to this decision. Huge thanks to Don, Anthea, the Elders, the YFW Management team and to all our volunteers who freely give their time to help fulfil God's purpose with young families connected to church. It has been a privilege to serve with you in this way and I thank everyone for their support and friendship. I trust that this will continue in my new capacity as a friend and volunteer within the church. I look forward to new and exciting things happening at Christ Church, as well as the continuation of activities and groups when we are able to be 'up-and-running' again. You all continue to be in my thoughts and prayers.

God bless you,

Love Jo

Thank You to Jo from Sunday Club

Sunday Club want to thank Jo for her tireless commitment during her time as Young Families Worker. Her faith shone through everything she did for Sunday Club, encouraging us all to develop new skills such as using music to engage with the children. Jo would also willingly give extra time for the children, using their interests to help them understand stories from the Bible in addition to supporting all their families. Everyone in Sunday Club will miss her during future sessions. We are very grateful for all she achieved and send her all good wishes.

Anthea, Eff, Eddy, Alison and Maureen

As a member of a family whose child attends Sunday Club, thanks are due to Jo for her willingness to meet with each child on their particular level and for supporting them in their individual ways. We have so many happy memories of the imaginative activities she organised and all the lively music she used for worship.

Maureen

Thank You to Jo

I extend thanks to Jo for all she did to maintain safeguarding during her time as Young Families Worker at Christ Church. Safeguarding was uppermost in her preparations for activities with the children and young people.

Safeguarding was also her first consideration when she gave support to the many families linked with the church. She also gave time to understanding and applying national safeguarding updates.

Thank you, Jo from Maureen Thomas (Safeguarding Officer for Christ Church)

Prayers for April

4th April

God of resurrection, ever renewing, ever reviving,
we adore you for your life-giving presence.
Son of Man, newly risen, sorrow made joy,
we adore you for your sacrificial living and dying.
Holy Spirit, breezing among us this Easter morn,
we adore you for breathing new life into us. Amen.

11th April

Lord, you accept our doubts and embrace our questions like a wise parent
encouraging your children to express themselves; hiding your hurt at our
scepticism, always hoping for the best and seeing our potential.
We worship and adore you for believing in us. Amen.

18th April

Jesus said to his disciples, 'Peace be with you' – they responded with turmoil.
Jesus said, 'Have you anything to eat?' – they served him fish.
Jesus opened their minds – they became his witnesses.
So, Lord, may we too find peace in your service,
with opened minds and hearts on fire. Amen.

25th April

Lord, we adore you, our Good Shepherd; always there, always watchful.
Your fold is the space you hold for us, where we know we are loved.
Although dangers surround us, and in foolishness we may stray,
you have our back.
So many sheep, yet you know us all by name.
Lord, we adore you, our Good Shepherd. Amen.



Christian Aid Week appeal 10 – 16 May 2021

Climate chaos is one of the greatest injustices we face.
Together we STOP this climate crisis.
Droughts are now more frequent and more intense due
to the climate crisis. Rose and her family, and millions of people in Kenya, are
struggling to get enough food and water.
Your gift could help a community build an earth dam, so when the rains do
come, they will have the water they need to live. People like Rose need every
last drop to survive the drought.
Together we STOP this climate crisis.
Every envelope. Every gift. Every challenge can change lives.

It has not yet been confirmed whether door to door collections will be allowed.
Christian Aid are monitoring the situation closely and will let us know in due
course.

Janet Marshall – treasurer

Carolyn & I will let you have more details in the May Messenger so that you will
know how and where to donate.
Many thanks,
Janet & Carolyn.

Earth Hour



Earth Hour is one of the world's largest movements in support of the environment and is held every year on the last Saturday of March. It now involves millions of people in more than 180 countries who switch off their lights to show their support for the planet. It was started in 2007 by WWF and their partner organisations as a symbolic 'lights-out' event in Sydney, Australia - and encouraged people around the world to join in, to draw attention to climate change. Entire streets, buildings, landmarks and city skylines go dark to draw attention to nature loss and the climate crisis. All around the world, lights go out at 8.30pm local time – creating a wave of darkness around the world. But Earth Hour goes far beyond the symbolic action of switching off lights. It has become a catalyst for positive environmental impact, driving major legislative changes by harnessing the power of the people and collective action.

More than a decade later, the climate crisis remains, made worse by another urgent threat – the rapid loss of biodiversity and nature. The rate of global loss of nature during the past 50 years is unprecedented in human history. Nature doesn't just provide us with food, water, renewable energy and clean air; it is also one of our strongest allies against climate change. Protecting nature is one of the most immediate, powerful and cost-effective solutions to the climate crisis.

2021 gives us an unmissable opportunity for change, when world leaders come together for the COP26 conference in November to set the environmental agenda for the next decade and beyond. Crucial political decisions will be made on climate action, nature and sustainable development. These decisions will affect the well-being of our planet for many years to come.

Earth Hour 2021 gives us an opportunity to speak up and show our politicians and world leaders how much we care about these issues and ask that they take urgent action.

All you have to do is switch off any non-essential lights for one hour at 8.30pm on Saturday 27th March. You might also light a lantern or candle and place it in a window if this can be done safely. You could write to your MP (or even the PM!), and make a personal pledge to make one change – maybe to use less plastic, switch to an ethical bank, buy more local produce or eat less meat.

We really can make a difference.

Watch the official 2021 Earth Hour video at

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-fIxCsCrHpY>

Liz Seymour

The latest news from Kira Farm

"And God is able to bless you abundantly, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work."

2 Corinthians 9:8

February was a busy month at Kira Farm with the trainees eagerly learning lots of new skills. Looking at their Facebook page the other evening it was great to see news of Scovia on it. There was a lovely picture of her standing proudly in her garden where she had been working hard preparing it for planting using her conservation farming training, 'Farming God's Way'. I read how excited she is having the opportunity to return to Kira this year and is loving the vocational training, learning valuable skills that will last her a lifetime! Excelling in tailoring she has already made a skirt and a shirt and is now making dresses as you will read in her letter...

Dear Anthea and Tony and friends at Christ Church,

I pray my letter finds you okay and happy. Thank you for replying to my first letter. I was filled with joy hearing from you after all the time in last year. I thank God for the precious gift of life this year, I pray that things continue to be good all the time.

I don't know whether there is a vaccine here but I pray that we will stay safe until that day to vaccinate. Kira is a very nice place, you will see when you will visit. I like it!*

About the farm training, this year I have started with very serious energy. I finished making the fallows, putting manure in the holes, covered with God's blanket and I have planned to begin planting next month. I will plant beans, maize and by the grace of God, my crops will grow very well with good rain.

In tailoring, I am learning how to make A-line dresses, Peter-Pan collar dresses, and straight skirts for my adults. I'm testing on my size for now. We have also had how to wash hair, plaiting and how to talk to customers, which has been good as well. It has been a good start to this year and I believe my dream will never fail.

I send greetings to your family and church may the almighty God be with you all.

Big blessings

Scovia

*I asked Scovia whether there was a vaccine available in Uganda. Following her reply I looked up on the website...It was last Friday that Uganda received their first batches of AstraZeneca vaccine donations from the COVAX Facility, a UN initiative to ensure COVID-19 vaccine access to the world's most vulnerable. The country's health minister has reported that the first doses will be used to vaccinate people who are most vulnerable and those at more risk such as healthcare workers, security personnel, teachers, and other essential social service providers.

Please remember all those involved in the very wide ranging work of Amigos in your prayers and pray for protection – the child sponsorship team, the children as they return to school, the Farming Groups, the vulnerable people and all others awaiting their vaccinations that they may be kept safe, and also of course for the staff and students at Kira Farm - especially for Scovia 'that her dream will never fail'. And please pray for good rain this year!

And a message from Team Amigos:

We are continuing to see God's provision and faithfulness as the year unfolds and feel incredibly grateful for your unwavering prayers and support!

Anthea

Amigos News

Scovia's Update



Getting up to speed with hairdressing



Clearing my plot

Celebrating Easter at Christ Church Before the Pandemic



It was two years ago when we last celebrated Easter in the church building. Here are some of the beautiful decorations which adorned the sanctuary in April 2019

SAINT BERNADETTE OF LOURDES

Bernadette of Lourdes was born in 1844 and was the eldest of six living children, her father was a miller but for various reasons the family lived in extreme poverty.

Bernadette is best known for experiencing apparitions of a beautiful young lady, later known as the Marian visions. These apparitions are said to have occurred between February and July 1858, at the time she was only fourteen. Bernadette had gone to play with a group of friends in the grotto at Massabielle. Mary revealed herself with the words 'I am the immaculate conception'. Apparently none of the other children saw the vision. Amongst the many messages given to Bernadette at this time, was the instruction that a chapel should be built at this place.

Bernadette was a sickly child, she had contracted cholera as a toddler and thereafter suffered severe asthma and other ailments. Her final height was only 1.4 m (4ft 7in). Bernadette attended the day school conducted by the Sisters of Charity, and Christian instruction from Nevers. She did not start to learn French until the age of thirteen, instead she spoke the language of Occitan.

At the time of the apparitions Bernadette's family's finances had declined to such a degree that they lived in a one-room basement, known as 'the dungeon' where they were housed for free by her mother's cousin.

Bernadette experienced a large degree of disbelief about the visions, her parents were not supportive and the clergy and civil authorities were sceptical. To escape attention she became a boarder at a school run by the Sisters of Charity at Nevers. In 1866 she was accepted as a novitiate and completed her religious instruction. Her remaining years were spent in prayer and seclusion. Bernadette was happy and loved by all for her virtues of kindness, holiness and wit.

Although no-one else ever experienced these Marian visions, Bernadette was adamant that she had seen the beautiful lady. On 25th February the Lady told Bernadette to drink the water of a spring that flowed under the rock. Bernadette could see no water, so she dug down to see if she could find anything, nothing happened. A day or so after her explorations water started to flow. Bernadette drank the water and washed in it, as did many others and the water acquired a reputation for healing properties. The spring still flows at the rate of 32,000 gallons a day, but analysis of the water has found nothing remarkable about it.

Thousands came to the shrine every day, on the grounds of hygiene the authorities had the area barricaded off. However in 1862 after a thorough enquiry by the Church Commission, the local bishop decided that the visions were genuine and approved the cult of Our Lady of Lourdes. A church building was started that year.

Bernadette spend much of the rest of her life in the convent of the Sisters of Charity at Lourdes, where she died aged 35 in 1879. Most of her life she suffered from ill-health and died in agony, still praising and thanking God.

It is to be remembered that she was canonised not for her experiences at the grotto, but for her faithful and loving dedication to God, to healing and care of the poor.

Very early after the 'discovery' of the grotto pilgrims began flocking from all over France. The town was to become one of the Christian world's most celebrated pilgrim centres, now the usual annual figure is 5 million. Most of the visitors are sick and hoping for a cure. Many of the pilgrims have found peace and comfort at the site.

Throughout all her troubles Bernadette held fast to her faith, she did not seek

publicity or fame, in fact she hid herself away at a convent in Nevers. The visions marked a turning point in her life when she distanced herself from publicity and travelled inward to prayer and contemplation. Bernadette worked hard at the monastery in the infirmary and as a sacristan, she wanted no attention for herself. When once asked about her visions she replied that 'The Virgin used me as a broom to remove the dust. When the work is done, the broom is put behind the door again.' Perhaps God is asking us to be brooms to sweep away fear, addictions, inequalities and prejudice. The Feast Day of St Bernadette is 16th April.

Music to Listen to: Fauré In Paradisio
 Schubert's setting of Psalm 23

FRENCH ONION SOUP

This is a particularly warming and welcome soup on a cold day, preferably after a bracing walk, it seems to taste better the next day so is easy to make in advance.

It has always amused me that Spanish onions are used and a Swiss cheese. This is because Spanish onions grow nearer to the equator and are sweeter.

Ingredients

1 kilo (2 *pounds*) large Spanish onions
1 litre (2 *pints*) water
1 ounce (50 *gms*) butter
1 tablespoon olive oil
2 cloves garlic
1 tsp wholegrain mustard
White wine and brandy (if desired) to taste
1 tablespoon marmite
A little dark soy sauce
Rounded tablespoon cornflour



Method

Chop the onions and mince the garlic, fry in the butter and oil very slowly, turning often, this will take at least 20 minutes. When fully cooked turn up the heat, stirring continuously, allow to get nice and brown but not burned.

Add the water, marmite, soy sauce and a few turns of black pepper. Raise the heat until gently bubbling. Cook for a few more minutes, at this stage add a little white wine and brandy to taste if you wish, then thicken with the cornflour.

Ladle into soup bowls, add a slice of bread and grated Gruyere cheese, place under the grill until bubbling and serve with additional bread.

I have given a recipe for a vegetarian version, this can easily be made vegan by using 2 tablespoons oil and omitting the butter and cheese. Meat eaters may like to use beef stock cubes instead of marmite and soy sauce, you would probably need two cubes.

Jennifer

Weekly Meetings

Monday	7.30pm	Friendship group	(2nd & 4th Mondays of each month) contact Rose de la Cour tel 830824
Tuesday	9.30am - 12.00 noon	Coffee morning	
	9.30am	Prayer meeting ...	except the last Tuesday of each month
	10.30am	Holy Communion ...	(last Tuesday of each month)
	5.30pm - 6.30pm	Rainbows ...	
	5.30pm - 7.00pm	Brownies...	
	7.00pm - 8.30pm	Guides	contact Nicola Wilkins tel 07813620615 or 01271377154
Wednesday	1.30pm - 3.00pm	Parents & Toddlers	
Thursday	2.30pm	Ladies Fellowship ...	
	7.30pm	Bible Study...	contact Shirley Baxter tel 375560
Friday	10.00am - 12.00 noon	Hobnob coffee morning	
	10.30am	Bible Study...	contact Shirley Baxter tel 375560
Saturday	8.30am	2nd Saturday of each month - circuit event	
		Men's Breakfast	contact Chris Punt tel 343716 or Staveley Dawson tel 373213

All at Christ Church Barnstaple are committed to the following Safeguarding Principles:

- * the care and nurture of, and respectful pastoral ministry with, all children, young people and all adults.
- * the safeguarding and protection of all children, young people and adults when they are vulnerable.
- * the establishing of safe, caring communities which provide a loving environment where there is informed vigilance as to the dangers of abuse.
(Methodist Safeguarding Guidelines, online: www.methodist.org.uk)

Sunday Offertory for 2021

		Cash	Envelopes
February	7th	£0.00	£0.00
	14th	£0.00	£0.00
	21st	£0.00	£0.00
	28th	£0.00	£0.00

An increasing number of people are donating money direct to the Church account by standing order. Currently this offertory is £1885.00 per month. While we are not meeting together for Sunday worship in Bear Street, some of you are also sending in donations by cheque. Over the last six months this has amounted to about £7000. Many thanks to all of you. If you have given me an envelope number your gift will be included in the offertory in the accounts, otherwise it has been recorded as a donation. *If you are a tax payer* and would like the church to claim back the tax on your giving or if you change your address or other details, please contact Kathy Jeacock or speak to a serving elder - Thank you.



*If you are visiting Christ Church today we extend a warm welcome.
Please take a Messenger home with our good wishes.*

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Young families worker

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Alison Cairns
Anthea Coates
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Kathy Jeacock (treas)
Chris Marshall
Janet Marshall
Jack Neville (sec)

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Eff Poole
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There is no date set yet for us being able to return to using the Christ Church building. However, when we are able to meet inside, Celia Huxtable's fantastic, hand made 'Welcome Back' banner will be a fitting decoration for the occasion. Thank you Celia.



16
Spring marches onwards!

The last 4 toilets have
now been twinned

