

# The Messenger

“Jesus said to them, ‘Come and have breakfast’. None of the disciples dared ask him, ‘Who are you?’ They knew it was the Lord”

**Christ Church Barnstaple**  
Methodist & United Reformed Church



John 21:12

June / July 2024



Town Mayor, Louisa York and Consort Keith with organisers Paula and Janet

The Christian Aid ‘Big Brekkie’ was a great success , see page 9



Selaine Saxby MP supported the event



Tanya’s cake stall

This edition of The Messenger is the double issue, summer edition.  
The August edition will be published at the end of July.

## June Diary

Sun	2nd	10.30am 3pm	Morning Worship and Holy Communion: Rev. Paul Bate Causeway Service
Sun	9th	10.30am 4.30pm	Morning Worship: Rev. Jonathan Richards Café Church
Mon	10th	10am	Sound it Out
Sat	15th	3pm	Church Tea Party
Sun	16th	10.30am	Morning Worship: Rev. Marilyn Tricker
Sun	23rd	10.30am	Morning Worship: Rev. Jonathan Richards
Mon	24th	10am	Sound it Out
Sun	30th	10.30am 6.30pm	Morning Worship: Mrs Eff Poole and Mrs Jenny Newman Oasis Service
			<b>July Diary</b>
Sun	7th	10.30am 3pm	Morning Worship: Service leader to be confirmed Causeway Service
Mon	8th	10am	Sound it Out
Sun	14th	10.30am 4.30pm	Morning Worship: Service leader to be confirmed Café Church
Wed	17th	<b>10am</b>	<b>Deadline for August Messenger</b>
Sun	21st	10.30am	Morning Worship: Service leader to be confirmed
Mon	22nd	10am	Sound it Out
Sun	28th	10.30am	Morning Worship: Service leader to be confirmed

### Regular meetings :

Tuesdays - Rainbows 5.30pm (Term-time only)  
 Wednesdays - Parents & Toddlers 9.30am (Term-time only)  
 Thursdays - Bible Study 2pm; Circuit Zoom Service 7pm  
 Fridays - Hobnob 10am (except Bank Holidays)

## Message from Rev. Sue Macbeth

Dear Friends,

We have just completed the 50-day period in the church calendar from Easter Day to Pentecost. Whilst we might think this year that was a long or short period of time depending on how rushed or laidback you have been and compare it with previous years, it will be nothing like the next forty-two days to come. Earlier today the Prime Minister Rishi Sunak finally came to a decision about when the next General Election is happening. By the time you read this the first week of campaigning will be over. Forty-two days time.

I remember in the not so distant past the 2017 snap general election when Brenda from Bristol when questioned by some reporter made her famous statement 'You are joking. What, another one?' This time we haven't been caught on the hop and had some final deadline of January 2025 set down.

So what might it mean for us as Christians? I believe it will provide us with a sharp focus for our prayers and maybe for a sermon or two. As the General Election in the UK quickly approaches, Christians are encouraged to engage thoughtfully and prayerfully. This requires us to create or recommit to making space in our daily rhythm to pause, reflect, and pray. The political climate, both domestically and globally, is marked by uncertainty and division, making our role as Christians even more crucial. Here in North Devon we sometimes are seen as a sleepy hollow. But evidence is out there that when we get together and actively pray about things changes do happen. It is vital to ground our actions in the certainty of God's care and loving action towards and through us. I have spoken and written before about a group - *the Joint Public Issues Team* - whereby Christians from the Baptist, Methodist and URC work together to raise awareness of what we can do rather than what we can't. They launched their new General Election preparation work on Tuesday 21st May - what a sense of timing. Offering guidance for praying together for the seven month period before a final date had to be set, we read: *As we prayerfully engage with the upcoming election, it's essential to ground our actions in the certainty of God's care and loving action towards and through us. Pray that integrity of leaders and candidates is held. Pray for those standing in the elections and supporting the democratic process to act with integrity and honesty, prioritising the common good over personal or party interests.*

In other words, does this truly represent what we believe in as Christian communities? For me that will mean following Jesus' advice in Matthew 6:25 that we should not be overwhelmed and worry about being in the world, we will be provided for but we are expected to be active. If we look and listen to what is being said by candidates and parties we can compare and ask ourselves does this person or manifesto offer us the chance to follow the values shaped by Jesus? We are called to bring the good news of Jesus to the world (Luke 4:18-19). This is no easy task but one which we can have the opportunity to actively engage in especially during the next forty-two days. So let's be involved and renew our commitments as Christians in the world today. Love, pray and vote.

Grace and peace,

*Sue*

## **A hymn for World Environment Day - 5th June 2024**

*(Tune: Sine nominee StF 745)*

Creator God, abundant life your mark,  
you once poured speech into the formless dark;  
and from those words sprang forth a living spark  
Your inspiration awoke creation.

And so this world, in which we live and move,  
all that we sense below, around, above,  
displays the imprint of your longing love:  
its revelation throughout creation.

But yet the earth is fractured, frayed and torn,  
poisoned, polluted, ravaged, scarred and worn,  
its treasures plundered and its beauties scorned  
our desecration of God's creation.

From blight and guilt, we cannot walk away,  
our will and actions shape the world today;  
and ours the greed, insistent on its way,  
whose depredations despoil creation.

Come Holy Spirit, challenge mind and heart!  
Inspire our living so that we can start  
to make those choices which may yet impart  
love's liberation to your creation.

We pledge to touch all things with holy care  
until your coming Kingdom ends despair:  
when all the world will witness and will share  
the jubilation of healed creation.

Pat Bennett

*(published in Barefeet and Buttercups Wild Goose Publications 2008)*

## Free Free Free

Hello everyone, I'm not asking for anything! Indeed, the opposite is true, for I'm giving away, to all who would like to have it, the opportunity to ask any questions at all about the Bible and the Christian Faith or even, a bit more sketchily, about other faiths. Especially if you have a verse or passage you've never understood or that has been a problem to accept or even that you've rejected out of hand as 'not possible to believe,' or 'that doesn't fit with how I read and understand the Bible.' For example, Luke writes in his gospel record in Chapter 14 verse 26 that Jesus said "'If anyone comes to me and does not hate his father and mother, his wife and children, his brothers and sisters – yes even his own life – he cannot be my disciple.'" Ouch! That's a tough one! That verse is known as one of the 'Hard sayings of Jesus,' but there are more; do you understand them? Or how about St Paul who says, in 1 Corinthians Chapter 14 verse 34, "women should remain silent in the churches. They are not allowed to speak..."'. Does that create a problem for you; do you think St Paul was right? Or what about right at the beginning of the Bible; God created Adam and Eve and they had sons (three are named as Cain, Able and Seth) but where did their wives come from? Any or all of these, and other questions, can be asked in our afternoon Bible Study.

Anyone can come from any or no church background. People are welcome to stay for the full hour or leave after ten minutes. No-one has to come every week, indeed some only come once a fortnight and others on odd free days. You can come late and leave early and it's all free. We provide the Bibles so you don't have to bring anything, except maybe your questions! But you don't have to say anything, either. True, we're presently going through the First Epistle of Peter but when questions are asked we examine and seek to answer them. Most importantly no-one is expected to have prior knowledge – except maybe me (but even that's a bit risky!?!). There are no expectations and NO cost or commitment.

So, if you're interested in having even just one question answered please feel free to join us on any Thursday afternoon. We start at 2.00pm and finish at 3.00pm. We lock the outer door but just ring the door bell, to the right of the doors and we'll gladly let you in. And, should you be feeling a bit wary about this, or anything, please feel free to contact me if you'd like to chat.

Kind regards,

*Jonathan.*

Jonathan Richards (Rev'd)



Thank you again to all those who have made a donation towards the repair of the stained-glass panels in the doors from the Small Chapel, received through the Sunday offertory or paid directly into the church bank account. The total stands at £311 with potentially another £35 of gift aid to be reclaimed. Thank you, as well, for additional donations received for repairs in the kitchen. Thank you to Paula and Elaine for doing the organising.

*Kathy*





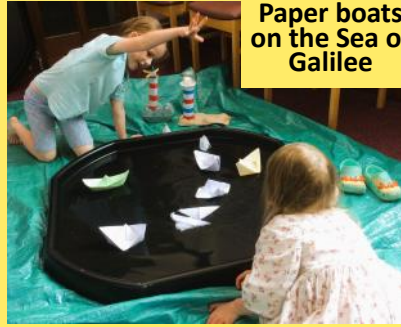
Making lighthouses



Calming a stormy sea



The food craft table



Paper boats on the Sea of Galilee

*Cafe Church*



Parents  
and  
Toddlers



## Young Families Work News

### Café Church

'The monthly Sunday afternoon Café Church for all ages remains a favourite with our family' to quote one grandma. And it's probably fair to say that this is the case for many of our families who regularly come. We may not always be large in number but we have come to understand the important place that Café Church has in Christ Church's calendar. The warm, welcoming and inclusive atmosphere is such that those who come say they feel relaxed and at home, whatever their age. And it is their church. Visitors and friends are warmly welcomed and soon find themselves enjoying one another's company as well as the worship, and often having a go at the various activities.

Revd Stephen Caddick, our Circuit superintendent, and his wife Sharon have been the latest much welcomed additions to our Café Church family over the past few months and a great help too. In May's Café Church, as well as chatting to others and taking part in the activities with the children, we were really pleased that they had agreed to lead the worship around the story of Jesus calming the storm. This was to the delight of all who were there! A very vigorous telling, the children made wonderful storm waves, then calm waves, with a swathe of blue material. Then along with other songs, they sang and mimed 'With Jesus in the boat you can smile at the storm'. With great hilarity and some confusion(!) they gradually left out one significant word after another of this song, miming the word instead. For instance 'With Jesus in the boat you can ~~ at the storm and the word 'sailing' was another good word to replace with mime! The children (and the rest of us too) loved every moment of it all. The worship/story time was much enjoyed and great fun, with no-one having any excuse to forget the story afterwards! Activities included making paper boats to sail on the sea of Galilee and making lighthouses, as well as the usual word searches and colouring and table puzzles. However, the children preferred to do their own thing using the materials provided. The food craft continued to be the most popular! Proudly – and extremely competently – looked after by two of the children, smiley faces were produced with biscuits, icing sugar, edible eyes and strawberry laces. Quickly demolished, there was not even one biscuit left at the end!

So after a delicious tea another happy, relaxed and much enjoyed afternoon came to an end. We look forward to the next one on June the 9th. Do come and join us. You will be so welcome.

*Anthea*

### Sunday Club

As well as learning about the Acts of the Apostles for the start of the summer term, Janet co-ordinated a mini service including contributions from the children. We will be repeating this activity in Sunday Club once a month. We also thank Joy for her recent assistance. We return to the Old Testament in June & July, learning about King David. Sunday Club sessions will continue as part of morning worship during the school summer holiday on an informal basis.

## Parents and Toddlers

The group continues to grow from strength to strength. We currently have 8 families who regularly attend which was recently boosted with the addition of a new Mum and her 6 month old baby daughter. Hopefully we can encourage a few more to ensure the group continues when the older ones leave to start school and full time education. We try to vary some of the toys and games from week to week but always the most popular is the playdough. Maybe we have some aspiring pastry makers for the future. Sandy

We hope you have had the opportunity to enjoy some of the sunshine we've been having. Sending our best wishes and love to you all,

*The Young Families Work Team*

## Christ Church Summer Tea Party

**Saturday 15th June**

Afternoon Tea served 3 - 5pm

Please come and enjoy an afternoon of fellowship and a delicious tea, to support the work of Christ Church



## Friendship Group

Our speaker on April 22nd was Sue Harrison who told us all about how she set up local groups for *Britain in Bloom*. What comes to mind when we all think about these groups is the floral displays, but the focus has to be: 40% flowers, 30% community involvement and 30% environment - bees, wildlife etc. In 2021 whilst still struggling with lockdown restrictions, the group of 40 volunteers worked really hard - with support from local businesses. The areas they worked on included the town centre, skate park, verges, and open areas around the town. They got a skate-park built, made insect hotels, planted trees, and planted thousands of flowers. Some of these were in rainbow patterns to celebrate the NHS during Covid. They won Gold, but 2 days later vandals destroyed much of their work. Undeterred, they won Gold again in 2022 but the vandals struck again - such a shame. Sue showed us lots of photos of the beautiful displays, her enthusiasm was clear to see.

At our AGM we planned our informal summer meetings; our regular meetings at Christ Church will resume in October.

*Rosemary*





## Christian Aid Weekend, 18/19 May

Janet, Chris, Rod and myself were up early on Saturday morning to prepare for the Big Brekkie which the four of us ran at the Church from 9.30 to 11.30am. I got The Voice to give us a plug on air as we picked up the rolls from Tesco.

We were grateful to Gill who provided us with our base stock of cakes and Tanya did a great job running that stall. Her family all turned up to support as well – it was the first time I had served takeaway food to a pub!

Withcombe Butchers in Joy Street had supplied bacon and sausages at a discount price and lots of people commented on how tasty the sausages were in particular. We also catered for vegetarians and gluten free customers. The Mayor, Louisa and her consort, Keith, were among our first customers, closely followed by Selaine Saxby MP. All three stayed for quite a while and chatted to other customers. It was great to see some new faces in the Church and some even returned for the Sunday Service. It was a very jolly occasion and we raised just over £412 which was a great effort. Thank you to all who supported the event.

On Sunday I led a Christian Aid themed service with a blend of Pentecost. We focused our thoughts and prayers on the people of Burundi in East Africa. Everyone joined in writing thoughts for prayer on cardboard bricks which Rod and Janet built into a wall and we commended for prayer the people and places



that were written on the bricks. Love made a big impact! The wall then went off into Sunday Club while we continued in Church. We were pleased to have visitors at the service including Amanda Evans, the Christian Aid representative for Devon and Cornwall who came up from Bude. Though I say it myself, it was a joyous occasion and I am sure people will have given generously through the Christian Aid envelopes by the end of May. Janet will be able to tell us how much we have raised in due course. She and I also organised envelopes and materials for the Barnstaple Group of churches for which we were responsible.

Rod and I came home to put our feet up but Janet and Chris were off to RHS Rosemoor where their brass band was joining two others in concert. All in all, it was a very successful weekend as we supported the work of Christian Aid. By the time you read this, Rod and I will be away on the holiday of a lifetime in Ecuador and the Galapagos Islands. I am very excited and I think he is terrified!

Photos—front cover

*Paula*

## New - Christ Church Information Leaflet



We now have a wonderful information leaflet available in the vestibule. It has lots of details of who we are and what we do. It starts with a welcome and tells folk all about Christ Church. It goes on to give details about what we can offer, including: Morning Worship, Sunday Club, Café Church, Causeway, Sound it Out, Parents and Toddlers, Friendship Group, Rainbows and Hobnob. There is also mention of our occasional services such as Songs of Praise and Oasis. What an amazing range of activities we have now - so much to be thankful for and be proud of. There is also a bit about social events, Eco Church, Church Friends and our support of Christian Aid. Please feel free to give these to visitors and friends, they are also available for other groups who use our church for their meetings.

We are enormously grateful to Paula who has put so much time and effort into producing this for us.

### **Amigos and Kira Farm**

*The Lord gives his people strength; the Lord blesses his people with peace.  
Psalm 29:11*

#### Recharging their batteries - Kira students go home!

As Uganda was holding a national census 9-19 May, institutions were advised to close so that everyone could participate. With this in mind, Kira trainees took their end of first semester break in May. So, though no letter from Gloria our sponsored trainee this month, we shall look forward to hearing from her again when she returns. We do hope that she has been able to enjoy some quality time with her family, sharing stories and what she is experiencing on Kira Farm. We hope too that she will have been inspired and begun to see opportunities for her involvement in the local community when she returns back home again in December.

*Anthea*

# Causeway



Taking part in the role play



Deacon Joan , left, leading the story of 'David & Goliath'

*The next Causeway service is on June 2nd*

# Congratulations!



George, Amelia and Owen are proud to announce the arrival of their miracle baby, Clara Christina on 16th March weighing in at 3lb 6oz. We all send them our love and congratulations, and we welcome Clara to our Christ Church family

## COMMUNITY HONOUR for “SOUND IT OUT”



Mayor Louisa York presents the RAF Community Plate to representatives from the Sound It Out dementia support group. Credit: BTC

Barnstaple's Annual Town Meeting has once again recognised the hard work of community organisations and volunteers throughout the town, often helping those who would otherwise have no voice.

The ceremonial event at The Guildhall Hall is a highlight on the Barnstaple Town Council calendar and was presided over by the Mayor, Councillor Louisa York.

It included the awarding of the prestigious RAF Community Plate, which each year is given to an individual or group who have made an outstanding contribution to the wellbeing of the town.

For 2024 the plate has gone to dementia support group Sound It Out, which sees a team of volunteers help people living with memory loss across North Devon, using music and singing to help them with cognitive and memory stimulation. **The Singing for Memory group was started in 2016 as a collaboration between representatives from Norah Bellot Court and Christ Church, Barnstaple. Over the years the group has benefitted residents from Norah Bellot Court, as well as people from the local community.**

**Why not come and see what we do.**

*Sally*

## **Notes from the Elders Meeting on Tuesday 7th May**

The meeting was chaired by Janet Gray who reminded us that it will be Ascension Day on Thursday and she read the last few verses of the Gospel of Mark. She also led us in prayer.

- \* The chairs in the Alan Finch Room have not yet been changed over.
- \* The Water Boiler in the kitchen will be done as soon as possible.
- \* News of the Fellowship was discussed. Rev. John Robinson is to be asked to present a Jubilee Certificate to Rev. Tony Coates. We then prayed for those in need of prayer.
- \* The Church Picnic is on the 11th August, at 12.30p.m. at Pilton Bluecoat Academy. More details to follow.
- \* Rev. Marilyn will co-ordinate the Harvest Praise on the 29th September.
- \* Book repairers have not yet been found for the pulpit Bible.
- \* With a few tweaks the Publicity Leaflet has been agreed. The Elders wished to thank Paula very much for all her hard work on the leaflet.
- \* Some of the Elders had a meeting with Rev. Canon Dr. Benjamin Williams from St. Peters and St. Mary Magdalens, plus some parishioners. It was a good meeting.
- \* Property: The gutters have been cleaned out. The Car Park is going to be made good. The Stained Glass appeal is ongoing. There is outside work to be done during the summer months.
- \* There are two young volunteers in Sunday Club working towards their Bronze D of E.
- \* Parents and Toddlers are going very well, and Café Church is going strong with a very happy atmosphere.
- \* The Rainbows are still very keen and enjoy themselves and have fun.
- \* Events: An Afternoon Tea Party will be held at the Church on Saturday, 15th June. Quiz and Pasty evening on Saturday 14th September. The Winter Fair is on Saturday 9th November.
- \* The Messenger is free to all but donations are welcome.
- \* The RAF Community Plate has been awarded to Sound it Out for the work they do.
- \* It was agreed to provide Gluten Free Bread for Communion.

The Meeting closed with Prayer and the Grace was shared.

Next meeting: Weds 5th June



## Causeway

'God is with us' was the theme for our May Causeway Worship. We were thrilled to welcome newcomers including Michaela's mum Viv, and Michaela's new guide dog, Athos. Gemma joined us for the first time at Christ Church and she was remembered fondly by friends who were also part of Instow Causeway several years ago.

Gill and Alison covered our news and prayers. Jo accompanied our songs on piano which included 'Be bold be strong' and 'Only a boy named David' Our speaker, Deacon Joan Cole, led us through the story of David and Goliath with plenty of drama of course! Thomas played the part of David and took bread and cheese to his brothers in the Israelite army. David wasn't frightened by the roars and threats from the Philistine army and offered his help to King Saul who was played Joy. Saul's armour was very heavy and was rejected by David who relied on his stones and God's help to defeat Goliath who was played by George, the tallest of our friends! Thank goodness soft balls replaced the stones for the story!

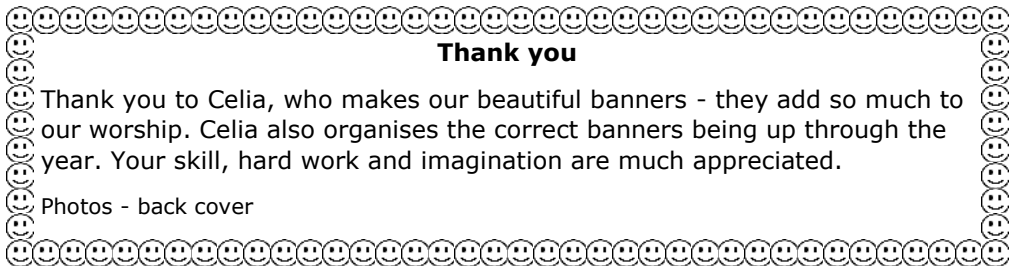
At the end of our worship several of us enjoyed dancing to the song on screen 'Nothing is impossible'. We were given 'God is with me' coasters to take home to remind us that, just as God was with David, so God is with us whatever we may face.

Our next Causeway on June 2nd will be led by Steve Richardson when will be singing our choice of hymns, our 'Songs of Praise'. John Ewington will be speaking at our July Causeway on July 7th which is Sea Sunday. Jonathan Richards will be our speaker on August 4th.

Do you come and join us. You will be made very, very welcome.

Photos - page 11

*Gill and the Causeway Team*



## Thank you

Thank you to Celia, who makes our beautiful banners - they add so much to our worship. Celia also organises the correct banners being up through the year. Your skill, hard work and imagination are much appreciated.

Photos - back cover

## Offertory

An increasing number of people are donating money direct to the Church account by standing order. Many thanks to all of you.

**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 Janet Marshall or speak to a serving elder.

Cash offerings can be made at Christ Church on a Sunday morning. Gift Aid envelopes are also there if you wish to use one. Thank you,

*Kathy*



## OUR MISSION STATEMENT

Christ Church seeks to express  
the love of Christ for everyone.

### 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](http://www.methodist.org.uk))

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

**Circuit Superintendent:** Revd Stephen Caddick      01271 345956

#### **Elders:**

Alison Cairns      (Church Secretary) 343154 [alisoncairns@hotmail.com](mailto:alisoncairns@hotmail.com)  
Kathy Jeacock      (Church Treasurer) 373555

Chris Marshall  
Janet Marshall  
Anthea Coates

Liz Seymour  
Shirley Baxter  
Eff Poole

Jenny Newman  
Staveley Dawson  
Elaine Stevens

#### **Pastoral Team (Church Friends):**

Shirley Baxter      Elaine Stevens

**Room Bookings:**      371808

**Circuit Administrator:**      379116

#### **Christian Aid Reps:**

Janet Marshall and Paula Littlewood  
Janet: 01271 373013 [jcbmar18@btinternet.com](mailto:jcbmar18@btinternet.com)

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Some of the lovely hand-made banners

