

# CHRIST CHURCH WARE

Issue 66 FLOCK

Christ Church Ware Magazine Spring 2020



Christ Church Ware  
Jesus led, Spirit empowered, Grace based.

[www.christchurchware.co.uk](http://www.christchurchware.co.uk)

# John's Journal



from  
**Rev. John Hookway**

Welcome to the spring magazine. Throughout scripture, God's people often have times where they gather together to celebrate. That has been our pleasure recently; the opening event, welcoming community groups, even funerals full of thanksgiving to say nothing of our services. We have much to celebrate. Much has been achieved and it's been great to see such happy faces enjoying the facilities and the events. We can often focus on the past or the future but it is good to be in the present and enjoy all that is happening. We are seeing new faces every week and it's lovely that people are taking up the invitation to come and celebrate God's goodness.

### Join In

That is not only an open invitation but also the name of one of the events run recently. Jess tells us more about it on page 15 and it is amazing to have welcomed 100+ people in one day. It's just one example of our community focus – we had all the Primary Schools in over Christmas, Marriage Prep classes, Diocese training days, the F Word Project ...the list goes on and on.

### Easter and Lent

Naturally, with Easter fast approaching, people think about the tradition of abstaining over Lent. That's absolutely right and proper but let us also make time to remember that the purpose is refinement and to help us draw closer to God. We are Easter people 365 days a year. We have so much to be thankful for, cause to worship and celebrate.

**Easter Services**  
at Christ Church

**PALM SUNDAY - 5th April**  
9.15am & 11.00am Services

**MAUNDY THURSDAY - 9th April**  
8.00pm Service

**GOOD FRIDAY - 10th April**  
9.30am Walk of Witness from Kibes Lane  
10.30am Family Service with crafts and hot cross buns

**EASTER SUNDAY - 12th April**  
10.00am Family Communion Service

*"God spoke to me about many things and answered many questions I was asking. He has set me up with ideas going forward into the next season."*

**United 20: Week 1**  
Saturday, July 25, 2020 - 9:00am to Friday, July 31, 2020 - 11:00pm  
The East of England Showground, Peterborough

**BOOK ONLINE**

### Are we all going on a Summer Holiday?

In late March, we will be welcoming people from many churches to a New Wine event with Paul Harcourt, the National Director in attendance. You might remember that he led one of our Away Days a while back. It may seem a little way off at present, but a reminder that bookings are already being taken for New Wine 2020 at Peterborough. Indeed, many have signed up and I encourage you to join in. I think I have attended New Wine/Soul Survivor at least 25 times now. It's special for lots of reasons. In fact Heather and I had our calling confirmed at New Wine many moons ago. Why not prayerfully consider coming along? You'll find lots of opportunities to hear from the Lord and to deepen relationships.

### Bishop Alan

Bishop Alan is the Bishop of St Albans and also sits in the House of Lords. We were delighted to have him join us for our official opening service. He loved his time with us and mentioned how exciting it was to see people of all generations in attendance. He's well aware of our commitment to social justice and how we attempt to engage with our community. His impression of us was that we were a "hopeful and enthusiastic" congregation. I agree!

### The Bible Course

The Bible is the world's best-selling book. Whether you are new to it or well versed, (no pun intended), a course that we are running soon might be of interest. Dave and Sue Illott are leading an eight week course starting at the end of April. It's going to be a great way to connect with God's story. I love God's word and came to have a love for scripture once I found my place in God's story. I'm sure others will have the same experience on the course.



### APCM

Our Annual Parochial Church Meeting is happening on Wednesday 22nd April and is open to everyone. The PCC meets nine times a year (I have attended 81 since joining!) and the APCM is the meeting where we hear reports on the year gone by, look ahead, pray and elect new PCC members and wardens among other things.

Nominations are welcome and I'd encourage you to explore that. Talk to a current PCC member first to find out what it entails.

Over the last few years the Trustees and leaders have accepted tremendous responsibility regarding the church developments that have now been delivered. They have our thanks and appreciation.

I am excited about what is happening at Christ Church, epitomised by the contents of the magazine. Look carefully at the dove installation (more on that on page 12) and you'll see one of the doves flying "inward." It speaks of our one year spent out of the building but to me it also means that we are welcoming people "flying in" to where they will find peace and rest, a hope and a future.

Have a blessed Easter.

## Your Magazine

*Spring is in the air, Easter on the near horizon and so it's apt that your magazine is filled with stories that reflect the resurrection life of Christ. We are especially pleased that once again we can include so many first time contributors, but we are greedy!*

*So many people are being encouraged and blessed by reading about the extraordinary events in ordinary people's lives- and you do not need to worry about your writing skills or "where to start." We are here to help you and often end up simply interviewing people over a cup of tea.*



*Even as we publish this issue, we have heard of one or two truly inspirational stories that we hope to bring to you next time. The person sitting next to you in church or in your Life Group probably has one – and no doubt they are thinking the same about you!*

*Or perhaps you want to be the topic of one of our other themed features. For example, we need five people each issue to tell their salvation story. Maybe you are in contact with a former member of church that could send us one of our "Postcards"?*

*The easiest thing to do is to drop us a line at [magazine@christchurchware.co.uk](mailto:magazine@christchurchware.co.uk) and then we can have a chat. Although the next deadline is officially mid-June, you cannot contact us too soon. We look forward to it!*

*Get in touch at:  
[magazine@christchurchware.co.uk](mailto:magazine@christchurchware.co.uk)*

*Next Magazine deadline is mid-June, but the earlier we receive your input the better! Publication early July.*

# My Playlist



from  
**Alec Spence**

...“But did my guitar really sound OK tonight, Alec?” from a poodle haired guitarist...

Above right: Alec, a while ago.

Below: Mick Fleetwood & Friends at The Palladium - friends including Rick Vito (Fleetwood Mac), Billy Gibbons (ZZ Top) and Steve Tyler (Aerosmith).



With 719 gigs under my belt in the last ten years (much to Alison's and my bank manager's frustration), many of my musical memories are of live performance. I also apparently have OCD about record keeping...

**First song “bought/loved”** - *Chirpy Chirpy Cheep Cheep*. As a child, my family owned one single - I never knew who bought it. I knew every sound of it, at 45rpm - and, of course, at 33 & 78, as well as backwards. Hearing it again, I can smell a warm Dansette instantly.

**My worship song** - In the 90s we travelled to Moscow for my best man's wedding - he'd met his Siberian wife as a missionary in Russia. We couldn't join in with *How Great Thou Art* when it was sung in Russian, and so sang it in English. I never knew if the rest of the church thought we were singing in tongues...

**My dancefloor song** - while I don't do dancefloors, my happy place is the moshpit. With Royal Blood playing at Koko, things got lively during *Figure It Out* - I went down. In a split second, I knew my life would be over in a trampled mess, and that I'd be berated in my absence for being a foolish mid-life crisis man. The next second, everyone stepped back, I was helped up by the same youth that had knocked me over, and it had never happened. There is consideration in the most unlikely places.

**Air guitar song** - *Bohemian Rhapsody*. My memories of watching Live Aid on that hot July day are vivid, and Queen's performance will surely never be eclipsed - even if my desire to watch the event on TV all day/night nearly dashed my marriage before it had taken place. They say “never meet your heroes”. In a long conversation backstage at the Albert Hall, the words “But did my guitar really sound OK tonight, Alec?” from a poodle haired guitarist

convinced me that some heroes are worth meeting...

**My guilty pleasure song** - At aged seven, collecting my older sister from a school disco, I could only dream of such adult (10 year old) fun as I saw going on inside the hall. A few years



later I delivered newspapers to two members of Mud, who bizarrely bought neighbouring houses in my road. There was a small explosion of joy in my heart when *Tiger Feet* was played during the opening of the 2012 Olympics - recognition of songwriting perfection, for which they were paid £1 to reach 4 billion viewers on TV. The same amount, co-incidentally, that I was paid for my two hour paper round decades earlier.

**My special moment song** - Deacon Blue came to my uni as a support act in a transit van in 1987. I saw them by accident and was hooked by their music. Having finally tracked down their first album (pre Spotify ubiquity) it became a commuting staple on my ropey old cassette walkman. There is no finer celebration of life than *Dignity*.

**My last song** – funeral!!! Thirteen years on from a handful of hits, The Feeling are not a famous band. They are, however, splendid enough for me to have seen them a shameful 62 times (so far) along with many friends that I've made over that time. *Blue Picadilly* celebrates, with beautiful euphoria, the journey home at the end of a long day at work - 12 stops, then home...

# A Day in the life of...

Each issue, we invite one of our congregation to describe how they invite God into a day in their life. This time, Sara shares about her journey...

I have been coming to Christ Church for over 22 years after returning from Australia with my husband Brad and 2-year old daughter Laura and expecting Emma; our second.



Both Brad and I do not have family locally, and friends at church became our family; supporting us through many highs and lows.

We now find ourselves as empty nesters and friendships remain very special. Journeying with our Life Group, we have constant prayer support and friends who always care.

My working week involves three days as a children's nurse in a local special needs school. It is a privilege to care for these special pupils with their, often profound, medical disabilities. I feel God has placed me in this role, as he has others at different times in my career.

The job has its challenges but each day I pray that God will be with me in whatever pupil situation arises and in the wider care-team relationships. I often give thanks when travelling home, knowing that the Holy Spirit has sustained me through the day.

I have not always managed to prioritise a quiet time but a couple of years ago I did the “bible in a year” organised by the church, and I gained so much. I gained new knowledge not only on the personal relationship I have with God but it gave me a better view of the “jigsaw puzzle”.

This year I started all over again using the BiOY app. from HTB. I am being challenged to trust God in everything. My advice to anyone with worries and fears would be read God's word,

pray and let Him give you peace in your life.

On days off I catch up on all the jobs, get some exercise, do the gardening, and also try to connect with others. I have had times feeling lonely; partly due to my personality. Over the last couple of years I have felt God tell me to be brave; send a text; ask someone if they are free for a cuppa. I think there are probably many other ladies like me in the congregation. Take courage; speak to me or someone you know; ask about prayer triplets and don't be lonely.



from  
**Sara Holland**

Most evenings you will find me cooking dinner for my commuter husband and watching a bit of TV. There's the weekly Life Group, and the monthly book club I attend. I love this, even though I was a bit anxious when first asked to join. But it is such a special group of ladies. We read, we discuss the book, we have a chat and catch up. We stay connected and build relationships.

My prayer is that those like me with less outgoing personalities will not struggle with loneliness. Have a chat. Take a step of faith and try to go deeper with others. Being connected and building friendships is not only important for us as women; it's the “good soil” where God's word can be most fruitful!



# You Make Me Brave - Bethel Music

Esther explains why this worship song means something special to her...

This is one of my favourite worship songs because it is part of something special that happened to me at the Soul Survivor winter conference.

from Esther

To set the scene, the room was filled with lots of people all crammed in seats listening to the talk. The preacher started speaking about prophesying to others which is incredibly daunting to me, so I was a bit anxious as to what was going to happen. I'm someone who prefers to stay in my comfort zone.

The preacher asked the people around to pray for God to speak to them and put someone on their heart. Then if you felt God say someone you go share it with them. The man sitting in front of me slowly turned round to my sister and me, saying "Which one of you is Esther?"

I instantly froze up as I had never experienced God speaking to me through someone before.

He told me that he felt God put the song *You Make Me Brave* on his heart for the girl called Esther who sat behind him and that he felt I needed to hear it. Soon after, I went and listened to it and I just felt encouraged and a certain boldness stir in me to step out of my comfort zone and just express my faith. Now it is a lot easier said than done but this song stirs something in me that I can't ignore and that I am beginning to act on.

... "Which one of you is Esther?"  
I instantly froze up as I had never experienced God speaking to me through someone before.



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## MISSION NEWS

### New Mission Partners announced



from Gary Parkes

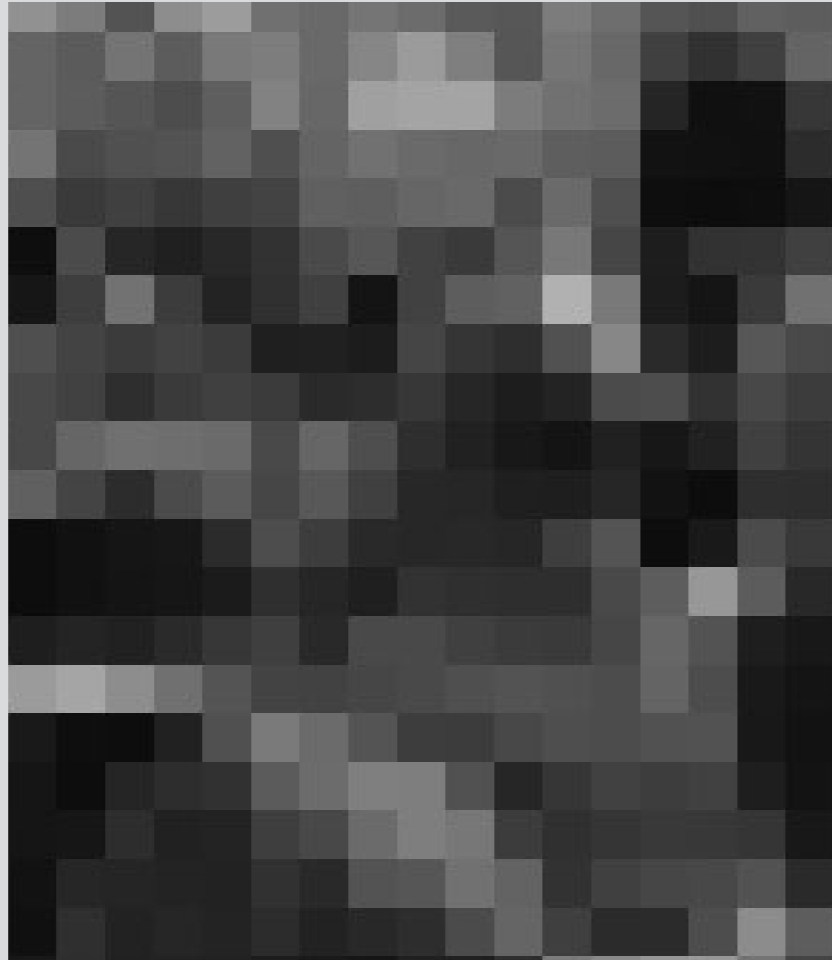
# Miracles in our midst

What is the greatest miracle that you could imagine? A blind person regaining sight? Maybe even a resurrection? Perhaps the greatest miracle of all is someone changing their mind about who Jesus is and allowing Him to guide them through life. Here are some miracles in our midst...

**WILL**  
*Will is a determined young man whose ambition is to be a strong disciple. It's not always been that way.....*



Before November 2019, I would say that I believed in God but was actually not a Christian. I accepted He existed but it was not especially relevant or meaningful to me. I started to think properly about my faith after going to visit my Nan in Florida. She is Jamaican and has an extremely strong faith and if you met her, you'd have no doubt what she believes! Her passion for God made me think twice and then Jo Mustoe invited me to a service. He advised me to spend time without my phone and read about Jesus. When I read about what Jesus did for me I cried and started worshipping without there being any music on. I was home on my own; it was odd but I felt the Holy Spirit and fell in love with Jesus.



**JOHN**  
*For some, it's a big "road to Damascus" moment that brings them to faith. For others, it's a longer journey but just as miraculous in God's sight.....*

At a recent MADD group meeting the speaker Canon Tim Bull told us about his backstory, and said that EVERYBODY has one. Where do you begin to tell your backstory?

I have always been a resident of Ware and a member of Christ Church. I was fortunate to have a mother who was a Christian. My father was supportive but not overtly Christian.

Sent off after lunch each Sunday afternoon dressed in my best clothes to Sunday school which met in the local pub function hall. Christ Church had a presence and outreach to one of the new local council estates. Progressed to Pathfinders a bible class for ages 11 to 15, then CYFA for 16 and upwards. Always very lively groups, fertile ground for discerning a Christian life call and the sending of disciples into the world. I refused confirmation, my mother wasn't happy, however she accepted I had made the right decision. First Ware Week in July 1970 (now a whole month!) Christ Church ran an outreach coffee bar during which I realized that I had got religion but not the reality! So now my life had new meaning.

I have as a result of my mother's care I always believed, and not really had one of those Damascus road experiences, I have been part of a church community where I have served and been served through many people who have been part of my back story. Many of them obviously praying for me over the years as I have grown and matured as a Christian.



**MARK**

*A successful business, lovely family, nice house and a confident leader at church. That is Mark in 2020 but not the same version that encountered Christ as a teenager.*

"I think I was the least popular person in my school year and was consistently bullied. However a brave invitation from a girl in my class whom I barely knew opened the door for my life to be transformed. I was invited to her baptism at Hoddesdon Baptist Church, made welcome by all of the people at her youth group, and invited to all of their parties. Simple love and kindness shown to me.

Whilst I had always considered myself a Christian, in the following months at HBC, I realised that my faith didn't have to be dry, cold and distant - I could enjoy a personal friendship with the maker of the universe and His Son who died for me!

Skip forward 15 months, and I found myself travelling across to St Albans to visit the 'Upper Room' (an ecumenical, charismatic prayer group). My experience that evening changed my life. I walked into a packed church hall where 250 young people were waving their arms in the air in complete freedom and abandoned to the power of the Spirit.

As I travelled home that night, I knew that I wanted and

needed the fullness of that relationship with God. Cycling home from school the next day (a route that I had cycled almost every day for the past 6 years), I met for the first time, a dear old couple from HBC. They were instrumental in praying for and facilitating the Upper Room, several years earlier - God's timing! As I spoke to them, they offered to pray for me there and then that I would be 'filled with the fullness of the Holy Spirit' and that He would give me the gift of a special prayer language. As they prayed, I was filled with an overwhelming sense of peace that I had never felt before, and new words started to flow from my lips. I had a new closeness with God that I have enjoyed ever since.

Step forward twentyish years, and I am still a work in progress, but God's power is still at work in me. I continue to invite God to use me in His plans, to be His welcomer."



**STEVE**

*God spoke to Steve as a child and shares an example of how God inspired him to speak up for justice and how our God turns things around....*

"When I was 9, I had a dream. I was in a safe, protective room but the roof and walls fell back one by one. I was in the open on my own. I woke up in an instant and somehow knew straightaway that I'd been protected by my parent's faith, but now I had to decide for myself. I said "yes" and ever since, my life has never been dull!

For instance, at University a friend was being racially abused during my professional training. Despite him asking the Tutor to stop, it continued. Most of us were nervous of putting our heads above the parapet, but I felt a nudge from above. I became the witness on the formal complaint. What I hadn't bargained for was us both being 'failed' in the exam that the Tutor had taught us for. We were the only two who 'failed'- the Tutors marked their own papers. So seven months before my wedding, I was facing the sack! My friend and I sat the resit in Brixton and both passed easily. An investigation took place and the Tutor was asked to step down. We kept our jobs, Viv and I were married, and I went onto qualify with our peers.

But what happened a year later was miraculous.

I went to a local professional meeting and was asked if I'd join the local committee. Within a few months I was asked to join the regional committee, then invited to stand for the Global Council and was elected at the age of 27. Three months later I made my maiden speech on modernising training - and the President asked if I would join the modernisation team. A year later the 100,000+ members accepted our proposals - the first acceptance in five years - and in among the proposals, Tutors were no longer allowed to mark their own pupils' papers.

God really is amazing. He really does care about what's right and he cares for you. If you don't know him yet, get in touch!



**LAURA**  
*2019 saw Laura baptised in an inflatable pool on Christ Church school playground as well as marrying Isaac a few weeks later. Dramatic stuff; and she takes us back to 2014 for more drama...*

"Heroin was a big part of my lifestyle so I found myself in a really dark place in life. One of the crowd of users that I knew suddenly became "clean" and had found Jesus. In fact, he'd started off sleeping in a church doorway as a homeless person and someone in church had made friends with him! In my condition, I was already trying all types of agencies for help so figured I may as well try church when he invited me. I went along to a Bible study. Honestly, I'd only gone for the free dinner but when they watched a film about feeling desperate, alone and worthless and I thought "that's me." I went to church the following Sunday and got saved that day. For me, the difference in having Jesus is having hope, peace and tranquillity. I know I am being looked after; I was quite a nasty person before, bitter and vengeful. I'd been sad all my life but my heart is much softer. I'm happy now. God has changed me so much and I feel positive about the future."





# Flipping Marvellous Pancake Party

*Q: What do you get when you take flour, eggs, milk, some tasty toppings and some fascinating people? A: Lots of fun!*

On Thursday 27th February, we had a flipping marvellous pancake party! It was really just to have some fun together, to share a bit about the work of our Christians Against Poverty debt centre and to raise some money but it turned out to be so much more.

What is it about eating together that unites us and gets us talking? I think it's something that Jesus understood really well - he frequently invited himself to dinner at other people's houses and provoked interesting conversations which were real and gritty. We need those kinds of conversations in our lives too! We need people to talk with who will listen and encourage us too.



from  
**Sam Rich**

In the six years that we have been running the CAP debt counselling service in our community, I think there are two things that have particularly struck me.

The first is that there, but for the grace of God, go I. We each have our load to carry in life, and so much of the burden is due to circumstances that surround us along the way. The situations we find ourselves in could happen to anyone. So it only makes sense to live as humble people, seeing Jesus in each other and thanking God daily for life itself.

The second is that just taking the time to listen to someone's story is a much greater gift than it may first appear. The sharing of a story over a meal or a cup of tea can bring huge relief,

even if nothing actually appears to change from that conversation. We are relational beings, created to do things together and so that sharing is powerful and brings healing.

So I'd encourage you to share your time and a meal or a cuppa (or a pancake!) and offer that wonderful gift of a listening ear to someone. If you would like to perhaps do that as part of the CAP team, do get in touch with me at samantharich@capuk.org or on 07725607425.

If you or someone you know would benefit from free debt counselling, call 0800 328006.



If you, or someone else you know, are struggling with debt, phone

**0800 328 0006**  
to make an appointment

"CAP are unsurpassed when it comes to the debt help they give people across the country. There's nothing better to start you on the path to having more money in your pocket."

Martin Lewis, Money Saving Expert.

### Please pray for us:

- For clients to be able to stick to their budgets and to go debt free
- For our clients to come know Jesus for themselves



## Postcard from...

Hello! - I'm Hannah. Some of you may know me as Neil and Judith Greaves' eldest daughter. For the last couple of years I've been studying English Literature and French at the University of Leeds, and this year, as part of my degree, I have the amazing opportunity to spend a year in France! I've just spent five months working in the communications department at the Vaucluse Tourist Board in Avignon (sunny Provence!).

The second half of this year will be spent in Paris where I'll be completing another internship at a health company (quite a change from tourism!) until the end of July.

Back in September it felt really overwhelming being in a new and unfamiliar country, trying to integrate into the culture and speak a different language all day without getting a headache every night from working my brain so much! Lately I have been thinking a lot about Jeremiah 1, where God shows Jeremiah that He has called him as a 'prophet to the nations'. God had a specific plan for Jeremiah, whose initial reaction reminds me a lot of myself, where I'm quick to doubt myself and say "who, me? I can't do that!". This is often how I feel at the prospect of stepping out of my comfort zone in France this year. But the amazing thing is God won't give us anything we can't do. He equips us to serve Him in ways that we can't even imagine! I am challenged to remember this every day, and taking a step out the boat has also shown me how God blessed me so abundantly throughout my time in Avignon. I had been worried about feeling lonely in a new city but instead I was surrounded by wonderful, supportive people and got to live with a lovely French family. I was able to find a church that welcomed me with open arms and reminded me in many ways of the community here in Christ Church, yet really opened my eyes to see how our God is the God of all the nations and how He can move so powerfully in a completely different language and culture.

This year in France has helped me to truly put my trust in God (and not just when it's convenient), believing and showing that He can indeed perform miracles. Recently I had the challenge of trying to find accommodation for when I move to Paris - time was moving quickly without much success and I had non-Christian friends asking me how I could be so calm about the whole situation. Praise God that He really filled me with His peace and that my non-believing friends were able to witness that! And right at the very last minute God provided and I have been blessed with an apartment (which is exactly what I had hoped for!) to live in. I'm really excited about this next chapter in Paris and what God has in store there.

### Please pray:

- I would be really grateful if you could pray that God will provide me with a great church in Paris and that I will meet amazing people there; that the process of adjusting to life in a new city will go smoothly
- Boldness and courage to live out my faith in my new workplace in Paris, and to be open with expectation about the God of miracles and how He wants to use me in this exciting time in my life!



# No flight of fancy but a prayer of praise and thanks



from  
**Jan Elliott**

Jan explains the birth and meaning of the new artwork in the bell tower. She believes that God sometimes provides signs and brings circumstances together to guide us. If we're attentive, we can spot the connections, hear His voice and obey, bringing Him glory.

Many of you will know that Steve and I have a motorhome which we love to jump into to break away from the chores and responsibilities of daily life and go exploring parts of the country we don't yet know (and get some walking-and-talking together time). As soon as we climb in we have a wonderful sense of the lightening of the load... we're on holiday before we're off the driveway! It was on one of these short breaks in the Spring that the idea for 'Flock' came to me, quite unexpectedly and pretty much fully formed.

We were in Derbyshire, enjoying the beautiful, gentle countryside in pleasantly warm sunshine. On one of our day's walks we found ourselves in the picturesque village of Winster, once a thriving centre for lead mining but now a sleepy, peaceful dormitory for folks working in farming or the tourist spots of the Peak District. Wherever we travel, we never pass up an opportunity to go into an open church; we always discover something to delight and inspire us and this day was no different. This particular church, St John's, turned out to be quite ancient, quite small and quite unusual.

We might think that Christ Church's space is restricted by its twin rows of pillars but St John's has a central row of columns with one right in the middle at the point where the Nave and Chancel meet. An information sheet pointed out that this presented many problems because the pillar partially obscures the congregation's view of anything happening in the Chancel... not so great for weddings! The Chancel itself is less than half the size of ours and tucked away behind its

huge pillar, is a shadowy and mysterious space. From the entrance I could see something filling the air in that space between the pillar and the altar and, moving closer, saw that it was a display of origami birds made by children, hanging from a net.

All at once I had a picture of an artwork I could make – and knew it should hang in the bell tower. A mass of simple dove-shaped birds made from white porcelain. The building committee had planned a 'feature' chandelier to hang there because this space would become clearly visible from the street once the brown glass screen was replaced with clear glass. I turned to Steve and said "We should do that – make an artwork of doves – I could make that." Over the next 24 hours the dove artwork idea had fully resolved itself in my mind; how many doves there should be, what form they should make as a group and the title of the piece. It felt like something between a gift and an instruction.

I have some history with doves; on retiring, Steve made me a delightful dovecote for the garden and for a couple of years we had a small flock, which I loved. Early last year I had to rehome them out of the area but that's another story. I was sad, they were beautiful and I missed seeing them every day. This artwork seemed to be a kind of consolation, as though God was saying to me...

*"You know how much you loved your flock of doves? Well I love them too and I want you to make me a flock. You've been watching them for two years, you know what they look like, how they fly, you're ready to do this now, I've been preparing you for this."*

Opposite: 'Flock' in place.

Below: Jan installing 'Flock' in the bell tower.



The dove is an international symbol of peace and purity but in Christian art, it is used specifically to represent the presence of the Holy Spirit. In 'Flock' there are 160 doves forming the shape of a cross, one for each year since Christ Church was built, up to the time that we moved out to begin the redevelopment work. These doves represent the faithful and consistent work God has been doing in this place through his Holy Spirit. To commemorate all that was achieved in 2019 by his Holy Spirit working through all of us, there is one more dove flying in to join the group. And, of course, we are his flock!

Some of you will have spotted the picture of our church bell in the last of the 'Church on the Move' newsletters, with its inscription: Dove Bros Builder 1859. 'Flock' hangs beneath the bell. There is one further curious dove element to this story. It took me several weeks over the summer to make, fire and string the porcelain birds ready for display at the completion of the building work. During these weeks two wild doves turned up in our garden, set up home in the empty dovecote and hatched two young. The start of a new flock. It felt like affirmation and gave me great joy. We have no idea where they came from or how long they will stay but they seem to me to be a prophetic sign that God continues to be very much at work in our church and that the flock will continue to grow. Be prepared, we may need to buy more chairs!

# Chapter & Verse

The books of the bible are full of richness that it is impossible to have just one favourite verse! But since we have just been going through Philippians in our life group, one phrase I love comes in chapter 3 verse 12, which says:



from  
**Peter Hanney**

*"Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already been made perfect, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me."*

It's a verse that I have found both inspiring and challenging at different times. God is active, and He wants us to be active – to grab hold of something and to co-operate with Him. Here is Paul in prison towards the end of his life, not weighed down or giving up, but pouring out his heart and reaching out for more.

In the verses leading up to this, we are invited to give up the complete rubbish (or 'dung' as it says in the King James Version) that filled our lives before we knew Christ, whether that be misguided religious duty (as in the case of Paul), more obvious wrong-doing or just our failure to be the people God made us to be. And now we have the opportunity to be identified with Christ in his death and share in his glorious resurrection.



Am I willing to grab hold of all that God has for me, or would I prefer to stay where I am? And as a church are we willing to step beyond what we are used to, or have become comfortable with, and take hold of all that God has for us and for the people around us?

# Beans Means Kind



from  
**David Brett**

I've been wanting to write an article for a while as I often find God puts challenges on my heart that I feel I want others to hear. It was in one of the very rare brief moments of solitude I get that I heard God say just share how you've struggled.

The Bible warns that we have more worries than we can cope with in just today let alone the time ahead (Matt 6:34). We live in a society where many people are stuck on the poverty line not knowing how they will cope until their next pay packet, high pressure working cultures, social expectations on our identities, just to name a few. As a parent I worry what our children are exposed to and how that might impact their future direction of knowing God. So with all these stressors is it a surprise many of us reach breaking point with our mental health?

I've been there and struggled with anxiety and depression. I know that God has blessed me along the road with medical help, people that have supported me and revelations from



*So with all these stressors is it a surprise many of us reach breaking point with our mental health?*

God which have helped me to manage to live with these struggles. Don't try to go it alone. Medical professionals can help. There are many resources such as the mind and soul foundation which can guide us. The greatest support I found though was in the friends and family who God had put around me.

What can we do as a church to support each other and our wider communities in this broken society? How can we as a church be a people who show the grace which is given to us?

- Invite people over for food. It doesn't matter if it's beans on toast and your house is a mess... was Zacchaeus ready for Jesus? (Luke 19:1-10).
- Pray with each other when we meet up socially (it can feel weird at first but even people who don't yet know Jesus often appreciate prayer)
- Reach out to people you don't know... you've often got more in common than you might think.
- Try to focus on encouraging each other
- Reach out and don't hide when you're struggling. The first thing of coming to Jesus is to admit we're broken and in need of help (Matt 11:28).

**Please pray:**

- that I would find more moments of solitude with God away from the business of the thoughts in my mind.
- for all of us that we would be emboldened to reach out to those who put us outside our comfort zone to show them grace.



***"Commit to the Lord whatever you do, and he will establish your plans." Proverbs 16:3.***

*It's one of the few verses I can remember; I had it as a sticker on my wardrobe as a kid. It reminds me to try to let God in on everything because God wants to be involved with us. It doesn't promise success, but greater than that we don't have to try to go alone.*

# Join In with Jess

On Monday 17th February the team arrived at church ready to help with the half term JOIN IN event, simply a chance for children and parents/cares to join together for morning or fun activities and to learn together. We had absolutely no idea how many people would come, if any. Amazingly, 78 children and 42 adults came!

There were many different activity stations around the church. We had an all together time where we sang and heard the story of how Zacchaeus became Jesus' friend and that we can be too, a message for all ages. There was plenty of time for cake and conversations and for the excited children to show what they had made.

*"What a joy to be in the church environment, people could not help but be impressed with the beautiful space."*

It was amazing to see the building being used in this way! So much space! The place was buzzing with children and adults and yet at the same time, several commented that there was also a peaceful atmosphere. People looked comfortable being there. To have the children and the adults there was great, to see them working together on activities but also being able to chat with the parents/carers which we don't always have the opportunity to do at other children's events.

*"The community appears to be seeing us a safe place. I recognised folk from Love Ware and the recent community day so I feel that whatever we do, we are always Jesus ambassadors!"*

I found it powerful to stand in prayer together on the Sunday in the actual space that the event would be happening, covering it in prayer.

Praise God for an amazing morning, with great conversations, new relationships forming, wonderful team and for all the exciting possibilities that this new space brings!



# Postcard from...

Dear all,

Since leaving Ware, we've moved on again! In 2018 David retired early, and by God's grace we have a home in Bishops Waltham, ("Hampshire Village of the Year 2019"! ) near Winchester. We've joined a friendly congregation meeting in the church hall - "St Peter's @ Free Street". David leads and preaches occasionally, and helps the local Food Bank. He's a room guide at the nearest NT property, Hinton Ampner, and enjoys greeting the visitors (i.e. teasing old ladies...).

The summer house from Bedhampton was reconstructed in our new garden. Bobbie renamed it "The Pavilion of Splendour" and it's her place to have ideas and create stuff. We both love getting into the beautiful Meon Valley for walks. Our children are all in London now so it's easy for us and them to visit. And we have two Ragdoll grand-kittens, Elliott and Darlene!

*With love, David and Bobbie Proud.*



**Please pray:**

- For wisdom in learning to be an encouraging and helpful retired vicar!
- For a confirmation of the calling God has for us here.
- For continued energy and health.





# Here to Eterni-Tea

One of our best kept secrets is the Afternoon Teas served at All Nations on the last Saturday afternoon of the month. Beautiful surroundings, fantastic spread and marvellous conversations await. Better, every penny raised goes toward the running of the college. So by sitting back, eating and drinking whilst being served, is kind of an act of charity. Why not grab a few friends or perhaps arrange a Life Group trip for an afternoon out?

Logistics? The address is All Nations Christian College, Easneye, Ware SG12 8LX and the next dates for Afternoon Teas are 25th April, 30th May and 20th June. Its £15 per person and as the title suggests, you can have as much tea as you can manage! You need to ring ahead and book a table however – call Sean Watkiss on 01920 443538.



## Postcard from...

We arrived in Perth Australia on December 2nd, planned return on May 28th 2020. Peter and I have been Blessed with four wonderful children, however, two (the twins, Sindy and Simon) 10 years ago made their decision to emigrate with their families so this has been a yearly trip for us. The five grandchildren are growing fast, age range 7 to 16, so this year we decided to make it a six month trip, this also allows Peter to teach our eldest grandchild to drive. The children found us a lovely flat, so we have our own independence but close enough to be on "duty" when required.

We attend "West City Church of Christ" Perth (see photo page 21), and have even joined a home group. The church has amazing teaching and have made us feel very welcome. Perth has been fortunate to miss out on the horrendous fires which have mainly been over the eastern side of the country, we pray the worst is over, but it has left devastating effects to fauna and flora.

Yes, we have daily sunshine, yes we have picnics, swimming plenty of outside events and yes we miss you and our climate back home, honest!

*Wendy and Peter Wall*



# Blindsided

So, I had just dodged the bishop and was quietly drinking my tea when guess what – the editor crept up on e again. I wish he wouldn't blindside me like that.

Would I like to write a column for the newsletter? Of course – pure joy indeed. I think he is unscrupulously taking advantage of my humble servant heart - one born again every minute as they say.

I guess they must be a bit desperate for contributions if they end up asking me – I'm not one of those people you see up the front (and on all those fancy TV screens all over the church). In fact I always feel a bit out of place, being visually impaired, a little shy and only averagely talented at most things. Yes, I do get to be the cynical old shepherd in all the Christmas Eve plays but this does suggest I excel at being grumpy.

hurting round the loop the loop rollercoaster at Alton Tower with a sound track of my high pitched screaming. I subsequently withdrew my application to be a test pilot.

When I am trying to make sense of my chaotic life I dust off the instruction manual which is packed with handy hints such as "but the worries of this life, the deceitfulness of wealth and the desires for other things" that choke off the seed of faith in our hearts. I have spent far too much time worrying about things that either never actually happened, or did happen but turned out to be nothing much to worry about. Sometimes though we can crash headlong into times of tragedy, loss and regret



from **Geoff Madge**



Left: *The Christmas Eve 2019 Service cast.*

"generous love and faithful friendship are the riches to be desired in life"

Anyway I am supposed to be sharing an inspiring story about how I was I a dark hole and faith has lifted me out. I could tell you about the time I was running with my toddler at High Leigh's weekend and dived headlong into a fountain. This was a great illustration of washing our sins away but I suspect that John the Baptist didn't have to clean off so much green slime afterwards.

Many of my less inspiring life decisions have been made in a rash desire for something that with a bit more reflection I would avoided. My sermon video clip for this would be

and few of us are spared such experiences. My own dark hole experiences have finally convinced me that generous love and faithful friendship are the riches to be desired in life. With a helping hand and an arm to lean, on second chances do come along.

So if you see me striding confidently towards an inconveniently open sewer or sidling into a gluttonous looking cake shop, please help me out.

Now where did I hide those chocolate chip cookies...

# Love holds no record of wrong: The f Word Exhibition



from  
**Rosie Watson**

So many different testimonies to the freedom that restorative justice, dialogue and the giving and receiving of forgiveness bring. Reading The f Word stories for what is now the third time, new themes are underlined for me. For only a few is it given to forgive 'out of the blue'. For most of us, forgiveness is a process, often lengthy, for some, elusive or seemingly impossible, often a gift to oneself and not so much about the the perpetrator. Not a panacea.

Often the turning point moment has grown from empathy, a moment when the perpetrator was perceived as someone 'like me' - no longer demonised but seen as someone with a story to tell which 'could have been mine'. This is definitely not the same as condoning what happened - though many story tellers record adverse responses from family members, suggesting that to offer forgiveness is an act of disloyalty. As is the added factor of meeting the perpetrator, though doing so has deepened the healing.

Reading stories from those yet-to-become-God's friends as well as from those who own him as their friend, reinforces my conviction that the grace of offering forgiveness, is, like the sun and the rain, one of God's gifts to us all (the just and the unjust).

Interestingly, the founder of The Forgiveness Project, Marina Cantacuzino, a journalist by

trade, initially conceived the exhibition as apolitical and areligious. However, over the 15 years of collecting stories, she remarked recently, she has come to acknowledge that the paths towards forgiveness are spiritual ones...

Another observation was how many of the victims, with their perpetrators or without, have released the energy which was fuelling their hatred and desire for revenge into founding charities or organisations dedicated to (restorative) justice or forums where stories can be shared or writing books about their journey from hatred to release.

The only partly critical response we have had to the stories was a constructive comment from someone that it would have been good to have some 'ordinary/everyday stories'. This reflects a different focus for the Project that Marina herself is exploring. Watch this space.

## The f Word PROJECT



"If only there were evil people somewhere insidiously committing evil deeds, and it was necessary only to separate them from the rest of us and destroy them. But the line dividing good and evil cuts through the heart of every human being. And who is willing to destroy a piece of his own heart?"

Alexander Solzhenitsyn



How many of us 'manage' those slights that come our way on a daily basis:

- the washing up that someone promised they would do, still piled up by the sink,
- the birthday that was forgotten by a friend
- the promised promotion at work that never materialised,
- the 'benefits' that have been delayed,
- the plumber who didn't show
- the cruel words from an angry teenage daughter or son!
- not getting many 'likes' for a selfie I posted
- not being selected for a place in a sports team or a role in a play or band.

All these too can make us feel let down or hurt; all these also have the power to make us bitter - especially when a lot of them happen close together!

The challenge to me is how in God's strength, I process such scars so that they do not fester, nor steal my joy.

Opposite is one everyday story exploring how the reality of the indwelling love of Christ in us has enabled someone to have done just that.

**Maybe you have one of your own to share (an everyday one or more deep-seated) in one of the next editions of the magazine. Or maybe you'd like to share your responses to the exhibition... we'd love to hear from you!**

*When I was a young mum, I met another mum whose daughter was in the same playgroup as my son and who, it turned out, lived only 12 or so doors away in the same road! So began a deep friendship which has succoured me over 40 years. One of the many things that we discovered about each other was that we both struggled with depression - dark days when the light at the end of the tunnel was barely discernible.*

*One evening, in desperation, I knocked at her door. To be met by her saying, "I'm sorry, I can't listen just now - I'm too full up with managing my own stuff." - or words to that effect...*

*You can perhaps imagine how I felt as I dragged my feet home.*

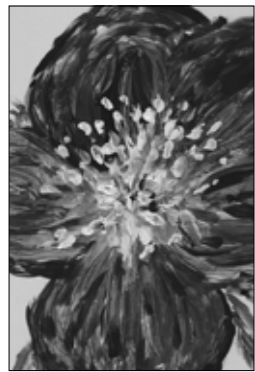
*The friendship faltered but I am glad to say was later strengthened but only when I recalled - and asked her forgiveness for - another evening when, knowing she wasn't feeling great, I had promised her that I would call or come round when we got back from a weekend away.*

*And clean forgot!*

*It was not that we were now 'quits' but that we both acknowledged the 'for better: for worse' aspect of our friendship. That we are fallible and will let each other down again, but will be able to talk about it, stand in each other's shoes (empathy) and by the grace of God, forgive.*

"The challenge to me is how in God's strength, I process such scars so that they do not fester, nor steal my joy."

# The Big Picture - imagery, imagination and the Bible



from **Flawsome**

Over the last year, a group called Flawsome have been on a creative journey together. Pam, Caroline, Alison, Catriona, Sian, Bobbie and Rosie have been exploring the Bible and rediscovering the visual and poetic shape of salvation. They want to share and invite others from church on this journey, both in the magazine, and through a display in church during Holy Week...

### Who or what are Flawsome?

Take seven women aged between 42 and 75 and meet once a month to journey through a book called 'Imaging the Story' by Gill Cudmore Sakakini and Karen Case-Green. Along the way, learn what it means to respond to God's creative spirit, discovering and sharing each other's creativity.

### Why 'Flawsome'?

Inspired by Patrick Regan's work 'Kintsugi Hope', the name refers to the fact that we are both flawed and awesome. Maybe owning the flawed part is easier in our culture, but the awesome part refers to Ephesian 2:10, which says that we are all God's handiwork, masterpiece and poetry.

### So how do you engage with God's creative spirit?

Every month we read a chapter from the book. Every chapter had a theme word beginning with 'C': *Creation, Crisis, Calling, Conception, Coming, Cross & Comeback, Charisma, Community, Church, Consummation*. The Bible passages for each chapter told God's salvation story from Creation through to Revelation. Rather than analyse the text, we studied other artworks or poems inspired by the passage,

engaged our imagination and responded by making something. Sometimes we would draw, or paint or write. It was our chance to "playfully participate in the story by creating something". We often miss how image-rich the Bible is.

### So you are all artists or poets then?

It's true that all of us appreciate creativity and enjoy trying to be creative. There is a range of talents in many areas within the group, but if you asked each of us, we would deny being particularly gifted. One of the things we recognised is the pressure or expectation that exists in the idea of 'being creative'. Some people might think that they aren't creative, perhaps because someone once told them they were rubbish at Art, or laughed at their craft. But we are each made in the image of the creator God. Someone once said that Creativity is so important because the enemy can't create, he can only distort and destroy. Creativity is powerful. Perhaps thinking of it as 'play' helps, but then there is the idea that play is not a worthy way to spend your time. That it is a waste of time. That it isn't useful. This is why doing this in a group is such an encouragement. A bit like a Life Group, everyone is on your side, and when you start to doubt that you can be creative, the others help you to keep going.

### Sounds like quite a fun way to explore the Bible

While it can be fun, you are following the Salvation Story, and there are moments of sorrow, though there is ultimately hope. Some of the creative tasks helped us to realise more deeply the pain and sadness felt by a creator when their work of beauty is wilfully destroyed. We needed to have the right attitude. C.S. Lewis says "The first demand of any work of art is surrender. Look. Listen. Receive. Get yourself out of the way".

We'd definitely encourage others to get together and journey through this book if they are at all interested in exploring the imagery of the Bible. See the salvation story through fresh eyes and engage in it through creativity.



### Pam

*I have loved being part of this group. it has helped me approach God's Word in a different way. I am a very visual person, I learn visually and I love creating. It is a much more hands-on experience looking at scripture, listening to what God is saying, and then expressing it in a creative way. For me, this is mainly through my printmaking. It's a safe space to be me! And to explore and use my gifts without judgement or fear of failure. We can't always see in ourselves what others see in us or our work.*

We're showing some of the work we've produced, in church during Holy Week. Please come and use it as a prayer journey through God's salvation story in the lead up to Easter.

- Saturday 4th April** 10-12 special opening 'event' with presentations from most of the group
- Sunday 5th April** after the services
- Monday 6th April** 2-4pm
- Tuesday 7th April** 10am-12noon
- Wednesday 8th April** 6-10pm
- Thursday 9th April** 6-8pm (ie before Maundy Thursday Service)
- Friday 10th April** after the Good Friday service.



# Ware in the World

In November 2019, Mary & Peter Yates were on QM2 (Queen Mary 2) sailing the round trip Southampton to New York. The passenger capacity is about two thousand five hundred persons. This group of people (below) is a small representative of that number. The Christian Fellowship Group met every sea day - numbers varied daily between 16-30 - with all nationalities including America, Canada, English and Irish. In the past, on this same crossing, we have met Japanese travellers. Two members of the Group we had met in 2018 on "Queen Victoria" - both mathematicians what is the probability of that? I call it the hand of God. Although large, it is a very spiritual Ship. On the two occasions we have sailed on QM2, the Christian Fellowship has played a large part in returning me back to Faith.

### Mary Yates



Peter and Wendy Wall, in Perth, Australia.

# The church building project – behind the scenes



from  
**Steve Elliott and  
Martin Dudley**



Steve Elliott and Martin Dudley reflect on their involvement in the project and reveal some surprises and encouragements that came their way...

## DESCRIBE YOUR ROLE IN THE PROJECT

**Steve** – I chaired the Building and Management Committees and was also the Project Manager. In all this I was accountable to the PCC. It was open and transparent and I couldn't sign cheques, for example.

**Martin** – I was the 'fulcrum', present on the ground all the time to keep the wheels oiled, so to speak, asking practical questions and dealing with any issues that arose.

## IT FEELS LIKE A SUCCESSFUL PROJECT. HOW DO YOU REFLECT ON IT?

**Steve** – Our aim was to be on time, on budget and 'on spec.' The hand of God enabled us to reopen as planned on 24th November, which was very important; on budget – we're nearly there; on spec – the PCC objectives have been largely met. Successful? YES! It was successful in other ways too, by bringing church members together and helping them feel a part of the project because so many contributed to the work.

**Martin** – Apart from the obvious there were also hidden successes by way of unintended benefits. For example, the space we now have is more useable than we had imagined. Members of the community are turning up in Sundays, maybe just to see the place. Word is also getting round in the local arts community about its suitability as a concert venue.

## WHAT WERE THE SECRETS OF SUCCESS?

**Martin** – Massive planning which went back about ten years. There was lots of knowledge and experience in the church community too and energy to do it.

**Steve** – I would agree that good planning was the key. Specialist skills also developed within the project and people just stepped up and contributed above expectations, which was a huge help. Oh yes, and prayer too!

## ANY HIGHLIGHTS?

**Martin** – Three stand out for me. The first: on 13th January 2019 after the pews had

been removed you could see on the south wall the light areas where the pew ends had been and they looked like gravestones (See photo, right). They reminded me of the many previous generations who had worshipped in the church. The second: when I was still new in the job as Operations Manager, I received a cheque from a church member as a contribution to fund a feasibility study for a new church development. With it was a card with a message expressing the hope that it would be done in their lifetime and that they would live to see it. On 24th November I gave the card back saying that God had granted them their wish and I hoped they were pleased with it! The third: Late on 23rd November from inside the building I looked at the west window and saw the panels next to it inscribed with The Lord's Prayer, The Ten Commandments and The Apostles Creed, which have been reinstated above the new west doors. To me this represented the way that all who come in and go out of the building will do so under the authority of God and his Word.

**Steve** – I can also mention two. The first: cleaning the bricks! What a contrast! We had no idea they had been so dirty. The second: the constant and unwavering support of the PCC who stepped out in faith in June 2018 and approved the building contract when there was £400,000 in the bank and we still needed another £1 million.



## DID YOU HAVE ANY SURPRISES ALONG THE WAY?

**Steve** – I'm pleased to say there were no nasty project surprises. We tried to mitigate risk by planning and thorough risk assessment so as to avoid this.

**Martin** – There was a 1921 penny under the choir stalls which must have been deliberately left there by the carpenter who installed them (see photo, left). It was also good to discover links with some of the craftsmen and subcontractors. For example, one gave us £100 discount on a scaffold tower to go towards the development project. I told him it would go towards installing the Loop system. It then turned out that his daughter has a hearing disability, so he was very pleased.

## WHERE ARE WE NOW? WHAT REMAINS TO BE DONE?

**Steve** – The project work is complete so just snagging and corrections and signing off remain.

**Martin** – We still need to landscape the garden and the area in front of the church. Also, we need time to consider how to use the building and let it tell us what it can do.

## DO YOU NEED ANY MORE HELP?

**Martin** – There are odd jobs to be done. Maybe later we could use some volunteer

gardeners. There is also about £195,000 still needed to pay off loans.

**Steve** – All committees have now stood down. A caretaker and also maybe an Events Committee would be helpful so as to co-ordinate any events we host.

## ANY OTHER DEVELOPMENTS PLANNED?

**Martin and Steve** – NO!! We need time to rest and reflect.

## FINAL REFLECTIONS

**Steve** – I told the SEVEN service recently that they'll enjoy the benefits of the renewed building for decades to come, with redundant technology replaced by what works best in the 21st century.

**Martin** – 'Unless the Lord builds the house, its builders labour in vain' from Psalm 127:1 comes to mind. We are the blessed generation called and chosen to do this work

### Please pray:

- That all who come in will be blessed and encounter God
- That the building will be a resource for mission
- That we'll be humbly thankful and not boast about our lovely church building.



# The Last Word



from  
**Jan Young**

*There may only be a few times in life when we know that we are speaking the last word. Jan is one of our longest serving and loved members, involved in pastoral care for decades. She shares a story of a very special lady who came to faith and a conversation that ended up being the very last word.*

It has been a great privilege to serve God in Christ Church, Ware. One of my greatest joys is meeting up with people who want to know how to find Jesus.

I was asked by a lady from our Church family to visit her mother in Highfield nursing home. She was dying from cancer and very frightened. She was a very sweet lady and she was shaking with fear. She said "Jesus can't love me; I have been so bad and He will never love someone like me."

We then sat together and looked at God's word. We looked at all the promises that Jesus made to us. That lunchtime that lady asked me if Jesus would come and be with her. "Of course He will," I said.

For the first time she stopped shaking. You could see the fear going and she was filled with God's spirit and peace. After a few more days of sharing the word of God with her, I called on what proved to be the last day of her life. When I got there she was shaking again. Why are you shaking again? I asked.

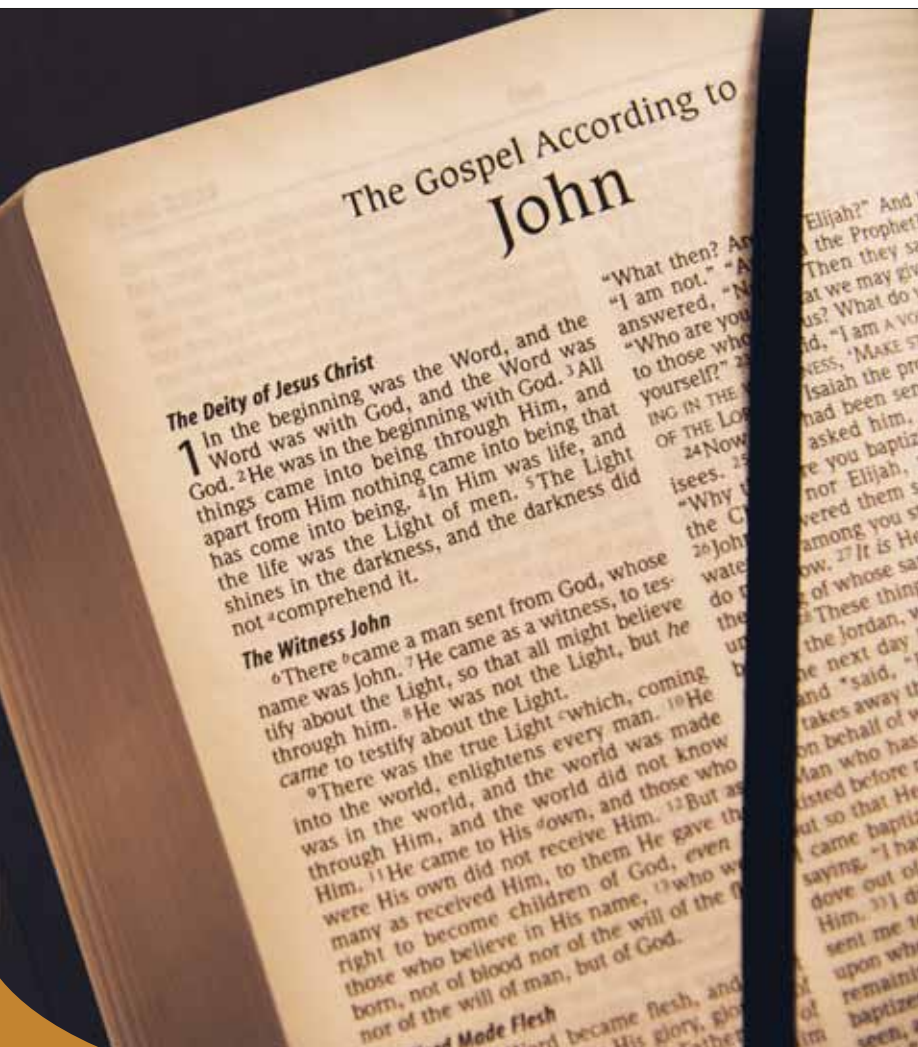
"Well Jan," she said, "How will I know when I am not here anymore?" I quickly sent an arrow prayer to God, asking for help.

I was able to tell her that in John's gospel Jesus tells us that He is going to prepare us a place in Heaven where we can be with Him forever. But He also said that He will come and fetch us so that we can be with Him. So when you close your eyes for the last time you will see Jesus who will have his hands outstretched to take you home with him.

She again had that wonderful peace that can only come from God and she knew where she was going. As it turned out, she went there just a few hours later.

My advice is never be afraid to tell your story. Our Heavenly Father will give you the words to say. The joy of watching someone coming to a faith in Christ is amazing. It might feel hard sometimes to share our faith but all you need is honesty, to tell your story about how you feel about Jesus yourself. Be personal, share your story and God will do the rest.

God bless you as you share the greatest gift ever. Amen



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**Operations Manager:** Martin Dudley (01920 487267- ext 200) **Treasurer:** Sam Rich (01920 487267)

**Church Wardens:** Cheryl Bevan (01992 538257) & Bob Barker (01279 842821)

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