



Christ Church  
Alsager

# The Magazine

Christ Church Alsager

December/January 23/24

[www.christchurchalsager.uk](http://www.christchurchalsager.uk)

# CHRISTMAS



Shoebox Fun at Messy Church

**For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.**



Dear friends,

We're at that time of year again! But is Christmas just about the shopping, the food, and the presents? At its heart, Christmas is all about a God who has showed up on earth. The creator of the universe, whose hands flung stars into space, cared enough to come to earth as a tiny baby.

“The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us.” (John 1:14).

Every year we sing carols and retell the same story of the donkey, the innkeeper, the stable, the angels, the shepherds, the star, the wise men, and Mary and Joseph with a baby! Why do we do this? It's to remind us that God deals with the mess of our world by sending his son to die in our place. This makes it possible for us to have a relationship with God himself, Jesus Christ.

When the time came, Jesus, who being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage; rather, he made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to death – even death on a cross!” (Philippians 2:6-8)

Reflecting on Jesus in the manger is a great place to start understanding the heart of the Christmas message. However, it's so much more than simply a cute baby lying in the bed of straw.

If our greatest need had been information, God would have sent us an educator;  
If our greatest need had been technology, God would have sent us a scientist;  
If our greatest need had been money, God would have sent us an economist;  
If our greatest need had been pleasure, God would have sent us an entertainer;  
But our greatest need was forgiveness, so God sent us a Saviour.

The bible tells us that rather than worrying about material things we should seek his kingdom which God is delighted to give to us. This should be the focus of our life, “For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.” (Luke 12:34).

I believe seeking the kingdom is best done with others. The Alpha Course is a great place to do this. Our Spring Alpha Course starts on Wednesday 7<sup>th</sup> February at 7:30pm. If you want to find out more, please do get in touch. I hope you have a wonderful Christmas.

Daran Ward



**COME AND FIND  
THE GREATEST TREASURE  
THIS CHRISTMAS AT**



**CAROLS, COFFEE AND CAKE**

*with a ukulele band*

10.30am

Thursday 7th December

**COMMUNION SERVICE**

10.30am

Sunday 24th December

**ALL-AGE NATIVITY**

11am

Sunday 10th December

**MIDNIGHT COMMUNION**

*join us for sherry afterwards*

11pm

Sunday 24th December

**TRADITIONAL CAROLS BY  
CANDLELIGHT**

*followed by mulled wine & mince pies*

5pm and 7pm

Sunday 17th December

**CHRISTMAS CELEBRATION**

*A short family celebration*

10.30am

Monday 25th December

**FAMILY FUN AT OUR CRIB SERVICE**

3pm

Saturday 23rd December



01270 872291 | [admin@christchurchalsager.uk](mailto:admin@christchurchalsager.uk)

[www.christchurchalsager.uk](http://www.christchurchalsager.uk) | 35 Church Road, Alsager, ST7 2HS

## Human Rights Defender Released

You may well know that CSW subscribes to the UN mandate called FORB. The letters stand for Freedom of Religious Belief for All. This means that, although most of our work concerns the persecution of Christians, we do not limit it to Christians alone but advocate on behalf of people of other faiths who are suffering for their religious beliefs. This has involved, among other things, bringing to the attention of the world through our involvement at the UN the plight of Uigur Muslims in China, Bahais in Iran and Yasidis in Iraq and Syria.



One remarkable man who came to our attention a number of years ago was Nguyen Bac Truyen, a Hoa Hoa Buddhist who received a long prison sentence in Vietnam for his human rights work. We have been thrilled to hear that, after years of speaking up for him, he was finally released in September and sent into exile in Germany.

The account of his arrest is dramatic. We let him take up the story:

“At exactly 8am on 30th July 2017 I was abducted by plain clothes public security agents while on my way to the Redemptorist Church of Saigon. They took me to Tan Son Nhat Airport at 2pm. I took the 3.30pm flight, arrived at Noi Bai Airport around 5pm and arrived at the B14 detention centre at 6pm.”

Nguyen was held incommunicado for nine months until his trial. For six of those months he was prevented from seeing his wife and was only granted access to his lawyers two weeks before the trial began. On 5th April 2018 he was convicted of ‘carrying out activities aimed at overthrowing the government,’ and sentenced to eleven years imprisonment followed by three years under house arrest.

Nguyen is a human rights defender and legal expert who took on cases of individuals who were being unfairly targeted, which also made him a target for the Vietnamese authorities.

His actions exemplify what it means to love one's neighbour. While in prison he continued to stand up for what is right. This included going on hunger strike in 2019 (along with other prisoners of conscience) to protest at the ill-treatment of a fellow prisoner, a Catholic activist named Nguyen Van Hoa. On this and other occasions, there were serious concerns for Truyen's wellbeing.



Nguyen is now released and we praise God for that, but three others, Nguyen Trung Ton, Pham Van Troi and Truong Minh Duc, who were sentenced at the same time and spent years incarcerated with him, remain in prison. They need our prayers.

Human rights reports by the EU, the United States, the United Nations, and human rights organisations show just how serious the violations by the Vietnamese government really are. Accompanying the reports are recommendations, warnings, and diplomatic, economic and political sanctions.

At the time of writing, Vietnamese state media has been silent on why Truyen was released before serving his full sentence. However, it appears that international advocacy played a key role, and Bui Thi Kim Phuong sincerely thanked the German government in particular for their support.

Speaking up for those who cannot speak for themselves is what CSW is all about and we continue to advocate on behalf of countless others who are still experiencing injustice at the hands of the Vietnamese authorities.

For further information about CSW's work go to the website, [www.csw.org.uk](http://www.csw.org.uk)

Keith Davies



**Sam Parnell Youth Leader**  
Email: Youth@Christchurchalsager.uk.  
Tel: 01270 872291

## Christ Church Youth

### Ablaze at 3Generate



Back in October we took a group of 8 young people from Ablaze, along with 12 younger children, to 3Generate which is the annual Methodist Children's and Youth weekend away. This year it was held at the NEC in Birmingham and approximately 1500 children, young people and leaders from across the UK attended. The weekend was themed around the biblical story of Jesus feeding the 5000.

Our young people really enjoyed some of the activities that took place throughout the weekend, with rock climbing, graffiti art, the 'Journaling through the bible' seminar, the open-mic night and karaoke worship being particular highlights.

It was great to see our children, young people and leaders building relationships with each other and drawing closer to God throughout different parts of the weekend. It has been really encouraging to talk to them after the event and to be able to delve slightly deeper into some of the teaching points with them at Ablaze.



Next year, we are aiming to take a group of 10 of our young people to a week-long Christian summer festival called 'Limitless', which will take place at the Staffordshire showground. Limitless Festival was one of the festivals that sprung up to fill the gap left by Soul Survivor and this year they expect 6000 young people to join together to worship God, learn together and encounter the Holy Spirit, many for the first time.

In the run-up to Limitless our young people will be taking part in some 'Festival Fundraisers', and we'll be coming up with some fun and exciting ways of helping them to raise money to go to Limitless. Please keep a look out in future magazines for details of some of these fundraisers and ways that you can give to help our young people go to Limitless!

**Chat & Chill**  
**AFTER-SCHOOL BOARD GAME CAFE**  
 Free Hot Drink & Cake, Computers for Homework,  
 Board Games, Card Games, Space to Chat.  
 School Years 7-11

Christ Church Alsager

www.christchurchalsager.uk  
 youth@christchurchalsager.uk  
 Christ Church Alsager is a lively part of  
 The Church of England

chch youth  
 @ChristChurch  
 AlsagerYouth

Christ Church Alsager

**FREE DONUT**

**THE SPACE**

PLAY GAMES, MAKE FRIENDS,  
 REFLECT, RELAX, DISCUSS BELIEFS,  
 TRY PRAYING.

OPEN TO ANYONE, WHETHER YOU  
 HAVE A FAITH, BELONG TO A  
 RELIGION, OR ARE JUST INTERESTED  
 IN FEELING MORE CONNECTED.

FRIDAYS - JB4  
 YR 7 & 8 - YELLOW WEEK - 12:05-12:30PM  
 YR 9 - GREEN WEEK - 12:30-1:05PM  
 (BRING YOUR LUNCH)

Alsager School

Christ Church Alsager

## Alpha Youth

In January, we'll be partnering with Alsager Community Church and Wesley Place Methodist Church to run Alpha Youth – a version of the Alpha course aimed specifically at young people which, along with offering a free meal, will allow them to explore big questions about faith and discuss beliefs in a non-judgmental environment.

We hope that many of the young people Sam has connected with through RE lessons, and The Space will come along to this to explore what Christians believe, as well as to make new friends and have fun.

Please pray that many young people will come to Alpha Youth, and pray for the leaders as they plan and prepare for it to start on the 18<sup>th</sup> of January!



**YOUR QUESTIONS MATTER**

**Join us!**  
**Your thoughts matter!**

Alpha is a chance to explore life's biggest questions in a judgement-free space.

**Join Alpha @ Ablaze every Thursday Evening for food, fun, friends, and discussion!**

Thursdays from 18th January  
Wesley Place Methodist Church  
7-8:30pm

**Free meal each week, Domino's Pizza First Night!**

For more Details contact Sam:  
Youth@christchurchalsager.uk  
07395 824459

**In partnership with:**  
Christ Church Alsager  
Wesley Place Methodist Church  
Alsager Community Church

Alpha  
YOUTH

Alpha  
YOUTH

## Sam in Alsager High School

Over the past few weeks I have been teaching RE lessons at Alsager High School to Year 8 and Year 9 students. I was asked to teach 11 Year 8 classes about 'The Life of Jesus', and 11 Year 9 classes about 'Mission & Evangelism'. These lessons have been a great opportunity to connect with students who we see at Ablaze, Chat & Chill, The Space, and at other clubs and events. We have been able to share personal stories and testimonies, answer questions, and generally get to know young people who we may not normally see in other contexts.

Please pray for my remaining lessons and for more opportunities to support the school in the future!







# CHRIST CHURCH ALSAGER POP-UP NATIVITY SERVICE

SUNDAY 10TH DECEMBER AT 10:30AM

Come down to the Church Hall from 10.30am to  
dress up as your favourite Nativity character

Costumes provided

Walk up to church at 11am for a pop-up style

Nativity play, no rehearsal needed

Sing carols

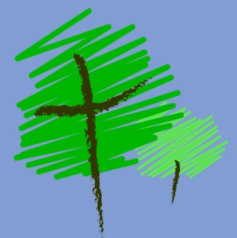
Receive a free book of the Christmas story

Bring the whole family for this fun service



01270 872291 [admin@christchurchalsager.uk](mailto:admin@christchurchalsager.uk)

[www.christchurchalsager.uk](http://www.christchurchalsager.uk)



**Jen Follett** *Children and Families Leader*  
Email: christchurchfamilies@hotmail.co.uk  
Tel: 01270 872291



## Christ Church Children and Families

Hello and a big welcome to you all. We are very excited for Christmas at Christ Church with three Christmas parties to look forward to, our very popular Pop-up Nativity, Carols and Crib Services. We will also be visiting and welcoming our local schools in this very special Christmas season.

But first, I would like to share what we have been up to recently. In October half term, we held a Family Fun Afternoon with a bouncy castle, lots of games and craft activities. It was very busy with around 80 children, parents and grandparents joining us.

In October's Messy Church, we enjoyed outside walking tours and in KFG, we have been learning about Jesus' miracles in the New Testament. Lots of fun was had bringing Lazarus back to life!



We had a great night at our Superhero Light Party, learning about how Jesus is our Superhero and how he calls us to encourage each other by sharing his wonderful light. Children came dressed as their favourite Superhero character and enjoyed lots of themed activities, face painting and games, including a Superhero Musical Stance and a Superhero Call-out game. After the talk, we ate pizza and had a prize draw for wearing dazzling costumes. It was great to see all the children joining in the fun.





In November, we held our first Shoebox Messy Church in support of the Operation Christmas Child Campaign ran by Samaritan's Purse. Members of the church were encouraged to fill shoeboxes and to donate items prior to the event. We included soap, toothbrushes and stationary items among others to give to a child in need, in one of 120 different countries around the world. Members of our church had been very busy knitting lots of hats and scarves which were gratefully received. Cranberry Primary Academy and Highfields Primary School were also very generous in supporting the appeal.

At the Messy Church event, children were encouraged to make and decorate items to give to another child. These included friendship bracelets, writing Christmas cards and decorating wooden toys and musical instruments. They were then able to complete their box with the donated items, including small teddies, hygiene items, school supplies, warm hats and gloves. 101 complete shoeboxes were handed in to the church with a further 49 boxes made up on the day which brought our total to an amazing 150 Shoeboxes. It was a great morning of our church community coming together and doing something really positive which will impact so many lives.

Thank you to all who were involved.



Our NATIVITY SERVICE this year is on Sunday 11<sup>th</sup> December. We will start in the hall by choosing a nativity costume to wear and then we'll walk up to church for a pop-up style nativity play with no rehearsal needed. Children will be invited to sing carols and come up to the front throughout the play if they would like to. Costumes will be provided but you are welcome to bring your own if you wish. A free book of the Christmas story will be available for every child. You will be most welcome to join us. Please see below for details of our regular groups. You are most welcome to come along even if you have never been before.

**BIG BREAKFAST @ CHURCH** Mondays 8-10am

A warm, welcoming atmosphere for all ages. Start each week with a hearty breakfast for £3 for an adult full English breakfast and children can eat for £1 (pre-school aged children eat for free). There are plenty of choices including fruit juices, tea, coffee, cereals, toast or a cooked breakfast. Meet new people or bring your family and friends.

**PARENT CHAT IS CHANGING!** Mondays 10-11.30am

Starting in January we will be running a series of parenting courses. Beginning with a video, we will discuss and share ideas with each other around a different topic each week. You are welcome to join us at 10am or come for your breakfast first around 9am. Please speak to Jen if you are interested.

**CHERUBS TODDLER GROUP** Mondays 1:30-3pm

A group for parents and carers with their babies and toddlers (0-4 year olds welcome). Every Monday during term-time in the church hall. Only £1 per child and refreshments are provided for both adults and children.

**TEA ON TUESDAY** 3.45-5.15pm

This is a weekly term-time club for families. We play games, get creative with crafts and have wonderful conversations. A meal will be provided for families to share; we have enjoyed dinners such as a mild curry and cottage pie, thanks to our fantastic team. This is a club for the whole family. If you would like to let us know you're coming or inform us of any dietary requirements, then please email:

[christchurchfamilies@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:christchurchfamilies@hotmail.co.uk)

This event is supported by Cheshire East Council.

**OUR SUNDAY CLUB: KFG (KIDS FOR GOD)**

Our Sunday Club, KFG, begins in the Church Hall at 11am. We enjoy an hour of games and craft activities centred around a Bible story. You are welcome to leave your children with us and join the service in church, or stay with us. All our helpers are DBS checked and trained in Safeguarding. If you wish to leave your children with us, be sure to fill in a form first and make us aware of any allergies as occasionally we include a food craft. Refreshments are served every week in the hall before from 10.30am.

Sometimes, we all stay in church together for a fun and interactive time with songs, activities and teaching. Once a month, we have Messy Church in the hall at 11am instead of KFG.

## MESSY CHURCH

This is a very popular event loved by growing numbers of families. We enjoy creative activities that are accessible to everyone including: games, paint, craft, baking, songs, stories and lunch for families together. Please be encouraged to join in the fun activities with your children! If you can let us know you're coming, please email: [christchurchoffice@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:christchurchoffice@hotmail.co.uk)

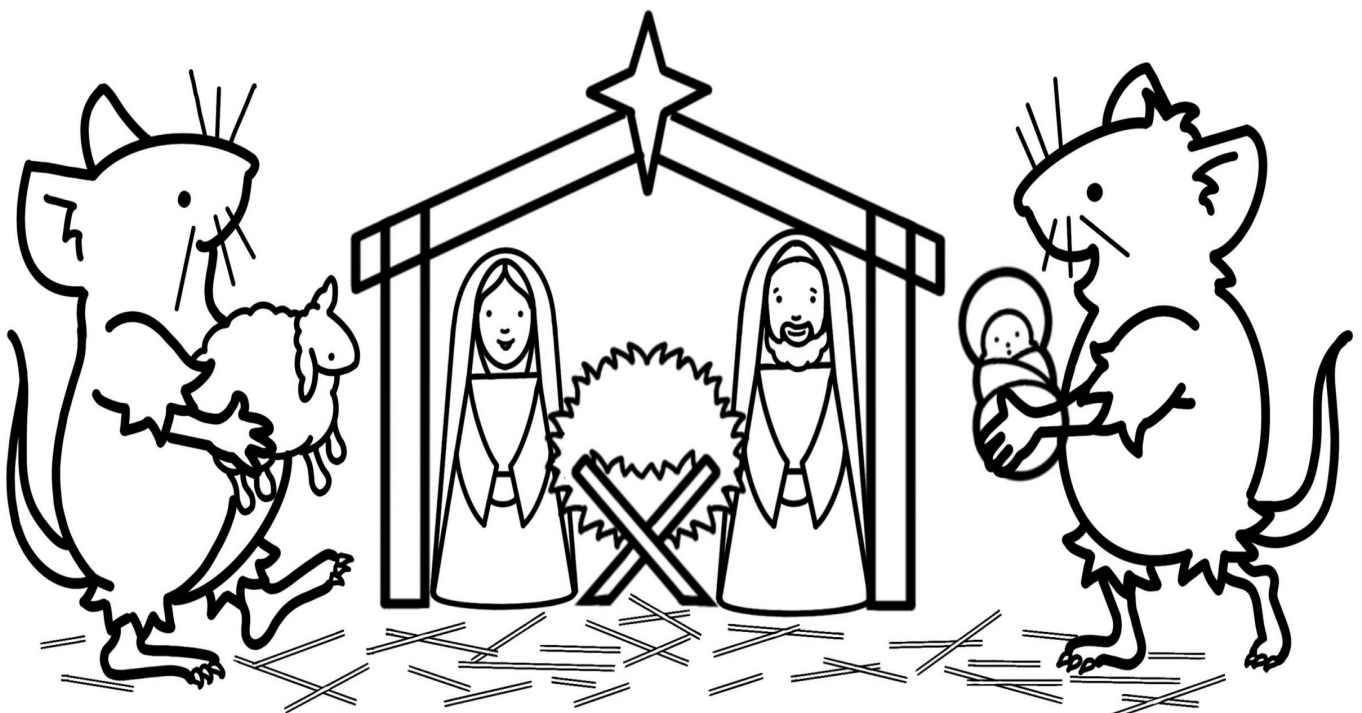
### **Dates to remember:**

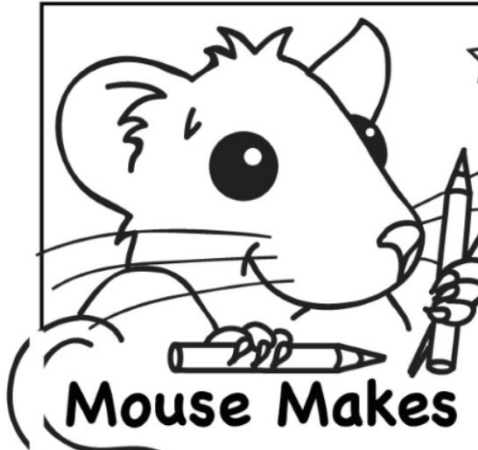
- KFG Christmas Party 3rd December (11 – 12.15pm)
- Cherubs Church Visit 4th December (1.30 – 3pm)
- Nativity Service 10th December (10.30am, starting in the hall)
- Cherubs Christmas Party 11th December (12 – 2pm)
- Tea on Tuesday Christmas Party 12th December (3.45 – 5.15pm)
- Carol Services 17th December (at 5pm & 7pm)
- Crib Service 23rd December (at 3pm) A service suitable for children & families.
- Christmas Day Celebration (10.30am) A short service – remember to bring your favourite present!
- KFG (re-starting after Christmas on 7th Jan)
- Messy Church 21st January

If you are new to the church or have not done so already, please ask Jen or Debbie for a contact details card. Then we can send you our monthly email so that you will always be in the know of what's going on at Christ Church. In addition, check out our Christ Church Families page on Facebook.

We hope to see you soon at one or all of our activities. You are always very welcome.

### A nativity scene for you to colour in





**GOD'S PROMISE**

*Isaiah 9:6-7*

CHILD • BORN • SON  
GIVEN • WONDERFUL  
COUNCELLOR  
MIGHTY • GOD  
EVERLASTING  
FATHER • PRINCE  
PEACE • LORD



**AN ANGEL MESSENGER**

*Luke 1:26-38*

ANGEL • GABRIEL  
JOSEPH • MARY  
FAVOUR • SON  
JESUS • GREAT  
THRONE • REIGN  
FOREVER • HOLY  
SERVANT • WORD



**ADVENT**  
comes from  
the Latin  
'AD VENTO'  
which means  
**ARRIVAL**

In Advent we  
celebrate Jesus' birth  
and look forward to  
the time when Jesus  
will come again.



**A LONG JOURNEY**

*Luke 2:1-20*

BETHLEHEM  
REGISTER • BIRTH  
MANGER • INN  
SHEPHERDS • FLOCK  
ANGELS • JOY  
GOOD NEWS • PRAISE  
SAVIOUR • CHRIST



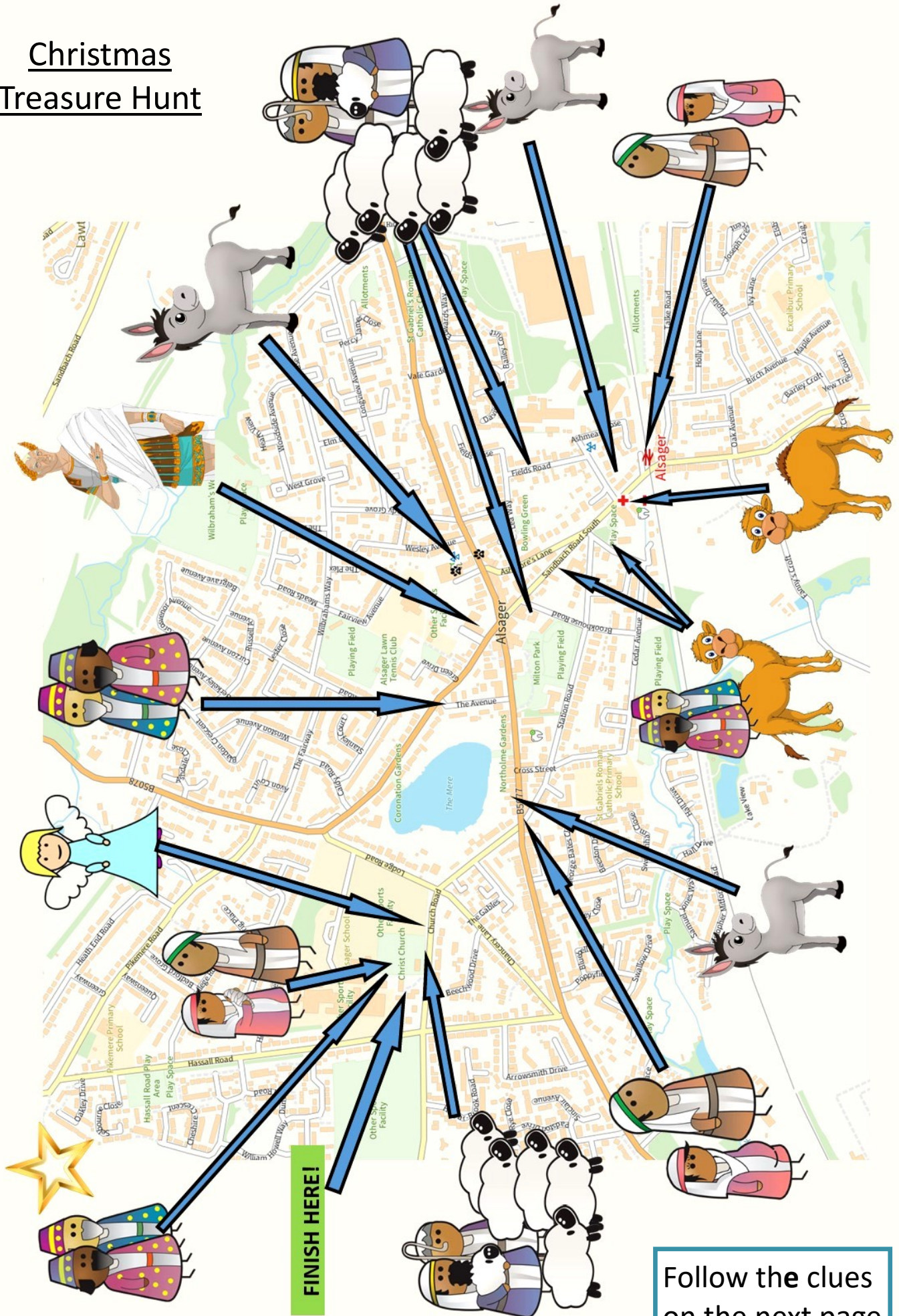
**THE BEST GIFT OF ALL**

*John 3:16*

GOD • SO • LOVED  
WORLD • HE • GAVE  
ONLY • SON  
WHOEVER • BELIEVES  
ETERNAL • LIFE

V	R	P	R	I	N	C	E	L	R	O	D
W	O	R	D	C	F	A	T	H	E	R	E
J	A	G	M	A	N	G	E	R	G	E	B
O	W	H	O	E	V	E	R	W	I	I	J
S	J	O	Y	B	O	R	N	O	S	G	E
E	S	L	S	E	R	V	A	N	T	N	S
P	P	Y	J	C	H	I	L	D	E	P	U
H	R	O	S	H	E	P	H	E	R	D	S
F	A	V	O	U	R	E	F	R	W	S	O
B	I	R	T	H	S	W	O	F	O	D	L
I	S	A	V	I	O	U	R	U	R	L	O
F	E	C	O	U	N	C	E	L	L	O	R
A	N	G	E	L	B	J	V	K	D	V	D
B	E	T	H	L	E	H	E	M	G	E	S
L	A	N	G	E	L	S	R	G	O	D	V
I	G	A	B	R	I	E	L	T	D	S	M
F	P	G	I	V	E	N	A	H	U	O	A
E	E	H	G	A	V	E	S	R	W	N	R
S	A	E	G	R	E	A	T	O	N	L	Y
O	C	H	R	I	S	T	I	N	N	J	O
N	E	O	G	O	O	D	N	E	W	S	N
F	L	O	C	K	M	I	G	H	T	Y	B

# Christmas Treasure Hunt



# Join in with the Christ Church Christmas Treasure Hunt!

Mary and Joseph went on a journey, and we are going on a journey too. Along the way we will collect everything we need for our nativity story.

**Clue 1** - Mary and Joseph started their journey in Nazareth, but don't worry, you will start your journey much closer to home. Where would be a good place to start a journey?

**Clue 2** - Wise Men were told that Jesus would be born in Bethlehem, they followed a star, they probably crossed a desert. Look around, what road can you see that has something you find in a desert in its name.

**Clue 3** - Camels need a LOT of water for a long journey. Where might they get their water from. Look for a name on a shop.

**Clue 4** - Camels have humps – we can get humps in other places too. Can you see a picture of two humps close by?

**Clue 5** - Meanwhile – some shepherds were looking after their sheep. Where might the sheep be? Look for a road name.

**Clue 6** - The Shepherds came to find Jesus. What did they want to do? Clue – what do they do at the URC before they have their lunch?

**Clue 7** - The donkey carrying Mary might get sick. Where could Mary and Joseph take him to help him get better?

**Clue 8** - It was a very long way for the poor little donkey. He got very hungry. Where could Mary and Joseph stop to get him some food?

**Clue 9** - The wise men came to find the one who had been born to be *what* of the Jews? Look for house with a number 12 on the door. This will give you your answer.

**Clue 10** - Mary and Joseph arrived at Bethlehem tired and hungry. They needed a place to stay. They knocked on the door, but there was no room for them to lodge. Where in Alsager might Mary and Joseph have knocked?

**Clue 11** - Caesar August declared that a census must be taken of the whole Roman world. If we had a census in Alsager, where might that take place?

**Clue 12** - When the wise men saw the star they were overjoyed! Where is the highest point in Alsager where you can see what the wise men saw?

**Clue 13** - An angel told Joseph that he should marry Mary, even though she was pregnant. Where can you see an angel in Alsager?

**Clue 14** - The shepherds hurried off to Bethlehem and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby, who was lying in the manger. You'll finish your journey here and find the greatest treasure of all, which is the good news of Christmas.

We wish you a very happy Christmas and hope to see you at some of our events soon.

**Blessings from all at Christ Church.**







COME AND FIND THE GREATEST  
TREASURE THIS CHRISTMAS AT

# Christ Church Alsager



**Fill in your answers here:**

Answer 1: .....

Answer 2: .....

Answer 3: .....

Answer 4: .....

Answer 5: .....

Answer 6: .....

Answer 7: .....

Answer 8: .....

Answer 9: .....

Answer 10: .....

Answer 11: .....

Answer 12: .....

Answer 13: .....

Answer 14: .....

# Stay Curious

## Try Alpha

### Curious about faith?

Join a series of group conversations that freely explore the basics of the Christian faith in an open, friendly environment. At each Alpha session, you'll be hosted in a small group and watch an episode on a different question of faith - then you have a chance to share your thoughts and hear what others think. You can say anything you like, or nothing at all.

Everyone's welcome. You're invited, no matter your background or beliefs. It's free and there's no pressure to come back.

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### Includes a free meal each week

Alpha for Adults - Starts 7th February 2024

Alpha Youth - Starts 18th January 2024

For more details:

[www.christchurchalsager.uk](http://www.christchurchalsager.uk)  
[christchurchoffice@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:christchurchoffice@hotmail.co.uk)



Alpha

Try Alpha

# Stay Curious

## Try Alpha

Alpha Youth starts 18th January 2024  
Alpha for Adults starts 7th February 2024

[www.christchurchalsager.uk](http://www.christchurchalsager.uk)  
[Admin@christchurchalsager.uk](mailto:Admin@christchurchalsager.uk)



## Report on our recent visit to IcFEM in Kenya

Several of the team members who visited the Mission last month (4th-18th October) share their thoughts on their personal highlights of the visit. It was a very intense two weeks; it took most of us a week to recover!

DEC is *Dreamland Education Centre* and DMH is *Dreamland Mission Hospital*; they're both on the Dreamland site, which you can find on Google Earth or Google Maps. Do have a look! There were also visits into the communities that are served by the Mission, where LTUs (*Local Transformation Units*) are the Mission's eyes & ears out in the wider community, sometimes 2-3 hours' drive away. We spent many hours getting out there in the Mission's ageing minibus....

**From Jane Askew:** From our first day's orientation with the Kenyan team, hearing about the vision and aims of the mission and the programme planned for us, to the last afternoon sharing a celebration BBQ with the same team members who had become trusted, respected, and loved friends, our visit to Kimilili was enjoyable, focussed and humbling.

For me, DEC was the highlight. On our first visit the school Scout Troup (boys & girls) welcomed us with a marching drill. It was joyous, and much appreciated by all. We visited the new boarding hostel and science lab and chatted with pupils and staff, who had great rapport. On Sunday, five people went to DEC for "church". It was the last Sunday before exams and almost the last before the long Christmas break, so it was a celebration of the year, a time of thanksgiving and prayer for all the exam candidates. It was wonderful to share the joy and exuberance of African worship again.

After church we visited the (boys') Scout camp on the lower field and had a conducted tour of their campsite. Their sleeping quarters were 8 feet up, on a lashed bamboo construction covered by a large tarpaulin. It had poured overnight but they had all been dry and safe, with one scout on guard throughout. The troop had already taken part in local and regional camping competitions and had just missed getting to the National finals. They hope to win next year! Their enthusiasm was infectious. Their scout leader had been a student at DEC, then trained as a teacher and returned to teach. I was so impressed by all that's going on there. it is a very special place.

**From Mike Askew:** Some of my highlights were; the welcome and hospitality with which we were greeted where-ever we went. The transformation of the villages we visited, including all the different crops we saw growing, the newly planted native trees flourishing and the beehives starting to be colonised by their new residents. The lessons I observed at DEC, where I was very impressed by the behaviour of the students and the rapport and mutual respect *and affection* between teachers and students. In particular: a science lesson focussing on health and hygiene, engaging for the students, and very relevant to their situation, despite the initially off-putting subject matter (water-borne diseases, and external and internal parasites, and how to prevent them!).

**From Gill Bowers:** My biggest highlights are; the traditional welcome and music playing at Nairobi Airport as we arrived. Being in theatre to see a cleft lip repaired. Watching Kiprop (the eye surgeon's) cataract surgery. Meeting with my sponsored student and visiting both DEC and the Khalayi nursery, which is at the Mission HQ.

**From Gill Cooper:** I was amazed to see how much progress had been made by the mission in the four years since our previous trip to Kimilili. There's the New Baby Unit, the new 3 storey operating theatre block under construction, the CT scanner at DMH, the hostel accommodation for boarders at DEC, the bees project in various farms out in the community and the tree planting project (over 15000 trees planted in the first year) to name a few. All this, in spite of the disruption caused by the pandemic! The only thing that stayed the same was the wonderful welcome we received from the mission staff. They are such an inspiration with their Godliness, hospitality, focus and commitment.



The group saying goodbye; Back Row: Solomon Nabie, Alan Kemball, Mike Askew, Jane Askew. Front Row: Buff Oram, Debbie Aitken, Gill Bowers, Heather Kemball, Gill Cooper.

**From Debbie Preston:** I am so glad I joined the team going to Kimilili but sad it was for only the first week. To witness the amazing work of Icfem was such a privilege. There were so many wonderful experiences - I'm not sure where to start! My fellow travellers will share their memories. One of my favourites was joining Sunday Worship at DEC. There were about 150 boarders aged 6 -14 years. Various groups gave presentations and there were testimonies which were inspiring. To worship among these young people was incredible – they were all so joyful, and their bible knowledge was awesome. They all owned paper-back bibles which were very well read. The service lasted for 2½ hours! Afterwards the scouts showed us the camp they had built and slept in the previous night – it was a wonderful creation. Do come along to our social evening on January 12th to see photos which show the camp and much more about our time.

**Martin & Buff Oram:** It's always such a joy to be with our Kenyan brothers and sisters again and to witness their faithful and joyous living out of the Gospel. Our greatest delight was seeing how the 5 team members who hadn't visited before were blown away and much blessed and impressed by all they saw and heard, returning to their churches as enthusiastic ambassadors for IcFEM in Kenya. We must also mention the deep impact made by Gill Cooper's whole day seminar on Mental Health Awareness which the Director, Solomon, had asked for. Around 50 people from several LTUs came and were gently and lovingly helped to understand some of the issues. Mental health isn't generally understood in many parts of the world, especially Africa; sympathy and compassion are not routinely meted out! We picked up ripples of her teaching during the following week when we visited out in the wider community. Some of the delegates had travelled some distance to be there and had taken back with them so much of what she shared.

**Save the date: Friday 12th January 2024, at 7:30pm**– Meet the team at our church social. See many photos and hear from us first hand! We hope our UK Operations Manager, Aidan, will be there too. **WE LOOK FORWARD TO SEEING YOU!**



# easyfundraising

## Something for Nothing

Ever heard the saying, 'there's no such thing as a free lunch' or 'there must be a catch' when offered something for nothing? Well, at Christ Church we are always looking at ways to increase our funds so that we too can help others, and we have come across 'easyfundraising'.

A number of us at Church have been trying this out over the last couple of months, and it really is money for nothing when doing your online shopping. We have already raised nearly £300 for the Church at absolutely no cost to ourselves.

Easyfundraising partners with over 7000 brands (including all the big brands like M+S, Tesco, Curry's, Argos, John Lewis and Screwfix) who will donate part of what you spend and send it directly to Christ Church. It won't cost you any extra as the cost is covered by the brand. Easyfundraising then receive commission from the retailer.

The great news is that it's really easy to set up. Simply follow the link, and then click 'Sign Up'. <https://www.easyfundraising.org.uk/cause/christ-church-alsager/>

You can set this up on your PC, laptop or mobile and by shopping on-line you will increase our Church funds. It's completely free, easy to do, and so, in order to boost the Church funds, please sign up without delay.

Any issues, please don't hesitate to call me, Mark Holland on 07973 186620.

## Oakhanger News

The past year at Oakhanger has been a very busy with many encouraging signs of growth. The work at the new centre continues to support the mission and outreach ministry of Oakhanger.

The prayer cabin is open daily and the Community Neighbourhood Watch group continues to support a safe and secure environment in our community and beyond. Children and families of all backgrounds and ability have shared a variety of healthy activities in the outdoors through the outreach project.

In these challenging times we are called to, "encourage one another with the message of hope, peace and love that is found in Jesus Christ".

Please join our Christmas Celebrations if you are able.

### Christmas Carol Celebration

Tuesday 19<sup>th</sup> December at 7pm (Refreshments provided)

### Christmas Day Communion

Monday 25<sup>th</sup> December at 10am

### Boxing Day at Brereton Heath

Tuesday 26<sup>th</sup> December at 10:30am

Join us for a walk - or Canoe if you dare. Hot drinks and Refreshments provided.

### Walk and pub lunch

Wednesday 1<sup>st</sup> January, meet at Oakhanger at 11.30am or The Plough for lunch at 1pm.

Booking essential

### Burn's Night Supper

Friday 26<sup>th</sup> January at Booking essential

### Oakhanger Project AGM

Thursday 1<sup>st</sup> February at 7.30pm

More news from Oakhanger can be found on the Oakhanger Facebook pages.

Have a great and meaningful Christmas and may God's Peace be yours through the year ahead.

Every blessing, Graham

For further details see our facebook page or Email: [oakchallenge@aol.com](mailto:oakchallenge@aol.com)

Mail: Oakhanger Centre, Oakhanger, Crewe, CW15UU.



## **Coffee and Communion**

Dates for December and January are:

**7th December-Christmas Special with a ukele band**  
**4th and 18th January**

If you need a lift, please contact:

Adrienne 01270 875072

Or Pam 01270 874521

## Women's Days

New Wine and The Orchard are both running women's days next year. They are a wonderful opportunity to come together and worship with some great teaching too.



### RESET -New Wine Women's day

"Gather, encounter, renew"

It would be fabulous if we could get a group together to go and worship, listen to teaching and laugh together. It's on 3rd February 2024 in Huddersfield, tickets cost £25. We can look to arrange transport once we know who is coming. For more information speak to Andrea Chatterley or Aly Ward. To book, follow this link: <https://www.new-wine.org/events/reset-24/>

### The Orchard Women's Conference



The Orchard Women's Conference is a day of worship and teaching for women – it is led by Rachel Hughes from Gas Street Church in Birmingham and her sister Amy from Trinity Church Nottingham. It's been running for a couple of years now and I have been going since it began.

The 2024 Conference is on Saturday 5<sup>th</sup> October 2024 at 10.30am to 8.30pm at the ICC in Birmingham. Tickets cost £50.

For further information and to book;  
[The Orchard \(theorchardwomen.com\)](https://theorchardwomen.com)

October 2024 is a long way off but the conference was fully booked this year and books up well in advance. If you book a ticket, please do let me know and I will keep a list so that we can arrange to travel together (the easiest way is by train with a 15 minute walk to the ICC from New Street).

I have been 3 times now with Rebecca and Heather and it has been an excellent day of worship and teaching. It has grown year on year and I thought I should let other women know about it.

Ceri Hewitt





# What's on?

There's something for everyone  
at Christ Church

## Craft Group

Tuesdays 1-3pm

Card making, flower arranging and more,  
just come along or contact Dily's Daniels.

## Walking Group

There are a few walks organised each  
year. The walks are always followed by a  
meal at a nearby pub. Join the walk or  
just come along for the food and fellow-  
ship. Next walk is Bosley Cloud on 24th  
February 2024.

For information speak to Andrea and  
Geoff.

## Growth Groups

Join one of our ten growth groups for  
friendship, bible study, prayer and  
socials.

Contact the Church Wardens for further  
details and how to join.

Please message your growth group  
leader for details on how your group  
will stay in touch.

## How to get in touch



Call Debbie in the church office  
On **01270 872291**



Email:  
[admin@christchurchalsager.uk](mailto:admin@christchurchalsager.uk)



Follow us on Twitter  
[@chchalsager](https://twitter.com/chchalsager)



Facebook:  
Christ Church Alsager and  
Christ Church Families

All  
Welcome

# BB@C

## Big Breakfast @ Church



Start each week over a  
hearty breakfast

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cooked breakfast

A warm, welcoming atmosphere for all ages.  
Meet new people or bring your family & friends.

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Christ Church Alsager



**The home is excellent. All care  
staff are very friendly and helpful  
to residents and family members.**

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In a 2023 survey of all our care homes, when asked if  
'Staff treat them with kindness, dignity and respect',  
**98.2% of family and friends agreed.**



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Call 01782 692 712 Visit [www.anchor.org.uk/MapleTreeCourt](http://www.anchor.org.uk/MapleTreeCourt)

## Stroke Survivor group

A stroke survivors' support group runs at the 13 Club in Alsager.

If you have suffered a stroke and would benefit from some easy and simple social interaction then do come along.

We are a friendly group with no agenda other than improving the support for stroke survivors.

If you require any additional information please feel free to call me on 01270 335061 or email

[strokesurvivorgroup@gmail.com](mailto:strokesurvivorgroup@gmail.com)

Thank you

Liz Bedson -GROUP LEADER



Department for Levelling Up,  
Housing & Communities



## HK BN(O) Support - English speaking volunteers needed for Hong Kong Conversation Club!

Hello, CHAWREC is looking for local English speaking volunteers to support our Coffee Conversation Club (running every Tuesdays except term breaks and holidays) to help Hong Kongers in the area to practise their English and integrate into the community.

*Come and join us and meet new friends from Hong Kong!*



**Date : Every Tuesdays**  
(except term breaks and holidays)

**Time : 10:30 am – 11:30 am**

**Venue : St Barnabas Church CW1 3HX**  
(Free parking available)

FREE COFFEE & CAKE

Please scan the QR code to enrol :



For further enquiry : [lydia@chawrec.org.uk](mailto:lydia@chawrec.org.uk)

CHAWREC 2023 | CHARITY NO 1088019

## Giving by Text & Mobile Phone

During this difficult time our income is significantly reduced.

Did you know that you can give by text or mobile phone?

This will help with our cash flow.

Thank you.

Text: chchalsager (followed by a number between 1 and 20 to match your donation) to 70085 e.g. to donate £10 text chchalsager10 to 70085. Texts will cost your donated amount plus one standard rate text.

You can also give by scanning this QR Code on your mobile phone. Simply point your phone camera at it and follow the on-screen instructions.



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9.7

Maple Tree Court  
Review score 2022  
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Read Frank's story

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Image does not represent face mask guidance followed in our locations

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## To advertise contact Debbie on 872291

### Copy deadline for the February/March issue is:

## Friday 12th January

Please email any articles  
and pictures to:

[magazine@christchurchalsager.uk](mailto:magazine@christchurchalsager.uk)

All pictures of children must have  
parental permission to publish.

# Church Services

- 3rd December Advent -The Spirit of Christmas Present: Bah humbug**  
9am Reflective Service with Holy Communion  
11am Informal Service with children's activities in the hall #
- 10th December Advent 2**  
9am Reflective Service with Holy Communion  
11am Informal Service –All age Nativity
- 17th December Advent 3**  
5pm Traditional Carol Service #  
7pm Traditional Carol Service #
- 23rd December** 3pm Crib Service
- 24th December** 10:30am Christmas Eve Morning Service with Holy Communion  
11pm Christmas Eve Midnight Service with Holy Communion
- 25th December** 10:30am Christmas Day Family Service
- 31st December No Services**
- 7th January Epiphany 1**  
9am Reflective Service  
11am Informal Service with Holy Communion and children's activities in the hall
- 14th January Epiphany 2**  
9am Reflective Service with Holy Communion  
11am Informal Service with children's activities in the hall
- 21st January Epiphany 3**  
9am Reflective Service  
11am Informal Service and Messy Church
- 28th January Epiphany 4**  
9am Reflective Service with Holy Communion  
11am Informal Service with children's activities in the hall

**Online Services:** # denotes services that will be live streamed and available on our website for you to watch later.

**YouTube channel:** <https://tinyurl.com/chchalsager>

**Church Office:** 01270 872291 Email: [admin@christchurchalsager.uk](mailto:admin@christchurchalsager.uk)

**Vicar:** Rev'd Daran Ward: 01270 878537 [vicar@christchurchalsager.uk](mailto:vicar@christchurchalsager.uk)

**Website:** [www.christchurchalsager.uk](http://www.christchurchalsager.uk)



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