

ISSUE 6 • JULY 2024

CHRIST OUR HOPE

Newsletter of Christ our Hope Liverpool



Pentecost Baptisms

BY WILL GIBBONS

In January we ran the Alpha Course, 10 weeks to explore the meaning of life over food, with a short film and lots of good discussion. Some explored faith for the first time, others found their faith deepened. On Pentecost Sunday I had the immense privilege of baptising those who came to faith on Alpha. Here are some of their stories...

Leona's story

"Most of my adult life I was lost, nothing felt complete, I was always partying, drinking. When I joined Alpha I knew soon after the first session that I need Jesus. I felt the best feeling ever, I felt so much peace. My experience In Alpha was the best experience I've ever had in my life, feeling the Holy Spirit come in to me and fill the hole I had in my broken heart. My life since has been amazing, I am a different person. I have so much love for everyone, I wasn't like this before. I tell everyone I am a Christian, even strangers. I tell them about how Jesus saved my life. "

Linzi's story

"Before Alpha I felt alone even when I had people around me. Alpha helped me with the questions I had that made me struggle with truly believing in God. Now I feel less alone and I don't worry about things as much as I used to because I know God is with me. I chose to get baptised because I wanted to be a child of God."

Laura's story

"My life before Alpha was definitely incomplete, I was lost and broken before I attended church. Alpha was a truly amazing experience, my eyes and my heart were opened for what felt like the first time in my life. Now, my life is less lonely, I feel like I'm finally free! Being baptised was important to me as it was my public declaration to God that I am His!"

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Open Gardens

BY NIC FINDLAY

It has been wonderful seeing Prayer Walks happening across Christ our Hope. Prayer Walking is such an important way of seeing a community the way that God sees it; of having our eyes (and ears!) open to where there is joy, where there is struggle, where there is beauty and where there is brokenness. Prayer walking is so important because in order to really bless our communities and translate the good news of Jesus into a language that makes sense, we need to know the places where we are, and we need to imagine what Jesus revealed in those places might look like.

During the summer holidays at Christ Church the love of Jesus is revealed to the local community in our garden! One of the greatest needs for families in the long six weeks of summer is free, fun activities; one of the greatest gifts that we have as a church is our beautiful green space. Two years ago we decided to match these two things up and try something very simple: opening up the garden for families to come and use. And so, with the help of some additional funding to provide a hot lunchtime meal, partnership from the brilliant Triple C, and a few friendly faces willing to welcome and say hello, we opened up the garden gates for three Wednesday lunchtimes in the summer holidays.

The results were astonishing. In 2022, at our first Open Gardens, we had 100 people. At the second, we had 150. At the third, it rained, but



we still had 75. Last year, our busiest day saw 109 children and 93 adults enjoy playing in the garden.

Three years in, we have found that the real joy of Open Gardens has been in its simplicity. It isn't a big, showy event. People don't come expecting entertaining; they come for the space, and they come because they know they will be made to feel welcome. It has been our absolute joy at Christ Church to see the garden full of life, and full of families encountering something of the love of God through friendship, a free meal and a safe space to play. Each parish within Christ our Hope is very different: the needs of our communities are different and the gifts of each of our churches are different. This summer, let's be creative in trying to match them up!

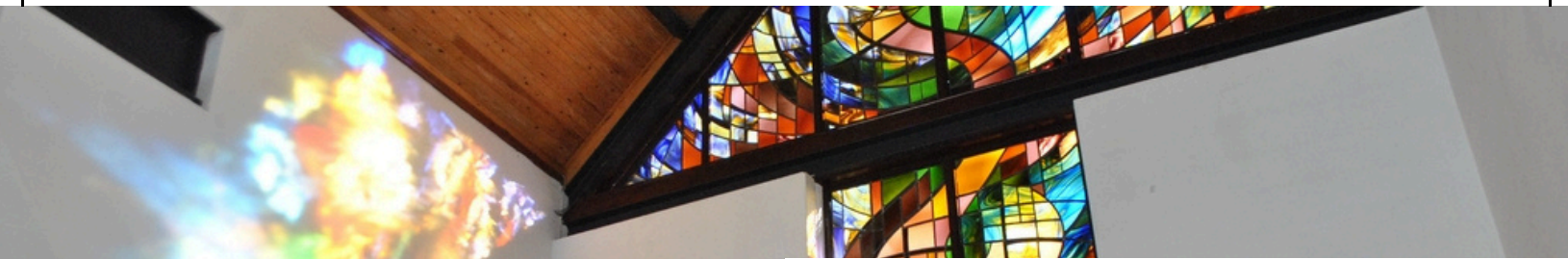


Why Do We Give?

BY LUCIA MILLER

I think part of the answer lies within what we see happen, and the difference this makes to our communities.

St Cuthbert's hosts APLACE2B every Thursday at 11am for 3 hours. It is a community wellbeing cafe that serves the local community, with a special focus on the well-being of all of Croxteth Park! Aplace2B sad, Aplace2b happy, Aplace2 feel safe and make friends. Aplace2 come



and be loved and served food and drink. We are open to all the lonely, the bereaved, the young mum or dad on their own, crafters, gamers, knitters, those who just want to be with others. They believe in generous hospitality, so go and be welcomed with a smile.

Imagine finding a place to be with this group. Or seeing your neighbour or friend made welcome by your church like this. Completely for free!

God's generous gifts flow into his disciples lives. Through God's disciples it continues, into the local church and on into the community.

We give because we know it makes a difference in many ways. Because of giving we can run a free group to bless the community, keep the heat on, to warm people in winter, allow a vicar to tend to the spiritual health of the people and allow justice to find a voice and happen locally.

To ensure there is no interruption to your giving (and Gift Aid if you are a tax payer) when we become a new parish, please would you move over to the PGS if you haven't already? You can do this simply by signing up to the scheme by phone or online and request that your gift be directed to your chosen church. Then, make sure to cancel your standing order payment or envelopes.

In COHL our vision is **“Growing Christ-centred communities that enable everyone to flourish”**

We really want to see each church able to fund its mission and justice work. We know PGS can make all the difference in this transition period.

You may have heard that the Diocese of Liverpool have been members of PGS for 10 years this year. This milestone gives us a moment to reflect on just how valuable it is to our churches, and how essential it is within Christ Our Hope. Did you know?

“I originally gave to St Stephen's via Gift Aid envelope scheme. Whilst this was okay it often meant I was scrambling around on Sunday mornings looking for cash to put into the envelope and occasionally I had to put in a cheque. Also, if I missed church I didn't always 'double up' to cover my absences.

Joining Parish Giving Scheme (PGS) helped me avoid the weekly search for cash whilst ensuring St Stephen's received my gift whether or not I attended.”

- Congregation member in Liverpool diocese.

The added benefit of PGS is that it is regular and helps churches budget and plan better.

- When the larger parish is created, there will be no interruption to your regular gift, if given via PGS.
- The PGS is the safest way to give. With a direct helpline to the PGS and a Direct Debit guarantee, you are always in control of your gift.
- In joining the scheme, you become part of a family of over 4,000 givers, in our diocese alone, using the PGS to give generously.
- Making your gift through PGS saves so much administrative time on claiming gift aid on each individual gift, and reconciling standing orders.

One short and simple telephone call to the helpful people at PGS is all you need to, JOIN, REVISE your gift, or make a ONE-OFF GIFT!

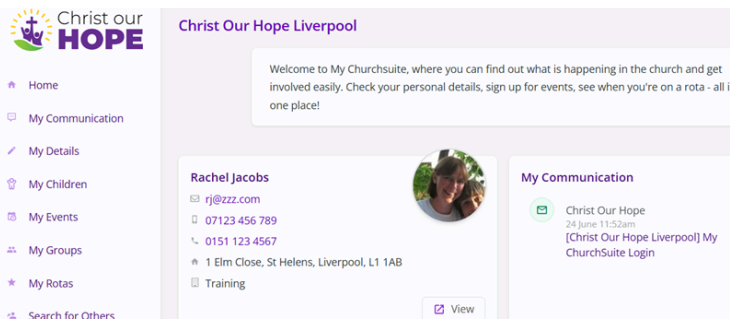


Give **ONLINE** at www.parishgiving.org.uk/donors/
Choose 'Find your parish' in the menu
In 'Location' type your postcode, click to enter.
Then select your church.



Give by **PHONE**
Mon - Fri 9am - 5pm 0333 002 1271

In a future issue we will be sharing more about being a generous disciple, and all of our churches will have a generosity sermon series within the Autumn. We hope this is something you can look forward to.



Introducing ChurchSuite

BY RACHEL PATTERSON

In our churches, people help with all sorts of tasks that require us to hold personal data. So, to improve our compliance with data protection legislation, we are starting to introduce ChurchSuite. This is a central database to hold our records of adults and children, with controlled access for those who need it. When your data is added, you will be able to view and correct it and choose how we can contact you.

But ChurchSuite is much more than an address book. As we work more closely together across the churches, we need to standardise our admin processes while retaining the diversity of our worship and mission styles, and ChurchSuite will help us meet both these goals.

If you like phone apps, you can see upcoming events and check when you are next on a rota. If you prefer email, you will get reminders

when you are on a rota, and you may get newsletters about things happening across the church and parish. If technology makes you shudder, don't worry – we won't get rid of paper and will make sure that you stay informed.

To launch ChurchSuite, we will be requesting contact information, and will provide full training to those who need it. If you have any concerns or queries, please speak with your local clergy or look out for upcoming training sessions. Watch out for information about next steps.



A Team of Wardens

BY RICKY PANTER

Our Churchwardens have met again to develop their plans for working across the new parish, and they are becoming a formidable team. As well as continuing their vital role in each local church they will also gather regularly to support each other and share how things are going. For this interim period, they have elected two of their number, Kallie Speariett and Jimmy O'Brien, to sit on the shadow PCC, and Jimmy will also convene and chair their meetings, with June Simm becoming secretary. Once the new parish comes into operation, there will be elections to these roles – as there will be to other roles on the new PCC. Our thanks and prayers must go to each of these key lay leaders.

Helen Edwards adds "Ricky has generously given his time, shared his wisdom and helped to inspire the Church Wardens. Thank you Ricky for all your work in building the Church Warden team. You are such a gift to us."



Supper & Speaker

CHRIST OUR HOPE LIVERPOOL

SUNDAY 14 JULY 6PM

St Andrew's Clubmoor Liverpool L13 0AL

**SPEAKER**
Archdeacon of St Helens and Warrington
Venerable Simon Fisher



DISCIPLESHIP IN THE FAMILY

Simon will help us to think about our own pattern of Christian living in the home, across all ages. Outlining what a domestic **Rule of Life** might look like, and sharing about liturgical living. Sharing pictures from his own family, including some baked goods – maybe the Fisher family does Bake Off!



Booking helps us cater for the BBQ. Tea and Coffee will be provided but feel free to bring your own drinks if you prefer.

CONTACT US helen.edwards@COHL.org.uk
BOOK VIA LINK OR QR CODE <https://forms.office.com/e/XhSba9b51Z>