

 **August 2024 newsletter**

As I sit and write this newsletter the sun is shining – hurrah! It is a very warm and beautiful day to be on holiday or enjoying some time of rest, refreshment and relaxation. We have also had our first Summer Fun Day Out to The Welsh Mountain Zoo and Colwyn Bay beach with the families that we support in the community – lots of very happy children having a paddle! Please do visit the parish Facebook page and see the video of the day’s events – lots of happy faces!

We are told many times in the gospels that Jesus withdrew to a quiet place for rest and restoration, so can I encourage you during August to take time out for that. We all lead very busy lives and so it is important to re-charge our batteries when we can. You may be going away for a break or having a staycation, whatever you do or wherever you are going we pray that you will find time to connect with God and rest in his presence. Don’t forget those whose families are away and maybe a bit lonely, do give them a call just to say hello, I’m sure they would appreciate it.

The 10.45am services in August will all be café style and are loosely based on the Olympics, thinking about what it means to be part of Jesus’ team! Don’t worry, we’re not going to be asking anyone to run a marathon or throw a javelin! We may have a few new faces joining us at café church so please do make them welcome and invite them to sit at your table.

**9am and 11am services during August remain unchanged.**

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We have several fundraising events planned for the next term, the first of which is an ‘afternoon tea with the singing vicar- Ron Iveson’. This is to be held on **Saturday 21 September 2024 2pm – 4pm**. We shall be serving a beautiful afternoon tea with sandwiches, homemade cake and scones, jam and cream whilst enjoying the entertainment provided by Ron. Tickets £10 are available from both churches. We will need some homemade cakes on the day, so if you could help with that, please do let Gill know. Thank you.

**Christmas Fair!** Date for the diary – Saturday 7 December 2024. Planning meeting Monday 9 September 7.30pm coffee lounge

**West Cheshire Foodbank.** We continue to host collection boxes for donations for the foodbank. Currently, they are asking for donations of jam, long life juice, tinned meat and small jars of coffee as the stocks are running low for these products. A big thank you to WCFB for supporting our cinema nights and fun days

**2024 Christmas Shoebox appeal**

We are continuing to support the T4U shoebox appeal this year and so we shall be requesting various items over the next months. There is a donation box at the back of St Thomas Church**.** August 2024 requested items – toothbrush & toothpaste, soap & facecloth, new socks. We are also collecting empty shoeboxes for use in this project – would you please let Doreen have any girls/ladies shoeboxes – she does not want men’s shoeboxes thank you as they are too big! Thank you for your continued support.

**News from Gemma**

July has started our summer community outreach work programmme, and it has been full of excitement, fellowship, laughter and joy!

The month began with the start of our brand-new initiative 'COGs on the move!' - and as with anything new, we did not quite know what to expect. Well, I am pleased to report that we had a fantastic time over at Wolverham playing fields, the sun was shining, we enjoyed fun and games with a number of families who ventured over to find out what we were up to, and we are looking forward to our next session on the 2nd August, 3-5pm. Please do share the time and place with family and friends and encourage them to join us, the more the merrier!

It was then a pleasure to join the scouts at their summer fayre. With so many different activities taking place, including a car wash. It was great to see some familiar faces from our church family popping in to say hi, and to have lots of families from the varying age groups throughout the scouting movement join in with our craft activities. A thoroughly enjoyable afternoon.

Moving on to another wonderful event, it was a pleasure to join in at the Christ Church school summer fayre too! Again, such an array of activities taking place for families.  However, I think the highlight for many was definitely seeing the Head of School being covered in gunge!

Our Toms Tots ended their year with a summer party, with games outdoors and party snacks too. We then said goodbye to some of our older children who are moving on to nursery and school places, so please do keep these children in your prayers, and all of our tots over the summer break. We will resume Toms Tots on the 12th September (I will miss them so much over the summer!!)

We then had our food hamper deliveries, with 354 shopping bags going out to 177 families within our community to support them over the summer.  What a huge community effort this was, with thanks to our funders, volunteers from many businesses within the community supporting with packing, delivering, hiring vans, donating items etc. We really do have such a fantastic support network in place now to make this project such a success, we truly are blessed, which in turn allows us to bless our community, not only with food, but with the love of our Lord.

It was also a privilege to be invited along to the Asda Friendship cafe. A fantastic community initiative, very similar in style to our Tea at Two event, you can attend for free and have tea/coffee and biscuits, and enjoy the company of others. Our community champion Adele will be sharing the date of the next one with us, so I will let you all know when it is so that you are able to attend - please do come along, we get so much support from Asda, it would be lovely for us to go along and support them too. Plus - tea/coffee and biscuits - yes please!!!

Now for the fun times with our families!  Cinema night!  The smell of hotdogs and pizza fill the air, and a new film to entertain our families whilst they sit and enjoy their popcorn. With over 50 attending, again what an opportunity to have our doors opened to our community and to sow seeds. Thanks also to West Cheshire Foodbank for their donation of crisps - they certainly went down a treat too!

And that's not all.....who doesn't love a coach trip!  Well 80 of us set off to the Welsh mountain zoo (yes the coach struggled up those hills), and enjoyed the morning with the animals (apart from the pesky seagulls). We had a lovely picnic lunch, before heading off to Colwyn Bay beach for the afternoon. To see such fun and fellowship, truly is a joy to be a part of. Upon return to church, a fish and chip supper was awaiting the families before they went home. What a wonderful day out we were able to share, with some fabulous conversations, getting to know people a little better, and allowing them to get to know us too. Further donations from the Co-Op, The Cupboard, West Cheshire Foodbank, and funding from the Benefact Group and Transforming Lives helped to put this trip together - how blessed we are!

Gosh, looking at that, July has been a blast hasn't it!  Just wait and see what August has in store..

**Dates for August 2024**

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| Sunday 4 | 10.45am | Café Church – ‘Making the team’ – speaker Vicky Marsland |
| Sunday 11 | 10.45am4pm | Café church – ‘Shaping the team’ – speaker Rev Rachel NewellABC at St Lawrence |
| Wednesday 14 | 2pm | Tea at Two in coffee lounge |
| Thursday 15 |  | Fun Day at Whitby Park ‘Ellesmere Port Olympics’ |
| Sunday 18 | 10.45am | Café church – ‘Inspiring the team’ – speaker Gemma Alexander-Bloomfield |
| Sunday 25 | 10.45am | Café church – ‘Challenging the team’ – speaker Helen Burgess |
| Tuesday 27 |  | Fun Day at Crocky Trail |
|  |  | NO PALS lunch in August  |

 Pastoral matters – please do let the clergy or the churchwardens know of any church family members that are sick in hospital or at home and would appreciate a visit.

I think that is it for now. Take care & God bless

Rachel, Gill & the staff team

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