

CHRIST CHURCH

United Reformed and Methodist

CHRIST CHURCH *LINK*

August 2026
September 2026



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www.christ-church-lewes.org



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The publication date is normally the final Sunday of the preceding month, and items for inclusion should be sent to the Secretary by the Wednesday before that date.

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MINISTER'S REFLECTIONS



Dear friends,

In a couple of my previous articles, I have commented on how in our current political climate we find ourselves becoming more exclusive, with several influential lobby groups encouraging us to reject the values of inclusivity. Some of this has been for political reasons, for some this has been seen to be a return to values of an earlier era. For others, there may be other agendas. I'm a theologian rather than a sociologist or political scientist, and so I felt that it might be helpful to explore a little of what our gospels share with us about Jesus' expressions of inclusion. After all, Christians look to Jesus as their role model and so sometimes it is helpful for us to look at what he did and ask ourselves what if anything we can learn from or emulate from his behaviour.

Jesus's life seems to be a continual stream of actions welcoming those whose lives don't quite meet the socially expected idea of 'normal'. From the beginning, there were a lot of people who had fallen outside of the realms of what was considered conventional society. Like our own society, theirs was not homogenous, nor did every one desire to fit in to a narrow definition of what an acceptable life was. If anything, there are very few characters in our gospel stories who actually fit into the narrow definition of what might be deemed the ideal life. Perhaps that was the problem, the ideal had become more important than the reality.

For some, they were outside of the normal because they couldn't integrate religious demands with their working lives. We think of the shepherds on the hillside greeted by the angel's news of the Christ-child's birth. Much like today, folk have to work shifts which disrupt normal life. There were those who didn't meet societal expectations of their genders. We think of Anna, the prophetess, who hadn't had children due to early widowhood and instead spent her life in the temple worshipping God. We look down on the women of the middle-ages who went to the convent in order to avoid marriage, but theirs was a choice freely made, like Anna's.

Mary and Joseph's betrothal met the expectations that they, having exchanged promises to one another beginning the betrothal, were now expected to get pregnant before concluding in a marriage. But Joseph not unreasonably had expected that the pregnancy would be because of his actions and clearly that hadn't been the case. Thoughts of breaking the contract were not unreasonable at that point – even with the enormous shame it would bring on both parties. Fortunately, our story ends with heavenly interventions and all is smoothed over. Today's relationships are not any more complicated than we see in this story, albeit without angelic interruptions.

As Jesus grows, we see more examples of stepping outside of societal expectations and welcoming those who don't fit – healing the man with severe mental health issues (known as the man with a legion of demons); a woman shunned and excluded from society for more than a decade for gynaecological issues; friendships that include touch with those of the opposite sex; treating women with respect in a society that was openly misogynistic. Jesus interacted and treated with respect men from the Roman army and their male servants. In the final hours of his life, he was supported by Simon of Cyrene (although it was the soldiers that enabled this to happen in order to humiliate an outsider, but in the process immortalising the man as part of the story). Jesus then shows kindness on the cross to someone who had committed theft and was paying the ultimate price. Time and again, he includes all who are interested in God and welcomes them into God's new kind of kingdom.

Copying this basic kindness and respect has always been seen as weak. And yet, if such actions are so weak, why does it take such strength to copy them? For years Christians have been seen as do-gooders, and their actions that of fools. And yet, without the altruistic actions of those who seek to include others, our society would not be the place it is today. We wouldn't have workers rights, without the Trades Unions – started by Christians. Likewise, Sunday Schools created the pattern of schooling for the masses. It is in seeking the best for all people, not the few, that our society can thrive. And if such actions are to be counted as weak – or perhaps woke - then it is to underestimate the power inclusion has within our society. We as a church have committed ourselves to being inclusive. It isn't just a nice ideal that

makes us kind people. It is a commitment to saying we believe in a kingdom where all are welcome, where all are invited to thrive, where all are welcomed into God's love. It isn't easy to welcome all, if anything it is one of the most challenging things we encounter. But without trying, we will struggle to follow the pattern that Jesus has set us, Inclusion then, really is for all. So, to quote a popular hymn, "all are welcome in this place".

Barbara

THINKTANK

Wednesday 16 September 2026 at 7.30 pm

(Tea, coffee and cake from 7pm)

Stuart Dew,

will speak on

'The Onward March of Communication'

Stuart Dew, Co-Leader of the Central Sussex United Area and a United Reformed Church Lay Preacher, has been involved in communicating in different ways all his life. He began as a newspaper reporter, became a BBC news editor and then focussed more on personal communication as a probation officer. In church life, as a lay preacher, he communicates the Christian message with congregations.

FROM THE SECRETARIES

Welcome to the August-September 2026 issue of **CC Link**.

Since our last edition of the Link our Church Administration Secretary Lindsay Frost has been hard at work underdoing a rehabilitation programme following his heart attack in May. We are glad to hear he is doing well and look forward to welcoming him back once he is fully fit and well.

In his absence a small group of Church Council members have reviewed the scope of the secretaries' jobs and managed to remove quite a lot of items. We are very pleased to see how the appointment of Hannah to our Lay worker role and Emily to the role of Admin worker have relieved us of some regular jobs. We will share more of this at the Congregational Meeting on 2 August.

The **Community Cuppa** launched on 20 May has run every Wednesday from 0900 to 1200 offering free tea and coffee, and a range of activities from crafts to jigsaw puzzles and books. Our knitted and crocheted squares are growing and there is a dedicated group of jigsaw enthusiasts who have completed a number of 1000 piece pictures. Thanks to Emily and Hannah for the display board which our visitors enjoy looking at.

A big "Thank You" goes to all our **Christian Aid Week** (CAW) team, who

At its May meeting, Church Council considered a proposal for a **Joraform Food Composter** at the church, provided free

Church Council discussions raised a number of concerns on the food composter proposal and it was decided to instead recommend a short term arrangement with a waste contractor whilst these issues are resolved.

Claire Bell, Acting Church Secretary



INTRODUCING KERRY HALLIDAY

"Beloved, since God loved us so much, we also ought to love one another."

(1 John 4:11)

Thank you for the warm welcome I have received. Many of you will already have seen me popping up around the Area since September 2025. For those I have not yet had the pleasure of meeting let me introduce myself.

I am a student presbyter with the Methodist Church, currently training through The Queen's Foundation in Birmingham. My training combines study with practical ministry, so my weeks are usually divided between books, church life, pastoral encounters and the occasional struggle to remember which deadline comes next!

Before entering ministry, I studied psychology and worked as a therapist and spent five years as an MHA chaplain. Although my work has changed over the years, my fascination with people has remained constant. I am endlessly curious about people's stories and the many ways faith shapes our lives.

I often think God must have a sense of humour. Just when I thought I had a reasonable idea of where life was heading, I found myself being called into chaplaincy and then ministry. Looking back, I can see God's fingerprints all over the journey although at the time I was often trying to work out what on earth was happening.

I have always loved the story of the Samaritan woman at the well. She met Jesus, realised she was fully known, and then hurried back to tell others about him. There is something wonderfully hopeful about that story, and it continues to shape the way I think about ministry.

Over the years I have discovered that God often turns up in unexpected places and through remarkable people. Again and again, I have found the extraordinary hidden within ordinary life. Sometimes it appears in a conversation over coffee, often it emerges when someone feels able to share

something important, or maybe through an act of kindness that might otherwise go unnoticed.

When I am not studying or serving in the Area, you will usually find me reading far too many books or walking along the seafront in Bexhill with my two elderly dogs. If the weather is less accommodating, there is a good chance I will be enjoying a cuppa in the De La Warr Pavilion.

What I value most about ministry is relationship; God meets us through one another. I often glimpse God's grace in simple encounters, whether that is sharing a conversation after worship or sitting around a table with a cuppa.

So, if you see me around, please do come and say hello. I look forward to meeting more of you over the coming months and discovering together where God is already at work among us.

CHRISTIAN AID WEEK 2026

This year we extended our Christian Aid Week (CAW) collections from the Wallands area to also include parts of the Nevill Estate in Lewes. Thank you very much indeed to our group who tramped the streets to deliver donation envelopes and information about online giving via a dedicated CAW web page , accessed via a QR code . Our distribution efforts covered just over 800 addresses in total .

Altogether we raised **£1472 .04** , comprising £471.34 online , £340.00 in cash and £660.00 in cheques . Many donations were subject to Gift Aid , which boosted the total by a further £211.76 making **£1683.80** in total for some of the world's poorest people.

Thank you to Viv Frost and Emily Gowers for tallying it all up and banking the money .

The Lewes Area Churches Prayer Chain

Christ Church is a link in the Lewes Area Churches Prayer Chain.

In August we are praying for the United Benefice of Iford with Kingston, Piddinghoe, Rodmell and Southease.

Here are the prayers from Rev'd Joe Chipper:

For Our Benefice

Loving God, we give you thanks for the churches of the United Benefice. Bless our life together, strengthen our unity in Christ, and help us to be faithful witnesses to your love in our communities.

For Our New Curate and Lay Ministry

We thank you for the gift of our new curate and for the growing number of lay people who have answered your call to lead worship and serve your Church. Grant them wisdom, confidence and joy as they share the Good News.

Prayer of Blessing

Gracious God, pour out your Holy Spirit upon our new curate and all who have responded to your call to serve as lay leaders. Fill them with faith and compassion. Give them humble hearts, discerning minds and joyful spirits. May their words proclaim your truth, their lives reflect your love and their ministry draw others ever closer to Christ. Bless them, protect them, and uphold them in all they do, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

For Summer Events

We give thanks for the many opportunities this summer to welcome our neighbours through Open Gardens, the Flower Festival and Artwave. May all who visit find friendship, beauty, hospitality and above all a glimpse of your presence. May every conversation, every act of hospitality and every shared moment become an opportunity to reveal your love and grace.

Closing Prayer

Faithful God, receive these prayers and continue to bless our churches and communities, that together we may grow in faith, hope and love; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Lorna Melia adds:

We give thanks to God for sending us Rev'd Joe and his family.

We pray that God will bless and protect them and supply Rev'd Joe with the wisdom and stamina to pastor the 5 churches in the valley.

Please share these prayers in any way you can with your church community, for example through newsletters, intercessions and prayer meetings.

We will be praying for the United Benefice of Iford with Kingston, Piddinghoe, Rodmell and Southease and our locality at the CTLA Prayer for Lewes Area on Saturday 15th August from 8-9am via Zoom. Please join if you are able. Claire Bell is the Christ Church Lewes CTLA prayer link person. Please contact Claire if you would like the zoom link.

In September we are praying for St Anne's

Churches Together in Lewes Area prayer gathering on Saturday 12th September 3.30-5pm at Kings Church Lewes

All invited to a Churches Together in Lewes Area prayer gathering on Saturday 12th September 3.30-5pm at Kings Church Lewes.

Please save the date and share this invitation widely.

The event will include refreshments and opportunities to pray individually and with others from churches in the Lewes area.

Churches Together in Lewes Area (CTLA) at Lewes Societies Fair

CTLA will have a stall at the annual Lewes Societies Fair in the Town Hall on Saturday 5th September. It will be open to the public from 10am - 1pm. The aim is to provide visitors with information about the different churches in the Lewes area. Rob Hoy will be there on the day, setting up from 9am, and would welcome some company for all or part of the time. Please contact Rob (Phone: 07907 243311 or email: hoys@rockuk.net) if you can help.

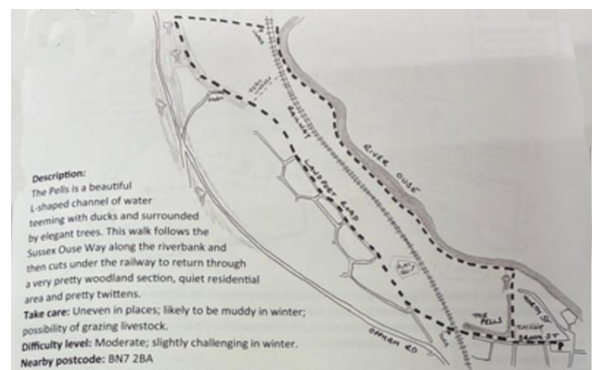
CHRIST CHURCH WALKS



Our July walk was on Sunday 19 and took us to **West Park and Lake Wood on the edge of Uckfield**, an area which includes mature woodland, large rocky outcrops and a lake. It is a Local Nature Reserve. We had a leisurely walk in the heat around this hidden gem that none of us knew was there.



Our 16th August walk sees us remaining in Lewes – the Pells and the Ouse. A walk of about 2.6 miles, uneven in places and muddy if wet (we wish). The walk follows the Sussex Ouse Way along the riverbank and then cuts under the railway to return through a woodland section, quiet residential area and pretty twittens.



Details for **our September walk** which will take place on 20 September will be advertised nearer the time.

Church Calendar for August 2026

- Sun 2 10.30 am Morning worship led by
 Rev Barbara Evans-Routley
 11.45 am Congregational Meeting
- Wed 5 10 am - 12 noon Community Cuppa
 12.30 pm - 1.30 pm Prayer Meeting
- Sun 9 9.30 am Prayer Meeting in the Quiet Room
 10.30 am Second Sunday worship
- Wed 12 10 am - 12 noon Community Cuppa
 12.30 pm - 1.30 pm Prayer Meeting
 7.30 pm Church Council
- Sun 16 10.30 am Morning worship led by Gwyneth Watkinson
 1 pm Church Walk
- Wed 19 10 am - 12 noon Community Cuppa
 12.30 pm - 1.30 pm Prayer Meeting
 7.30 pm Thinktank
- Sun 23 10.30 am Morning worship with Holy Communion led by
 Rev Barbara Evans-Routley
- Wed 26 10 am - 12 noon Community Cuppa
 12.30 pm - 1.30 pm Prayer Meeting
- Sun 30 10.30 am Morning worship led by Claire Bell

Church Calendar for September 2026

- Wed 2 10 am - 12 noon Community Cuppa
 12.30 pm - 1.30 pm Prayer Meeting
- Sun 6 10.30 am Morning worship led by
 Rev Barbara Evans-Routley
- Wed 9 10 am - 12 noon Community Cuppa
 12.30 pm - 1.30 pm Prayer Meeting
 7.30 pm Church Council
- Sun 13 9.30 am Prayer Meeting in the Quiet Room
 10.30 am Second Sunday worship
- Wed 16 10 am - 12 noon Community Cuppa
 12.30 pm - 1.30 pm Prayer Meeting
 7.30 pm Thinktank
- Sun 20 10.30 am Morning worship led by Tom Lunt
 1 pm Church Walk
- Wed 23 10 am - 12 noon Community Cuppa
 12.30 pm - 1.30 pm Prayer Meeting
- Sun 27 10.30 am Morning worship with Holy Communion led by
 Gwyneth Watkinson
- Wed 30 10 am - 12 noon Community Cuppa
 12.30 pm - 1.30 pm Prayer Meeting
- Thu 1 7.30 pm Pastoral Leaders meeting
- Sun 4 10.30 am Morning worship

Rotas for August 2026

	2	9	16	23	30
Preacher	Barbara	2nd Sunday	Gwyneth	Barbara	Claire
Welcoming	Andrew	Irene	Linda B	Graham	Janet
Vestry	Brenda	Brenda	Brenda	Brenda	Brenda
Coffee	Rod & Aly	Judy & Ian	Brian & Joan	Rod & Aly	Judy & Ian
Transport	Neil	Irene	Claire	Neil	Irene
PowerPoint	Barbara / Hannah	Neil	Tom	Irene	Hannah
Organ	Norman	Second Sunday	David	Norman	Norman

Rotas for September 2026

	6	13	20	27
Preacher	Barbara	2nd Sunday	Tom	Gwyneth
Welcoming	Graham	Andrew	Linda B	Brenda
Vestry	Claire	Claire	Claire	Claire
Coffee	Brenda & Alison	Judy & Ian	Claire	Glenda & Alan
Transport	Claire	Neil	Irene	Brian
PowerPoint	Irene	Neil	Tom / Neil	Irene
Organ	Norman	Second Sunday	David	Norman

CHRIST CHURCH

(United Reformed and Methodist)
seeks to proclaim the Gospel and serve
the community around it.

The Minister, Layworker and Church
Council members would appreciate
information about those who need
pastoral care and will endeavour to
answer the questions of those who want
to know more about the Church's life and
witness here in Lewes.