

**AUG - SEPT
2022**

Life.

Welcome To The Thomas Family

Alan Cottenden
welcomes our new
Vicar and his lovely
family

Ladies Elevenses Time

A first look at LET's
Autumn
Programme

Tearfund Quiz Night

Save the Date!



Living to love God and You

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Thank you to all who have contributed to this edition of Life. If you would like to contribute something to the next edition, the **deadline** for submissions for the **October/November edition** will be **9th September 2022.**

Please email: Editor@CCBedford.org



You can read this edition online, just go to our website: **CCBedford.org/lifemagazine**

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A word from our Wardens

Dear Friends,

This is the last article that we will be writing for the magazine. In the next edition we will have the first message from our new vicar, David Thomas. We want to use this opportunity to thank the whole Christ Church family for their support, encouragement, and prayers through the vacancy period. It was, at first, quite a daunting prospect to keep the busy life of Christ Church going at the same time as searching for a new vicar.

THANK
you

But with outstanding support from many people, we have made it through and now have an exciting new chapter ahead of us. Special thanks must go to John Bell and Pauline Grimley as well as the standing committee (Michael, Helen, Amy, Chris and AJ) for all the additional tasks they have taken on during this time.

With David taking over as vicar of Christ Church, it is a great time for us to refocus how we want to move forward as a church. Some clear themes came through the surveys that we undertook at the start of the year, which also align with our mission action plan: deepening our faith, outreaching into the community, and growing our children/youth/young adults ministries. These give us a strong indication of where we should put our efforts in the future. The exciting thing about David joining us is that he will bring his own perspectives and fresh ideas which will help us to change and grow. Change can be a daunting prospect for some of us, but it is a necessary thing for us to continue to develop as a church family

and become more effective in growing God's kingdom.

As David and Vikki take on their new roles in the life of Christ Church, we would ask that we all provide them with the love and support they will need to establish themselves. It will take some time for them to get familiar with all the people and activities in the church, so please bear with them as they do this. Most of all, please keep praying for David, Vikki and the whole of Christ Church as we embark on this next exciting season of our journey as a church family.

**KAY BERRINGTON &
ANDREW RUSSELL**





Saturday 19 November

Hundreds of churches.
Thousands of people.
One big quiz.

Get together with your friends, family and community
for an epic evening of poverty-beating fun
at Christ Church, Bedford.

Up and down the UK, people will be gathering for the ultimate quiz
extravaganza – all in the name of ending poverty for good.
And you can be part of it!

More information coming soon.
Save the date in your diaries now!

Every pound raised at the Big Quiz Night will help
transform the lives of people living in poverty.
Visit tearfund.org/quiz to find out more.

tearfund.org/quiz

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tearfund

The Thomas Family

Have arrived!

Written by Alan Cottenden

”

So, the Christ Church vicarage has new residents! David and Vikki Thomas moved in with children, Noah and Grace, at the end of June and are gradually establishing their new home, coming to grips with a new town, and beginning to get to know an army of new people. And all within this strange limbo period before David formally becomes our new vicar: they're waiting "in the ante room" before the action, as David describes it. A good time – our Editor thought – for me to ask them something of their story to help us get to know them as this new season unfolds.



How are you settling in?

David: OK! We're feeling very welcomed: lots of cards through the door, biscuits and flowers. As you can see, there are still boxes everywhere but we're getting there. Strangely, Noah (4) and Grace (nearly 2) haven't really warmed to the task of unpacking and so their best contribution to the war effort is often to explore the park or the library with Mummy. At the moment, they know the area rather better than I do. I've located one or two important landmarks – the Devonshire, the Gordon Arms, the Chinese take away and the chip shop – but exploring further is going to have to wait a while.

What are the children making of things?

Vikki: Grace has little idea what's going on but just takes it all as it comes. Noah has important questions like, "Who's my best friend going to be?" On Saturday we went to the summer fair at Castle Newnham – where he'll be starting school after the summer – and it was really good for him to see the actual buildings and imagine being part of that community. I've also started taking Grace to the toddler group that runs at Christ Church so she's getting to know and play with other children her age.

How does Bedford compare with Hounslow, and Christ Church with Hope Church?

David: Well, there aren't so many planes over Bedford so we're having to get used to not hearing one land or take off every few minutes. We may need to pop down to Luton Airport for the occasional fix of aircraft noise while we get used to the quiet. Of course, Hounslow is urban in character; it's also – generally – quite a poor area. Interestingly, when we told friends that we were coming to Bedford, they usually mentioned John Bunyan, Italians and / or the river.

So, there we are: that's what you're famous for! The other thing we notice is how friendly people are around here. In London, people don't generally talk to one another so freely. That's a really welcome change.

Hope Church actually comprises two congregations and, taken together, they are about the same size as Christ Church. Another interesting similarity is the diversity of their approach to "doing" church. I understand that your three Sunday services each have their own character and identity. I love to see that variety. Of course, we don't know Christ Church very well yet and we're really looking forward to getting to know how it all works and what God has for you – for us – next.





Tell us about the process that brought you here.

David: As the end of my curacy in Hounslow approached, we were of course keen to work out what God had for us next and it was Vikki who did most of the hard work of scanning the job web sites. It could have been quite overwhelming because, in principle, we could have gone anywhere, which actually made it both easier (loads of choice) and harder (millions of possibilities). There's lots of work in an application - quite a big spiritual and emotional undertaking - so it's wise to be selective. We decided to limit our search to places within an hour-and-a-half's travel of West



London where our parents and siblings are based. When I was training in Bristol – which is further away – we'd found it tough trying to sustain good relationships with wider family. We were also keen to keep in mind that we came “as a family”, so there needed to be a good fit for Vikki and the children as well as for me.

Vikki: When I came across the Christ Church vacancy and read the Parish Profile I remember feeling excited because I could see it working for us. It's strange, because you have to imagine your way into a situation to “try it for size” in your mind's eye which draws you in, but there's a reticence to put your whole self into it because of the risk that it might not work out!

David: I'd normally visit a church before applying for a position there but the timing for this didn't quite work out so that, by the time we got to visit, I'd already been short-listed. We weren't sure what the protocol was for visiting under those circumstances – it all seemed rather surreptitious! – so I emailed the archdeacon's secretary and left it to her who she would tell. So it was that we turned up one Sunday morning not knowing who might be expecting us. Everyone was very welcoming and friendly. Before the service, Kay approached us to chat and asked, "Are you David and Vikki?" And we confessed! Soon after, Andrew and Helen found us, too. We came away excited at the possibility that we might join you.

So, then you were offered the job!

David: Yes. When Bishop Richard phoned me I was pushing Grace round the parish in her buggy, pinning up our latest church posters on the various notice boards as we went. He started by telling me how wonderful it had been to meet me at the interview which I took to be his pastorally sensitive way of softening me up for a disappointment, and I felt my heart sink. Then he offered me the job! I must have been a bit flustered because I then accidentally hung up on him.

Hoping he hadn't interpreted my strange response as lack of interest, I phoned him straight back. All very exciting.

Vikki: When David phoned me with the news I knew from the excited tone of his greeting what he was going to say!



Was there a definite point at which you were convinced this was for you?

Vikki: Not really. It was more a case of thinking and praying things through and trusting God to open and close doors as he knew best. But, pretty early on we were clear that we would be delighted if this worked out and we are very happy to be starting this new adventure and intrigued as to what God has for us all.

David: It's slightly odd sitting here "in the ante-room", waiting to get stuck in!

David - you worked in industry before training for the ordained ministry, right?

David: Yes: I worked for 11 years as a data analyst for a pharmaceutical and healthcare data company. I especially enjoyed leading and working in teams and I love working through teams in church contexts, too. There are these two contrasting sides of me that work together. First, you won't be surprised to hear that I am quite analytical: I love to take a problem apart, understand it and work out the best way forward. But, rather than staying at a detached distance, I also like to be fully

engaged in what's happening. I'm what they call an external processor, which means I have to warn people that much of what I say is me thinking out loud rather than delivering a definitive opinion! Another warning is that I'm terrible at remembering people's names. I'll do my best, but please don't be offended if I forget yours!

How did you each come to faith?

Vikki: I grew up in the Anglo-Catholic tradition in an Anglican church - and like many people - when I reached my teens, I needed to think through my faith afresh for myself. I remember recommitting my life to God and also to discovering and enjoying the more informal evening services in the other church in our parish, alongside the more formal mornings. After I'd been away to university I sensed very definite guidance from God to return to Uxbridge where I'd grown up. Just as well as that's where I met David! I studied Chemistry at university and before having the children I was a Chemistry teacher in schools and colleges. Before David started his training I was heavily involved in church life, mainly in the areas of children's and youth work and music. It's been more difficult to do that recently with looking after our





own children and David always seeming to be doing something important!

David: My parents were – to use their phrase - raging heathens who discovered Jesus in their teens (Mum) and 20s (Dad) and experienced a 180° turn around in their lives. When I grew up we belonged to a large charismatic church and I can remember Mum and Dad's faith permeating their whole lives. For them there was no divide between the sacred (things of interest to God) and the secular (things – supposedly - not of interest to God): everything mattered to God. To give an example, I remember us driving down the road chatting on one occasion when an ambulance passed us sounding its siren.

Mum immediately pulled over and led us in praying for whatever the problem was that had called for an ambulance. When I was 14 or 15 we left that church and they began to lead a house church that met in our home. That's when I discovered that Mum could play guitar and was encouraged to learn myself. We had a really good worship group that was involved in different churches, including the one that Vikki belonged to, which is how we met! I can't really remember a time when I didn't know God but, of course, as I grew up my understanding and faith in him grew.

What do you do for fun?

David: We both like running. It's something we can do together and it's a sport where our skill levels are similar. We're a little bit competitive. Vikki holds the Team Thomas 5 & 10km pb at the moment, but not for long! We're looking forward to taking part in the Park Run in Bedford Park.

Vikki: We also appreciate good food. For example, we enjoy experimenting with meal kits.

David: I also love music – anything involving a guitar – everything from folk through to heavy metal.

Thank you!
Alan Cottenden

LADIES ELEVENSES TIME

Saturdays at 11.00am—A time to get together with others for refreshments and an interesting talk!

Autumn Programme of Talks

Thursday 25th August: An evening social at The Pavilion, Bedford Park 7.30-9.00pm with a 7.00pm park walk beforehand for those wishing to do this!

September 3rd: Our speaker is Maryam Aduma, Senior Pastor of Hope Ministries & heads up The Warring Women Intercessory Ministry. She has also written several books!

October 1st : Marion Topham will share her testimony about the adventures the Lord is taking her on.

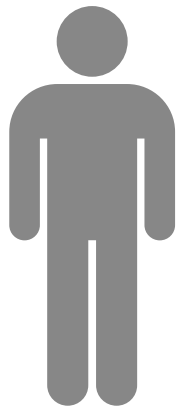
November 5th: Emma Peacock is our guest speaker. She has spoken at Spring Harvest & written a book “In Bed with Adam & Eve”.

December 3rd: A drama for Christmas!

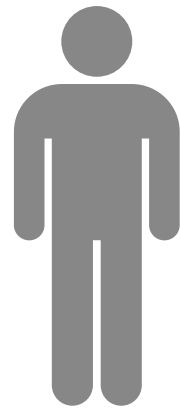


**ALL GOOD &
WORTH COMING TO!**





MEN'S BREAKFASTS



WHAT IS IT?

Men's breakfast meets regularly each month, normally on the fourth Saturday with the occasional exception (keep an eye on the noticesheet).

We meet from 9am and have breakfast and chat till 10am and then a topic for the month for discussion/sharing till 10:30am. Breakfast includes tea/coffee, orange juice, cereal, croissants, toast, jam, marmalade, egg and bacon bap (veggie option available on request). All for the bargain price of £3. In May we had Tim Robb (previous curate) come and give a talk. Alan Doughty also led a session in March. It is hoped to encourage a few members to lead a session and share their thoughts on a topic.

DIARY DATES

Men's breakfast dates for summer/autumn are:-

30th July

27th August

24th September

22nd October

26th November

December (Date TBC)

Due to covid over the past few years our socials have not really happened.

However it is hoped to restart these and have a curry night in Aug/Sept and then as the new season starts a visit to see Bedford Blues with a chance to have a chat in a pub beforehand.

Bedford beer and cider festival is happening again this year (5 - 8 October) if people are interested. A new term card will be available from late July with dates and details.

This is a valuable time to build up friendships and develop support networks. Please do come along and join us.

For more information, please contact John Betteley.





HOME

Written by Elizabeth Mortimer

Some of us have a greater sense of belonging to a certain place than others. Those people who have lived in a lot of different houses and locations tend to feel less attached to them than those of us who have lived in the same town and especially the same house for much of, if not all, our lives. Winifred Bruce has seen her wish to return to her own home fulfilled recently and we pray that this works out for her with carers visiting her four times a day.

When Peter Alley was gravely ill in hospital shortly before he died, he called out: "Take me home." The staff thought he wanted to go home to

Christine in Caves Lane, but she feels certain that he was asking the Lord, whom he had loved and served for more than seventy of his ninety-three years, to end his physical life and take him home to Glory.

We all know that Jesus was born in a borrowed room in Bethlehem, was a refugee in Egypt and grew up in the local carpenter's home in Nazareth. After He left His parental home, He was, effectively, homeless. Matthew Chapter 8, vs 20 and Luke Chapter 9, vs 58 quote Jesus as having said: *"Foxes have dens and birds have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head."* After His



crucifixion, Jesus was buried in a borrowed tomb.

We have very little idea what it will really be like when we get to Heaven. However, we know that one of the reasons why Jesus returned there after His resurrection was to prepare a place for us. John quotes the words of Jesus in Chapter 14, vs 2 & 3 of his gospel: *“My Father’s house has many rooms; if that were not so, would I have told you that I am going there to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am.”*



We Christians should not make ourselves too much at home in this world. The writer to the Hebrews, in Chapter 11 of his epistle, listed some of the Old Testament characters who lived their lives for God, in spite of being ill-treated by their opponents. In vs 13, we read that they admitted that *“they were foreigners and strangers on earth”* and in Chapter 13, vs 14: *“Here we do not have an enduring city, but we are looking for the city that is to come.”*



In Ephesians Chapter 2, vs 19, Paul wrote: *“You are no longer foreigners and strangers, but fellow citizens with God’s people and also members of his household.”* Every Christian needs to find a Church which they can regard as their spiritual home.

Very near the end of the Bible, in Revelation 21, vs 2 & 3, we read: *"I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God...God's dwelling-place is now among the people, and he will dwell with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God."* I knew several people who were recently received into their eternal home. We can look forward to, rather than dread, the day when we arrive in the Eternal City. I am sure we are in for a wonderful surprise. Paul tells us in 1 Corinthians 2, vs 9: *"What no eye has seen, what no ear has heard, and what no human mind has conceived" – the things God has prepared for those who love him –*

Meanwhile, David, Vikki, Noah and Grace – I hope and pray that you will soon feel very much at home here in Bedford with all of us in your new family at Christ Church.





SEPTEMBER VISIT

*Written by
Gillian Lindley*

How can you help?

Prayer!

- Rising costs due to Ukraine war.
- Climate change affecting the seasonal rain pattern and increasing storms.
- Our trip later this year - particularly for safety and effective communication.
- Plans for future Young People and Adult trips in the next couple of years.

Home of Hope is a children's home in Malawi and is one of Christ Church's mission partners. It was founded by Reverend Chipeta (Agogo - Chichewa for Grandparent) & his wife when he retired from full time ministry about 24 years ago. He's now 92 and they have just celebrated 70 years of marriage in July. Their vision is to be a home that nurtures orphaned and vulnerable children to their fullest potential, providing them with Primary, Secondary and Vocational Training education, and to give them the opportunity to live an independent life to the full. His daughter Lucy is now the Executive Director of Home of Hope and his grandson Shinghai is also involved with the day to day running of the home. Some of you may remember Rev Chipeta and Shinghai visiting Bedford & Christ Church in the winter of 2018.

Financially

- When you shop online go via [Amazon Smile/Give as you live](#) who will donate a percentage at no extra cost to you.
- Child Sponsorship via www.malawiorphanfund.uk
- One off donation.

Malawi is in southern Africa and is ~48% of the size of the UK and has an estimated population of 20 million. The country is also nicknamed "The Warm Heart of Africa" because of the friendliness of the people.

Mchinji is the closest town to Home of Hope, near Malawi's eastern border with Zambia. Malawi is among the world's least-developed countries. The economy is heavily based in agriculture, with a largely rural population. The Malawian government depends heavily on outside aid to meet development needs, although this need (and the aid offered) has decreased since 2000.

The Malawian government faces challenges in building and expanding the economy, improving education, healthcare, environmental protection, and becoming financially independent amidst widespread unemployment. Since 2005, Malawi has developed several programs that focus on these issues, and the country's outlook appears to be improving. Malawi has a low life expectancy and high infant mortality. There is a high prevalence of HIV/AIDS, which is a drain on the labour force and government expenditures.





Alex Mnatzaganian has organised several young people's trips, and an adults' trip to Home of Hope. There are plans to have an adults' trip in August 2023 and a youth trip in Summer 2024. Please speak to Alex if you would like to know more about taking part in these trips.

On September 18th 2022, Alex, Gillian Lindley, Phil and Ruth Janes hope to visit Home of Hope to strengthen relationships with the folk there and have discussions to understand ways we can help. We plan to fill 8 suitcases of items that will be most beneficial to Home of Hope.

For more information please look at:

www.homeofhopemalawi.org
and www.malawiorphanfund.uk

How can you help?

Can you donate?

- A large suitcase you no longer use – we intend to leave all suitcases with Home of Hope.
- A spare laptop, with a reasonable battery and charger (if it does not have an operating system that is fine).
- A smart phone, again with a reasonable battery and charger unlocked (no SIM needed).
- Bras you no longer wear, in reasonable condition.
- Adult or children's underwear, new or good condition.
- Glasses – both for reading and distance.
- A pruning or grafting knife.
- Paracetamol or plasters.



Sunday Services

9am & 10:30am Morning Worship

7pm Sundays@Seven

Wednesday Service

10am Holy Communion



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