

Christmas Shoebox Appeal 2025

Blessing Service

The Community Unites

On the afternoon of 9 November, 2025, members of the local churches and wider community joined in a celebration of the Christmas Shoe Box Blessing Service at St. Augustine's RC Church. The Blessing Service followed the morning's community gathering at the war memorial at St. Gregory's C of E Church for Remembrance Day. The Blessing Service helped everyone to remember not only those affected in wars past but those who are suffering from war today in various parts of the world.

For many years, the local churches have worked with the local community to fill shoe boxes with gifts for people who live in extreme poverty and war-torn countries. Christians Together in Seaton and District chose to support the Blythwood Shoe Box Appeal this year. People were asked to follow the guidelines of the charity when sourcing and packing their shoe boxes. Items requested ranged from practical everyday products like soap, toothpaste and toothbrushes as well as hats, scarves and gloves. A gift or a toy was also placed into the boxes. **The Blythwood leaflet states, 'By filling a shoe box with simple things, you can bring warmth, joy and hope this Christmas.'**

Members of the local churches received and checked the boxes delivered to St. Augustine's Church and a staggering 196 boxes were counted prior to the collection for distribution on 11 November. These boxes will be added to the those collected from other venues and the amount reported so far is over 3,000 boxes.

The boxes from Seaton have now been taken to a distribution centre in Chard and have started their journey to Kiev in Ukraine. After additional checking at the central depot, Blythwood will add a Bible storybook for children, a book for teenagers or a calendar with Bible verses for adults in their own language. Every year, volunteers from the navy help to load the enormous lorries with the boxes, showing the strength of support for this venture. Blythwood also deliver shoe boxes to Albania, Bulgaria, Hungary, Kosovo, Moldova, Romania and Serbia.

The gift of shoe boxes is a way of showing these people who have lost so much that they are cared for and they are not forgotten. As we see on the news, homes have been destroyed, many civilians are living with no electricity, no facilities and children are unable to go to school because there is no transport. The Blythwood video shows people receiving the shoe boxes and the amount of joy that it brings them. Some children are heard saying, 'Where is this from?' and other people can be heard saying, 'Angels came and gave us such gifts' and 'God bless you.'

We celebrate the birth of Jesus at Christmas and it is important for us to listen to his words. Matthew 25:40: 'Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did it to me.'

Julie Dunnon (Secretary Christians Together in Seaton and District)