
THE MINISTER WRITES ...



Dear Friends,

Recently, I've been thinking about Matthew 9, the story of Jesus calling Matthew the tax collector, eating with society's outcasts, and then, on his way to heal a dying girl, stopping for a woman who'd been ill and isolated for twelve years.

What strikes me most is the order of things. Jesus doesn't wait for Matthew to clean up his life before calling him. He doesn't wait for the woman to introduce herself properly before responding to her. He simply sees people the world had stopped seeing and moves toward them.

When the religious leaders object to Jesus eating with "sinners," he answers with a line from the prophet Hosea: God desires mercy, not sacrifice. That's not mercy as a nice little 'extra' alongside our religious observance, it's mercy as the whole point of it. Mercy is the main 'thing'! It's so easy for any of us who care deeply about our faith to slip into sorting people into who belongs and who doesn't, who's respectable and who isn't. Jesus just keeps undoing that sorting!

I love the way that when the woman reaches out to touch his cloak, Jesus doesn't treat her as an interruption to his more important errand. He stops. He turns. He calls her "daughter", one word that restores everything those years of exclusion had taken from her. And then he goes on to the little girl, takes her hand, and tells her to get up.

This story about two healings, woven together, tells us something about how God works: not at a distance, but through stopping for the person right in front of us, through entering grief and exclusion and refusing to let them have the last word.

So, this is the question we must grapple with: who is reaching for the edge of our attention right now? Who have we, without really meaning to, learned to look past? Mercy isn't only found in dramatic rescues, it's found in the willingness to stop, even when we're busy, even when something else feels urgent, and to see the person in front of us. Friends, may we continue to be a church community known less for getting our boundaries right and more for the mercy that moves toward people.

With love,
Neil

PASTORAL NEWS

Since the last Comment we were pleased to hear of the birth of a great granddaughter for Margaret and Jimmy.

Our young people are returning from university and it's good to see them as they have a break from their studies.

A number of the church family have had surgery and we pray that their recoveries will be uncomplicated.

For those receiving ongoing treatment at the hospital, your prayers are valued.

We remember those who through health issues can no longer join with us for Sunday worship but enjoy the link to the service.

It is with sadness that we heard of the death of our friend Cathy Moss from The Minster. We keep her family in our prayers.



HOLIDAY AT HOME

THURSDAY 16TH TO FRIDAY 17TH JULY (10.30AM TO 4PM)

SUNDAY 19TH JULY (5PM TO 7PM)

Our Holiday at Home is fast approaching and registration forms are coming in. It is not too late to register and forms are available at the back of the church and in the large hall. You are welcome to any or all of the sessions and you are welcome to drop in at any time. It would be particularly good to have a large audience for the Belstead Singers concert on Friday afternoon. Please let us know if you would like lunch.

The programme "**DESTINATION FRANCE**" is now in place.

- Each day will begin with coffee
- Thursday will start with a picture quiz of French people and places
- We will then take a virtual tour of France with our old friend, Chris Parfitt
- After lunch there will be a quiet activity followed by a visit from ActivLives for gentle, seated exercise and Botcha
- Friday morning is craft morning, a large range of activities, something for everyone
- Friday afternoon we will have a concert by The Belstead Singers at 2.30pm followed by tea and cake
- There will be time to relax with the day's papers, catch up with old friends, make new ones.

On Sunday 19th July, everyone is warmly invited to afternoon tea at 5pm, followed by Songs of Praise, including requests, in the church at 6pm. Slips for Songs of Praise requests, a favourite hymn or worship song, reading or poem, are at the back of the church.

CLOSURE OF THE FAIR TRADE SHOP



The shop in Upper Brook Street has been struggling for some time, as fewer people tend to come into the town to shop; over recent years we have had to use reserves which had been placed with Shared Interest. The end of our second 5-year lease meant that our closure was inevitable.

It has been wonderful to have had this presence in the high street, giving a different message on trade and the effect buying on a fairtrade basis can make to people across the world who struggle for health care and education for their families and who are often exploited by large companies.

We will be closing the shop on Saturday 1st August and handing over the property to the landlords at the end of that month. We have been following a number of leads to find an alternative base in Ipswich, but nothing has quite worked out, so we have taken the opportunity to lease a very small shop in Hamilton Road, Felixstowe for six months to sell as wide a range of products as we can fit into a small space! Do visit us there when you are in Felixstowe. We are near the florist and opposite the post office and will be opening during August.

We will also have a few crafts, textiles and cards from the Unwrapped and Refill shop in Woodbridge Road. You may wish to get your refills there when you are no longer able to buy from us. The shop is just past the 'Golden Key' junction (now Sainsbury's). Alternatively, Zest in Queen Street stock a small range of laundry and toiletry products. Emmaus in Dales Road stocks Sesif if this is more convenient for you. They are open Tuesday to Saturday.

Thanks to those who have supported the shop over the years, and to the church for their loyal support from the early days 35 years ago when the shop opened in the present church lounge. In recent years we have been grateful for permission to park in the car park for our volunteers when on duty. It has been greatly appreciated.



PRAYERS FOR JULY

5th July

We pray for the Eastern Baptist Association celebration and AGM this afternoon at Christ Church. Thank you, Lord, that we are able to host this event and thank you for all the people coming who give us a sense of community and belonging. May we all be inspired to be more confident in Your leading from now on.

12th July

We pray for our Holiday at Home. We pray for the organisers, those on the church Life committee, the chefs, the befrienders and the presenters. We pray especially for the guests, that they will feel truly 'on holiday' and will value our friendship and Christian love for them.

19th July

We thank you for all those involved in delivering education as the school term ends. We pray for the teachers' relaxation and 'recharging of batteries'. We pray also for parents who now have to take on more work to entertain, care for and inspire their children, especially if this is difficult financially or mentally.

26th July

The Fair Trade Shop in Upper Brook Street closes its doors at the end of the week. We give thanks for the witness and service it has given to the town and traders in low-income countries for the last 36 years and pray for its future success in smaller premises. We pray that the volunteers and customers will be able to continue to support this ethical way of trading.



First Aid Support for Schools in Zimbabwe

Many schools in parts of Africa operate without first aid kits, trained staff or reliable emergency response systems. During his sabbatical, Rev George Kalu received a grant from Commitment for Life and partnered with the Zimbabwe Red Cross Society to help change that reality. Together they delivered seven first aid kits to church-related schools serving less privileged

communities in Zimbabwe, where government funding is limited.

The Falcon Junior School in Rainham, Harare, also received professional, certified training from Red Cross instructors. Headteacher Vimbai Nyamakambo described the week as "blissful... challenging but exciting" and said she is eager to apply the new skills and knowledge. George hopes this first visit will open doors to further support, enabling more schools to receive life-saving equipment and training. Thank you for supporting Commitment for Life.

SUFFOLK HISTORIC CHURCHES TRUST RIDE & STRIDE/HERITAGE DAY

Once again, we are participating in these events, being held on Saturday 12th September, and would welcome volunteers to sign-in cyclists and walkers throughout the day. A rota will be available in the church from mid-July. Sponsor forms for those wishing to walk or cycle in support of SHCT and our own church are available in the display area at the back of the church.



Thursday Forum is taking a break until 1st October, although the work of securing speakers goes on. I can promise you a speaker from:

East Anglian Air Ambulance (8th October)

Tools With A Mission (19th November)

Home-Start Suffolk (3rd December)

This is in addition to our other topics of interest and entertainments. (We have a musical folk duo, Quay Notes, this year)

During the summer we have planned two outings so we can keep in touch. One was on 25th June to Landguard Fort, and one will be early September to the Quay, St Margaret's Green. We also promote Holiday at Home so we hope to see some of our Forum regulars at this event.

I thought people would be interested in noting how much Forum has raised for charities this year. I'm very grateful for everyone's generosity.

Ann

Forum Date	Beneficiary	Amount
25 th Sep 2025	Bawdsey Radar	£70.00
2 nd Oct	Christ Church	£29.50
16 th Oct	Christ Church	£18.50
23 rd Oct	Christ Church	£19.00
30 th Oct	Ipswich Community Radio	£25.00
13 th Nov	Headway	£64.70
20 th Nov	Christ Church	£15.50
27 th Nov	4YP	£20.00
4 th Dec	Christ Church	£18.40
11 th Dec	EACH & 4YP	£62.50 (each)
8 th Jan 2026	Hearing Dogs	£94.00
15 th Jan	Activ Lives	£30.00
22 nd Jan	St Elizabeth Hospice	£55.00
29 th Jan	Mayor's Charities	£20.70
5 th Feb	Mary Rose Trust	£38.60
12 th Feb	Christ Church	£28.10
19 th Feb	Friends of Ipswich Library	£22.00
26 th Feb	Fisherman's Mission	£63.00
5 th Mar	Windrush Reflection Touring Bus	£30.90
12 th Mar	RSPB Woodbridge	£42.00
19 th Mar	Suffolk Family Carers	£43.50
26 th Mar	Cancer Research (B Nichols)	£45.00
16 th Apr	Christ Church	£40.70
23 rd Apr	EACH (John Skoyles)	£202.00
30 th Apr	Christ Church	£26.00
7 th May	Anglia Care Trust	£30.00
14 th May	Ipswich Society	£20.00
21 st May	Christ Church	£21.10
Total to external charities		£1,041.40
Total to Christ Church		£216.80

ECO-CHURCH CREATION CARE

Is this Utopian?

A new report by the World Inequality Lab aims to be the most comprehensive attempt yet to navigate the various crises that are pushing the world toward climate chaos, political extremism and ever greater economic and social tension. By incorporating inequality studies, climate science and proposals for creating a political coalition capable of reforming the world's financial architecture, it claims humanity can raise global living standards, reduce inequality and keep global heating within a 2°C rise. This “plan for equality and prosperity within planetary boundaries” is the product of 45 authors based on databases compiled by more than 200 researchers from around the world.

The report offers a set of bold policy proposals, including hefty wealth taxes on billionaires, (the megarich would be highly taxed because they are most responsible for the climate crisis), reductions in working hours, a change in diets as consumption of red meat is one of the main drivers of deforestation and ecological destruction, and a shift of investment from materially intense sectors like industry and mining to education and health. It claims that, if these and other measures are taken, 89% of the world population would see their incomes double by 2100 and global heating would be kept below 2°C above the preindustrial average.

Central to the report's thinking is the concept of “sufficiency”, the idea that people can enjoy a prosperous, healthy life without constantly striving to consume or accumulate more material possessions that degrade the natural world on which all life depends. This echoes ancient Indigenous beliefs in the inextricable connection between humanity and the natural world, as well as ideas of a country's success being based on “gross national happiness” rather than “gross domestic product.”

Tackling inequality is a central goal, with the greatest gains to be seen in the global south, while the other priority is reducing climate risks by cutting emissions as close to zero as possible. This is projected to keep global temperature rises to 1.8°C by the end of the century – considerably lower than the catastrophic 4°C to 4.5°C estimates under scenarios of slow decarbonisation and ever-increasing demand for material goods.

“A habitable, equal 21st century is materially possible,” the report concludes. “What stands in the way is not technical impossibility but political choice and the hard but crucial work of building a coalition behind it.” Cornelia Mohren, a co-author and environmental coordinator at the WIL, acknowledged the report was “visionary and maybe utopian” but said this was necessary to show other paths were possible. “It is good to know we can combine an equal world with staying within carbon budgets,” she said.

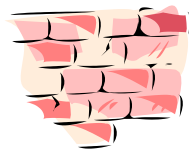
This report raises many questions and it is impossible to do it justice in this brief report. Is it Utopian? Does its vision come anywhere close to building the Kingdom of God on Earth? Just asking.

Kate

Eco-tip for July. When making a cup of tea, only boil the amount of water that you need. You waste electricity (and money) heating water you won't use.

OVER THE GARDEN WALL

... from our neighbours at St Pancras



Dear Friends,

I clearly became confused about the next date for my Comment message so am writing this on my return journey from a lovely week on Lake Garda. As we drove into France, I saw a sign which my poor French recollection seemed to say, 'It's 40° Hydrate yourself'. I must have been right because today at frequent intervals, in English and French, I read 'Heatwave, drink plenty of water.' I doubt we shall see such wise messages in the UK, but it's a useful warning to us.

We had what is becoming a regular May event: pilgrims, young and old, from Ipswich Catholic Churches walked to St Pancras, singing and praying as they recalled the once great devotion in our town to Mary, mother of Our Lord. At Lady Lane, many joined up, including members of the Guild of Our Lady of Grace, approaching St Pancras for a joyous Mass followed by refreshments.

It is 50 years since the birth of our diocese. There will be a big streamed celebration at our cathedral just before you read this, and a variety of events in Ipswich in early September which I shall report on for the next edition.

Pope Leo has just published his first encyclical, on AI. I've read through just once so shall content myself with comment on the earlier part. The first chapter talks of Babel and the attempt to build a tower reaching to heaven, and compares Nehemiah, who worked on rebuilding Jerusalem after years of exile in Babylon. The first godless endeavour was wrong whereas Nehemiah endeavoured to construct once more a place to worship God. In our day, as decisions on AI are made, God should be behind those endeavours.

Pope Leo XIV moved on to the work of his predecessor in *Rerum Novarum*. This encapsulated what became known as Catholic social teaching. It concerns the rights of workers, stressing the importance of Unions and fair pay and conditions for all. It was transformative, in an era characterised by huge poverty and great riches. Last week we heard of the first Trillionaire. Has much changed?! Pope Leo continues to a consideration of Just War theory and the extent to which it may still be relevant in our war-stricken world, before a thorough examination of issues around Artificial Intelligence. He's way ahead of me but I hope to have some meaningful comment in the autumn. Meanwhile, have a lovely summer. God bless you all.

Your Catholic friend,

Jean

PRAYERS FOR AUGUST

2nd August

As the rain and sun ripen crops in this country, we thank God that there will be an improved harvest this year. We remember those in other lands where rain is badly needed to ensure they have sufficient to feed their families and keep animals healthy.

9th August

We pray for T.W.A.M. (Tools with a Mission) as they send Agriculture kits to Africa and for the centres that train personnel in agriculture. With the conflict affecting shipping, we pray for the safe passage of shipments and for the distribution of the kits.

16th August

Many young people receive examination results shortly enabling them to plan for further studies for A levels, Apprenticeships, or study at university. We pray that they will receive good guidance so that they are able to fulfil their ambitions. We remember those young people who continue to seek employment in their first jobs.

23rd August

We pray for those who represent us on our local, county and district councils and in Parliament. May they have wisdom as they have to make difficult decisions which affect us all.

30th August

As our youth groups return to their weekly meetings, we thank God for the guidance and support given by their leaders. We pray that the young people enjoy the challenges their programmes present enabling them to grow in confidence as they learn new skills and teamwork.

DIARY DATES FOR 2026

All dates are subject to change

Church Meetings

4th Oct, 22nd Nov (with AGM)

Deacons' Meetings

9th July (emergencies only), 10th Sept, 15th Oct,
12th Nov, 10th Dec (emergencies only)

Youth Parades

11th Oct (Harvest Parade), 13th Dec (Gift Service)

Comment

From September, Comment will be produced every 2 months (see dates below)

For September and October, copy due 21st August

For November & December, copy due 23rd October

DIARY DATES FOR JULY

Emmaus Groups

Mondays in the Lounge (10.30am)

2nd & 4th Wednesdays (7.30pm)

1st & 3rd Thursdays in the Lounge (10.30am)

Sunday 5th EBA AGM (3.45pm)
Tuesday 14th Eco-Group Meeting (7.30pm)
Thursday 16th Holiday at Home (10.30am)
Friday 17th Holiday at Home (10.30am)
Sunday 19th Tea and Songs of Praise (5pm)

SERVICES FOR JULY

All Services will be led by our Minister, Revd Neil Coulson unless otherwise stated.

Sunday 5th July

10.45am Family Worship with Holy Communion

6.30pm EBA Celebration Service with Guest
Speaker, Revd Diane Watts
All church family and friends welcome!

Sunday 12th July

10.45am Family Worship

Sunday 19th July

10.45am Family Worship
6 pm Songs of Praise Service for our
Holiday at Home guests.
All church family and friends welcome!

Sunday 26th July

10.45am Family Worship

DIARY DATES FOR AUGUST

Emmaus Groups

Mondays in the Lounge (10.30am)

2nd & 4th Wednesdays (7.30pm)

1st & 3rd Thursdays in the Lounge (10.30am)

SERVICES FOR AUGUST

Sunday 2nd August

10.45am Family Worship with Holy Communion
led by The Very Reverend Keith Jones.
Keith is the Dean Emeritus of York

Sunday 9th August

10.45am Family Worship led by Mr Peter
Dawson. *Peter is a lay preacher and
Elder at St. John's URC*

Sunday 16th August

10.45am Family Worship

Sunday 23rd August

10.45am Family Worship

Sunday 30th August

10.45am Family Worship led by Mr William
Glasse. *William is a URC Lay Preacher
and Methodist Local Preacher*

DIARY DATES FOR EARLY SEPTEMBER

Thursday 3rd Thursday Forum meal at The Key
(midday)

SERVICES FOR EARLY SEPTEMBER

Sunday 6th September

10.45am All-age Worship with Holy Communion

*There will be no Service on
Sunday 27th September due to
the Ipswich Half Marathon.*
