



THE MINISTER WRITES ...



Dear All,

Last week, I was tasked with buying a new Christmas tree! This is not to replace the one in the lounge which is absolutely fine; it has served us well for many years and I'm sure it will continue to do so for quite some time yet! (And once again it went up far too early in my opinion!) Rather, the requested new Christmas tree is for one of our children and apparently, it needs to be small and full of lights if possible and so the search begins. I head onto the internet, onto Google and begin to type in the search box. As always, as I start typing, Google starts offering me helpful suggestions to complete my phrase. As I type 'Christmas' a list of possible second words and phrases appear below based on popular searches in Google. The 'second word' options were fascinating: Christmas... decorations, day, countdown, shopping, songs, crackers, events near me. However, guess what was top of the list of options! Yes, it was 'trees', 'Christmas trees!' How on earth did Google know?! Anyway, the small, illuminated Christmas tree search began well (but no purchase just yet!), and some of the other options were of interest and I'm sure many of us will, with good reason, be buying and/or enjoying some of these listed Christmas items over the coming weeks. I have to say though, I think it is also quite surprising what is not in this most helpful of lists!

I wonder, will you be embarking on any kind of search this Advent and Christmas time? Perhaps you'll also be using the internet to help you with some of your Christmas preparations and purchases. Perhaps some of you will be searching for that Christmas decoration or early bought gift that you stored so well that you can't now remember where it is! Or is it really just us who do this?! Okay, our season of Advent will no doubt include some

of those search engine suggestions. But I would like to add the following suggestions to our search! What about the wonderful Christmas story of God's love for humanity? What about Christmas hope, Christmas joy, Christmas peace and Christmas mystery?

Friends, let the search begin! I hope you find everything you are looking for in the coming weeks! And this Advent, I hope that for each of us there is that deep searching, deep longing for the coming of God into our world through Jesus with his wonderful gifts of redemption and renewal. Let us be open to God's presence in this season of searching and sensitive to the Spirit's leading as we seek to share God's love with others and to be light in the darkness of our broken, hurting world.

And then on Christmas Day we will rejoice as we find what we are looking for: *Hail! Thou ever-blessed morn! Hail, redemption's happy dawn! Sing through all Jerusalem, "Christ is born in Bethlehem!"* On this day we will celebrate as in many ways our search is over! We delve into a great mystery and find Jesus, God with us - we find a Saviour! We are not left alone. Before our search even begins, in love, God also goes on a search, and he comes among us who once were lost, but now are found. Christmas reminds us that we have much to be thankful for and much to share with others.

I hope you and your loved ones have a great Christmas!

With love,
Neil

A prayer for Christmas from the Anglican Daily Office:

*Almighty God,
who wonderfully created us in your own image
and yet more wonderfully restored us
through your Son Jesus Christ:
grant that, as he came to share our humanity,
so we may share the life of his divinity;
who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever. Amen.*

Neil



The recent TSBBOB Association Annual Christmas fund raising Fayre was on behalf of Tools with a Mission (TWAM).

We have committed as a Church and Old Boys Association to give support to this organisation which has been a part of Christ Church life for many years, since its formation from amongst our membership. The funds raised will support the recently replaced van as well as going towards the running costs of the organisation.

Details of the items useful to TWAM will continue to be published in the Notices, Comment and church website and hopefully the church members and Old Boys association will respond.

We have done well so far, so please keep checking for unwanted and spare tools etc. If you are unsure if TWAM will take certain items, I am happy to clarify.

Thank you for your ongoing support.

Ron Baker
Church Ambassador for TWAM

BLUE PLAQUE UNVEILING

On Tuesday 14th November 2023, a blue plaque was unveiled on the church site to commemorate the 1st Ipswich Company's 115 years of service to Boys Brigade in the church here in Tacket Street. The ceremony was led by Ron Baker with Graham Still, member of TSBBOB Association and Neil, who read the prayers and blessing. Several members of Christ Church attended together with 25 Old Boys.

It was the vision of our Founder-Captain R.H. Paul (Harry) to seek to start a BB Company in 1903, some 20 years after the BB started in Glasgow in 1883. BB was becoming popular nationally at the time, and often started from a church Sunday school, as was the case at Tacket Street Congregational Church.

Many great men and women have ensured that the Company continued in strength over those years with over 2,000 members serving in the Company. Some finished their service and moved on, with others staying to offer continuity, by becoming Officers, Leaders and church members, taking on various posts in the church.



Over the 115 years and continuing with the Old Boys Association, former members have remained faithful and loyal to the service they gave, recognising the impact it has made on their lives. Closure in 2018 was unfortunately inevitable at the time, but with a strong bond, the Old Boys Association has let us 'keep the memory alive'.

Ron Baker



An enjoyable evening saw a range of games being played, with table tennis for the active and a 'Fish and Chip' Quiz. Some interesting answers and scores pursued. Watch out for the next event!

FLOWERS IN THE CHURCH SANCTUARY

This is a gentle reminder regarding the provision of church flowers in the Sanctuary. These provide a very real link between the fellowship and those who receive them when they are distributed following the Sunday service.

The flower list for 2024 will be located in the Main Hall during the winter and then at the back of the church.

Please add your name to the list – perhaps to mark a special date. You may feel able to buy the flowers and arrange them yourself, or you may prefer to make a suitable donation to the flower fund and leave it to others to buy and arrange them.

PRAYER CALENDAR FOR DECEMBER

3rd December

Each year on 1st December the world commemorates World AIDS Day when people unite to show support for people living with HIV and to remember those who have died from AIDS related illnesses. Dear Lord, We pray for all those affected by HIV AIDS and that progress towards goals, which have stalled in recent years due to lack of resources, may continue to reduce the number of lives at risk. God of love, we are all your children. Free us from traditions and prejudices that deny the full humanity of other people. Help us to support each other in love, to stand together for justice. In Jesus' name. Amen

10th December

Dear Lord and Father, this week we offer our gifts to those most in need – in our community, further afield and worldwide. In all our giving may we also send our love to those who are struggling to find enough food for their families, to heat their homes and provide essentials. We pray that our small contributions will show these families that we care, and help them to enjoy the festive season. We pray too for the work of SARS saving lives in the most difficult situations. Be with them as they care for those suffering severe trauma and bless their work. We ask for your blessing too on our giving to Christian Aid, which works across the world wherever there is need.

17th December

Jesus, Light of the World, there is nowhere your light cannot shine. We think of places where hate seems to have the upper hand, praying that love and light may become evident and bring hope and change. We pray that we may find ways to share love and encouragement with all those we meet. We pray for God's blessing on our Christingle and Candlelit Services today.

*'All out of darkness we have light', which made the angels sing this night;
'Glory to God, on earth be peace, goodwill to all shall never cease.'*

24th December

We thank you, dear Lord, that we are able to celebrate the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ and we have the freedom to lift our voices in praise and thanksgiving. We share with our fellow Christians across the world giving thanks and worshipping with awe and wonder at His great gift to us this Christmastime.

*'God is with us': round the world the message bring,
He is with us; 'Welcome' all the bells on earth are peeling.*

Thursday Forum

at Christ Church
Tacket Street (next to Cox Lane car park)

Thursday Lunchtimes

Refreshments at low cost 12 noon - 1.00 pm

A short talk 1.10 - 1.50 pm

You are welcome to either or both



November's topics each Thursday were as varied as ever, although this month they all had strong local connections. We started with an inspiring talk by Marian and Chris Stephens about bee-keeping and bee-encouraging. They complimented us on our insect-friendly wild areas in the church grounds and gave us hints for our own gardening.

John Day is the owner of the East Anglian Traditional Art Centre and spoke very knowledgeably about Suffolk and Norfolk artists. He was followed by John Hammond who has volunteered at the St Elizabeth Hospice Shop in Martlesham since it opened. He too has become knowledgeable in his field and can tell what is valuable, and where and how to sell it to get the best price for the Hospice. He also spoke movingly about the work of the hospice itself. Councillor Carole Jones explained the need for, and the running of, food banks and pop-up shops locally. The month will finish with music – David Stainer and Diz Deacon will entertain us with their own brand of folk music.

There are only two weeks in December for Forum. The first week we will hear from Alan Cutting, who works via 'Together for Ipswich' (we heard about the setting up of this from Archdeacon Rhiannon King a couple of years ago). He'll tell us about the care for Ukraine refugees in Ipswich. We finish with our celebration of carols and readings, which is fast becoming a tradition.

The programme in January starts off with a 'high profile' name: Tim Passmore, the Suffolk Police and Crime Commissioner, on 11th January. The first foray out of East Anglia for a while comes on 18th January when we are transported to Ireland by our photographer friend Ian Van der Ende. The Suffolk Wildlife Trust is going to tell us about their (our) newest reserve, the Martlesham Wilds, having reached their goal of fundraising but now needing to furnish and care for the area. The first Thursday of February will still be local, but not a story of picturesque rural Suffolk. We'll get an update from Ipswich Town Pastor Paul Laughlin.

All these delights are preceded by the same quality meals as ever. Our five pairs of caterers work so reliably and so expertly, we can easily take them for granted, but we are very grateful to Janet and Siobhan, Netty and Trish, Anne and Nellie, Kate and John, and Stephen and Kiki, our most recently- recruited cooks.

Come once; come just for food; come just for the presentation; make it a habit. Whichever suits you best.

Ann

ECO GROUP CREATION CARE

This article first appeared in A Rocha UK's November eNews, and is reproduced with their permission.

A Rocha UK arocha.org.uk is a Christian charity working for the protection and restoration of the natural world, and committed to mobilising Christians and churches in the UK to care for the environment.

On 20 September, Prime Minister Rishi Sunak announced radical changes to a raft of environmental policies in what he called a “pragmatic, proportionate and realistic” approach to net zero by 2050. In the last few weeks, the Climate Change Committee (CCC), the government’s own advisors on climate, have offered a blistering rebuttal. Far from ‘realistic’, the CCC have warned that these policy reversals have damaged the UK’s ability to meet our climate commitments and will keep energy bills high for millions of households.

The announcements included delaying the ban on the sale of new petrol and diesel vehicles from 2030 to 2035, delaying the ban on installing oil and LPG boilers and new coal heating, in off-grid homes to 2035 rather than phasing them out from 2026, an exemption to the phase out of fossil fuel for the approximately one-fifth of UK homes who would struggle the most to switch to green alternatives, and scrapping of policies which would force landlords to upgrade the energy efficiency of their properties. The prime minister defended these moves, saying that he is still committed to net zero commitments and trying to “bring the country along with us” and save families thousands by delaying the green pledges.

Yet he has faced considerable criticism across business, politics (including several ex-Conservative PMs), and civil society, who have pointed out that this is a false economy which will not only cost more in the long run, but also put another nail in the coffin of the UK’s international climate leadership. Lisa Brankin, Chair of Ford UK, said that the delay on petrol and diesel vehicles undermines the “ambition, commitment and consistency” needed by industry from the government. While there was support from organisations representing rural communities for the delay in phasing out oil and gas boilers, citing the impact and cost on rural communities, the CCC looked over the numbers and, while the 2035 date for new fossil fuel boilers was “potentially compatible” with net zero by 2050, the exemption of 20% of households from the phase out will make “Net Zero considerably harder to achieve”. They also highlighted the widespread uncertainty this creates for consumers and supply chains. Similarly, the CCC found that pushing back efficiency requirements will cost renters about £325 a year more in bills. It also prolongs the chronic problem of cold, damp, poorly-insulated rental properties – properties that leak energy and can be a health hazard.

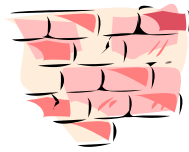
In the same speech the prime minister also announced the scrapping of a series of fictional policies – policies which have never been proposed by the Conservative government or the Labour Party. This included a requirement for households to use seven bins, a tax on meat, and compulsory car sharing. It’s easy to laugh at the idea of seven bins lined up outside your house on bin day, but it all points to a much deeper problem. A willingness of senior politicians to deliberately use false narratives to win votes and advance their agenda risks turning the environment into a wedge issue between political parties. This undermines public understanding of the issue, but also fractures the cross-party consensus in the UK, which has held fast since the 2008 Climate Change Act. Secondly, it also undermines the authority of independent, expert-led advisory bodies like the Climate Change Committee. It’s important that the current government (and the next, whatever its hue) has the courage to have an honest debate about environmental issues, guided by the evidence rather than their political ambitions, and invests in building political consensus around protecting people and the planet. And, it’s more important than ever that we pray for politicians and speak up on behalf of creation.

Hannah Eves, A Rocha UK Researcher and Executive Assistant

Kate Helleur

OVER THE GARDEN WALL

... from our neighbours at St Pancras



Dear Friends,

As I write, almost every news bulletin has further devastating reports. Currently, our world has many challenges. However, there is good news, both in Ipswich and worldwide, which is my focus this month.

Together for Ipswich (TFI) partnered with *Ipswich in Prayer* for a Prayer Breakfast which I was privileged to attend, at the Salvation Army in Woodbridge Road. It was exciting to hear of the increasing lay Christian chaplaincy support in Ipswich schools and colleges. In many years of inspecting post 16 colleges, both the bulk of them and the few that were Catholic, I was able to see the need for, and value of, chaplaincy. Teachers and lecturers often struggle valiantly to support young people and this trained Christian support in many of our schools is a real blessing. Also for those in Years 7-13, *Christian Youth Ministries* are doing a great job. Three big worship events are already planned for next year and the programme includes summer camps for this age group. Others spoke of support for women and TFI gave an update on their wonderful support for Ukrainians in Ipswich, and for the young men housed in our Novotel. Some have been granted asylum and the others will have moved, mainly to the Midlands and North West, by the time you read this. All our town's Christian volunteers deserve our thanks and need our prayers.

Moving to a worldwide perspective, several weeks ago Pope Francis published *Laudate Deum* (Praise God). He called the climate crisis 'one of the principal challenges facing society and the global community'. He will fly to UAE on 1st December to meet world leaders and will attend the climate change conference, COP 28, on 2nd December. His earlier encyclical, *Laudato Si'*, published in 2015, was read worldwide by more people than any other papal document. I talked to boys in a Ugandan secondary school about this and on my next visit the school compound was totally changed: the boys had taken up the challenge to care for 'Our common home'! We have seen the effect of climate change in heat waves and floods, and the devastation along our coast. *Laudate Deum* tells us that emissions per individual in the US are about 7 times greater than the average of the poorest countries. The latter suffer most from this, as I know too well from the recent desperate hunger in parts of E Africa which I have visited.

As we approach Advent, let us keep all the many worldwide needs in our prayers, also thanking God for the good work being done in our own town.

Jean

PRAYER CALENDAR FOR JANUARY

These prayers have been written by Junior Church

7th January

It's New Year and we pray for our church to thrive and grow this year, and for good health for our congregation. Help us to show other people your love so that they can see your light shining through us.

14th January

The weather is cold and we pray for those who don't have a safe, warm home to live in. We pray for people who are homeless and the people who were flooded out of their homes in the autumn storms. We hope that they will soon have somewhere nice to live.

21st January

We think about Holocaust Memorial Day and we pray especially for all children caught up in conflict around the world. Be with them Lord. We think of children who can't go to school for so many different reasons: danger, war, not being able to afford books and uniform, needing to stay home and work, or simply not being allowed to, like the girls in Afghanistan. Thank you for our schools and teachers, and the opportunities we have for education.

28th January

Today is World Leprosy Day. Jesus healed people with leprosy and loved them when no-one else would be near them. We pray for people with leprosy and all the families affected by it. New training for doctors and nurses is starting and we pray that many people will come forward to learn how to care for people with leprosy.

DIARY DATES

Monday Emmaus Group in the Lounge at 10.30am finishes on 11th December and restarts on 8th January

Wednesday Evening Emmaus Group at 7.30pm finishes on 13th December and restarts on 10th January

Thursday Emmaus Group in the Lounge at 10.30am finishes on 7th December and restarts on 4th January

Tuesday 28th November 12.00noon Prayer Lunch

Thursday 7th December 3pm meeting with Ben Marshall (Artistic Management)

Tuesday 12th December 9.30am Tots Plus Party

Thursday 21st December 10.30am Carols at Tooley's

Thursday 11th January 7.30pm Deacons' Meeting

Tuesday 23rd January 12noon Prayer Lunch

Friday 2nd February 7.30pm Church Life Meeting

Thursday 8th February 7.30pm Deacon's Meeting

Sunday 18th February 12.30pm Church Meeting

SERVICES FOR DECEMBER

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

Sunday 3rd December

10.45am Advent Sunday Family Worship with Holy Communion
Amnesty International will be present for card signing after our service

Sunday 10th December

10.45am Parade and Gift Service on the 2nd Sunday of Advent

Sunday 17th December

10.45am Family Worship on the 3rd Sunday of Advent
Junior Church will be making Christingles

6.30pm Readings and Carols by Candlelight followed by mince pies

Sunday 24th December

10.45am Family Worship on the 4th Sunday of Advent

Monday 25th December

10.45am Christmas Day Family Worship
A short all-age service

Sunday 31st December

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

SERVICES FOR JANUARY 2024

All Services will be led by our Minister, Revd Neil Coulson

Sunday 7th January

10.45am Family Worship with Holy Communion and Commissioning of Deacons

Sunday 14th January

10.45am Family Worship

Sunday 21st January

10.45am Family Worship

Sunday 28th January

10.45am Family Worship

Sunday 4th February

10.45am Leprosy Sunday Family Worship with Holy Communion
Tamsyn Filby, from The Leprosy Mission will be speaking.
The service will be followed by a Church Family meal to raise money for The Leprosy Mission.