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## THE MINISTER WRITES ...



<sup>27</sup> My sheep hear my voice. I know them, and they follow me. <sup>28</sup> I give them eternal life, and they will never perish. No one will snatch them out of my hand. <sup>29</sup> What my Father has given me is greater than all else, and no one can snatch it out of the Father's hand. <sup>30</sup> The Father and I are one.' *John 10:27-30*

Dear All,

In these verses in John's Gospel, we find Jesus saying "*My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me.*" For many this is understood in quite a limited, exclusive way, and of course, I respect this approach. But I do think there as a wonderful opportunity to interpret

this verse, not as a narrow condition for belonging, but as a broad and inclusive recognition of all those who respond to divine love in many different forms. This is not to dishonour our own Christian tradition, no way! We thank God for it, we rejoice in it, this is our way of life! This is where we find our amazing God, so awesomely revealed to us in Jesus, our way, our truth, and our life. But at the same time, as those who live in a diverse society, this passage can provoke a reminder that God's love cannot be confined to one denomination, (or two in our case!), or one faith tradition, or one people group. Certainly, from a more theologically liberal perspective, surely, the image of Jesus as the Good Shepherd extends to all who seek compassion, justice, and truth - whether they explicitly follow Jesus or not.

Valuing a more generous, open minded interpretation may be really helpful to us when we are hoping to engage in friendly open-hearted dialogue with people of other faiths, like our Muslim friends. It was so great to meet with our friends at the Ipswich Mosque the other week, we received a very warm welcome, enjoyed an engaging conversation and we are really looking forward to further opportunities to share friendship with them in the coming months. Valuing a more generous, open minded interpretation may be really helpful to us when we are hoping to engage in friendly open-hearted dialogue with those who are sadly on the margins of society: in God's all-encompassing love, we are able to affirm that they too are known and held by God.

Sticking with this theme of God's generous love, perhaps we should also mention Jesus' statement in verse 30, "*The Father and I are one.*" Again, this is often interpreted by more conservative Christians as a claim to divine exclusivity. However, we might wonder whether this unity can be understood, not as a boundary-marker, but as a model of divine-human harmony. Rather than using it to claim that only those who believe a specific doctrine are saved, might we see this as a call for all people to live in unity with God's loving and just purposes? Might we see a passage such as this as one which reminds us to challenge religious triumphalism and to promote humility, peacebuilding, and cooperation across lines of belief? Might it be a springboard for ecumenical and interfaith collaboration and a reminder that divine truth often transcends human categories?

With much love,  
*Neil*

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## CHRISTIAN AID WEEK

We had a busy, enjoyable and successful Christian Aid Week. Both the plant sale and the concert with delicious afternoon tea went very well. Sincere thanks to all who helped in any way at either event and thank you all for supporting them. As money is still coming in, we will have the totals in next month's Comment.

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### PRAYER CALENDAR FOR JUNE

1<sup>st</sup> June

Let us continue to pray for Myanmar as it recovers from the devastating earthquake. Pray for its leaders that they may be open to foreign aid coming in to help.

8<sup>th</sup> June

Pentecost. Thank God for sending his Holy Spirit upon us to teach us and guide us. Pray for a fresh anointing upon Christians everywhere.

15<sup>th</sup> June

We especially remember fathers today. Let us thank God for fathers who set a good example to their children and let us pray for greater stability in family life.

22<sup>nd</sup> June

Let us pray for the work of Headway, the charity whom we chose at last month's church meeting. They provide support, information and advocacy for people affected by brain injury.

29<sup>th</sup> June

We continue to lift all the war-torn areas of the world, praying for peace and reconciliation in Ukraine, Gaza, South Sudan and Kashmir.

## HOLIDAY AT HOME

Our Holiday at Home on July 24<sup>th</sup> – 25<sup>th</sup> (10.30am to 4pm) and 27<sup>th</sup> July (5pm to 7pm) is fast approaching and you are welcome to any or all of the days. Information and registration forms are available at the back of the church, please take one for anyone you think may be interested. If you are able to help in any way, Church Life would be pleased to hear from you. We need caterers, help with crafts on Friday morning, help with transport and most importantly, friendly faces to greet and talk to our guests. Thank you

*Anne Durnford, chair Church Life Committee*

### Holiday at Home,

Thursday 24<sup>th</sup>- Friday 25<sup>th</sup> July 10.30am-4pm  
Sunday 27<sup>th</sup> July 5-7pm



With many activities taking a break over the summer months, there will be two days of social activities for anyone who would like a change from the weekly routine. Do join us for our

#### **Holiday at Home at Christ Church, Tacket Street IP4 1AU**

**"This Year We're Off to Sunny Spain- Viva Espana !"**

Each day will begin with coffee

There will be two days of activities and entertainment including

Crafts, games and quizzes some with a Spanish theme

Learn some Spanish

Lunch will be served

A concert by Phoenix Jazz, and more

And, of course, time to sit and chat to old friends and new.

Sunday afternoon we will serve afternoon tea at 5pm followed by "Songs of Praise " at 6pm, including your requests.

We have again applied for funding from Ipswich Borough Council Make a Difference fund.

You are welcome to any or all of the days . If you are interested, registration forms are available at the back of the church and in the large hall or telephone Anne 01473 727790, email [durnfordanne@gmail.com](mailto:durnfordanne@gmail.com) who will be pleased to give you more information.

Transport can be provided if required.

## BRAIN TEASER

Can you find the names of 18 books of the Bible in the paragraph below WITHOUT the aid of your Bible?

*I once made a remark about the hidden books of the Bible. It was a lulu. Kept people looking so hard for facts. For some it came as a revelation, for others it was the genesis of friendly rivalry within the family. And some were in a jam, especially as the names of the books were not capitalised. But the truth finally struck home to numbers of people. I want it to be a most fascinating few moments for you. Or it could drain a human mind for hours! Yes, there will be some really easy ones to spot but some may require judges to help them and it will be a real job. I readily admit it usually takes the Minister to find one of them and the lamentations will be loud and long when it is found. A little old lady says she brews a cup of tea so she can concentrate better, but hard as she tries often the best her eyes can see is sixteen or seventeen. Go on, see how well you can compete. Relax now, for there really are eighteen books of the Bible in this paragraph.*

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## HEADWAY

Our chosen charity for July – December 2025 is **Headway**, a charity that supports individuals with brain injuries, strokes and neurological conditions. Already we have a good connection with the CEO, Helen Fairweather.



She has given us some introductory leaflets; please take one from the back of the church, to familiarise yourself to what we are raising money for.

Helen is coming to talk to Thursday Forum on 13<sup>th</sup> November – book the date if you can.

We were also given two free tickets to a very prestigious conference on 21<sup>st</sup> May which Moira Pinkney and I attended. The keynote speaker was Jonathan Van Tam, Deputy Chief Medical Officer during Covid who spoke about his experiences of leadership and communication skills at that time.

Other talks included one about Epilepsy during pregnancy, FND (Functional Neurological disorder), and one from Laybrook, a specialist bed and chair supplier. A doctor described his experiences of having a stroke himself and the Professor of Rehabilitation from the University of Essex spoke about developments there. Roger Blake spoke about Autism and Tim Lockington spoke about Parkinsons Disease. If you want extra information on any of these, just ask Moira or myself. We may have a leaflet!

Headway's basic service is to people with brain injuries due to brain tumours, accidents, or stroke sufferers, or those suffering from dementia, and they offer a range of therapies and activities based in Ipswich and Bury St Edmunds. However they are also passionate about the causes and exact diagnosis of these injuries, so their remit is wide-ranging.

They are fund-raising for various specific items, like a fleet of wheelchair-accessible vehicles instead of ordinary cars and a minivan. It may be that we will be able to fundraise for something like this?

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# ECO CHURCH – CREATION CARE

At the Church Meeting on 4<sup>th</sup> May, Christ Church adopted the following Environmental Policy:

## **The context**

Christ Church recognises the urgency of the climate and nature crises. We believe in our Christian responsibility to care for creation and will take the practical steps necessary to strive towards safeguarding the life of the Earth in our church life and as individuals.

As a member of the Baptist Union and the United Reformed Church, we acknowledge the commitment made by both denominations to achieve Net Zero in our church life, the URC by 2030 and the BU by 2035. In line with these commitments, we will work towards reducing our carbon footprint year on year.

We accept our responsibility to use resources wisely so that climate change is mitigated, biodiversity protected, finite resources conserved and waste and pollution minimised. We will work with the A Rocha Eco-Church programme to guide and develop our practical actions.

## **Worship and Teaching**

Care for creation will be embedded in the life of Christ Church, in our worship, children's work and study. We will communicate our understanding of our responsibility for all that is entrusted to us in creation, making the links between damage to the environment and social and global injustices.

## **Buildings and Energy**

We recognise our most important environmental impact will be an ongoing reduction in our carbon emissions. We will seek to reduce our greenhouse gas emissions, working towards meeting our energy needs from renewable sources and reaching net zero carbon by 2035 at the latest. We will endeavour to make environmentally positive choices in all aspects of our work, including using eco-friendly products, reducing waste, improving energy efficiency, and encouraging environmental awareness among all users of our buildings.

## **Land and Nature**

We commit to an environmentally friendly approach to our church grounds, managing our land as far as is practicable to be kind to nature and encourage bio-diversity.

## **Community and Global Engagement**

We will engage with organisations and with the political process, locally, nationally and globally, in addressing the climate crisis. Recognising the disproportionate impact the changing climate has on the poorest in the world, we will support charities and campaigns which address this injustice.

## **Lifestyle**

We will actively encourage individual members of our congregation to examine their own lifestyle and to take actions in their personal lives, including assessing their own carbon footprint, reducing their use of fossil fuels, considering how they travel and the food choices they make. We will promote re-use, recycling and repair and the avoidance of waste.

## **Christ Church Eco-Group**

**May 2025**

## Eco-tip for June

Let's ditch the disposable coffee cups. Take your reusable cup with you if you are going to want a take-away coffee.



Huge thanks to everyone who has attended Thursday Forum this year and especially for those who have donated, either to the charity of the day or, if the speaker is not connected to a charity, to the general use of the church. The donations to the church are on top of the excess we get from the sale of food.

Total given to the church this season: £163.63

Total given to charities this season: £911.00

Forum Date	Beneficiary	Church	Charity
03/10/24	Church	£12.70	
10/10/24	Hope Health Action		£48.00
17/10/24	Community Hub CHIP		£42.80
24/10/24	Mary's Meals		£95.00
31/10/24	Church	£18.52	
07/11/24	Church	£21.31	
14/11/24	Ipswich Love		£27.20
21/11/24	Church	£15.30	
28/11/24	Headway Suffolk		£39.20
05/12/24	Alzheimer's Research		£39.10
12/12/24	ITFC Foundation		£59.00
09/01/25	Maritime Trust		£25.00
16/01/25	Church	£30.00	
23/01/25	RABI Farming		£62.70
30/01/25	Brave Futures		£48.50
06/02/25	Church	£16.00	
13/02/25	Raptor Rehab.		£34.50
20/02/25	ESNEFT Charity		£77.00
27/02/25	Cirdan Sailing Trust		£50.00
06/03/25	Safe Harbour		£30.00
13/03/25	Church	£24.80	
20/03/25	Alzheimer's Research		£37.00
27/03/25	Church	£25.00	
03/04/25	Emmaus Suffolk		£52.00
24/04/25	Samaritans		£52.00
01/05/25	For Children & Young People		£72.00
08/05/25	Inside Out Community		£20.00

## DIARY DATES FOR JUNE

Thursday 12 <sup>th</sup>	Deacons' meeting (7.30pm)
Sunday 22 <sup>nd</sup>	Church meeting (midday)
Tuesday 24 <sup>th</sup>	Prayer lunch (midday)
Thursday 26 <sup>th</sup>	Forum outing to Bressingham

### Emmaus Groups

Mondays at 10.30am in the Lounge

2<sup>nd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> Wednesdays at 7.30pm

1<sup>st</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> Thursdays at 10.30am in the Lounge

### Dates for July/August's Comment

Copy Due Date     Friday 20<sup>th</sup> June

Publication Date     Sunday 29<sup>th</sup> June

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## SERVICES FOR JUNE

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

### **Sunday 1<sup>st</sup> June**

10.45am     Family Worship with Holy Communion led by Revd David Thompson  
*David is a retired Baptist Minister*

### **Sunday 8<sup>th</sup> June**

10.45 am     Pentecost Sunday Family Worship led by Revd David Mayne  
*David is the Eastern Baptist Association Regional Minister Team Leader*

### **Sunday 15<sup>th</sup> June**

10.45am     Family Worship

### **Sunday 22<sup>nd</sup> June**

10.45 am     Family Worship followed by the Church Meeting  
*Please bring a packed lunch to eat before the Meeting*

### **Sunday 29<sup>th</sup> June**

10.45 am     Family Worship

### **Sunday 6<sup>th</sup> July**

10.45 am     Family Worship with Holy Communion led by Revd Graham Edwards  
*Graham is a retired URC Minister*

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