
THE MINISTER WRITES ...



Dear All,

I'd like to share some thoughtful and challenging words with you written by Fr Richard Rohr, the Catholic priest and writer:

Christianity is a lifestyle—a way of being in the world that is simple, non-violent, shared, and loving. However, we made it into an established “religion” (and all that goes with that) and avoided the lifestyle change itself. One could be warlike, greedy, racist, selfish, and vain in most of Christian history, and still believe that Jesus is one’s “personal Lord and Saviour”... The world has no time for such silliness anymore. The suffering on Earth is too great.”

For me, this is a fitting thought that is worthy of reflection as we move into the season of Lent during March. With Lent coming, some of us might now be deliberating over what it is we are going to give up as part of our journey through this season. For others, this tradition may not be one we personally follow. Either way, I wish you well for this coming season of Lent and I am certain that we will all remain committed to truly following in the way of Jesus our Lord and to being those who maintain an open and embracing approach to challenge and change within our lives.

During this Lent, let us find time for God in some way and for regaining our sense of mystery and wonder. God is always with us and our journey through Lent is an opportunity for us to be open to the divine and this will always draw us onwards in our discipleship. Let us seek, find, create

spaces and opportunities during this season of Lent to draw close to God, to lay down all that hinders us from living in him and then to find ourselves once again astounded by the love and grace of God. And in this unfathomable love, we cannot then but give ourselves to serve others, as we are able, and to share God's redeeming and transforming love, justice and peace with a suffering Earth.

With much love,

Neil

An Affirmation for Lent:

We believe and trust in God who has created and is creating, who has come in Jesus - the word made flesh - to reconcile and make new, and who works in us and others by the power of the Holy Spirit.

We are called to be the church: to celebrate God's presence, to live with respect for creation, to love and serve others, to seek justice and resist evil, to proclaim Jesus, crucified and risen, our judge and hope.

In life and death, in life beyond death, God is with us. We are not alone. Thanks be to God. Amen.

A blessing for Lent:

Now may God, who gives seed to the sower and grain to the reaper, provide all that we need so that we may produce a rich harvest of faith, love, justice and joy for the good of the earth and its people, and to the glory of God. Amen.

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LEPROSY MISSION LUNCH

The recent Leprosy Mission morning service and lunch raised £957.62.

FLOWERS FOR 2025

There is a new flower list for 2025 on the church noticeboard in the school hall. If you would like to provide the flowers for a particular Sunday, please fill in your name on the date/s you choose.

Maybe a date which has special significance for you, an anniversary, birthday, celebration or for no special reason other than you love to see the flowers on a Sunday and know that they are delivered after the service to members and friends with love from Christchurch.

FROM CHURCH LIFE COMMITTEE

Fairtrade Big Brew

On Saturday 8th March, 10am-12.30pm, we will be holding a Fair Trade Big Brew in Christ Church Hall. Come and enjoy a cup of Fair Trade tea or coffee and a biscuit. We will be holding our popular baking competition, and are delighted that Jane Sago from the WI has agreed to judge for us again. This year it is a tray-bake. The choice is yours-nuts, apricots, dates, bananas, chocolate, coffee to suggest a few - let your imagination loose!

Jane asks that we present 6 slices from our bakes on a plate. There will be a cake stall. If you are able to bake a cake, using Fair Trade ingredients where possible, it would be much appreciated. Money raised will be sent to Transform Trade, formerly the Traidcraft Exchange, who provide financial help, training and advice to enable those in the developing world achieve a better standard of living, health care and education. There will also be a Fair Trade stall from the Fair Trade Shop in Upper Brook Street.

Christ Church has been a committed Fair Trade church for many years, and being a Fair Trade church is an integral part of our being an Eco church. While the climate crisis affects us all, our friends in the developing world have been particularly hard hit-drought followed by

torrential rains, changes in seasons causing crop failures etc. Many are using their Fair Trade premium to help counteract the many problems this causes, by, such as planting trees, to offer much needed shade and to prevent soil erosion, installing irrigation systems and water storage for when rains do come.

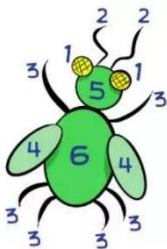
We look forward to seeing you.

Christian Aid Week

Advance notice.

Our main Christian Aid Week event this year is to be a concert by vocal ensemble Octave on Sunday 18th May at 3pm, followed by afternoon tea. More details later. However, we are still planning to have the popular “over the wall” plant sale at the front of the church the previous Saturday morning on 10th May. Not only a successful fund raiser, but a good chance for outreach and interaction with passers-by. If you are starting to split plants, take cuttings, plant seeds, please think of Christian Aid and do some extra ones for the plant sale.

Many thanks



BEETLE DRIVE

The 17th Ipswich Scouts, Cubs and Beavers are holding a Beetle Drive on Monday 31st March from 6.30pm in the Christ Church Hall. It will cost £1 per person to take part, with cakes available to buy on the night. All money raised will be going to Scouting funds. All are welcome.



In choosing speakers for Thursday Forum we try to have as wide a range as possible, including history, local interest, charities, local personalities, music, art, drama, literature and just quirky topics. We don't pay a speaker's fee, but we have always had incredibly good presentations. Guests have the

opportunity to give to the relevant charity at the end of each presentation and we have proved ourselves to be very generous.

Three points come from this introduction:

In March, which is Lent, we have two references to the season and to the fact that Forum is part of Christ Church's outreach. Bob Hamilton, Diocesan Pioneer developer, is coming on 6th March to talk about some of the initiatives on the local Anglican scene, including 'Safe Harbour', operating out of St Helen's Church. Then on 27th March, Viola Jones will take Christian Imagery in art as her theme.

If YOU have a particular theme you would like to hear about, or, better still, if you can help me get in touch with a speaker, please let me know and we'll try to accommodate them

As a direct result of the talk we had on Living with Dementia, I have signed up to do a 26-mile trek in July, for Alzheimer's Society. I have a JustGiving page, www.justgiving.com/page/ann-fox-5 and also a paper list. Please bear in mind that the church charity, when we've decided on one, will benefit from my walking the Orwell Challenge in the summer too, so feel free to choose one or the other.

Here is the provisional programme for March:

- 6th March Bob Hamilton, diocesan Pioneer Developer, Safe Harbour
- 13th March John Ferguson, international photographer
An Eye for Life, his exhibition in the Wolsey Gallery
- 20th March Claire Staddon, CEO Emmaus Suffolk, The Work of Emmaus
- 27th March Viola Jones, Christian Imagery, relevant to the season

PRAYER CALENDAR FOR MARCH

2nd March: Metrological spring began on 1st March. We thank God for the early signs of the new season that we see around us and pray that our lives may reflect the new beginnings. As we join together to celebrate the work of Fair Trade, we pray that the lives of those who provide goods will be blessed.

9th March: We have an opportunity to join in THE DIFFERENCE course organised by Together for Ipswich. We pray that those attending may feel led to make a difference in their lives.

16th March: Our Lent course begins this week At Castle Hill and St. Johns U.R.C. We pray that we may be challenged as we prepare for Easter. Remember the area partnership of our local churches and Hadleigh U.R.C.

23rd March: As our planet struggles with climate change, let us think of the part we can play in being good stewards of all God has given us. We think of those displaced from their homes and those who live in very poor conditions. They have so little compared to us and yet they often share what they have with their neighbour.

30th March: Lord bless our young people in the organisations Tots+ and Junior Church. May they find friendship and fellowship as they join together to follow their programmes. Bless their leaders and may the enthusiasm they show inspire the young people in their care.

BMS WORLD MISSION

BMS World Mission is radically different in 2025 from its origins in 1792, so let's take a "Then-and-now" look at the Society.

Then

In the 18th century there weren't many Protestant missionaries and even fewer missionary societies. Some Baptists even thought that mission was theologically unsound. But in 1792 Northamptonshire shoemaker and Baptist pastor, William Carey, published *An Enquiry into the Obligation of Christians to Use Means for the Conversion of the Heathens*, a survey of the world's countries and people groups and a call to Christians to engage in mission.

Challenged that it was now time to do more than just pray about those without the gospel, on 2nd October 1792 a group of fellow ministers in Northamptonshire founded the 'Particular Baptist Society for the Propagation of the Gospel among the Heathen', later known as the Baptist Missionary Society. The following year, William Carey and John Thomas were sent to India to begin the mission work, and their departure was a turning point in the history of Christian mission. They were the first English non-conformists to travel to India with the sole purpose of mission, and they pioneered a pattern of missionary activity that quickly became widespread.

William Ward and Joshua Marshman and their families arrived in India in 1800 to join William Carey and settled in the Danish colony of Serampore just north of Kolkata. The early work in India developed in several areas: preaching and theological teaching; education and the founding of schools; translation and the printing of Bibles and leaflets; campaigning against injustices such as sati (or suttī, the Hindu practice where a widow was burnt alive on the funeral fire with her late husband's body) and infanticide.

Now

All the early missionaries were from Britain, but it's different in 2025. Yes, there are still Europeans working in different countries, often in professional roles, but BMS also partners with national Christian organisations in the countries where it works, and supports workers in

those organisations. Some new people who are supported by BMS include:

Ardi Wiradinata, Indonesia: Ardi is Director of Mission with BMS partner Asia Pacific Baptist Federation (APBF), responsible for connecting 40,000 churches and 65 Baptist conventions across 22 countries in Asia and the Pacific, bringing them together in the name of mission. Those might seem like daunting numbers — especially as APBF has set a goal of reaching all nations and people groups in Asia and the Pacific by the end of 2040!

Barnabas Hembron, Bangladesh: Barnabas is working as Mission Co-ordinator for BMS partner the Bangladesh Baptist Church Sangha, helping steer its evangelism and mission programmes. Barnabas also helps moderate the Department of Evangelism, Ethnic Unity and Culture at the National Church Council of Bangladesh: he's the pastor of the Baptist Church in Dhaka and he's a tutor at the College of Christian Theology Bangladesh!

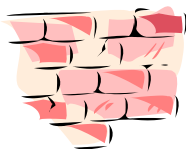
Pastor J Lalduhawma, Cambodia: After ordination Pastor J worked in the Baptist Church of Mizoram in north-west India. In 2013, he and his wife Lalrengpuii were chosen to be sent to Cambodia. As part of his role in Cambodia, Pastor J pastors the Horiaios Baptist Church and runs a dormitory ministry. The dorm ministry was set up to provide students further education from rural areas with an affordable place to live. At the dorm, students can take English and computer classes, and many students have found faith at Pastor J's church!

Wissam Nasrallah, Lebanon: Wissam grew up in Saudi Arabia after fleeing Lebanon to escape the civil war, and gave his life to God when he was 14. After moving to France for university and spending several years working in finance in Paris, he felt called to return to Lebanon and joined BMS partner Thimar as its Chief Operations Officer in 2017, working to share the Word of God, bring relief and alleviate poverty across Lebanon.

Edited from material from BMS World Mission

OVER THE GARDEN WALL

... from our neighbours at St Pancras



Dear Friends,

Last night, having returned from a few days in Dorset to see my sister, I asked myself what I could write about this month. Soon, I had the answer! You may have seen on the local news that our diocesan cathedral, in Norwich, has serious structural problems. It's the second largest Catholic cathedral in the country, a huge Victorian Gothic Grade 1 listed building towards the outskirts of Norwich, but easily accessible by bus from Norwich station. Like all cathedrals, it functions as does a parish church, but also has a special function in the diocese for example for ordinations and other special events. These occur at Christmas and Easter but also in Holy Week; many services in both Anglican and Catholic cathedrals are similar. We usually have a coach from Ipswich to the Chrism Mass, where the oils used for baptism, confirmation and anointing the sick will be blessed for use during the next year. It's a lovely event, accompanied by singing from the excellent choir, and concluding with hot cross buns for all!

Like most Anglican cathedrals, we are blessed that we have a good bookshop and an excellent cafe. There are numerous activities beyond the services, from a night shelter to fitness classes and a mother and baby group. It would be catastrophic if it were damaged beyond repair. Historic England have generously donated £57,000 for a survey of the roof and drainage system, to discover the repairs needed. Probably it will cost millions to repair, so here's hoping there are some generous bequests!

Recently I discovered a project called Divine Renovation, which began in Canada. A major feature is encouraging and equipping parishes to engage in evangelism. A feature is inclusion of Alpha courses, working in conjunction with Nicky Gumbel, who pioneered these courses now used worldwide. Some Catholics will disagree but I think it makes sense for

Christians to work together, where possible. One speaker at a zoom session I watched last night said:

'Failure is not an option - it's an obligation.
The virtue is learning from failure!'

I think that's quite profound.

As I write, the third anniversary of the invasion of Ukraine is imminent. Ipswich will once again mark it with a vigil at the Town Hall. I think I've been to them all! We need to pray for the fighting to end and realistic plans for the future to be agreed. Our world has numerous problems, but our God is great. Now more than ever we must pray that world leaders have wisdom as they make decisions.

Your Catholic friend

Jean

DIARY DATES FOR MARCH

Saturday 8th Transform Trade Big Brew 2025 Coffee morning and
 Baking Competition (10am)
Thursday 13th Deacons' meeting (7.30pm)
Friday 28th Church Life meeting (7.30pm)
Tuesday 25th Prayer lunch (midday)

Emmaus Groups

Mondays at 10.30am in the Lounge (not during Lent Groups)
2nd & 4th Wednesdays at 7.30pm (not during Lent Groups)
1st & 3rd Thursdays at 10.30am in the Lounge

Lent Groups

Wednesday 12th, 19th, 26th 2pm & 7pm Lent Study Group

SERVICES FOR MARCH

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

Sunday 2nd March

10.45 am Family Worship with Holy Communion

Sunday 9th March

10.45 am Family Worship

Sunday 16th March

10.45am Family Worship

Sunday 23rd March

10.45 am Family Worship

Sunday 30th March

10.45am Mothering Sunday Family Worship

Sunday 6th April

10.45 am Family Worship with Holy Communion
