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**THE MINISTER WRITES ...**

Dear All,

As the important UN Climate Change Conference, COP 26, is taking place as you receive our November Comment, I would like to remind us if I may of some of the reflections we considered a few weeks ago as we thought about caring for creation. Take a moment, if you can, to meditate on Psalm 104. In Psalm 104:24, the psalmist describes the beauty of creation, declaring, 'O Lord, how manifold are your works! In wisdom you have made them all'. Reading through this Psalm, we note that the writer grasped how creation works. He knew where the birds nest, and where the mountain goats live, the great skill of a lion as it hunts its prey, and the vast array of creatures living in the water. He knew creation intimately; he must have spent time observing and learning how all things fit together, and he was inspired to worship as a result! In verse 31, the Psalmist writes of God rejoicing in his creation. It is clear that the beauty and variety of all he has made brings God joy! This is just one example from among many examples within the Scriptures where we see that creation can reveal more of God's character and glory and can inspire us to worship, and we see how much God loves, delights and finds joy in all that he has made, the whole of creation!

Of course, as we look at the world today, we all too often see the many ways that we have damaged this beautiful gift that God has gifted to us and called us to nurture. The ways that we live and work and consume have pushed creation to breaking point. Writing in a very different time, the words of the Apostle Paul to the Roman Christians seem extremely relevant to us today at this critical, pivotal time for creation:

*<sup>19</sup> For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the children of God; <sup>20</sup> for the creation was subjected to futility, not of its own will but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope <sup>21</sup> that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to decay and will obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God. <sup>22</sup> We know that the whole creation has been groaning in labour pains until now (Romans 8:19-22).*

We could accurately say that right now, in this our time, creation is in bondage to decay, it is literally being destroyed and is crying out for liberation. Whether it's plastic pollution littering our seas and the poorest communities, or species going extinct at record rates, or the dangerously rising temperatures, or the climate crisis making droughts, floods and storms more frequent and severe, we've misused and damaged this beautiful gift of God. We're even feeling some of the effects in the UK, but as we are sadly all too aware, it is the poorest people in our world who are most affected by the changing climate and decaying creation.

But there is hope for our world. Creation is broken, but God is at work reconciling and restoring.

This theme of divine reconciliation and restoration is one we clearly see in the early theological understandings of Jesus in the writings of Paul. He presents the Jesus who reconciles all things to himself, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross (Colossians 1:19-20). It probably should be admitted that despite its innate beauty and fascinating mystery, this developing Christology of Paul's is not always a favourite focus for liberal and progressive Christians, (and I confess, this includes me!), who tend to be far more focussed on and inspired by the amazing, godly and loving man that Jesus was and on earnestly seeking to follow in his way.

But still, this poignant motif speaks clearly to us of a cosmic and abiding hope for the whole of creation, of the restoring and redeeming work of God in our world and, importantly, of the great opportunity that now comes our way as we can now be part of this mission work. We are invited to participate in the mission of God for the whole of creation. We now walk in the way of Jesus and work to redeem and reconcile the earth with his help

and by his grace. Yes, the world is crying out, but God is at work and we're invited to join him in a vital gospel ministry of caring for the creation we've been given to steward, and of seeing it restored. So, there is hope! There is hope! Thanks be to God!

So how might we participate, how might we respond? Well, in the face of this crisis, let us respond today with faith and courage. Let us speak up against injustice and against anything that destroys God's beautiful creation. Let us pray, for we should act from a foundation of prayer. Let us protest with our pen and our purse, advocating and petitioning and purchasing and investing in ways that help care for creation. Let us make some changes to our way of life that will help protect the climate and prosper the environment. Let us continue or start to do this today. At this time when COP 26 is taking place, a conference that has been described as the last chance to avoid global climate catastrophe, let us commit to prayer for the world leaders as they meet, praying that it will lead to real changes to government policies that will help to protect the climate. Let us commit to action ourselves, as individuals and as a church, so that we can address the huge injustice of climate change and its impact on the poorest people around the world and actively partner with God who is at work to reconcile and restore the creation he so deeply loves.

With love,  
*Neil*

#### Let us pray

Lord, open our hearts and minds as we pray.  
Give us the wisdom to listen, and strength to act.  
Today, we ask that COP26 will lead to a breakthrough  
for those facing the greatest impact from the climate crisis.  
May the voices of the most vulnerable be heard  
and may they know a sense of hope that only you can bring.  
We pray in a moment of stillness.  
Quieten our hearts and minds,  
so that we can hear the calls of our global brothers and sisters.  
Lift up their voices, so those in positions in power  
are moved into action by the power of their stories.  
We pray together now,  
lifting up their voices with you.  
Amen.

(The reflection was inspired by Tearfund resources and the prayer is from Christian Aid).

## **PRAYERS FOR NOVEMBER**

*7<sup>th</sup> November* - with the Cop 26 Conference due to start shortly, we pray that there will be a change in attitude leading to actions in tackling climate change.

*14<sup>th</sup> November* - as we join together in worship on a Sunday let us remember those who through age, infirmity or vulnerability are unable to meet with others and pray that they will find the video services a way of remaining in touch.

*21<sup>st</sup> November* - at church meeting we will elect new deacons and re- elect those who are prepared to serve for a second term. We pray for God to guide us as we hold these elections.

*28<sup>th</sup> November* - we pray for our young people in Junior Church and the uniformed organisations and we remember vulnerable children everywhere who lack education and health care.

## CHRISTMAS DONATIONS 2021

During December the church traditionally makes three offerings:

Gift Service (12<sup>th</sup> December) - Christmas Tree monetary offerings for our chosen charity which this year is the Suffolk Refugee Support



Gift Service - Christmas presents and food for disadvantaged families in East Suffolk

Christmas Day - all financial offerings to Christian Aid.

As mentioned in October's Comment, Home Start, the organisation which distributes the large number of presents to families, have asked if donors can provide money to enable their staff to purchase gift vouchers for distribution instead. In order that these can be provided in a timely manner, it would be good for donations to reach them by 3<sup>rd</sup> December.

In the current circumstances the Treasurer and Deacons propose that we invite Christ Church folk to make a single donation as their offering to all three causes. You are welcome to identify how your donation is to be apportioned but if no preferences are shown it will be shared equally between all three. Donations should be made by 1<sup>st</sup> December to allow the Treasurer time to send Home Start's share to them by the 3<sup>rd</sup> December. Offerings received after this date will be divided between Suffolk Refugee Support and Christian Aid unless you indicate other preferences.

Christ Church folk can make their donations ideally by bank transfer, but baskets will be provided in church on Sunday 28<sup>th</sup> November. Also, a cheque may be given or sent to the Treasurer. If using a bank transfer please use the reference "Christmas".

## THE LEPROSY MISSION



It would be appreciated if those with boxes would count the contents, as last year, and let John have a cheque or bank transfer for the amount. The same applies if anyone would like to make a donation before the end of the year.

John will collect all items received and let me have a cheque so that I can account to the Mission before the end of December.

The full details of our 2021 efforts for TLM will appear in the February 2022 edition of Comment.

Just a reminder that in 2022, World Leprosy Day will be celebrated with a parade service, led by a Leprosy Mission speaker on 20<sup>th</sup> March.

With every good wishes for the coming Christmas Season and thank you for your continued support.

## **TACKET STREET BOYS BRIGADE OLD BOYS' ASSOCIATION (TSBBOB) CHRISTMAS FAYRE 2021**

This will be held on Saturday 27<sup>th</sup> November 2021 in the Church Halls from 10.30am until 1.30pm.

All the money raised will be given to Christ Church and we hope that three or four church members will volunteer to help us on the stalls. It is good fun and hopefully we will be busy.

If church members have any items that we can sell on fancy goods or books, toys or puzzles stalls or can make cakes we would welcome these. I can arrange collection. Several items have already been given for which we are grateful.

Of course we trust that church members and friends will turn out and support us on the day. We do try to make this a social occasion for church community, our Old Boys Association members and friends and an opportunity to engage with the passing public who we encourage to come into our Fayre.

Thank you in anticipation.

## **SUFFOLK HISTORIC CHURCHES TRUST - RIDE AND STRIDE**

I have been delighted to pass on to the Trust £285 as sponsor money from my Ride and Stride. Eventually half of this money will come to Christ Church; the other half goes to the general pot to restore, maintain and utilise historic church buildings.

Thank you so much for your generosity.

## CHURCH STUDY DAY ON 16<sup>TH</sup> OCTOBER 2021

HE HAS TOLD YOU, O MORTAL, WHAT IS GOOD; AND WHAT DOES THE LORD REQUIRE OF YOU, BUT TO DO JUSTICE, AND TO LOVE KINDNESS, AND TO WALK HUMBLY WITH YOUR GOD. (MICAH 6 VERSE 8)

A whole day studying just one verse?? And yet eleven of us were fully occupied from 10am to 3pm at Winesham Village Hall thinking about the meaning and implications of this one verse from the Old Testament. Jenny Haggart led us inspiringly through, using teaching, discussion and prayer time.

The context of the verse is worship; the Israelites were in the habit of bringing ever greater objects to sacrifice instead of living the life God demanded. We were reminded that worship is constant communication with God, a surrender to him (sacrifice) and a resolve to live our life in a way that honours God. We thought of possible idols in our day: arrogance, control, status, love of money. We have a responsibility to show others that we are different.

We tried to define justice, both on a personal level and a global plane. We cannot just punish wrong but must create a society where things are right.

We thought about mercy (nearly the same as kindness), and how the ultimate example of mercy is shown by God Himself as he shields sinners from what they rightly deserve. He demonstrates and models that unqualified, stubborn kind of love which never gives up.

C. S. Lewis said: 'Humility is not thinking less of yourself; it's thinking of yourself less'. It is a choice, God-given and an act of obedience to God, accepting that God knows better than us.

We were all encouraged to find ways in which we can live our lives more compassionately, more justly and more humbly, in our daily routines and in our campaigning for a better world.

And we had social time too, with teas and coffees, and the beautiful, though rather damp and chilly, countryside of Winesham.

Thanks go to Jane for organising and baking a cake, and to Jenny Haggart for an inspiring and thoroughly absorbing day.

(Much of this is quoted directly from Jenny's teaching.)

# Tacket Street Boys' Brigade Old Boys Association



The Boys' Brigade 1<sup>st</sup> Ipswich Company  
1903-2018



# Christmas Fayre



with morning coffee and light lunches

**Saturday 27<sup>th</sup> November 2021**

**Christ Church Hall**

**Tacket Street, Ipswich**

**10.30am – 1.30pm**

**Stalls** include vegetables, cakes,  
books, bric-a-brac, novelties, games,  
competitions **plus many more**

All funds raised will  
go to  
Christ Church

All Welcome

**Hope to see you there!**

## CHURCHES TOGETHER IN WOODBRIDGE AND MELTON - CLIMATE EVENT



We attended this event on Sunday 19<sup>th</sup> September in Kingston Field, Woodbridge, with a Fairtrade Stall, taking products that emphasised sustainability and re-use of materials, in addition to being fairly-traded. There were a number of organisations represented including Transition Woodbridge, the Refill Shop in Woodbridge, Suffolk Wildlife Trust, Sistrans and Churches Together.



The programme began at 2pm with a welcome by the Rector of St Mary's Church. There were talks by Prof Peter Hobson of Writtle University College, a representative of Transition Woodbridge, Revd Richard Stainer, Joint World Development Advisor for the Diocese, and Rachel Smith-Lyte of the Green Party. The speakers stressed the importance of facing up to the climate crisis and the loss of biodiversity, and what we can do to lessen our carbon-footprint. We were impressed by the Repair Café as part of Transition Woodbridge and held once a month at St John's Church, Woodbridge. Broken appliances, furniture, clothing etc. can be brought along and repaired by experts, prolonging their life. This is just one of a number of initiatives with which Transition Woodbridge is involved. It would be good to see something like this working in Ipswich. The event closed with an ecumenical Act of Worship which ended with a prayer to affirm our commitment to care actively for God's creation:

Lord of life and giver of hope,  
We pledge ourselves to care for creation,  
To reduce our waste,  
To live sustainably,  
And to value the rich diversity of life.  
May your wisdom guide us,  
That life in all its forms may flourish,  
And may be faithful in voicing creation's praise.

# Thursday Forum

After 18 months without Thursday Forum, it was difficult to know whether there would be a desire or need for such a weekly lunchtime group at Christ Church. However our first few sessions have been well attended and the same friendly atmosphere has come back. Former 'regulars' spoke of their delight when they learnt that Forum was starting up again and they were very excited.

Excellent food is being provided by three different teams this year, although Chikondi still does the lion's share. Joining her is Netty Waters (once a month) and Anne Durnford (once a month), all ably assisted by Andy Midgley.

The first week we were able to give £53 to our treasurer for Suffolk Refugee Support as a result of an inspiring talk by Rebecca Crerar, their Charities Manager. The next week we went to Russia on the Volga River from Moscow to St Petersburg with Chris Parfitt; then, rather nearer to home, Mike Smith told us some fascinating local history. The month finishes with music from 'Saxophony'.

Themes coming up in November include Jo Salter and her ethical clothing enterprise; Annett Thompson talking about The Hold, Ipswich's new archive centre; Trevor Elliott on his work in the prison service (a light-hearted view) and 'My time serving as a Royal Naval Chaplain' with the Revd Neil Coulson.

So you are very welcome to join us any Thursday, for lunch from 12pm - 12.45pm and or for the talk from 1.10pm - 1.50pm. It's all in the Christ Church Hall, and Covid regulations still allow plenty more people to attend, and also allow us to enjoy each other's company.

*Ann Fox, Coordinator*

## HARVEST OFFERINGS

The offerings this year provided a total of £1,941.25, including Gift Aid.

Commitment for Life has received £675.41 and £635.42 has been sent to Operation Agri.

In addition to some food products Families in NEED (FIND) has received £630.42.



## OVER THE GARDEN WALL

... from our neighbours at St Pancras



Dear Friends,

I was about to write this when the terrible news was broadcast of the fatal stabbing of Sir David Amess MP, in a church where he was meeting members of his constituency. As the numerous memories of him flooded in, it quickly became apparent that his deep Christian faith motivated his actions. Before long, unusually alas nowadays, hymns, prayers and references to services were broadcast. A verse of a hymn sung in our schools seemed apt, 'They'll know we are Christians by our love'. There are not words to express the horror or long term impact of this terrible crime. May he rest in peace, and may God be with all those from Southend and beyond who are grieving at this time, and especially his family, who have asked that we set aside differences and show kindness and love to all.

There was little publicity for the meeting of worldwide faith leaders organised by Pope Francis in the light of the forthcoming COP26 meeting. I was delighted to see a really happy photograph of him with the Archbishop of Canterbury. We have heard various high profile people reflecting on the extent to which promises about projects to reduce global warming will lead to action. It was therefore refreshing to see Prince William as a lead figure in the launch of the ten year project, *Earthshot Prize*, and to see London buildings lit up in green to signify the aim to make the world a cleaner and greener place.

This reminded me of *Red Wednesday*, instigated several years ago by Aid to the Church in Need (ACN), supported by Prince Charles. On Wednesday 24<sup>th</sup> November many buildings will be lit up in red to remind us of those worldwide who suffer unjustly because of their faith or belief. We can wear something red on that day to show solidarity with the campaign. I think I have written before of ACN's work. St Pancras recently had a very generous collection for the people of Haiti, which I am sure was sent through ACN. As I write, I hear of terrible floods in Kerala, where many of our local Indian friends have family. So much to pray for, not forgetting to thank God for all he has given to us.

God bless you all. **Jean**

## ECO-CHURCH CREATION CARE

As we reach November, all eyes are on COP26, the crucial climate conference hosted here in the UK and taking place in Glasgow. COP stands for Conference of the Parties, as the countries attending are those that signed the [United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change \(UNFCCC\)](#), a treaty that came into force in 1994. This is the 26th annual meeting – hence COP26.

Many people see this as the most significant climate event since the [2015 Paris Agreement](#), when all the signatories to the UNFCCC agreed to keep temperatures well below 2 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels and to pursue efforts to limit the temperature increase even further to 1.5 degrees Celsius. At present we are not on track to achieve this, with higher temperatures than this now predicted by the end of this century. Indeed, emissions of greenhouse gases are continuing to rise, rather than falling by half in this decade, as is necessary. Furthermore, the effects of a warming climate – extreme weather events, decline of species – are happening faster than previous modelling had suggested. COP26 is therefore critical because it's the first moment when countries must set out more ambitious goals for ending their contribution to climate change under the Paris Agreement. Many see it as the last chance to save the world from climate change that would be catastrophic. Powering our societies by the burning of fossil fuels will turn out to have been a phase in the history of humankind and we now have to manage the transition to sustainable sources of energy with some urgency.

A recent international survey of young people aged 16 to 25 showed that many are affected by real anxiety about the future they will inherit from us; soberingly, their worries about what might lie ahead is even leading many to feel they should not have children. And the main reason for their frustration and fear is that they cannot see their governments tackling the issue with enough seriousness or urgency. Even as they prepare to host COP26 our own government, for instance, is considering approving the development of a new oilfield, west of Shetland (Cambo) and a new coal mine, the Whitehaven coal mine in Cumbria.

A thought-provoking quote from Gus Spence, an advisor on climate change and former dean of the Yale School of Forestry and Environmental Studies; “I used to think that top environmental problems were biodiversity loss, ecosystem collapse and climate change. I thought that thirty years of good science could address these problems. I was wrong. The top environmental problems are selfishness, greed and apathy, and to deal with these we need a cultural and spiritual transformation.”

And so we pray that those taking part in COP26 and in positions of power will have the wisdom, the courage and determination, not just to make commitments and set targets, but to follow them up with actions and legislation.

*Kate*

## **NOVEMBER DIARY DATES**

*Thursday 4<sup>th</sup> November*

Thursday Forum: Cool Clothes that Tell Tales, Jo Salter from “Wheredoesitcomefrom”  
Church Life Meeting at 7.30pm in the Langston Hall

*Wednesday 10<sup>th</sup> November*

Property Committee at 7.30pm in the Langston Hall

*Thursday 11<sup>th</sup> November*

Thursday Forum: The Hold, with Annett Thompson from Concertus.  
Deacons’ meeting in the Langston Hall at 7.30pm

*Thursday 18<sup>th</sup> November*

Thursday Forum: A Double Life Sentence – 28 years in the Prison Service with Trevor Elliott.

*Sunday 21<sup>st</sup> November*

Church Meeting in the Christ Church Hall at approx. 12.45pm with Election of Deacons

*Thursday 25<sup>th</sup> November*

Thursday Forum: 'My time serving as a Royal Naval Chaplain' with Revd Neil Coulson

## **REGULAR EVENTS**

Emmaus Bible Study groups on Mondays (10.30am weekly in the Turret Room), Wednesdays (10<sup>th</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup> November at 7.45pm) and Thursdays (10.30am fortnightly 4<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> November in the Church Lounge).

## **REGULAR EVENTS (TERM TIME ONLY)**

*Mondays* - Beavers, Cubs and Scouts

Contact Group Scout Lead John Rockett

*Tuesdays* - Tots Plus for all under-school aged children and their carers in the Christ Church Halls 9.30am

Contact Jo Robertson

*Fridays* - Rainbows, Brownies & Guides

Contact Ruth Strudwick

## **SERVICES FOR NOVEMBER / EARLY DECEMBER 2021**

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

### **Sunday 7<sup>th</sup> November**

10.45am Family Worship with Holy Communion

### **Sunday 14<sup>th</sup> November**

10.45am Remembrance Sunday Family Worship

### **Sunday 21<sup>st</sup> November**

10.45am Family Worship, followed by the Church Meeting

### **Sunday 28<sup>th</sup> November**

10.45am Advent Sunday All-age Worship

### **Sunday 5<sup>th</sup> December**

10.45am Family Worship with Holy Communion

### **Sunday 12<sup>th</sup> December**

10.45am Church Parade and Gift Service