



Tacket Street, Ipswich, IP4 1AU



COMMENT
SEPTEMBER 2025

THE MINISTER WRITES ...



Dear All,

I hope that you are well and that you have been able to enjoy the summer weeks and spend some time with family and friends. September is now upon us and as individuals and as a Church family, many of us will no doubt return to our usual routines, roles and responsibilities in the coming weeks.

In Psalm 34, we find words of encouragement as we prepare to begin the new academic year. There's much to ponder in this Psalm, and the whole Psalm is worth reading through, but here I'll just share some well-known words from the reading:

*O taste and see that the Lord is good;
happy are those who take refuge in him.
9 O fear the Lord, you his holy ones,
for those who fear him have no want.
10 The young lions suffer want and hunger,
but those who seek the Lord lack no good thing.*

The Psalmist invites readers to experience God for themselves. Even though there's been real hardships and difficulties, God's salvation, deliverance and abundant life have once again brought transformation. This experience is on offer to all and the psalmist invites all to experience it for themselves: *taste and see!* Then they will understand for themselves the goodness of God and will be radiant (Isaiah 60:5), happy (v. 8) and will be fully provided for (vv. 8-9). We notice that in these verses, and all through verses 4-10 of this Psalm, the key word is 'fear'. While there are a few references in the Old Testament that suggest actual fright, usually fearing God connotes reverence for, trust in, and dependence upon God. This dependence is what is in sight here and it is expressed as taking refuge in God (v. 8) or seeking God (v. 10).

As we embark on this new academic year, I pray that we will all experience God - 'taste and see that the Lord is good'! In all our worship, mission, service and church activities, let us walk forward with confidence and courage, depending upon God, taking refuge in him and experiencing for ourselves his goodness, grace, radiance, joy and life in all its fullness.

With much love,

Neil

NEWS FROM FIND



The number of volunteers at FIND has dropped considerably since COVID and the need for vital groceries and essentials continues to increase. If anyone has a little spare time and would like to help with this very worthwhile charity, please go their website for further details (www.findipswich.org.uk).



TOGETHER FOR IPSWICH

The National Week of Prayer takes place from 6th – 14th September.

A list of events taking place locally will be available shortly but one event already in the calendar is a breakfast event on 9th September from 8am to 10.30am for anyone involved in church life.

CONTACTS WITH THE BOND STREET MOSQUE

We have had good relations with the Bond Street Mosque for a long time now but after the death of Stephen Smith we had no longer any contact person. But at Stephen's Thanksgiving Service we promised each other we would revive the friendship.

Our first meeting was at the Mosque and we asked all about what Muslims believe and how they worship. Conversation was easy and it was clear we had much in common, and also much that we did not know about each other (or about our own faith, if we're honest).

We followed this meeting up with another on 10th July where different people attended and we were treated to more hospitality and sharing of ideas. Our broad focus was 'prayer' but the discussion was much wider than that.

We'll see each other again on 31st August at the Multicultural Day in Alexandra Park where we have a stall, providing craft ideas and a Prayer Tree for anyone to contribute to. The Day is organised by the Bangladeshi Community, but includes all cultures and faiths.

We have been invited to send representatives to the Bond Street Mosque's 40th Anniversary on Sunday 14th September, and Rob King and I are going, as Neil is on leave that weekend.

Our next event will be our own Harvest Festival when members of the Mosque will again be invited to our service and lunch afterwards. I'm sure they will feel welcomed, as always.

There is one more meeting planned in the year; based at Christ Church rather than the Mosque, and in the evening or at the weekend for those people who are busy on weekdays. The format and exact time are not fixed.

Thursday
at Christ Church
Tacket Street **Forum**
(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



Thursday Forum has not been very active this summer, but we had a wonderful trip to Bressingham in June and we look forward to a meal at The Key, St Margaret's Plain on 4th September. Our schedule resumes on 25th September with a talk entitled 'The Eyes of the Few', about the history of Radar at Bawdsey. I have it on good authority that it is an excellent talk.

In case you miss next month's Comment, there will be NO Forum on 9th October; otherwise make a regular date to come at 12 noon onwards every Thursday.

ECO CHURCH – CREATION CARE

The hidden costs of church flowers

It has long been a lovely tradition in churches to decorate the sanctuary with fresh flowers, a delightful way to celebrate the beauty of God's creation. Often the expectation is a formal display, with perfect, often unseasonable blooms carefully arranged and secured in place in blocks of floral foam or "oasis". We enjoy these arrangements, but it has been eye-opening for me recently to discover the environmental cost of some of our practices.

Let us start with the use of oasis. It may do its job perfectly but it is a type of plastic, not biodegradable or recyclable, and held together by a mixture of chemicals known to cause biological and environmental damage. It does not decompose but simply breaks down into tiny microplastics. This means they're easily spread as they break up and we wash the green dust down the sink, polluting water sources, killing wildlife, and ultimately damaging human health as they enter water systems and the food chain. The RHS banned the use of oasis in 2020. Happily, there are alternatives for flower-arranging, including using scrunched-up chicken wire, making structures from twigs, or simply using taller vases.

The other main issue is the carbon footprint of imported blooms. By the time they reach the UK, these stems have usually travelled thousands of miles across the world in refrigerated containers. And then there are the tonnes of non-recyclable cellophane that these bunches are wrapped in before being sold. The carbon footprint of imported flowers can be 10 times that of a homegrown bouquet. (Although not specifically a church issue, it is sobering to note that a typical Valentine's bouquet of a dozen Kenyan red roses – roses do not grow in the UK in February! – is estimated to have a carbon footprint of 75kg – about the weight of an average man.) Furthermore, according to Greenpeace, Colombia-grown roses may be sprayed with a shocking 200kg of pesticides per hectare.

Ideally our church flower displays should be compostable, local and seasonal. Maybe we need to accustom ourselves sometimes to a different "look", particularly at those times of year when British grown flowers are not readily available. Winter foliage, seed heads, berries.....? With a bit of creativity it is still possible to create some beautiful displays. It will be fun to experiment.

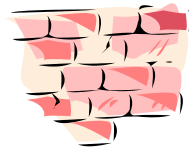
Eco-Tip for September: The above! As far as possible let us bear in mind the basic principles of local and seasonal when we make our own choices in buying flowers.

FRONT GARDEN PLANS

Unfortunately our experiment with planting a Pictorial Meadow Mix in our front garden beds has been far from successful and the decision has been taken to plant them instead with a mix of garden plants that can thrive in dry, sunny conditions. We hope to start planting in the autumn and any donations of plants will be gratefully received then. These are large beds to fill! So, thinking ahead, does anyone have any such plants in their garden suitable for dividing later in the year or from which they could take cuttings now? A starting list of suggested plants would include lavender, echinacea, sedum, perennial salvia, yarrow, verbenas, eryngium, penstemon, cistus, nepeta, agapanthus. Or anything else you might know of!

OVER THE GARDEN WALL

... from our neighbours at St Pancras



Dear Friends,

I hope you have been able to take advantage of summer weather here or overseas during recent weeks. I had a wonderful trip to a beautiful lakeside area of northern Italy early in the summer. Particularly pleasing was time spent at Limone on Lake Garda. Apart from it being a beautiful place I was delighted, knowing that this was the site of the childhood of St Daniel Comboni, to be able to visit not only his childhood home high up above the town but also the church where he was christened. Comboni missionaries looked after a church near Upminster where I worshipped for several years, and they also in Uganda founded the Apostles of Jesus, whose schools acted as the base for much of our chemistry training in Uganda. It was a happy holiday which sadly faded into the background after I tripped and seriously hurt my back on the way home. I've never before been out of action for so long - it has been humbling to have been contacted, visited and helped by so many people including Christchurch friends. Thanks!

The big event of the summer for Catholics has been the declaration by Pope Leo that St J H Newman will be a Doctor of the Church: 'a person of great holiness and learning whose teaching and wisdom not only resonated with their own contemporaries, but still illuminates and instructs today'. He will join Ven Bede, often seen as the father of English history. Newman spent almost half of his life in Birmingham, about a mile from where I lived, so people who know me will have heard me speaking of his journey to being recognised as a Saint six years ago. You will almost certainly know one of his three hymns, Lead kindly light, but may not know the origin. He wrote it on an orange boat enroute to Marseilles, returning from Sicily, after suffering a very serious illness. Thus he wrote of the dark night and of being far from home. Music lovers will know Newman's Dream of Gerontius, set to music by Edward Elgar, who was for many years organist at St George's RC church in Worcester. It includes the hymn, Praise to the Holiest which many will also know. Like me, Newman was influenced by Evangelicals in his youth; he spent years as an Anglican before becoming a Catholic, first priest and eventually Cardinal, in the second half of his life. We often sang Lead kindly light in my youth, and Praise to the Holiest is sung often in my sister's village Anglican Church. This great scholar can be of relevance to all Christians and we in this country can take pride in another Doctor of the church to join Ven Bede. Some of his words in Lead kindly light are surely relevant to our troubled world of today.

Greetings from your Catholic friends to all at Christchurch,

Jean

PRAYER CALENDAR FOR SEPTEMBER

7th September

As our young people return to Junior Church and their youth organisations, we pray for those who teach and enthuse them, and leaders of Scouting and Guiding who work week by week with young people.

14th September

We pray for our Emmaus Groups who share together in Bible Study. Each group welcomes new members offering friendship and fellowship.

21st September

Middle Group are holding a Curry night on 25th September, and will welcome Matt Henderson from the Leprosy Mission. Proceeds will go to the Revive Odisha project. Pray that this will be a successful event.

28th September

As Thursday Forum restarts, we pray for the working party as they forward plan. We give thanks for those who provide meals and provide the technology. We pray that all who join us will find friendship and fellowship.

DIARY DATES FOR SEPTEMBER

Emmaus Groups

Mondays at 10.30am in the Lounge from (8th September)

2nd & 4th Wednesdays at 7.30pm (from 24th September)

1st & 3rd Thursdays at 10.30am in the Lounge (from 18th September)

Thursday 4th Forum meal at The Key (12 noon)

Saturday 13th Ride & Stride/Heritage Open Day

Sunday 21st No service because of Ipswich Half Marathon

Tuesday 23rd Prayer Lunch (12 noon)

Dates for October Comment

Publication Date Sunday 28th September

SERVICES FOR SEPTEMBER AND EARLY OCTOBER

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

Sunday 7th September

10.45am All-Age Worship with Holy Communion

Sunday 14th September

10.45am Family Worship led by Revd John Cook

Sunday 21st September

There will be no service due to the Ipswich Half Marathon

Sunday 28th September

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

Sunday 5th October

10.45am Family Worship with Holy Communion

Sunday 12th October

10.45am Harvest Thanksgiving and Parade Service
