

All Saints' Church

Cottenham with Rampton



Pastoral Letter #37

25th November 2020

Dear Church Family,

It's not yet Advent but Christmas trees already seem to be going up in houses around the villages! The church Christmas tree arrives on Saturday so do please pop in if you'd like to help decorate it. The box of decorations will be behind the High Altar. Come on your own or with the family.

Many historians believe that Christmas trees originated from a guild in Freiburg, Germany, who decorated evergreen trees with fruit, tinsel, wafers, and gingerbread to perform 'Paradise Plays' on Christmas Eve. These plays celebrated the story of Adam and Eve. In the 16th century, the plays were banned from public places, which corresponds with the time in which Christians first began to bring evergreen trees into their homes to celebrate Christ. Families who could not afford decorated trees simply stacked wood in celebration. These 'Christmas pyramids' evolved into wooden shelves holding figurines, candles, and even a star. Eventually, the paradise tree and Christmas pyramid merged to become the modern Christmas tree. The tradition remained in Germany until the 19th century, when people began emigrating from Germany, at which point it spread across the world.

This week, the positive news of another vaccine came with the news that churches can re-open their buildings for worship. I've missed you all so can't wait until Sunday 6th December when we can gather together again. All of the usual safety precautions will remain in place to keep you safe.

Advent begins this Sunday and heralds the start of a new sermon series called 'Worship in the Waiting'. Advent offers us a period of preparation, both physically and spiritually, for the gift that is about to be born, and I invite you to use the Advent resource sent out last week and also available on the website. Do also consider buying one of the many Advent books available.

Christmas this year will be hard for many who are struggling financially, particularly those who have lost their jobs as a result of the pandemic. The Foodbank is likely to be in great demand. To help someone have a Merry Christmas this year, I'd like us to support Ely Foodbank by filling a shoebox with non-perishable festive treats such as sweet and savoury biscuits, chocolates and Christmas Puddings. Please drop them off in the porch during the weekend of 5th/6th December and we'll get them to where they need to be.

Please can you remember in your prayers those who are unwell: Barry Herd, Peter Tilbury, John Easterling, Janet Johnston, Phyll Greed and Bob Ward; and for the families of Patrick Barnes and Joyce Piper who have recently died.

As usual, do join us for 'Coffee and Chat' over Zoom. It will be at **11am** this week, but will move to 12 noon from the 6th December once services in church have resumed.

Do please get in touch if you need anything, or would just like to chat.

May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all, now and evermore. Amen.

Best wishes,

Revd Lynda Davies

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