

All Saints' Church

Cottenham with Rampton



Pastoral Letter #38

9th December 2020

Dear Church Family,

At this time of the year, the Christmas movies start appearing on the television. One that you will undoubtedly have watched over the years is the film based on Charles Dickens' book 'A Christmas Carol', whether it's the 1951 version with Alistair Sim, or the Muppet Christmas Carol of 1992. If we're not careful, we can be fooled that the Dickensian Christmas portrayed in the film is the '*perfect*' Christmas, with men dressed in top hats and coats, women in Victorian dresses, snow on the ground, and roaring fires in beautifully dressed drawing rooms. All lead us to the conclusion that Christmas is all jolly and fun. But this wasn't actually the idea that Dickens had in mind when he wrote the work. What you may not know is that Dickens was a social reformer. His story wasn't to say '*Hey, isn't Christmas lovely!*' but was intended to challenge people to think about their society and the world they lived in. A Christmas Carol features of course Ebenezer Scrooge, who is visited by three ghosts – the Ghost of Christmas Past, the Ghost of Christmas Present, and the Ghost of Christmas Yet to Come. The ghosts challenge Scrooge to re-think his life afresh, to think what actually matters this Christmas and what matters in life. Through his encounters, Scrooge is changed and transformed.

One of the characters in the story is Bob Cratchit, a hardworking, family man with a disabled child, who isn't able to feed his family properly at Christmas, and not able to pay for the medical care his child needs. His child might die because of his poverty. And what we see is Scrooge, this stingy, exploitative boss, not paying his worker a proper day's wage for a proper day's work.

Fast forward hundreds of years. We still see exploitative bosses. We still see people not getting a fair wage for a fair day's work. And, wanting to get the most for our money, we often buy cheap goods from abroad, where the people making the products sometimes only receive the equivalent of 50p a day, barely enough for their family to have a hot meal each day.

A challenge this Christmas. If you've still got Christmas shopping left to do, why not be an ethical consumer. Maybe go online and find sellers that source and sell their produce ethically. Maybe buy second hand, giving old things a new lease of life. Maybe look for that Fairtrade logo. Maybe there are charities and home-made things that you can buy and support. Have a think this Christmas. Rather than putting money in the pockets of people like Scrooge, we can choose to spend our money ethically and wisely, and support, not just the Bob Cratchits in the UK, but the Bob Cratchits in India, in Indonesia, in Romania, and many other countries where people are not paid properly for a full day's work.

It's worth remembering this Christmas that how we spend our money can affect the Christmas of other people. Let's be people who use our money to bless the poorest, the most exploited in this world. After all, wasn't it Jesus who frequently urged his followers to *'act justly, to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God'* echoing the words of the prophet Micah?

It was lovely to welcome people back to church last Sunday. Please remember to keep conversations brief as mixing of households is not permitted indoors. Why not come to 'Coffee and Chat' over Zoom at **12 noon** where you can chat freely and catch up with those worshipping online?

This Sunday at 4pm is the first of our Christmas services – Blue Christmas, and is especially for those who prefer a quieter celebration. If you want to know more, please get in touch.

A very happy birthday to Phyll Greed who turns 90 on Monday 14th. What an achievement!

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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