

**All Saints' Church  
Cottenham with Rampton**

**Pastoral Letter #69  
Wed 12<sup>th</sup> January 2022**



Dear Church Family,

A very Happy New Year to all you. Despite the worry caused by the new Omicron variant of Covid-19, I hope that you were able to enjoy some time with those you love over the Christmas season.

Our Christmas was quiet with our daughter and her family away and our son working, but we were able to enjoy a lovely family meal once we were all together. Like many of you, we struggled to find good programmes to watch on the television but one film that we often end up watching is *Scrooge*. *'Oh! But he was a tight-fisted hand at the grindstone, Scrooge. A squeezing, wrenching, grasping, scraping, clutching, covetous, old sinner!'*

Apparently there are nine films of *Scrooge*. Martyn will claim that the 1951 black and white version of *'A Christmas Carol'* with Alistair Sim is the best, but you will always find him glued to *'The Muppet Christmas Carol'* if it happens to come on! Muppets or not, you have to hand it to Charles Dickens – he really could write a sentence. The funny thing, though, is that so could lots of people.

In Victorian Britain, morality tales like *'A Christmas Carol'* were a penny a dozen, sometimes literally. The market was flooded with weepy ne'er-do-wells teaching folk the error of their ways. But how many of these good, Christian stories do you know today? That's right: none.

There's no denying *'A Christmas Carol'* is a particularly good example of the genre. Even after a lifetime of watching and reading it, Dickens' ability to tell a good story still amazes me. But that doesn't really explain why it's the only Christian morality tale to resonate with so many who wouldn't claim to have a Christian faith.

Maybe it's something to do with this line in the book/film: *'Scrooge became as good a friend, as good a master, and as good a man, as the good old city he knew.'* Scrooge, miser of misers, extortionist and moneylender, is redeemed. He's transformed and, in turn, transforms the lives of others. But, he keeps his business. He keeps his position. He keeps his connections.

In other words, he makes a difference *through* his work, his friendships and status, not in spite of them. He doesn't give it all up and become a preacher. He becomes a good friend, a good master, and a good man, right where he is.

You could read this as a cynical loophole left for Dickens' affluent readers. But in *Scrooge* we hear echoes of that other transformed financier – Zacchaeus (Luke 19: 1-10). When Jesus moved his heart, Zacchaeus vowed to give away half his possessions and, if he'd cheated anyone, repay them four times over. But he didn't leave his job. He recognised that he could do God's work, even as a tax collector.

That's why *Scrooge's* story continues to resonate. Because, like him, we were created to join in God's purposes in the rich variety of life, in work, school or retirement, as well as in quiet prayer. It's what we yearn for, whether we profess faith or not. So, wherever you find

yourself this year, whatever resolutions you may have made, may you know you're working with the King.

It was lovely to worship with so many of you over Christmas. Whilst we took the decision to move the Carol Services to one outdoor service, 250 came and it was a great experience. The previous weekend's Live Nativity was equally well attended, giving young families the opportunity to hear the Christmas story afresh. Thank you again to all those who made both events happen.

As we start 2022, we continue to live with the uncertainty that Covid-19 brings. We are thankful that whilst the Omicron variant is more transmissible, it does not appear to cause as serious an illness as previous variants, with the additional benefit of the booster vaccine. That said, we continue with measures to keep you safe in church, encouraging hand sanitising, the wearing of face coverings, good ventilation and social distancing. Thank you for doing all that is asked of you during these difficult times. Whilst the rates remain high, we have paused having tea and coffee after the service, and activities such as Little Saints will take a break until mid-February when hopefully things will have improved.

If, for whatever reason, you are not coming to Church at the moment and would welcome a home visit or to receive Communion at home, do please let me know. Marie and I, and the Lay Pastoral Ministers (Maggie and Sue) would be delighted to visit you (taking the necessary precautions of course). Please don't lose touch with your Church family.

Again, a very Happy New Year to you, and prayers for a blessed 2022.

Stay safe and best wishes,

Revd Lynda Davies

[Rector@allsaintscottenham.org.uk](mailto:Rector@allsaintscottenham.org.uk)

01954 583651