

The TOGETHER Sheet



By the time you read this the Reverend Chris and Wendy will have left our Benefice. Chris is taking up a new role. He will be based at Gazeley near Newmarket.

We are very sorry to lose Chris and Wendy who have both done so much for our Benefice. Under Chris's care the church communities of our two parishes have thrived and been guided into a single Benefice with the parishes of Buxhall, Great Finborough, Harleston, Onehouse and Shelland. Our loss is another Benefice's gain and we wish Chris and Wendy great happiness and success in their new roles and home.

Our Benefice is blessed with the Reverend Canon Pauline being in place as our Associate Priest. Canon Pauline has great experience and has fitted into our communities perfectly since she and Rod joined us. Pauline will be helped by Reverend Alison, and our Readers Derek, Ray and Rod. Their assistance is greatly appreciated at all times but will be especially important in our time without a Rector. We will have help from others as well. The Reverend Canon Barbara Bilston and others have all offered to help us with services when we can meet in person again.

So here is a final *From the Rectory* from Chris.

From the Rectory...

Reverend Chris Childs

The rolling out of the vaccine is proving, as I write, to be a light in a dark and quite frightening world for many people. Who would have thought that Brexit would have been secondary in news stories? We all sincerely hope that the small 'light' at the end of this long tunnel is the success of the vaccine not a train coming towards us, but the news is very encouraging. In the meantime, we must all play our part and be sacrificial in the way we lead our lives; giving time to support others and staying 'in' when we would rather be out. I am sure most of us are keeping to the spirit of the regulations and not ignoring them.



Life goes on. We are all pleased to hear of babies being born, weddings and baptisms taking place and of course people moving to new homes and changing jobs. We try to make things as normal as possible, but the smaller delights of life seem to take on an added pleasure. Even the larger ones have an added 'brilliance'.

Last March I turned my desk round to look out of the study window – to watch the garden over the top of the computer screens. The most dominant sight is a wonderful old holly tree. It has been heavy with berries each year since we came here, but only this year have I noticed it fully. That maybe to do with the fact that I have had to spend so much time sitting here on Zoom Meetings for one thing but also because the holly has that wonderful carol with the memorable words and in my mind has always therefore been special.

'Of all the trees that are in the wood
The holly bears the Crown'

There is much mythology associated with holly (and ivy). In some pagan societies a teenage boy and girl would be dressed in holly and ivy leaves respectively and paraded around the community to remind people that in the midst of winters darkness, there remains life. Last night Wendy and I watched the 'Green Planet' with David Attenborough and saw those astonishing Alaskan Wood frogs that freeze for a couple of months a year as the climate around them reaches minus 40 degrees then simply thaw out. Their skin when frozen provides an excellent camouflage in the surrounding rocks. We don't have to do that but there is a sense this year that all our lives are 'frozen' at the moment. Although the frogs looked dead they were actually alive. In our lives the holly and indeed

evergreen ivy remind us of life in the midst of seeming death and the brightness of the berries is stunning.

In a previous home we had a very vibrant holly tree that never had any berries and was quite dark and dangerous in a sense that if you got caught by it you were scratched. Holly trees have those prickly leaves which protect the beautiful berries often obscuring them from sight and the prickles make it hard to cut them.

As you read this the days of sunshine will be longer – but let's cling onto the frog and the holly and remember there are brighter days around the corner. Don't let the almost invisible life of the frog against the rock or the dense and dangerous foliage of the holly obscure the brightness and life that is coming.

With good wishes and prayers for you all.

Chris

You will know that **services in church** have been suspended and Bishop Martin has made a Declaration under Canon B14 to enable this to happen. Each PCC voted unanimously in favour, but I very much hope this will be a temporary measure. I bear in mind the safety of those church officers who have responsibility for the services. Provision remains online from us and by post and telephone if you wish.

As to the future, Canon Diane Williams the Rural Dean and Archdeacon David Jenkins have set in process the procedure for the appointment of my successor. There is a group of people working with Canon Pauline on the parish profile and distilling plans for future ministry here so that the next Rector will know what you are looking for them to 'do' with you all! A final meeting is fixed for the Bishop to approve the advertisement and paperwork in April. Please pray for a good appointment.

Christmas Services

We were pleased with attendance at our 5 outdoor services and on Zoom. Enormous thanks are due to the Churchwardens and others for their work. The wonderful Nativity images made by Dean Hearn of Harleston provided a good focus at Little Finborough, Onehouse and on Harleston Green. I am sure they will be useful in the future. We were grateful to the bandsmen of Battsford Free Church and Buxhall Handbell ringers for our music.

Our District Councillor has made a most generous donation to enable the purchase of an outdoor amplification system which will no doubt also be useful in the future.

Thank you to all who contributed to the work of the Children's society and East Anglia's Children's Hospices in our Christingle and Carol Services.

Until a new Rector is appointed a first point of call will be to Canon Pauline Rev Alison or the Ministry Team. I am sure that they and all the Churchwardens will receive your support and prove their worth.

With all good wishes and prayers for your future.

Rev Chris

Contacts

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Services in the Benefice

Throughout February all scheduled services and meetings will be on-line to help to inhibit transmission of Covid-19

7 February: The Second Sunday before Lent, Sexagesima

Proverbs 8.1,22-31; Psalm 104.26-37; Colossians 1.15-20; John 1.1-14

9.30 am Spiritual Communion Zoom Meeting

14 February: The Sunday next before Lent, Quinquagesima, Transfiguration Sunday

2 Kings 2.1-12; Psalm 50.1-6; 2 Corinthians 4.3-6; Mark 9.2-9

9.30 am Spiritual Communion Zoom Meeting

17 February: Ash Wednesday

Isaiah 58 1-12; 2 Corinthians 5 20b-6 10; John 8 1-11

10.00 am Said Spiritual Communion Zoom Meeting

21 February: The First Sunday of Lent

Genesis 9.8-17; Psalm 25.1-9; 1 Peter 3.18-22; Mark 1.9-15

9.30 am Spiritual Communion Zoom Meeting

28 February: The Second Sunday of Lent

Genesis 17.1-7,15,16; Psalm 22.23-31; Romans 4.13-25; Mark 8.31-38

9.30 am Spiritual Communion Zoom Meeting

7 March: The Third Sunday of Lent

Exodus 20.1-17; Psalm 19; 1 Corinthians 1.18-25; John 2.13-22*

9.30 am Spiritual Communion Zoom Meeting

Morning Prayer on Wednesday and Saturday at 10 am.

Bible Study / Lent Course (from 17 February) on Wednesday at 4 pm.

Log in details will gladly be given by Rev. Canon Pauline as well as the weekly Pew Sheet and Orders of Service. Please ask.

Please join us for our worship on-line. All are welcome.
