

The background of the entire page is a photograph of Christ Church in Ipswich. The church is a large, historic stone building with Gothic architectural features, including pointed arches and a tall, narrow tower. Bare tree branches are visible in the foreground, partially obscuring the church's facade. The sky is a clear, pale blue.

Christ Church

Tacket Street, Ipswich IP4 1AU

Comment

February 2020

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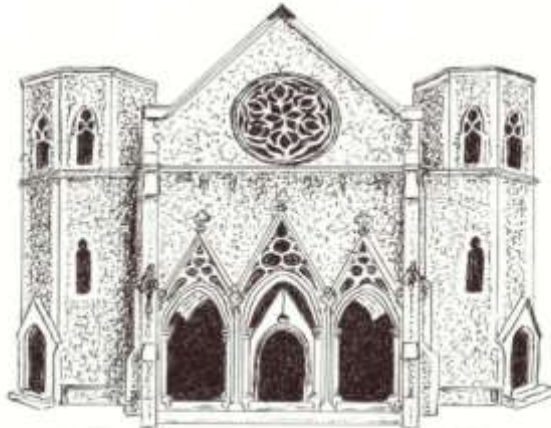
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Christ Church, Ipswich

R. King

THE MINISTER WRITES ...



'Whenever you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret'. Matthew 6:6

Dear All,

Here in Matthew 6, Jesus teaches on the importance of setting aside time for quiet prayer and devotion, time for our relationship with God. The Gospels appear to show that this is how Jesus himself lived, often withdrawing from crowds and followers and making time and space to connect with God. For Jesus, I imagine that these moments of encounter with God were vital to the bond that he enjoyed with God and they no doubt gave him the strength, faith and courage he needed to stay true to his calling.

I wonder, how do we feel about this? Encouraged or disheartened? In all honesty, perhaps the trouble is that for a host of reasons, many of us, and I'm included myself here, sometimes find personal devotions difficult. Perhaps, it's a question of time, so much to do and so little time to do it. Or maybe we find ourselves lost for words and struggling to express ourselves honestly. Some of us might speak with candour and say that it is a question of commitment and priorities. For different reasons, time for personal devotions, in whatever shape we tend to find most fruitful, can fall by the wayside.

So should we feel guilty about this? I believe the answer is emphatically 'no!' I think that God remains 'open armed' towards us, reminds us of his unfailing love and waits for us to nurture our side of the relationship. Also, we remember that devotions are not the only way in which we experience God. And anyway, these words of Jesus in Matthew's Gospel should actually give us great encouragement, for underlying them is the assurance that God is always there, near to us, surrounding us and waiting to meet with us when we reach out to him. Lent will commence later on this month. During the season of Lent this year, may I encourage you to make time for

God in some way and for regaining your sense of his presence. God is with you now as he is with you always. As you set aside a few moments, I trust that you will draw closer to God and sense afresh his grace and strength for your life of discipleship and service.

I close with Eugene Peterson's 'The Message' translation of Matthew 6:6:

Here's what I want you to do: Find a quiet, secluded space so you won't be tempted to role-play before God. Just be there as simply and honestly as you can manage. The focus will shift from you to God, and you will begin to sense God's grace.

I pray this will be so for you.

Grace and peace,

Neil

THANK YOU, ANN!

We gladly took a few minutes within our Advent Sunday worship to offer our sincere thanks to Ann Fox for all her faithful service as Church Secretary. Ann retired from this role at the end December 2019. We are pleased to record our thanks to Ann here too. Here's what was said to Ann that Sunday morning.

I've only known Ann for a couple years and so I'm very grateful to other friends among us who've helped me honour her for her 10 years of dedicated service as our Church Secretary here at Christ Church. There is a very real sense in which it is hard to put into words just how much we have all benefitted from and been so thankful for your long and effective ministry, but we will try!

You have guided us through this time very faithfully and proficiently and especially following Andrew's departure. During our church's pastoral vacancy, which is never an easy time, your positive and encouraging attitude helped us all to come together as a Church family and this became very evident during our church meetings. Nothing seems too much for you to handle! You have delegated very well and have tried to make the post of Church Secretary more manageable than before. Despite the very difficult loss of Peter, you weren't in any way deterred and God gave you the strength throughout this period and enabled you to keep going, and still you continued to serve and lead in an exemplary way.

As an utterly loyal, reliable, dependable person, and a generous giver of time and energy, you have offered yourself in this significant role within our Church Family and we have all benefitted greatly. You have offered leadership that is distinctive and wonderful: One that is quietly persuasive, empowering, energising.

One that is friendly and warm, that welcomes others, draws others in, believes in them and seeks to see them released into service themselves. One that is bold and speaks out, whenever such leadership is necessary.

One friend here said that, for them the word that sums you up, Ann, is "Awesome!" And I'm sure we'd agree with this! "Awesome Ann!"

If you'll all allow me, may I also add my thanks to you Ann. Firstly, I wholeheartedly agree with all the words and thoughts we've already said about you. We met just under two years and before I even arrived, you began to give generously of your time, your wisdom, your energy and your support. You must have spent thousands of hours talking with me about the life of our Church and I am, and will always remain, very thankful for all your guidance, advice and encouragement. You helped me greatly to settle in very quickly into my new role here and still now, your counsel and encouragement is deeply appreciated. Thank you for everything, Ann, it has been an absolute privilege to serve with you during my first 18 months at Christ Church.

We could all say more but please accept these the thoughts and words from all your friends here at Christ Church as our 'thank you' to you. For all your service as our Church Secretary, Ann, we offer you our heartfelt gratitude. Thank you!

And finally, thankfully, you remain very much in service among us and as we thank you today, we also pray for you as you continue to serve and lead in other areas of ministry within the life of our Church. May you continue to know God's blessing, enabling and empowering in all that you do. Neil, on behalf of all at Christ Church

THE LEPROSY MISSION

During 2019, Christ Church remitted to the Mission headquarters £1,206.98 which is a really excellent result and much higher than 2018, as shown below:

	<u>2019</u>	<u>2018</u>
World Leprosy Day	£758.00	£350.27
Boxes	£188.98	£120.95
Donations	£260.00	£387.00
<u>Total</u>	<u>£1,206.98</u>	<u>£858.22</u>

World Leprosy Day total for 2019 was made up as follows:

Envelope donations	£482
Sausage & Mash lunch	£202
January Church Meeting lunch	£ 74
<u>Total</u>	<u>£758</u>

The Mission doubled our World Leprosy Day figure under the Government's UK Aid scheme and in addition, claimed almost £100 in Gift Aid. That means that from our efforts here, the Mission received a total of approximately £2,064.

Many thanks to everyone involved in any way in producing this magnificent result.

Bruce

THURSDAY FORUM - END OF AN ERA

The era in question is **Pat Wootton's**, who stepped down from master-minding Thursday Forum at the end of December. It has been her hard work and dedication that has kept it going, enabled it to thrive, and built up its reputation throughout the town and further afield in Suffolk.

Thursday Forum's predecessor was Open Church, started in October 1984, which itself was inspired by the Lenten Meditations earlier that same year. Open Church was held in the church and offered a simpler snack lunch and a narrower range of speakers, tending towards spiritual, ethical and moral themes.

In 2007, Thursday Forum emerged from this and Pat worked closely with Peter Fox to re-brand and establish what is today, one of our most successful forms of outreach. Pat used her particular gifts as an efficient secretary and record-keeper as well as her ability to recruit helpers, find interesting speakers and encourage attenders.

Now Pat has finally extracted herself from this involvement and has been allowed to retire. We, her church friends and Forum colleagues want to say a huge 'Thank You' and express our admiration for the long-standing dedication to this work, the love she committed to it, and the inevitable sacrifices demanded of her in terms of time and priorities.

When looking for facts about Pat's service to Thursday Forum, I did not see much mention of her name in records. This is because she herself was the Minutes Secretary and everything she did was recorded in the passive mood: 'it was suggested that--- ', 'he was contacted --'. We discern this same attitude in her present activity on a Thursday. She is always busy seeing to lunch-time visitors, helping to welcome the speaker or ensuring that all the volunteers are at their posts and are happy with their brief. She is never seen making public announcements or ordering people about.

I'm sure Pat could have continued in her present role for years to come, coping so well with deteriorating eyesight, but we recognise that Pat deserves a rest and we are truly grateful for the foundation that has been

laid and which has been upheld over the last 12 years - the last two years shouldering most of the responsibility alone.

She will be a hard act to follow!

Ann Fox

THANK YOU FROM PAT

Thank you very much for the kind words, beautiful flowers and the multi-signed card which I received at the last Thursday Forum event in December.

Thursday Forum grew out of the ashes of the then Open Church some twenty odd years ago and before I retired I wanted to be sure that the vision that Peter Fox and I shared would continue to be an important part of the church outreach so I was particularly pleased when Ann Fox agreed to be the new Coordinator. After her long and distinguished service as Church Secretary it is very good of her to take on this task which I know she will do well.

No organization works without good people behind it and I would like to acknowledge all the support I received from the Working Party and the Planning Group.

Thursday Forum has always felt that the provision of good refreshments was an important part of its appeal and Chikondi Midgley provides low cost appetizing meals of a high standard and we are greatly indebted to her. Sheila Storey had previously done sterling service in this role. Rob King is responsible for technological help and advertising, Janet Wilson acts as our Treasurer, June Thornton assists as Cashier for refreshments (plus 2 or 3 others) and Jane Lane, Cathy Moss (Tower) and Peggy Ayers (St Pancras) help to meet and greet speakers. David Stainer serves on the Planning Group.

I would like to thank them all for their tolerance and support. I am sure they will continue to give that support to Ann. *Pat*

THURSDAY FORUM

Thursday Forum has got off to an amazing start in 2020 with a talk on Giles the cartoonist, followed by one on the Magna Carta, its local connections and bringing the story up to date. We heard about Canon Roy Tricker's MBE and we heard about the Ipswich Outreach project and the soup kitchen. Lunches have been of a very high standard and well worth attending even if you cannot stay for the talk. We'd like to think our buildings are where new friends are made and regular friendships are cemented.

In February there is an equally diverse collection of talks:

6th February: Jeremy Flack, the Green Advocate helps the local United Reformed Churches to forge ahead (or is it 'keep up?') with green initiatives to reduce the damage we are doing to our world. He will be speaking on Trees and Climate Change.

13th February: 'From Siege to Sheeran' by Anthony Wooding , a volunteer guide at Framlingham Castle

20th February: The History of Refugees in Suffolk by Martin Simmonds, who is Communications Officer for Suffolk Refugee Support.

27th February: A Cornish Medley by Chris Parfitt; another of his fascinating armchair travels.

If you've not tried us before, choose a topic and come along. Or why not bring a friend or neighbour?

OVER THE GARDEN WALL

... from our neighbours at St Pancras



Dear Friends,

As I write this, we are just a few days away from the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity with the theme 'They showed us unusual kindness' (Acts 28:2). The materials, prepared by Christians from Malta and Gozo, remind us of the kindness displayed to St Paul and his companions after they had been rescued from the shipwreck off the coast of Malta. I remember the place well because I was at St Paul's Bay with my parents and my father was keen to have a photo of himself. As I was composing it, he stepped back into the sea so we then drove around with his socks blowing from the window to dry!! The island has memories still of St Paul and also a beautiful shrine of Our Lady at nearby Mellieha. Our Ignite young people's group are going there on pilgrimage this summer. The area unfortunately is in an area where even today, migrants in unseaworthy vessels, trying to reach Europe from some African countries, still need to be rescued.

Sunday 26th January has been declared by the Pope as the Sunday of the Word of God. 'Without the Scriptures, the events of the mission of Jesus and of his Church in this world would remain incomprehensible.' Thus, St Jerome could say, 'ignorance of the Scriptures is ignorance of Christ.' It is evident that Pope Francis chose this date because it 'has ecumenical value' i.e. it is the day after the week when we pray for Christian Unity. Many of our churches will be recommissioning readers on that day.

The service has words which apply to us all, whichever church we belong to: 'You must seek to grow in holiness through your own reading and meditation upon the sacred Scriptures. You must always aim to prepare well to proclaim the word of God and turn to the Sacred Scriptures as a source of spiritual nourishment.'

The meetings held to prepare for '*Enjoy the Bible: Sensing the Bible through Art and Music*' on 7th March have been a real joy and we hope to have a good crowd from Ipswich town centre churches on that day. To register: enjoy-the-bible.eventbrite.co.uk. **Jean**

FAIRTRADE FORTNIGHT 24TH FEBRUARY - 8TH MARCH

This year's Big Brew theme is ... *Coffee!*

We will be holding a Big Brew during Fairtrade Fortnight, on Saturday 7th March in the Turret Room. The baking competition this year will be scones using the Fairtrade ingredients, sugar, fruit etc. We are delighted that Jane Sago, a WI advisor, has agreed to be our judge again.



Tea, *coffee* and Fairtrade cookies will be served from 10am-12 midday. There will be a stall from the Fairtrade Shop in Upper Brook Street, which will also be available during coffee after the morning service on 8th March. Proceeds from the Big Brew will go to the Traidcraft Exchange.

The Mayor of Ipswich will be hosting a reception on behalf of the Ipswich Fair Trade Town steering group on Thursday 27th February from 6pm -8pm. The venue is still to be confirmed but is likely to be the Council Chamber in the Town Hall. They have been very fortunate to get Mike Gidney, CEO of the Fairtrade Foundation as guest speaker. Tickets for this event are free, but limited in number, and will soon be available from the Fairtrade Shop.

Thabiti's Story



Thabiti harvesting coffee on his farm

Like many smallholder farmers in Tanzania, multi-talented Thabiti grows coffee, maize, beans and bananas on his small farm. Thabiti has a physical disability in his legs and finds walking and carrying very difficult. He recently joined a Traidcraft Exchange group to learn how to farm coffee better, and is now receiving support tailored to his disability.

BUDGET FOR 2020

At the Church Meeting in November 2019, the budget for 2020 was presented and adopted by the meeting and by doing so, the membership has agreed to make the budget work.

This budget estimated the cost for the year of day-to-day expenses but large sums were placed in the funds set aside for major building work and Professional Fees. The remaining designated funds are to remain at their present level.

In order to balance the projected income and expenditure an additional £11,000 is necessary from the Offerings and other donations made to the church. This would require an increase of nearly 20% on current giving. In order to keep the increase required to a reasonable level it was agreed by the membership that, for this year, the church should use £8,000 of its reserves to reduce the immediate need to £3,000 or an increase of about 5%. Members should be aware that using £8,000 of such reserves cannot be acceptable on a regular basis as to do so would be a major risk to the future of Christ Church.

We all know that our own cost of living has gone up...but we are not alone....so have those of Christ Church, costs such as insurance, gas and electricity and other items which are essential just to maintain the daily work of the church.

The Deacons ask that everyone connected with Christ Church consider, prayerfully and carefully, their own current personal giving. A 5% increase would help bridge the anticipated shortfall of £3,000 and higher levels of increase will help to ensure a reasonable financial safety net for the future. Doing so will enable us all to move forward with confidence and in faith.

John

A REALLY POWERFUL EXPERIENCE

This was the heading for an article in the January Open Doors magazine about the Handmade Petition “I SEE YOU”, comprising of decorated squares that some of us donated. This was part of the Open Doors ongoing “See Change” campaign in support of persecuted Christian women. Sadly, even though women escape from, for example, Boko Haram in Nigeria, when they return to their communities and churches, the stigma and shame associated with what has happened to them follows them and remains hidden.

This petition is saying that we do see you, we hear your story, we want justice for you and are praying for you.

More than 16,000 squares were received and thousands sewn together into banners. These were then hung in the Chapter House of Westminster Abbey during November, acting as a tapestry of prayer that was visited by thousands of people and members of Parliament.

Open Doors would like to say thank you so much for everyone who took part. Please continue to pray for these women and for Open Doors workers who bring healing and hope to them.

Nettie

CHRIST CHURCH'S RECENT CHARITABLE OFFERINGS

Harvest 2019

Commitment for Life: £348.35

Operation Agri: £494.60

Christmas 2019

Mission Aviation Fellowship: £1,342.60

Christian Aid: £443.67

All figures include Gift Aid to be claimed

RECOMMENDED READING

Three times a year we get three copies of Baptists Together magazine and they are always good reading. One copy is for the treasurer and one for the secretary, but when they have finished with them, all three can be borrowed from the back of the church. May I recommend the Spring edition to you in particular?

The theme is 'Welcome', and, whereas we have tackled this topic at Christ Church before, and indeed we think of ourselves as welcoming, this magazine brings to our attention a whole range of other considerations. We know that our buildings are not conducive to disabled access, but have we tried as much as we might? More significantly still, in one of the articles a wheelchair user points out: 'in all but the most inaccessible church buildings, a welcoming and friendly attitude will enable me to be included, while, even in the most physically accessible building, I may be excluded by the attitude of others'.

All disabled people are individuals with opinions, wishes and gifts like everyone else. One of them says: 'We don't just want to be cared for, we want to build the church too. People like me don't just want to be served but to serve too'

Have we thought purely of wheelchair users? What about sight-impaired or hearing-impaired? What about those on the autistic spectrum for whom noise is disturbing? What about learning disabilities? What implications does this have for our hymns and prayers?

There is a lovely article on the L'Arche communities and one on a church transformed by welcoming asylum-seekers, as well as a fascinating series of prayers with Widgit symbols (see the article near the back for an explanation!).

Please take a copy from the back of the church, or access it online at www.baptist.org.uk/baptiststogether. If there is demand we could get extra copies of this particular edition www.baptist.org.uk/shop.

Ann Fox

METAPHOR FOR THE CHURCH

One picture of the Church is of a building that isn't finished yet. "You are living stones that God is building into spiritual temple" (1 Peter 2.5) and "In him, the whole building is joined together and rises to become a holy temple in the Lord" (Ephesians 2.21).

This metaphor reminds us that we are a work in progress and that God isn't finished with us yet.

When I think of an unfinished building, I am reminded of the importance of scaffolding during building work. What is the scaffolding that we use as we play our part in the building of the Church? Do we support one another as we build in new ways, or do we try to restrict things to the way that we always have done them?

How are we building? As we follow Jesus' leading, we need to realise that there is a serious responsibility that we are entrusted with (1 Corinthians 3.10-17). What are the principles or values that our churches are built around? Perhaps it is 'loving one another' or 'Jesus is Lord' or maybe it might be something like 'keep everyone happy' or 'this is our club that needs to be run in a way that suits us'.

Are we following the blueprint? If builders are following different building plans then the building isn't going to come together. How do we keep focused on God's plans?

Who is the building for? We are being built into a Holy Temple where the presence of God can/should/will be found in all of its glory.

We are being built into the King's House. Are we accessible to those who are seeking God?

Rev Graeme Ross, our Regional Minister

CHRIST CHURCH ECO-GROUP - CARE FOR CREATION

As I write, we hear the news that the last decade has officially been the warmest ever recorded and 2016 and 2019 the warmest years. And we also hear the message that emissions of the greenhouse gases that are heating up the planet must be reduced urgently if we are to avoid dangerous consequences for us all. The severity of bush fires, droughts and floods is increasingly being attributed to this climate change.

The greenhouse gas we are probably most familiar with is carbon dioxide and with it the necessity to stop burning fossil fuels. But there is a greenhouse gas that is 30 times more potent than carbon dioxide, methane, surprising quantities of which is burped up by cattle as they digest their food. Globally our appetite for meat is increasing and so therefore is the number of cattle farmed for beef. Together with all other livestock, the meat industry now produces more greenhouse gases than the running of all our transport – cars, planes, freight and ships put together. Brazil has more cattle than any other country on earth (exporting thousands of tons of beef to the UK each year) and, to meet demand, cattle farming is encroaching further and further into the Amazon rainforest. The forest's trees store huge amounts of carbon but, during the summer of 2019, the equivalent of 5 football pitches was being lost every minute, further reducing the forest's ability to be "the lungs of the planet" and keep the world cool.

40% of the world's crops are grown to be fed to animals for our meat, which is an inefficient use of land; more people can be fed if we eat the crops directly. In addition, about a third of the loss of biodiversity is attributed to the farming of animals, from loss of habitat in the Amazon or the massive fields growing a single animal feed crop to African penguins threatened with extinction as their food source (sardines) is overfished to be turned into fishmeal.

So, what to do? What we choose to eat is a very personal matter but it seems that, for the sake of the planet and its people, we must be persuaded to eat less meat. We don't necessarily need to cut it from our diets

completely, but reducing to maybe a portion or two a week would be a very good start.

Kate Helleur

(Statistics are all taken from the BBC programme “Meat: a threat to our planet?” shown on 25th November 2019, still available on iPlayer)

DIARY DATES

Tuesday 28th January 12.30pm - Prayer lunch (Turret Room)

Thursday 30th January 7.30pm - Junior Church meeting

Sunday 2nd February 12.30pm - Family meal - Bangers & Mash for Leprosy

Thursday 6th February 7.30pm - Deacon's meeting

Thursday 13th February 7.30pm - Church Life meeting (Langston Hall)

Sunday 16th February 12.30pm - Church meeting after a soup & roll lunch

Thursday 20th February 6pm - 8pm - Middle Group visit to Gt Blakenham

Waste Recycling Centre

Tuesday 3rd March 12.30pm - Lent lunch (Turret Room)

REGULAR EVENTS

Emmaus Bible Study Group in the Lounge

- Mondays weekly 10.30am - 12pm
- Thursdays (fortnightly) 10.30am - 12pm

Various - Trefoil Guild, Boys Brigade Old Boys, Smart Recovery and Little Signers meet on our premises so please ask if you are interested

REGULAR EVENTS (TERM TIME ONLY)

Mondays - Beavers, Cubs and Scouts

Contact Group Scout Lead John Rockett: jdrockett@hotmail.co.uk

Tuesdays - Tots+ for all under-school aged children and their carers in the Christ Church Halls 9.30am – 11am.

Fridays - Rainbows, Brownies and Guides.

Contact Ruth Strudwick: ruthstrudwick@gmail.com

SERVICES FOR FEBRUARY 2020

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

Sunday 2nd February

10.45am Family Worship with Holy Communion

This Service will be followed by a Church Family Lunch in aid of The Leprosy Mission

6.30pm No Evening Service

Sunday 9th February

10.45am Family Worship

6.30pm Evening Service with Holy Communion

Sunday 16th February

10.45am Family Worship followed by the Church Meeting

6.30pm No Evening Service

Sunday 23rd February

10.45am Family Worship led by Dr Richard Jurd

URC Lay Preacher and a member at Lion Walk, Colchester.

6.30pm Evening Worship led by the Wednesday evening Emmaus Group

Sunday 1st March

10.45am Family Worship with Holy Communion

6.30pm Evening Service