

## THE MINISTER WRITES ...



Dear All,

As we celebrate Easter this year, we remember that there is much for us to rejoice in and I pray that as we reflect once more on the resurrection stories and rejoice in the God who is always giving us life, there will be a stirring of new life and hope within us. The possibilities of new life and fresh hope, which are depicted in the Gospel stories of the first disciples' encounters with the resurrected Jesus, followed the darkest of days when Jesus was crucified and died. These resurrection encounters profoundly affected the first disciples; they were transformed and their whole way of viewing God, themselves, life, death and indeed, everything, would never be the same again. Peter wrote about this in his first letter:

*What a God we have! And how fortunate we are to have him, this Father of our Master Jesus! Because Jesus was raised from the dead, we've been given a brand-new life and have everything to live for, including a future in heaven - and the future starts now! God is keeping careful watch over us and the future. The Day is coming when you'll have it all - life healed and whole. (1 Peter 1:6-7, The Message).*

Indeed, what a God we have! And by choosing to follow Jesus and be a part of our church family, we have left our old lives behind and are now blessed with a wonderful, brand-new life in God. The 'brand-new life' Peter writes about, speaks to us of how 'new' our life now is. We have all been 'given a brand-new life' and a God filled future which starts right now. Whatever we are going through, even if we are walking through dark days, we can be certain that the new 'Day' that Peter speaks of is breaking into today. Praise God!

So, as we celebrate this Easter, let us hold onto God as we expectantly look for resurrection life and light within our own lives and within our broken, hurting world today. However, we reflect on the Resurrection stories, however we understand them, we all fully grasp that there is a message here about hope for today and for the future. The Spirit of God assures us that because of Jesus' life, death and resurrection, we are his beloved children and that whatever we go through in this life, we do so as those who are strengthened and sustained by God's resurrection power and in this same power, we will be lovingly held forever. The Risen Lord now beckons us to live transformed lives, to see everything differently and to go into the world with faith, hope and love and make a real difference in his glorious name.

With much love, *Neil*

### An Easter Prayer:

Loving God,  
on this Easter morning, we celebrate the miracle of life, renewal, and hope.  
May the story of Christ's resurrection remind us that love is stronger than fear,  
that justice will rise even in the face of oppression,  
and that new beginnings are always possible.  
Fill our hearts with compassion for all people,  
guide us in the ways of peace and kindness,  
and help us to be bearers of your light in the world.

In the spirit of the risen Christ, who welcomes all,  
Amen.

## CHURCH LIFE COMMITTEE

Thank you so much to all who supported our Transform Trade Big Brew. Congratulations to Sheila Storey on winning the cake baking competition, and our thanks, once again, to Jane Sago for judging. She was very impressed with all ten entries and said there was very little to choose between them, they were all delicious. The sale of coffee and cakes raised a splendid £196.69. In addition the Fair Trade Stall had sales amounting to £242.77.

We will be serving Easter Breakfast in the Turret Hall at 8.45am on Easter Sunday. This will be followed by informal communion at the breakfast table. Tickets are now available from committee members, £3 for adults, £1 for children.

Our main fundraising event for Christian Aid Week is the concert by Octave and afternoon tea on Sunday 18<sup>th</sup> May. However, we are still having the usual plant sale on the front lawn on Saturday 10<sup>th</sup> May between 10.30am and 12.30pm. This is popular with passers-by as well as our own congregation. If you are planting seeds, taking cuttings or separating some plants, please think of the plant sale and do a few extras, thank you. The sale will continue in the hall during coffee on Sunday 11<sup>th</sup> May.

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## TWAM

Don't forget with Spring on the way to find any tools you would like to donate to TWAM. They are especially looking for individual items to make up tool kits. All items either new or in good condition please. Bring along to church and place in box at the back or I can collect if easier. They are still accepting sewing machines, coins and a range of other items.

We have done well in our efforts to support TWAM long may we continue to do so.

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### PRAYER CALENDAR FOR APRIL

*This month, the prayers have been written by Junior Church.*

6<sup>th</sup> - Saving God, as we think about World Health Day this week we come to you to pray for those who work in the healthcare system and give their time to help others. We think of those in our Church family who need help at this time and pray that they feel your holy presence with them.

13<sup>th</sup> - Our humble God, King of Kings. As we recall your triumphant journey to Jerusalem, we welcome you into our hearts today to guide us in our journey through life.

20<sup>th</sup> - Loving God, on this joyful Easter Sunday, we thank you for the sacrifice you made for our world as we come together to celebrate new life and change

27<sup>th</sup> - Protecting God, this week we think of the importance of Earth Day. We thank you for giving us life. Help us to acknowledge and take responsibility for safeguarding the world you created for us.

## OBITUARY FOR PAUL WILLIAM WILMOT 1938-2025

Paul joined Tacket Street Congregational Church from a young age, transferring from Peoples Hall Methodist Church, Stoke Street, where his family attended, to become a member of 1<sup>st</sup> Ipswich BB Company.

From an early age he looked wider than the BB, joining the Langston Players, an amateur playgroup, as a founder member in 1954, at age 16, as an actor. He went on to prove to be a natural taking part in many plays even learning to play piano for one key part. He also helped in producing and directing. He was a notable singer.

He was a founder member of Church Youth Group, at the time, which became the Folk Group. They met every Sunday evening after church service for singing and guitar sessions and developing a book of songs. Later they were invited to take part in church services at Tacket Street and at various churches locally. He was a natural leader.

Paul had a lovely social presence leading in barn dances and social events at church. He was often the life and soul of any party.

In another role he was a leading member of Suffolk Congregational Youth which linked the young people of local churches who often joined together for church services and youth activities.

He became a Deacon and then one of his crowning roles he was appointed as Church Secretary, which he carried out for six years before retiring in 1984. He was very efficient and highly regarded.

Paul was a member of 1<sup>st</sup> Ipswich from boy to Officer and Captain. In his youth he attended The Boys' Brigade King George V1 Leadership Training Memorial Officer Cadet Scheme. It was a high honour to attend this residential course and it set him up for a 'BB career' which he continued throughout his life. He was an active officer in sports side of the Company and took on the Battalion Sports Officer role covering a wide range of events involving 22 Companies - he did this very successfully. He took over as Company Secretary in 1959. He later became Officer in Charge of Junior Section and in 1989 became Captain until closure of Company in 2018 - the longest serving Captain.

During his church and BB life he spent two years national service in RAF returning to BB and church life in 1958.

He married later in life and spent 43 years with Pauline continuing his church and BB service and involving his new family - his two stepsons who were already members of 1<sup>st</sup> Ipswich.

Paul's life was one of dedicated service chosen at an early age and maintained throughout his life. He was the beating heart of 1<sup>st</sup> Ipswich and a tireless worker in helping to achieve the, 'Advancement of Christ Kingdom among Boys,' during 66 years' service.

'Sure and 'Stedfast'.



## **OBITUARY FOR STEPHEN SMITH 1930 – 2025**

Stephen was born in September 1930, the youngest of three children. His parents were James and Violet Smith, who had moved to Ipswich in 1926 to run a fish and chip shop.

For many years Stephen worked for Grimwade Riddleys, a wholesale grocery company which later became a pharmaceutical company, starting off as a salesperson and moving up into management, eventually taking on the management of the pharmaceutical site. It was typical of Stephen that when the company closed, he made sure every member of staff had a job to go to.

It was there that Stephen first met Rosemary and they married in 1956. They had a daughter, Lyn, and were married for 45 years until Rosemary's death in 2001.

Stephen's long involvement with the YMCA began as a young man and, as a member and volunteer, he did much to support the association, the residence and its staff. He was a director and a member of the board, served as its chairman and took an active interest at regional and national level. In 1990 he was registered as the administration and finance manager to the organisation in Ipswich.

From his early involvement in the YM Badminton club, Stephen went on to make a highly significant contribution to the sport, both as a player and administrator. As a member of the Suffolk Badminton Association council for over 75 years he was not only the longest serving member but had also been the youngest, joining at just 16. He promoted the sport tirelessly, was county singles champion for at least 8 consecutive years and was awarded the English Badminton Award for long standing exceptional service to Badminton in England.

Christ Church played an important role in Stephen's life. Among other things he served as a Monday caretaker for over 20 years, looked after our church gardens, served on our Property Committee and did much to create and sustain a valued connection with our friends at the Ipswich Mosque. The part he played in the life of the church will be greatly missed.

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## **CONTACT WITH BOND STREET MOSQUE**

In the past we had a close relationship with the local mosque, shared in social events, and had serious discussions and learning sessions on aspects of our faith. The contact was maintained by Stephen Smith who regularly attended their prayers, finding friendship and calm for his own prayers there.

Shami and other brothers have invited us to come for coffee and a chat to rekindle that friendship, on Wednesday 30<sup>th</sup> April at 12.00. Their prayer time will start at 1pm and there would be an opportunity to sit and observe if anyone wanted to extend their time. The invitation is open to all, but it would be helpful if people could sign up at the back of the church so we know who is due to come and we can go in together.

Please be aware that you will be expected to remove your shoes on entry. Head gear is not essential for ladies, but the Muslim ladies will all have their heads covered. Please can the ladies wear long (not short) skirts or trousers. We'll be discussing other opportunities for contact, hospitality and mutual learning.

It will be a way of honouring the memory of Stephen, and to demonstrate that there is a lot more that unifies us than divides us in this fractured world today.

## ECO CHURCH – CREATION CARE

A piece of research that caught my eye recently has looked at the relationship between Britain’s three largest religious communities and their attitudes towards environmental matters. It turns out that it is Hindus who are at the forefront of environmental activism, engaging in eco-friendly actions at higher rates than other faith groups.

The research was carried out by the Institute for the Impact of Faith in Life. Amanda Murjan, a research associate, writes “Hinduism’s emphasis on the interconnectedness of all existence fosters a deep-rooted environmental ethic, where nature is not merely a resource but a sacred entity. The belief that God is in everything connects humanity with all existence, reinforcing an intrinsic responsibility toward conservation.”

While 92% of Muslims believe their faith requires them to care for the earth, the figure for Christians is 82%. And it is Christians who apparently engage in the lowest levels of conservation action. The research also showed that 31% of Christians deny climate breakdown – the highest among these three faith groups. A Christian belief that God will ultimately restore the world maybe contributes to this attitude.

Though people of faith do in the main believe they are responsible for caring for the Earth, this report suggests that their actual environmental actions do not in fact differ significantly from those without faith.

Interesting.

### Eco-tip of the month

As thoughts turn to our gardens, remember to use peat-free compost only.

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## REMEMBERING THREE YEARS OF THE WAR IN UKRAINE

‘Together for Ipswich’ organised two events on the third anniversary of the invasion of Ukraine; a procession through Ipswich followed by a service at the Minster; and an invitation to drop in and join the weekly Ukrainian meet-up at the Café ‘On the Huh’ in St Peters Street.

Margaret Fish and I attended this informal session. A large map of the country was displayed on the table and the Ukrainian guests added the name of friends and relatives, together with a candle, to the area where they lived. A short time of silence followed, prompted by four words: **protection, peace, justice and hope**. Solidarity is about the only thing we can show those forced out of their homeland.





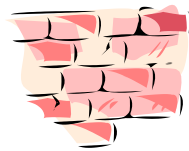
It doesn't matter whether our speaker is a well-known personality - like Nick Hulme, of Ipswich and Colchester Hospitals, and Claire Staddon, CEO of Emmaus Suffolk, who both feature on television - or one of our own friends, like Jane Lane whose title was 'Call the Midwife', we always have a fascinating 45 minutes of entertainment and inspiration. In March, in addition to Claire and Jane, we have been treated to talks by John Ferguson, the award-winning photographer, Bob Hamilton the Anglican Diocesan Pioneer Developer, and Viola Jones who spoke about how we see the world differently, and better, through art.

We have two weeks off in April and continue on 24<sup>th</sup> with a talk about the Samaritans. Finding speakers for the Samaritans was interesting because I kept being referred to the emergency number. But in the end, I have been rewarded with two speakers together – Anne Reeder and Gary Grayson.

On 1<sup>st</sup> May we hear about another charity but this one is local to Ipswich and located round the corner from church (as many charities are). Gavin Stone is the CEO of 4YP – a service for young people aged 7 – 25 'providing somewhere safe to go, something positive to do and someone trusted to connect and journey with'.

## OVER THE GARDEN WALL

... from our neighbours at St Pancras



Dear Friends,

A recent tv programme about St Patrick (Feast day 17<sup>th</sup> March) promised to 'strip away myths and reveal the true story'! Two written sources tell of his kidnapping 1,500 years ago from a wealthy family in Wales. He spent six years as a slave in Ireland, before escaping. Having studied and been ordained as a priest he returned years later as a missionary. I first became aware of St Patrick in the 1970s when my friend Dr Heley proudly wore shamrock, flown here for an Irish Sister! In 1987, when I moved to Birmingham, I went to my nearest church which seemed so Irish that I didn't go back until years later. I never took part in the huge annual processions in the city but about ten years ago I was the spokesperson to inform our very English assistant priest that the dozen or so of us present at his evening Mass on 17<sup>th</sup> March would be singing Hail glorious Saint Patrick! He seemed bemused, but gave in. The chorus indicates, for me, that the celebration is as much about nationality as St Patrick's contribution as a missionary:

'For God and Saint Patrick and our native land.'

Both Catholics and Protestants claim St Patrick, but each has their own hymn!!

In Lent, Catholics here have a tradition called Family Fast Day. The original idea was to have a simple meal and give the money saved to CAFOD, which is part of the worldwide Caritas network. Probably now most people just make a donation. This year funds will go to an area of N Kenya with a climate very like Karamoja in Uganda, which I know well. It's very hot and rarely rains. Such areas benefit from the World Food Programme (WFP). Most secondary schools are boarding and each term they receive basic food for the main meal of the day (in Uganda it's a carbohydrate and red kidney beans). Last term, at a school where a young man I know is acting Head, the food ran out and students were sent home to families who would struggle to buy food for them. Huge cuts in US aid and our own overseas aid are impacting the work of Caritas worldwide and of WFP (US is the biggest donor and we are third largest), hence the need for our help. Our support of CAFOD and agencies like Tearfund and Christian Aid is so important. Fr Joseph has a weekly Lent lunch, with all proceeds going to Mary's Meals, another wonderful charity. As for us, as well as supporting such projects, if we are able, our prayers for the many worldwide areas of conflict are so vital.



My greetings to you all as we move towards the great celebration of Easter and the Resurrection of our Lord.

Your Catholic friend,

**Jean**

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## DIARY DATES FOR APRIL

Thursday 10<sup>th</sup> Deacons' meeting (7.30pm)  
Friday 18<sup>th</sup> Good Friday Walk of Witness (10.30am)  
Tuesday 29<sup>th</sup> Prayer lunch (midday)

### Emmaus Groups

Mondays at 10.30am in the Lounge (not during Lent Groups)  
2<sup>nd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> Wednesdays at 7.30pm (not during Lent Groups)  
1<sup>st</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> Thursdays at 10.30am in the Lounge

### Lent Groups

Wednesday 9<sup>th</sup> 2pm & 7pm Lent Study Group

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## SERVICES FOR APRIL

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

### **Sunday 6<sup>th</sup> April**

10.45 am Family Worship with Holy Communion and welcoming new members

### **Sunday 13<sup>th</sup> April**

10.45 am Palm Sunday Family Worship

### **Sunday 20<sup>th</sup> April Easter Sunday**

8.45am Easter Breakfast with informal service of Holy Communion  
10.45am Easter Day All-age Family Worship

### **Sunday 27<sup>th</sup> April**

10.45 am Family Worship led by William Glasse  
William is a URC Lay Preacher and Methodist Local Preacher

### **Sunday 4<sup>th</sup> May**

10.45am Family Worship with Holy Communion followed by the Church Meeting  
Please bring a packed lunch to eat before the meeting, which will start no later than 12.30pm.

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