



Tacket Street, Ipswich, IP4 1AU



COMMENT
NOVEMBER 2025

THE MINISTER WRITES ...



Dear All,

In Luke 16:19-31 we hear Jesus telling the story of *'The rich man and Lazarus'*. Now except for verses 16 to 18, all of Luke 16 is devoted to teaching concerning possessions. As we have already seen over the last year, this is a subject of primary concern to Luke, not only in his record of Jesus's teaching, but as early as in the preaching of John the Baptist (3:10-14) and as late as Luke's story of the early church (Acts 2-6). This story of the rich man and Lazarus is a story that is both simple and complex, clear and puzzling. The story is well travelled, existing in several cultures and many versions. At least seven versions of it appear in rabbinical sources! Luke's version is clearly a Jewish modification of the story; we notice the central place of Father Abraham.

Despite this story being short, the account is rich in detail. And clearly, the sharp contrast between the rich man and the poor is vivid and evocative throughout. The rich man's character is reflected in his refusal of aid to the poor. This was, of course, a violation of the Law of Moses (Deut. 15:4-11). Moreover, this is a violation of what should be normal, common human compassion. We know the other man only as 'poor' but 'poor' had come to be in some circles almost as a synonym for 'righteous': *The Spirit of God is upon me because he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor* (Luke 4:18). *Blessed are you who are poor, for yours is the Kingdom of God* (Luke 6:20). That God would reverse the fortunes of such people was a widely held belief and a strong conviction for Luke (*The Magnificat* 1:51-53, *The Beatitudes* 6:20-26). Here, there is an obvious and clear challenge to the reader, both then and now.

This parable calls us to consider how wealth, privilege, and indifference to suffering shape life for us and those in need. This story is not really about an afterlife, but about the urgent call to justice here and now. The rich man's failure was not his wealth itself, but his disregard for the suffering of Lazarus at his gate. Today, we are invited to reflect on economic inequality, systemic injustice, and the responsibility to use resources for the common good of all. Living out this parable means advocating for policies that protect the vulnerable, practice generosity in our communities and care for creation. It also means listening to the voices of the marginalized who reveal truth that we would not hear without them. Ultimately, we're reminded that genuine discipleship demands compassion, advocacy, and action for those in need. Let us do all we can to live out the powerful point of this parable so that the plight of the poor is permanently more positive.

With much love,
Neil

*He has told you, O mortal, what is good;
and what does the Lord require of you
but to do justice, and to love kindness,
and to walk humbly with your God? Micah 6:8*

DESERT ISLAND DISCS

As part of his year as President of the Suffolk Organists Association, Stephen is planning an evening of Desert Island Discs with a Fish and Chip Supper in the Turret Hall on Saturday 8th November at 6.30pm. All members of the congregation are welcome to attend and the only cost is your supper. Please let Stephen know if you would like to come and he will let you have a menu and price list nearer the time. There will also be dessert!

It will be a chance to hear what makes Stephen tick musically and learn something of his musical journey.

GIFTS FROM THE BOND STREET MOSQUE

Our friends at the Mosque have generously given some books, including a Koran in accessible English, and some tracts. These are in the vestry for anyone to borrow. If you do borrow one, please just write your name and a contact number, in case someone else needs it while you have it.

The 40th anniversary brochures at the back of the church are also for you to peruse or borrow. Please bring back if you take it out of the church. The photos are well worth looking at.

MIDDLE GROUP CURRY NIGHT FOR LEPROSY MISSION

On behalf of Middle Group, I wanted to say a big thank you to the chefs for the delicious food on the night, for all who helped and those who were able to support us on 25th September. It was lovely that friends from other churches and Bond Street Mosque were able to join us.

Our area representative, Revd. Matt Henderson, was able to update us on the latest news about TLM's Revive Campaign and showed us a moving video about the very difficult conditions that Leprosy sufferers have to endure. Thanks to kind and generous supporters, things are beginning to improve in Odisha.

I am pleased to let you know that we raised £225 on the night, with some new standing orders set up.

Thank you all again.

QUIZ IN AID OF HEADWAY

Save the date and join us for a fun, general knowledge quiz in aid of Headway, the Church's chosen charity. Taking place in the Church Hall on Wednesday 5th November at 7pm. All welcome, invite family and friends, or join other friends to form a team. Tea, coffee and snacks will be provided. Bring your own if you fancy something a little stronger! No need to book, entry free, with donations to Headway.

Tacket Street Boys' Brigade Old Boys Association



The Boys' Brigade 1st Ipswich Company
1903-2018



Christmas Fayre



with morning coffee and refreshments

Saturday 29th November 2025

Christ Church Hall

Tacket Street, Ipswich

10.30am – 1.00pm



Stalls Include vegetables, cakes,
books/CDs, fancy goods, provisions
and treasure hunt competition (hamper)

All Welcome

Hope to see you there!

CHRISTMAS DONATIONS 2025

During December the church traditionally makes three offerings:

Gift Service (14th December this year) - Christmas Tree monetary offerings for our chosen charity which this year is Headway.

Gift Service - Christmas presents and food for disadvantaged families in East Suffolk

Christmas Day - all financial offerings to Christian Aid.

Home Start Suffolk have once again asked if donors can provide financial gifts which they will use to purchase vouchers which will allow them to support families throughout the year, not just for one day. This year, Home Start have been able to run some cooking session for families, providing warm meals in the winter months with food purchased from the vouchers which has been amazing. Although the financial situation has stabilised, they are seeing families with no food due to changes in benefits, loss of work for people not on contracts and expected high energy costs. The number of families they would class as in need and vulnerable is increasing rapidly with housing being a major issue in Ipswich.



We've had four sessions this year so far and numbers are up, talks have been great and all the helpers and workers have slotted back into the routine with enthusiasm and efficiency, as always.

I honestly didn't think I would enjoy hearing about radar research and World War 2 problems, but the speaker Graham Murchie was such an expert speaker he made the subject fascinating; he made that era come to life.

Our next speaker was Rev Tom Mumford from St Mary-le-Tower Church. He told us about his faith journey and the very recent journey of his church building as it has become a Minster. He stressed that the label 'Minster' is as much an upgrade and compliment to the town as it is to the church itself. It was good to make another friend from among the local clergy.

After a break of one week we returned to hear about Ipswich Central and all the work they are doing now and planning for Christmas. We'll no doubt enjoy the results of their efforts, but after this talk we know who is behind a lot of the events.

We broadened our horizons the following week to hear about the work and legacy of SIFRE, Suffolk Interfaith Resource Centre. The centre itself has closed but we still strive to connect with those of other faiths and to learn about them and from them. The speaker was Barbara Richardson-Todd replacing the advertised speaker. She is a director of the East of England Faiths Agency.

November will provide a similarly varied menu of speakers.

We start with James Winterbotham who has been involved with the creation of a new historic map of Ipswich and will explain what it tells us about the town's development through the ages. We should learn much more about how Ipswich has been formed and get glimpses of its past.

HEADWAY is our chosen charity for these six months and on 13th November, we are very pleased to welcome its CEO Helen Fairweather to tell us about the invaluable services it provides for everyone with brain injury suffered through traumatic accident, stroke, virus, tumour, neurological condition or other event. If you have not had enough opportunity to give to this excellent cause, come along this week, enjoy, and donate.

As a light interlude, we enjoy the photos of Ian van der Ende again on 20th November. This time he is taking us on an exploration of some of the Suffolk villages. Do we know them as well as we thought?

Vivienne Berry comes to us on 27th November to talk about young people's mental health and what we as adults, parents, grandparents and neighbours can do to help. She is a counsellor with 4YP, the organisation we heard about last May.

Hope to see you at some of these events.

TRADING WITH JUSTICE AT ITS HEART

And what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God? Micah 6 v 8.

The Fair Trade Shop was formed 36 years ago by a group of Traidcraft representatives whose aim was to introduce food, beverages and craft items produced by people who were not exploited but received fair pay for their work and enough to support their communities and provide education. For those who continued, formed a company and opened a shop, this is still our passion and, although there have been many changes since those early days – not least the closure of Traidcraft – we continue to sell a huge range of products on this basis.



Sustainability is very important and many craft items are made from recycled materials; growing tea, coffee and cocoa in this changing climate means that planting of trees and diversification is the only way they can continue to make a living and this can be achieved through the fairtrade premium.

We are stocking up for Christmas; please consider us when buying Christmas cards (supporting the work of Transform Trade, Amnesty International, the Soil Association and Somersham Ward, Ipswich Hospital), Advent Calendars from the Meaningful Chocolate Company and Divine Chocolate and other seasonal goodies. We are open Monday to Saturday 9.30am to 4.30pm and also via the online shop (www.thefairtradeshopipswich.co.uk).

The manager and volunteers would love to welcome you to our shop in Upper Brook Street (next to Caffè Nero), and we invite you to think prayerfully about the impact you make on the world when you shop – to its people and our planet.



ECO CHURCH – CREATION CARE

While a certain world leader denies the existence of a growing climate crisis, calling it "the greatest con job ever perpetrated on the world", Pope Leo XIV is standing up for climate and environmental care and justice. Speaking at an event to mark 10 years since the publication of *Laudato Si'*, the landmark document on climate published by Pope Francis in 2015, he called for greater action on climate change, saying there is "no room for indifference or resignation". *Laudato Si'* is credited with helping to encourage leaders working on the Paris climate agreement which was signed later that year and Pope Leo is committed to continue in Pope Francis's footsteps.

Pope Leo said: "Some have chosen to deride the increasingly evident signs of climate change, to ridicule those who speak of global warming, and even to blame the poor for the very thing that affects them the most." He called for a change of heart to truly embrace the environmental cause and said any Christian should be onboard. "We cannot love God, whom we cannot see, while despising his creatures. Nor can we call ourselves disciples of Jesus Christ without participating in his outlook on creation and his care for all that is fragile and wounded,"

Pope Francis had emphasised that 'the most effective solutions will not come from individual efforts alone, but above all from major political decisions on the national and international levels' and Pope Leo echoed this, calling for increased pressure on politicians. He added that citizens across the world need to take an active role in political decisions, saying "only then will it be possible to mitigate the damage done to the environment".

"God will ask us if we have cultivated and cared for the world that he created for the benefit of all and for future generations, and if we have taken care of our brothers and sisters - what will be our answer, my dear friends?" Pope Leo said.

Pope Leo has agreed to a Vatican plan to turn a field north of Rome into a vast solar farm, which, once up and running, is expected to make Vatican City the world's first carbon-neutral state. Quite a statement!

Eco-Tip for November: For those of us who are able, just enjoy an autumn walk!

Stop Press The UN has just released data showing that the amount of carbon dioxide being released into the atmosphere is not going down. In 2024, the amount emitted, far from reducing, actually rose by a record amount. As Pope Leo has said, "no room for indifference."

TSBBOB ASSOCIATION ANNUAL CHRISTMAS FAYRE 2025

Our annual Christmas Fayre will be held on Saturday 29th November from 10.30am and our fundraising effort will be split between Christ Church and TWAM, as we have done in recent years. On this occasion church members and family and friends, together with Old Boys Association members and the general public join with us for a friendly, traditional and social event.

This annual Christmas Fayre has been held continuously since 1947 and we are proud that this has become an established event in church life.

We welcome your support on the day and would also be grateful for offers of items to sell or cakes and provisions.

BMS WORLD MISSION

God used it for good

Hannah Watson, BMS World Mission

Junior fled the war-torn Democratic Republic of Congo and came to faith in a detention centre, all before he turned 17. From orphan, to refugee, to child of God: this is Junior's incredible story.

Chapter One: orphan

Junior was just 12 years old when he was asked to identify his father's body. It seems impossible to imagine, but in war-torn Congo, where Junior grew up, there was no grown-up to step in. Junior's mother had left the family when he was just seven years old, and, as a public sector teacher, Junior's father was required to move all over Congo, lending support to deprived schools. His work eventually took the family east, to an area ravaged by fighting between rebel militia groups. The violence was indiscriminate, and one day, armed gunmen entered the school where Junior's dad was teaching. Junior remembers anonymous adults coming to find him and telling him in a blur that his father had been shot.

Junior and his sisters were sent to live with a grandmother they had never met before. "She couldn't really take care of us," Junior explains, his words skimming over years of emotional and physical neglect. "We just ate our next meal whenever possible." At just twelve years old, Junior couldn't work but felt an enormous burden to look after his family. "I was the 'man'," he explains.

Junior's story paints a heartbreaking picture of life in Congo, a country wracked by a humanitarian crisis stretching back decades. Violence, especially in the east, has killed hundreds of thousands, and left over 27 million people struggling for food – people like 12-year-old Junior. It would only be years later that Junior could look back on the grief, the hunger, the heartache and fear and see that God did have a plan for his life. That somehow, someday, God would bring about good.

Now in Cyprus, Junior can look back and recognise God's goodness and love to him in the most desperate of circumstances.

Chapter Two: refugee

"The idea to leave Congo didn't come from me," Junior continues. "It came from my grandmother." After four years living alongside constant violence and struggle, Junior's grandmother told him that she was making plans for him to leave Congo. If he could find safety in Europe, he would be able to send help to her and his two younger siblings. Furnished with a passport, Junior was given instructions by more anonymous adults – more grown-ups treating him like a grown-up – though he was just sixteen. After saying goodbye to his sisters, Junior was hurried out of the country and away from the life he'd known. "It was only when I arrived in Cyprus that I was told my passport wasn't legitimate," Junior explains. "It stated I was an adult, and I was put in prison."

As a sixteen-year-old refugee, Junior spoke neither English nor Greek and had no knowledge of the legal system he was told he had broken. No-one in his family in Congo owned a mobile phone, and without any proof of age, Junior was placed in a detention centre. It's an experience he describes as being like a prison – an experience that would be both the lowest and most life-changing period in his life.

It was while in the detention centre that Junior met a man who was happy to teach him English. The man had a Bible in his room and Junior asked what it was about. "The man told me he was a Christian," Junior says. "But I couldn't really see God's love or his justice in my life. I thought: if he's really 'Love' as you guys are saying, why can't I see it? He took that opportunity to explain to me about Christ dying on the cross as an atonement to redeem people. I saw clearly that I was guilty, and I repented."

Chapter Three: child of God

It took nine months before Cypriot authorities were able to confirm that Junior was legally just a child and he was released. By God's grace, he was able to step out into a new chapter: one committed to following Jesus.

Through the kindness of Christians in Cyprus, Junior found accommodation and enrolled in school. Finally, he could see some of God's love in his life. It was through believers that Junior first heard about the BMS World Mission-supported welcome centre that would become, over the next three years, a place he could call home. Offering practical support to refugees such as a clothing distribution, food bank, IT lab and sewing machines, the centre also gives much needed emotional support to those beginning again with nothing. For Junior, it's provided friendship, support to finish his education, and become a place he loves spending time every week.

"We come from different places, but the one thing that binds us together is love for people," Junior explains. "We have a great example in Christ himself who gives himself to people and serves." It's this desire to serve that has led Junior to volunteer at the welcome centre three times a week, alongside refugees from places like Palestine, Somalia, Syria and Afghanistan. And it's this desire that motivates Junior's long-term dream of training as a pastor and moving back to Congo. "No-one is safe in the east part of the Congo," he explains, "but I would like to go back and help people with what I've learned here."

Junior is now 19 years old. Life still isn't easy, and he longs to make contact with his sisters, still at risk back home. Yet, for all the pain he has suffered, he radiates warmth and smiles easily, joking with those around him. Junior began life in the hardest of circumstances but is on track to becoming an incredible man of God, wherever his Father leads him. Looking back at his journey to Cyprus, he can truly say: "God used it for good."

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PRAYER CALENDAR FOR NOVEMBER

2nd November

We hold the newly appointed Archbishop of Canterbury, Sarah Mullally, in our prayers as she prepares to take up her new role and lead the world-wide Church of England. May she have the wisdom, strength, insight and courage to face the challenges presented by the differing, but sincerely held, views within the church.

9th November

As we remember the sacrifice of those lost in war, may we recommit ourselves to the path of peace. We pray for all those bereaved and suffering now as a result of war. May our world leaders never forget the horrors that war inflicts, govern for the good of their people and find peaceful ways to solve their differences.

16th November

We pray for the people of Gaza and for the reconstruction of their ravaged land. May decisions be wise and resources available for the rebuilding of lives as well as the physical infrastructure. We pray particularly for the children, for those orphaned, bereaved or injured, and that it may be possible for there to be some healing from their psychological trauma.

23rd November

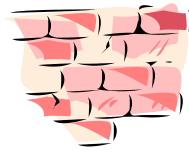
With the 25th November designated by the United Nations General Assembly as the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women, we pray for an end to gender-based violence and discrimination. Bring help and healing to all survivors of abuse. May girls throughout the world be able to grow up in safety, receive education and live life to the full.

30th November

As we begin the season of Advent and begin to make our preparations for Christmas, may we not be swayed by all the invitations for over-consumption around us. Help us always to tread lightly on the Earth and to prepare to celebrate in ways that are not harmful to creation.

OVER THE GARDEN WALL

... from our neighbours at St Pancras



Dear Friends,

This year marks ten years since the publication by Pope Francis of *Laudato si'*. This is Latin for 'praise be to you' and is part of a quotation from St Francis of Assisi's *Canticle of Creation* which praised God by meditating on natural forces such as sun, moon, wind and water. Pope Francis addressed 'every living person on the planet' and called for global dialogue on caring for our common home - planet earth. It is the most read papal document ever. When it was published, I was going to Uganda. I talked to the boys in my secondary school base about it. At that time, they had a LIFE group with a few members concerned about the rights of the unborn child. When I returned a few months later, almost every boy belonged to that group, but the remit had totally changed to concern not only for all people but for plants and animals as well. All the compound was swept and clean with proper provision for the animals such as pigs and chickens. Litter was all gone, and they had created a bus shelter for people waiting for buses from Rwanda to go on to Kampala and even Kenya. I was astounded.

Laudato si' contributed to the decisions at COP21 ten years ago to limit global temperature rise to 1.5 degrees. A conference has just taken place at Castel Gandolfo, the Vatican owned summer palace, in preparation for COP30 in Brazil. It is now a 136 acre eco village. Pope Leo addressed the Conference there, urging governments to 'listen to the cry of the earth and of the poor and families, indigenous peoples, involuntary migrants and believers throughout the world.' Whilst noting how *Laudato si'* had borne fruit, he also quoted a world figure who had said that climate change was 'the greatest con job ever perpetrated in the world', noting also that some in the Church were 'in full throated denial of the crisis.'

There is however some good practice amongst UK Catholics. The Columban missionaries in Solihull, not far from where I lived in Birmingham, are 'rewilding' land around their headquarters by creating biodiverse spaces. They have planted over 5,000 trees including willow, swamp Cypress and oak, as well as various fruit trees and a wildflower garden. There are lavender plants to attract bees and beehives to produce St Columban's honey for sale. This year over 800 children and teachers have visited for workshops exploring biodiversity. It can be done but not alas in our Ipswich parishes. However, we congratulate Rushmere St Andrew Anglican Church for their gold eco award and you for the Fairtrade shop.

I can promise future comments on Pope Leo's just published address on the Option for the poor, not to mention his imminent joint service with our King!

Meanwhile my greetings to you all.

Jean

DIARY DATES FOR NOVEMBER

Emmaus Groups

Mondays at 10.30am in the Lounge

2nd & 4th Wednesdays at 7.30pm

1st & 3rd Thursdays at 10.30am in the Lounge

Wednesday 5th Quiz in aid of Headway (7pm)

Friday 14th Guides' Beetle drive (7pm)

Tuesday 25th Prayer Lunch (midday)

Saturday 29th TSBBOB Christmas Fayre (10.30am)

Sunday 30th AGM and Church Meeting (12.30pm)

SERVICES FOR NOVEMBER AND EARLY DECEMBER

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

Sunday 2nd November

10.45am Family Worship with Holy Communion

Sunday 9th November

10.45 am Remembrance Sunday Family Worship

Sunday 16th November

10.45 am Family Worship

Sunday 23rd November

10.45 am Family Worship led by Canon Roy Tricker

Roy is a retired Anglican Vicar

Sunday 30th November

10.45 am Advent Sunday Worship followed by the Church AGM/November Meeting

Please bring a packed lunch to eat before the Meeting which will start no later than 12.30pm.

Sunday 7th December

10.45 am Worship for the Second Sunday in Advent with Holy Communion

Friends from Ipswich Amnesty will be with us and there'll be a card signing opportunity after the service.
