



January 2019

Dear Friends

Happy New Year!

I don't know about you, but I begin each new year with lots of hopes and aspirations. For some people, it is a resolution to get fitter, more mobile and active and perhaps to lose weight. The excesses of Christmas celebrations have taken their toll (certainly on me!)

But this is most importantly a time to reappraise our lives before God. As we begin a new year we do so not only with our family, our friends, and workmates, but also with our Lord.

If you have been reading the Bible in a year you will know that, as with a calendar year, the Bible begins with creation and ends with the new creation. The common factor in both is Jesus. He was there at the start ('In the beginning was the Word' John 1:1) and he will be the one who will usher in the end. ('I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end' Revelation 22:13)

The bit in the middle is pretty important too. After a year of prayer and reflection the Parish Leadership Team and I have laid out a new direction for our church in 2019 which is to be '*growing in the likeness of Christ*'. This is the second part of our new vision: '*To become a vibrant, overflowing, multi-generational Church growing in the likeness of Christ.*'

Over the next few Sundays from 13 January, up until Lent, we will be exploring what that means. Everyone in the church will receive a *Booklet* setting out our *Vision, Mission and Values* and each week we will look at one aspect of these characteristics. As we did with *The Bible Course*, we will be following similar topics in Breakfast@9 and 10:30 and you are all encouraged to join a Life Group to go deeper with the questions in the study section of the *Booklet*. Sermons will be available on-line for those who miss a Sunday.

On Saturday 16th February we will be inviting the community to share in the opening of the refurbished CMC. And on Sunday 17th we have Archdeacon Antony with us preaching at the 10:30 Service and sharing a 'Vision lunch' where he will dedicate the new building to God's work. This will need prayer and therefore we will be holding a Prayer Day on the Friday before – please put this important weekend in your diaries and try to come to all or part of our celebrations.

Yes, there is much to hope and aspire to. I also acknowledge that 2018 for many in our congregation was a challenging year and this is a time for our church to come together as members of one body and provide comfort to all in distress. By doing so we truly will be '*growing in the likeness of Christ*'.

With love and prayers

Canon Chris Tebbutt - Rector

Mission Support

A recent news item said that CofE attendance continues to decline but that visitors to cathedrals increased by 13% this year. Our own church was filled to celebrate the birth of Jesus at our Christingle, Carol, Crib and Midnight services. Hope is foretold by the birth of the Saviour yet Jesus also foretold of wars, famines and natural disasters. We have sent support through the Disasters Emergency Committee to those affected by the Indonesian tsunami and will consider sending more to support the victims of the latest one. In South Sudan, riven by civil war for many years, we are sponsoring the training of a clinical officer to help the sick and injured.

Finance Update

Our Advent Conspiracy series had themes of worshipping fully, spending less, giving more and loving all, echoed in the message of the several versions of A Christmas Carol viewed over Christmas of spending carefully and wisely yet giving generously to those in need. Whilst the final figures for the past year are not yet known, it seems likely that we have covered our costs, due in part to receipt of a legacy. In the coming year we trust that we have budgeted carefully and wisely but to maintain that situation, we will have to increase our normal income and our giving by up to 10%, so help us to spend less yet give more in this New Year.

Save The Date

CMC Opening

Saturday 16 February 2019

Vision Lunch— Sunday 17 February 2019

With Archdeacon Antony MacRow-Wood

Monday to Thursdays— morning prayer at 7:30am in the church.

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Your prayers are asked for:

Sandra Webster, Gill Sherlock, Wendy Wadsworth, Daphne Hewitt

Hazel Kerridge, Sandra Singleton, Mary Herbert, Shirley Evans

Sheila Lloyd-Jones, Anthony Greenall, Bobbie Clark,

Margaret Vaughan, Andy Simpson, June Smith, Liz Hawkins,

Suzanne Slade, Eveline Stimpson

Continue to Remember:

Marion Birt, Janet Fawcett, Elizabeth Dauncey, Gill Fry,

Crispin Malpas, Suzanne Lindsay, Tony Hiscock, Barry Mardell

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