

New Year 2017 - to the Churches of Ordnance Road, Ponders End and Goffs Oak

Dear Brothers and Sisters

I had the privilege of sharing in two very special services over the Christmas period. The first was a gift service for a local Girl Guiding charity – Happy Hearts - that runs events in Goffs Oak to enable girls with learning or physical disabilities to engage more fully with being a guide. We rejoiced in the charity's achievements and the impact it has had on girl's lives.



In this service we also heard Jean Vanier - founder of L'Arche - an international federation of communities for people with disabilities and their carers - speaks eloquently from Matthew 25:35 about Christ's call to welcome those who are strange and different.

This struck a chord with me. **How we approach people who are different from ourselves is perhaps the question of our age?**

Indeed, the second event was a new ecumenical venture at Ordnance Road that combined five churches and drew over 160 people to a united EN3 Church Carols in aid of the Enfield Refugee Welcome Group - another group of people who may appear strange or different.

On the global stage it seems that we are at a critical point in recent history. We are surrounded by folk who appear to want to put up boundaries, borders and barriers. Who want to focus on our differences and deny our common humanity and connectedness.

Once again we see the contemporary nature of the story of Mary and Joseph. Here we have a couple already on the edges of their own community because of Mary's condition, forced to travel a difficult journey because of demands beyond their control who then struggle to find basic shelter. It is hard for us to imagine how tough this must have been. If God coming to earth in this marginal manner says one thing above all others, it is that God's love dwells in those situations and with those people who are rejected because they are strange or different.



As a good friend said to me in conversation after the referendum – ‘I wonder what kind of world we want to live in’, and what our role is in tackling prejudice and intolerance of those who are different - whether that be through disability, race, creed, gender, sexuality, or any other

excuse given to categorise, judge and condemn groups of people because they don’t seem to fit?

In reality none of us fit because we are all strange and different in some way or other. So I pray for the wisdom to see with God’s eyes, to accept people as they are – something Christ always did - and the grace to see beyond the surface of those I meet. **Amen**

Now it is the new-year and I must thank you for your good wishes, cards and prayers over the Christmas period. God was gracious to us in all our ventures and over 600 people attended special events, our carol services, Christmas Day and Watchnight, including many visitors amongst us.

At Ordnance Road our Christmas Fete was the best ever, supported by many friends from across the circuit and our new ecumenical EN3 Carols, already described, showed us what God can do when we unite around an important cause.

At Goffs Oak a wonderful children’s Christmas party was followed by a Nativity Carol service which drew young and old into the scene at Bethlehem. We also welcomed guests to our coffee morning communion and Carols by torchlight in the centre of the village, where over 80 gathered, accompanied by Potters Bar Town Band, to sing and raise money for Action for Children.

At Ponders End we once again launched Advent with a fabulous international evening concert. We started a big clear out campaign (see

pics!) We reflected on the Nativity through a nativity sets coffee morning –never have so many sets gathered in one place! We launched a brand new evening carol service and welcomed in the new year as nearly 100 attend watchnight.

This does not capture all that happened and it really was a joy to share these moments with you.

Discipleship is the theme of this coming year...

We begin in the coming 6-8 weeks before lent, where our preachers across all three churches will begin to explore aspects of what it is to be a disciple...

David Watson writes: 'Jesus created a radical and unique pattern of discipleship. He called a mixed crowd of ordinary people to follow him, to be totally obedient, to serve and to suffer. He called them to himself, not just to his teaching.'

Why is this important you ask? We know that being a disciple of Christ is about becoming Christ-like – a lifelong journey. So as we grow every day in commitment to and love of God in Christ we pray that the Holy Spirit will help and equip us on this journey.

And so is rooves! It is my hope that all three churches will undertake re-roofing projects of part of their buildings this year. Please bear with us as these things happen.

And finally – news from across the circuit...

You may have heard the great news that we have been matched in stationing and a new minister – Rev Dan Haylett – will join us in September as superintendent. PLUS in the next week we welcome Isata Jalloh as our new Youth and Children's worker. These new staff will help re-establish the resources we need to look after the work of God in Enfield and the circuit churches.

May God bless you all – Revd Alan Combes

Minister - Ordnance Road, Goffs Oak and Ponders End

Top to Bottom

- Ordnance Fete
- Rev Dr Peter Graves returns to Goffs
- Ponders clear out team
- Rev Alan preaches from the skip!!

