

Rejoice!

February/March 2022



**The Magazine of the
West Norfolk Methodist Circuit
Refreshed**

Friends,

I have been away for 13 weeks and I am back. It is different though this time. Usually, when I come back from holiday; I am knackered, feeling good that I did so much wonderful stuff but somehow forgot to rest. It is different this time because I actually feel refreshed and I did do some wonderful stuff, too.

Why was it different from the other times? When I was between 'jobs' before in my life, there wasn't a job to go back to, I was still looking or waiting. There was no sense of just being, no calm, no restful peace, only the peace that came from a welcomed change coupled with a huge heap of unknown.

My sabbatical started like all holidays, I was still winding up the odd thing or so for a couple of days [and I had planned for that inevitability]. However, two days in, I was off to the cottage I had booked. The change of setting helped a lot but it was when the emails were set aside until after sabbatical that 'being on sabbatical began.'

I started reading the bible from Revelation to Genesis and some other books, too. My companions for this journey were my Westies, and we started daily walks. Most days we went to the pond that was on the property where our cottage was located. Other days we went to the coast and walked the beach. I began to involve myself wherever I was: at the pond, at the coast, on walks, driving, shopping or in the cottage.

In the midst of involving myself in whatever was around me, I started being. I do not know if I slowed down or I sped up but I do know that I was in-sync with what was around me. The harmony I felt was incredibly exciting, energizing, calming and restful. Hence, at the end of 13 weeks, I do feel refreshed. Thank you for this gift of sabbatical; it was the necessary first ingredient to a refreshed time away.

Blessings and peace,

Rev Robert

Praying together in the Circuit

"For I know the plans I have for you", declares the Lord
"Plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future. Then you will call on me and come and pray to me, and I will listen to you. You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart" Jeremiah 29: 11-13

The children of Israel were in exile in Babylon. God gave them a message of encouragement and of challenge. He had great plans for them. They needed to be united in wanting his plans, not their own, to pray and seek him with all their hearts and find his will and his way.

Dear Lord and Father of mankind, forgive our foolish ways,
Reclothe us in our rightful mind, in purer lives Thy service find
In deeper reverence praise. [John G. Whittier 1872]

Sovereign Lord, we seek your face, to worship you in Spirit and truth
We seek your presence in our witness and service.

You are working your purpose out as year succeeds to year
With all our hearts we want to be part of your purpose to reach out
as you lead and direct us day by day living and witnessing in your love.

The Lord has told us what is good. What he requires of us is this:
to do what is just, to show constant love and to live in humble
fellowship with our God Micah 6:8

God of justice and peace hear our prayers that those who ill-treat, exploit, abuse others may be convicted of their wrong doing.
We pray for those who suffer at the hands of oppressors to be set free, those who have been put down by unkind actions, looks and words may see themselves in the light of your love for them. We pray for justice and fairness, that all people will be valued and the gift of life respected, that none will be hungry or without basic needs, clean water, essential medical supplies, safe places to live, available education and opportunities to achieve careers. May we all be involved in actively seeking integrity and fairness as you lead us.

How precious, O God, is your constant love !
 We find protection under the shadow of your wings.
 We feast on the abundant food you provide;
 You let us drink from the river of your goodness.
 You are the source of all life,
 And because of your light we see the light.

Psalm 36: 7 – 9

[From the Methodist Church website]

Prayer is a gift from God that enables us to be aware of the presence of God in our lives and in the world. It is also a means of expressing what we believe about God and can prompt us to act to change the world as we respond to God's love.

Lord God, our prayers embrace the earth which you have created, to be cared for as you desire it to be. For your world, all its people in every place to know your love for them. In the area you have placed us, help us in your power and with your provision to make a difference and see the transformation which you alone can bring, in lives, in communities, in the environment, for your glory.

Prayers have been requested for:

Derek + Viv, Stephanie, Margie, Janice, Trisha, Linda, Andrew,
 Mavis & Julia, Judy, Kath, Stephen + Victoria, William, Tom, Sarah.

David and Rosemary and their son. Denise as she adjusts to life without her husband.

All who are suffering from Covid and its results.

People are like stained glass windows.
 They sparkle and shine when the sun is out;
 But when the darkness sets in their true beauty is revealed only if
 there is light from within.
 Elizabeth Kublar Ross



Stow Bridge

We have had all the Good News of the Christmas story over the last month. We have heard it all before over the years from childhood and yet it's always joyful and good, happy news – especially with all else we love and enjoy over the Christmas period.

Now for some sad news. Yes it is sad news for us as the very small congregation at Stow Bridge to have reached the time when we will cease to meet as the Methodist Society, with our numbers down to 4 or 5 and our meetings only twice a month.

I am sure we will miss the little Anglican Church, St Peter's. The Bethesda Chapel at the foot of the tidal river Great Ouse, got beyond a very costly repair or make over. This is how we started our services at St Peter's, and in my own view we could not have gone to a lovelier church, that so reminded me of a Methodist building; a village Chapel.

We will miss the views of the open countryside and especially the aconites lovely yellow mass of flowers. It seemed they spread out more every year. And of course we were almost joined with the C of E as most of us would go every Sunday, Methodist or C of E and got on with each other very well.

I reckon we will all have special memories. Now we thank all who we have worshipped with in the past.

Do you know that 80 years olds are worth a fortune.

They have silver in their hair, gold in their teeth, stones in their kidneys and gall bladder lead in their feet and gas in their stomach.

We can add this to all of our joys, happiness and prayers.

We wish you all a safe and happy 2022.

Peter Hewitt

London Road

Many of you may well have heard the sad news that Joan Hamon passed away on 26th November aged 89. She had had a long career in nursing becoming a much loved and respected District Nurse and was a leading Member of the London Road community. A Service of Thanksgiving for her life was held on 17th December at London Road and our thoughts and prayers are with Roland and the family. May Joan rest in peace.

One of our young church members and a member of the Scouting group which operates from our premises has been presented with the Gold Award in Scouting. To achieve this, Grace Elflett had to attain all 9 of the challenge badges which included writing an essay relating to the Hanseatic Trade and an investigation into acts of discrimination, one an historic event and the other very much an on-going current problem. Well done Grace.

As part of our Gift Weekend, we held a coffee morning on the 11th December. It was both a financial success and also a fellowship success. Many of our congregation attended as well as members of the Singing Your Heart Out group which uses our hall for their sessions. Mid-way through the event we all sang carols and just about managed to raise the roof!

Many of us have sadly missed the exercise sessions organised by the Osteoporosis group but we have now been able to arrange some for the New Year. A small group attended a session specifically for the over 50s on Monday 6th December and this should become a regular event. In addition, a different class should be starting on a Wednesday morning concentrating on developing strength and balance and is again geared for the over 50s. Who knows by the spring we should all be super fit!

The Church family of London Road would like to extend greetings to one and all. And a healthy 2022.

Hunstanton

We held our Carol Service on Sunday 12th December; it was a lovely time of worship led by Rev. Richman. We had coffee, refreshments, chat and laughter afterwards in the Link. Unfortunately due to COVID the Stroke Group Carol service on the 21st December was cancelled and we hope for better things next December.

Our service on 2nd January was taken by Pat – the Vine Resources for that day were used and everyone enjoyed getting back together again after the Christmas break.

Sunday 9th January was our Covenant service which was led by Rev. Richman. This was a time to reflect on 2021 and commit ourselves afresh to our God, Church and Circuit for 2022.

We are a small group of people many of whom are elderly but we have hope and vision for the year ahead, please remember us in your prayers.

The Hunstanton Team.

Dersingham

In the first few days of December the road and pavement around the Church were blocked off by large mounds of earth and diggers, as a team of workers cleared and resurfaced the drive and car park. The weather was wet, cold and windy, but 6 days later the work was done and we are delighted with the outcome. We owe thanks to our Property Co-ordinator, Roger Jackson, who obtained quotes and oversaw all the work. Donations we received in memory of some church members who died in 2020 and 2021 helped towards the cost of the work.

We have started planning for 2022 with coffee mornings 10.00 a.m. to 11.30 a.m. on Saturday 26th February for flower festival funds and Saturday 26th March for Action for Children and Methodist Homes for the Aged. The Flower Festival will be 26th – 29th May, and the theme 'Miracles – God at Work'. The bowls club is up and running on Wednesday afternoons 2.00- 4.00 p.m. and the Jigsaw Club meets on the third Thursday morning 9.30 – 10.30 a.m.

Can you help us? Michael King-Underwood resigned as treasurer at the end of December after serving for 11 years. We have been unable to find anyone to take on this role. We have covered some areas – gift aid, banking, but need a **bookkeeper** as soon as possible. If you are able to help us please contact me pebatstone@gmail.com for further information.

Elizabeth Batstone

Terrington St Clement

Happy New Year to everyone.

We had a successful Nativity display on 4th December, with several stalls and Mary and Ruth were kept busy in the kitchen providing tea coffee and mince pies. Thank you to everyone who made it so enjoyable.

We had several services over Christmas and New Year thanks to Rev. Jackie. She works so hard for our churches.

A big thank you to her.

Network, MWiB, is being held monthly. Please note the new starting time of 2pm rather than 2.30pm.

Saturday Coffee Morning continues 10am to 11.30am

God bless. Linda Howling

Highgate

As a Fellowship we have supported Operation Christmas child shoebox appeal for several years. Because of the Covid virus we were unable to participate in 2020. We all missed taking part.

However, even as a small Fellowship we were able to send seven shoe boxes last year filled with school materials, hats, gloves, and numerous toys and the all-important toothbrushes !

We know that the children who received them will be overjoyed. In some countries, Samaritan's Purse is able to include Bible leaflets and a Gospel message. Some children take part in a Bible study and become child evangelists.

We are about to celebrate our Chapel Anniversary giving thanks for 172 years and for every opportunity to worship together.

In December we had an unwelcome graffiti message painted on our wall. Peter worked hard to remove it!

We prayed for the person to one day see things differently to the message left. We are still trying to ask for re-consideration of our parking situation as we were classified as a business and not a charity.

Frances Singleterry and Janet Mason

Gaywood St Faith's

Saturday, 5th February sees the latest Coffee Morning and More event organised by St Faith's Church in Gaywood Church Rooms. All are welcome to the event when those attending have a chance to meet friends over a cup of coffee or tea and enjoy a light bite in a friendly atmosphere. This session is the first of 2022 and people are delighted that they have resumed after they were not able to be held during Lockdown.

In December the Coffee morning became a mini Christmas Fair and raised more than four hundred pounds. The money goes into the church funds and is much needed because there have been no fund-raising events during Lockdown.

With Covid safety measures in place, including wearing of masks, a range of Christmas services took place and these included Christingle services attended by local school pupils, a lovely candlelit Carol service of Lessons and Carols and a Midnight Communion Service starting at 11.15pm on Christmas Eve. A team of volunteers worked hard to decorate the church for Christmas. Special mention goes to Peter Dexter for his practical and creative work in putting up the Corona, which hung above the Chancel. Peter decorated it with seasonal greenery from the rectory garden and it looked stunning.

We are delighted to welcome back the Rev. Robert Roberts from his three-month sabbatical. During Robert's absence, all of us at St Faith's Church have been pleased to welcome the Rev Gail Kerry to lead some of services on Sundays and on Wednesdays when a Communion service is held. Gail's

assistance was much appreciated by all of us and for her part. Gail said she was given a warm welcome and made to feel very much at home among us.

It is now over a year since our former Rector, the Rev Canon Julie Boyd left St Faith's to take up a new post as Team Vicar in the Aylsham Team Ministry. We are praying that a new Rector will be in post by early summer. Within the next few weeks we are to lose our popular curate, the Rev Laura Purnell and her Lay Preacher husband, Martin. Laura has been appointed Team Vicar and Schools' Chaplain within the Dereham and District Team Ministry. Laura and Martin will move from their home on Wootton Road, Gaywood, to the Rectory at Shipdham in mid-Norfolk. Laura and Martin have been with us at St Faiths for more than three years and during that time have become well-loved members of our clergy team. Meanwhile, the Rev Karlene Kerr has been doing sterling work in her role as acting Rector and her leadership of Worship and Mission is much valued by the church membership.

After many years of dedicated service as St Faith's Safeguarding Officer, Gill Hiles has stepped down from the post and a successor for the role is being sought. Sincere thanks for the work that Gill has carried out in this demanding and sensitive role have been expressed. Anyone who feels this is a role they could step into and who would like more details of what is involved can contact Acting Rector, the Rev. Karleene Kerr, for an informal chat. More than 100 copies of the Christian Aid Cookery book, Taste and See, have been sold but a limited numbers of copies, at four pounds and fifty pence each, are still available. The book, produced by the West Norfolk Christian Aid Support group run under the auspices of Churches Together in King's Lynn, was launched at a Coffee Morning at the end of last year when those attending could sample some of the recipes from the book. The book was put together, in aid of Christian Aid, by Joy Smith, of Grimston, who is a professional cook. If you would like a copy please contact the Rev Heather Berry on 01553 764098.

Richard Parr

Stanhoe

We are thankful that we have all stayed clear of Covid so far, although not complacent! We have suspended Bible Study meetings for the time being, and decided not to go ahead with our usual Service of Prayer for Christian Unity, on the first Monday of that week, when we have in the past invited local Christians of all denominations to join with us, and followed it up with tea and cake. We have such a small building that it quickly becomes impossible to practise social distancing. However, we still hold fortnightly services, and a few of the Burnham Market congregation worship with us.

Our annual Christmas Carol Service was held at the beginning of December, led by Rev. Dr. Richman Ncube. At that point, Omicron was not recognised as the problem it has since become, and we did have a number of visitors, including Valerie's daughter, Christine, and Pauline, daughter of the late Betty and Tom Holmes, (both of whom, later on, did great work helping in the kitchen), and some from the Anglican Church in Syderstone. We all enjoyed singing carols, followed by mince pies and hot drinks. A retiring collection raised a good sum of money, and more was added from Church funds, so that we were able to make substantial donations both to the King's Lynn Night Shelter and to the King's Lynn Food bank.

We look forward to our annual Covenant Service on 23rd January, to be conducted by Rev. Rich, and then, further in the future, after a gap of two years, welcoming the Student Cross Pilgrims, who walk from Leicester to Walsingham during Holy Week, and have asked if they might once again call into our church on Good Friday for rest and refreshment, and a short time of joint worship - we always enjoy sharing their amazing commitment and faith and are uplifted by their visit.

We wish you all a Happy (or should it be Happier) New Year.

Elizabeth MacLeod

Hilgay

We were pleased to be able to hold our Christmas Eve Service although fewer people than usual attended. Once again Rev. Paul was unable to lead it, so Lesley Dent stepped in at the last minute and led the service with help from other members. After the service we were able to continue fellowship over a cup of tea and mince pies. Our Sunday Worship services are seeing some changes. We have joint services with Southery alternating weekly between our two buildings. This has been successful so far and we pray it will continue. We hope this will be helpful as there is a shortage of preachers to fill appointments at the moment. Please see the plan for details of services and we hope on the next plan to revise service times so that whichever chapel we meet in it will be a 10:30am start.

We have also joined with Hilgay Village Hall to do alternate Monthly Coffee Mornings. These take place on the last Thursday of the month from 10:00am till 11:30am and we are pleased to welcome the Downham Market Walking Group who join us for refreshment after their walks around Hilgay.

The February Coffee morning will be at the Village Hall, March one in the Chapel, April - Village Hall and so on. All are welcome to join us. We hope this will be a way to work together and help each other and also enable Village residents to meet for a chat with tea/coffee and cake.

Our Guild meeting since October have been very much home-grown as with Covid still around it has been difficult to invite speakers from too far distant in case of more sudden lockdowns. Nevertheless we have had some entertaining meetings. We hope we can continue till Easter. Meetings for February are 8th, 22nd, and March 8th and 22nd beginning at 2:30pm

Pauline Driver.

Downham Market

I hope you have had a good Christmas, not as restrictive as last year. My daughter Anne and I were so glad that Chris Young was able to organise the carol singing in aid of the Christmas hampers. We so missed it last year as we find it is the start to the season of goodwill and the best part; contrary to the supermarket advert the food is not the best bit of Christmas. We have enjoyed this fund raising event for some years now and this year were able to join in on all the five nights, two at Morrison's and three at Tesco's and we did enjoy it albeit as there was only a handful of us; it was quite hard work. Hopefully more folk will feel comfortable enough to join in next Christmas.

Having not done anything so strenuous since my open heart surgery I wasn't sure how I would cope, standing for a couple of hours, not getting to bed about eight and singing when I am still rather breathless talking but as if going into remote control I managed; mind over matter? On the last night, as I followed my daughter into Tesco's for a last minute shop. I was really worn out and sat myself down on one of their bollard step stools only to have one of the staff rush up and offer to get me a chair. She said they had all enjoyed turning off the permanent music, (I tried spelling this with z and a but the computer would correct my spelling,) and listening to our carols echoing round the store, so we brought the real meaning of Christmas to that frantic commercial idea of Christmas. We also had several shoppers stop to request favourite carols which we then sang, out of sequence to the carol sheet and lent them one so they could join in, with promises they would join us this year. So gains all round, nearly £500 raised for the Christmas dinner boxes and lots of fun and fellowship.

Alex reported they had sent out 26 dinners for 106 people, including 69 children each box containing a turkey crown, vegetables, fruit, puddings, sweets, non-alcoholic drinks and presents for the children. Not being able to meet to assemble and deliver the boxes she had matched a volunteer family to each family in need and they assembled the contents and did the delivery. And the number of volunteer families matched exactly the need. Who says miracles don't happen these days?

Now news of Churches Together who have been organising and funding the food hampers for some years now. As we have no secretary or treasurer we

are unable to legally function as a charity and have to disperse the funds we hold. The hamper money will go to Eternity Church who runs the food bank and hopefully Alex will be able to continue organising the Christmas dinner boxes. The balance will go to West Dereham for Chris Young to carry on supplying primary schools with the 'It's your Move booklets for the pupils leaving for secondary school. Under the chairmanship of the Rev. Nigel Moat who will liaise with all the Churches in the group, it is hoped that we can carry on organising other events with different Churches taking responsibility for one event. For example, the next big event which we hope to keep going is the Good Friday Walk of Witness. It is hoped a Church will volunteer to be responsible for this so that it can be covered by their insurance should anything go wrong. This pandemic has certainly made us look at all our activities; some have had to cease where older folk have decided to retire and no younger person has come forward to carry on, but I am sure most of the essential ones will carry on albeit in a different way. Reduce; reuse and recycle can apply to our activities as well as things.

Now for Downham Church news. The appeal for knitters was answered and a good number of angels were offered to our congregation to pass on before being sent to be distributed round the town. Our choir practices continue with increased numbers and we have been able to sing at several services as well as at the social we held before Christmas as there was no Christmas Fair. Messy Church still continues to meet on the second Friday of each month at 4.30 and all families are very welcome. The usual meal provided has had to be adapted to cold drinks and individually packed nibbles put on each family's table and this month kindly provided by Morrison's when five families with ten children gathered. With the theme of families they saw pictures of Jesus as a baby and then aged twelve going into the temple. They then made a model of the temple and a scroll which they took home. The scroll bore Luke 2 v22 you can look up your own versions.

We continue to deliver meals to people's homes and they are gratefully received.

So life goes on with covid always to be with us in some form or another. In his first service of the New Year with us Rev. Paul took verse 5 of Proverbs 3 as his message, to trust in the Lord and lean on him. In that way we can get through all that may be before us.

With love I wish you a peaceful and healthy New Year.

Joan Macey

The mark of an effective church is not how many people come BUT how many people live differently as a result of having been there.



Any items for the **APRIL** edition should be with the editor by

MARCH 12th, earlier if possible. **If you don't get an acknowledgment of emails PLEASE**

enquire if I have received them as some articles have found their way into my spam bin which I don't check very often!

Mrs Barbara Foster
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We leave our milestones as we fare along life's winding way
On which the hand of time records the things of yesterday.
The milestones of our friendships, of our lives and joys and tears,
The memories with which we mark the passing of the years.

Time to move on

I have now stepped down from the position of President of M.W.i.B West Norfolk Circuit. That means is there anyone out there who would like to step in? It has been a worthwhile position. If anyone feels like doing it please contact the secretary Miss Jacky Woor, 6 Quebec Hall Bungalow, Quebec Road, Dereham NR19 2QY or phone 01362 697860. Email jackywoor07@btinternet.com.

Thank you.

Phyllis Bowman

It wasn't me!

Two little boys, Tom and Danny, are excessively mischievous. They are always getting into trouble and their Mum knows if any mischief occurs in their town, the two boys are probably involved. The boys' mother heard that a preacher in town had been

successful in disciplining children, so she asked if he would speak with her boys.

The preacher agreed, but he asked to see them individually.

The mother sent Danny in the morning, with the older boy to see the preacher in the afternoon.

The preacher, a huge man with a deep booming voice, sat the younger boy down and asked him sternly, "Do you know where God is, son?"

The boy's mouth dropped open, but he made no response, sitting there wide-eyed with his mouth hanging open.

So the preacher repeated the question in an even sterner tone, "Where is God?!"

Again, the boy made no attempt to answer.

The preacher raised his voice even more and shook his finger in the boy's face and bellowed, "WHERE IS GOD?!"

The boy screamed and bolted from the room, ran directly home and dived into his closet, slamming the door behind him.

When his older brother found him in the closet, he asked, "What happened?"

The younger brother, gasping for breath, replied, "We are in BIG trouble this time!"

"GOD is missing, and they think WE did it!"

January (in Latin, Ianuarius) is named after Janus, in Roman mythology he was the god of beginnings and transitions. He had two faces so he could see the future and the past! He was also the god of doors.

Historical names for January include its original Roman designation, Ianuarius, the Saxon term Wulf-monath (meaning "wolf month") and Charlemagne's designation Wintarmanoth ("winter / cold month").

... The Roman calendar originally began in March, and the months of January and February were added later, after a calendar reform. January 1 is an official holiday to mark the beginning of the New Year. Even many non-western countries will observe January 1 as New Year's Day.

February comes from the Latin word februa, which means "to cleanse." The month was named after the Roman Februalia, which was a month-long festival of purification and atonement that took place this time of year.

January brings the snow,
makes our feet and fingers glow.

February brings the rain,
Thaws the frozen lake again.

March brings breezes loud and shrill,
stirs the dancing daffodil.

The Garden Year
by Sara Coleridge

Which are you?

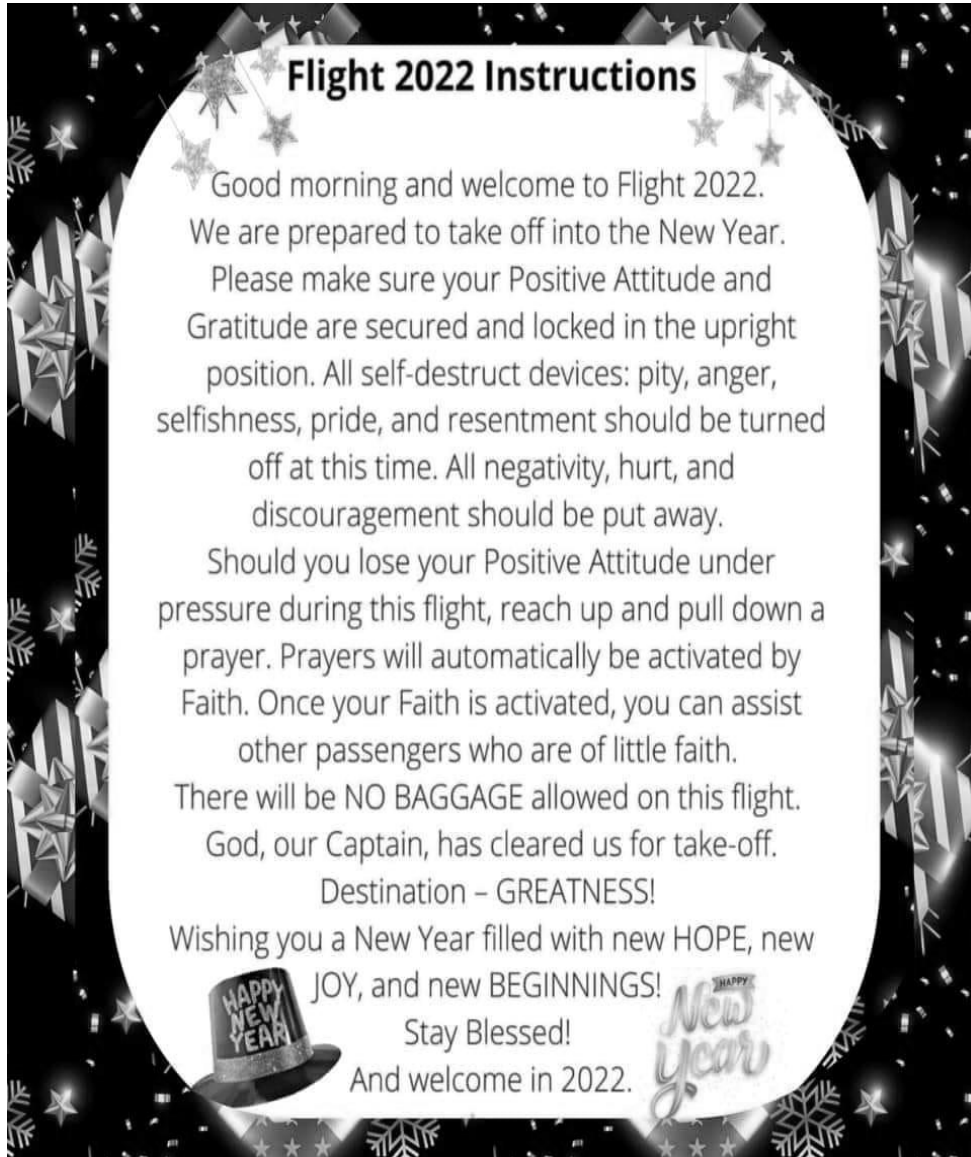
Some individuals love January because they welcome the lull that follows the hectic holiday season. Others dislike the effort it takes to begin again, whether that means going back to work, going back to school or simply starting a new calendar year. January comes around every year like a train on schedule—whether it makes us want to sigh with relief or get revved up for a fresh start, we'd better get on board before it leaves the station.

"We spend January 1st walking through our lives, room by room, drawing up a list of work to be done, cracks to be patched. Maybe this year, to balance the list, we ought to walk through the rooms of our lives . . . not looking for flaws, but for potential." — Ellen Goodman

St Valentine's Day - February 14th

The word **love**, though used quite loosely in current times, carries a lot of weight. From the way that we express our favourite foods to the way we describe our affection for our families, love can mean a lot of things. For Christians, however, the word love is rooted as a perfect description of God and Jesus Christ and that love is shown in a flawless way in John 3.16: NIV. For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.

Thank you Sylvia for all these bits!



The Son of Encouragement

You've surely heard the lines

*Where seldom is heard a discouraging word
And the skies are not cloudy all day*

and they invoke an atmosphere of companionship and harmony. The words we use can be so important; they can go a long way to strengthening and energising those near to us. Our aim must always be to encourage others, and most of all, our brothers and sisters in the faith.

In those heady days following the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, life for the apostles and converts to the faith in him was probably chaotic. Not only was there great joy and excitement among those who loved him, but also alarm, disbelief and hatred among their Jewish enemies who of course rejected any suggestion that he was God's Anointed Son.

A vital part of this new atmosphere was the Spirit-inspired love among the brethren, the company of believers drawn from several regions around the Eastern Mediterranean. They sold their possessions to raise funds for those in want and lived a life of selfless harmony. A certain man called Joseph, who was originally from Cyprus, owned some land, and his faith in the Risen Lord and his concern for everyone's welfare was such that he sold a field and gave the money to the Apostles. This proof of his commitment and confidence gave a great lift to them all, so they called him "Son of Encouragement" or Barnabas.

Barnabas also played a vital role in Paul's life. When Paul made his way to Jerusalem and presented himself as a believer in Jesus, Peter and the others were cautious, to say the least. This same man (under his original name of Saul) had played a leading part in arresting believers. One man, however, listened carefully as Paul told of his conversion, was convinced of its authenticity and spoke up in his support — Barnabas.

Luke describes Barnabas in glowing terms: 'Barnabas was a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and of faith.' (Acts 11:24) As a result of the persecution of the believers, they scattered to places such as Antioch in Syria, but even there, Gentiles were harassed by those who insisted that they had to embrace all the trappings of Judaism if they were to be accepted, something Paul was later to fight against. Hearing about their troubles, the elders sent Barnabas to lead and support them. Through his encouragement, the believers in Antioch became strong in their faith and were the first to be called Christians. They flourished under Barnabas as he 'urged them all to be faithful to the Lord with all their hearts.'

Before long, Barnabas realised that he would need some help and at this point he remembered Paul, who had by now returned to his home town of Tarsus, not very far from Antioch. Paul gladly accepted the invitation and they made a point of accepting Gentile converts without insisting on their undergoing the rituals of Judaism.

There was missionary work to be done in other places as well, however, and after a while in Antioch the Spirit of God came the community and told them that Saul and Barnabas were to be sent away to other towns to continue spreading the word about Christ Jesus, as you can read in Acts 13. They formed a great partnership, with Paul apparently doing most of the public speaking but with Barnabas in close support.

They encountered opposition of course, mostly from traditional Jews who refused to recognise Jesus as the Messiah, but also from pagans. In the town of Lystra they came across a man who had been unable to walk since birth and Paul could see that the man's mind was open to the word of God and that he could be healed. At Paul's command the man jumped up and started walking. The people watching were worshippers of the Greek gods and in their excitement acclaimed Paul as the visiting god Hermes, the messenger of the gods who had come to address them. Barnabas must have had a striking presence,

however, for they called him Zeus, the bearded deity who threw down thunderbolts upon the earth!

Luke gives us a succinct summary of their work in Acts 14:22:

'They strengthened the believers and encouraged them to remain true to the faith.'

May we too be sons and daughters of encouragement.

David Clarke



An Update on Climate Matters

In the previous edition of Rejoice, I wrote about "Nature on your doorstep" especially the value of small spaces, such as the area just outside our sitting room. This photo was taken just before Christmas, when after a warm spell, the weather turned colder. This hedgehog came two days running to feed on a fat ball before starting to hibernate. Late winter and early spring are challenging times of year for wildlife so regular feeding is important. The bonus is that you are likely to see a greater

variety of birds in the garden as nature's larder gets emptier. We scatter seed on the ground for ground feeding wildlife as well as filling the bird feeders. During the week in which I wrote this article, a male and a female muntjac turned up in the same spot, in which I photographed the hedgehog. As February is the month, in which most Spring Church Councils take place, I would like to take the opportunity to remind you about the **East Anglia District Environmental Policy and Eco Audit**. The aim of these is to encourage churches to look at and take ownership of becoming an Eco Church and to help the District to work towards gaining an Eco District Award. Churches can work towards bronze, silver or gold awards. For more information, look at <https://www.eangliamethodist.org.uk/we-care/environment>. You may not feel ready to make major changes but perhaps after discussion, you might be able to decide on one or two small steps you could take. These can help make a big difference. Since I started collecting soft plastics to take to Tesco for recycling, I have been surprised how much I gather each week. Soft plastics include clean cling film, plastic bags and wrappings, crisp packets, pet food and other pouches.

And finally, please contact Deacon Lynne or myself, if you would like to take part in an online chat about CLIMATE MATTERS AND SOCIAL JUSTICE. We plan to hold one via Zoom at 7.30p.m on Thursday, 3rd February.

Lesley Dent

You walk through life much easier with a smile on your face.

Peace begins with a smile. Mother Theresa

WE ALL GET OLD IN THE END....

I changed my car horn to gunshot sounds. People get out of the way much faster now.

You know that tingly little feeling you get when you really like someone? That's common sense leaving your body.

I didn't make it to the gym today. That makes five years in a row.

If God wanted me to touch my toes, He would've put them on my knees.

Last year I joined a support group for procrastinators; we haven't met yet.

Why do I have to press one for English when you're just going to transfer me to someone I can't understand anyway?

Of course I talk to myself; sometimes I need expert advice. Or you get the answers you want.

At my age "Getting lucky" means walking into a room and remembering what I came in there for.

Actually I'm not complaining because I am a Seenager. (Recycled teenager)

I have everything that I wanted as a teenager, only 60 years later.

I don't have to go to school or work.

I get an allowance every month.

I have my own pad.

I don't have a curfew.

I have a driver's license and my own car.

And I don't have acne.

Life is great.

Thank you to whoever sent me this.

What's on from January 2022

Thursday February 3rd CLIMATE MATTERS AND SOCIAL JUSTICE. Zoom at 7.30p.m

Saturday, 5th February Coffee Morning and More event St Faith's

Tuesday February 8th Hilgay Guild 2.30pm

Tuesday February 22nd, Hilgay Guild 2.30pm

Saturday 26th February 10.00 a.m. to 11.30 a.m. Coffee morning at Dersingham

Tuesday March 8th Hilgay Guild 2:30pm

March 12th Deadline for April rejoice

Tuesday March 22nd Hilgay Guild 2:30pm

26th/29th May Dersingham Flower Festival

Great to have a few diary dates!