

THE EDGE

Welcome to the September edition of The Edge, the Newsletter for the Benefice of Easington with Skeffling, Keyingham, Ottringham, Patrington, Welwick and Winestead parishes – the seventh month in ancient Rome, but the ninth for us.

If you have anything that you would like to share with us all through the newsletter, then please get in touch with me, Andrew Pate, or let Alisdair or one of the wardens know about it.

Living Christ's Story

Many thanks to everyone who has contributed towards this Deanery's response to the Parish Questionnaire which is part of the Living Christ's Story consultation.

Many thanks to Revd. Philip who has provided the reflection for this month, one which is very timely as we watch events unfolding in Afghanistan on our screens. Watching something on a screen can be a rather detached experience, but these are real people, caught up in a sudden and abrupt change of government, many fearful for their lives.

We were also grateful to Philip for "Easter Story2; well here we go again!

Christmas Live! an outdoor Nativity Play with real animals

Christmas Live! is the companion play to the Passion Play Easter Story (performed in Withernsea and Hedon in 2017 and 2019). We aim to stage it here one evening just before Christmas this year. We need volunteers to help with these items. Helpers do not need to be church members.

Location

Christmas Live! could take place in any reasonably accessible Deanery Parish, though not too near the coast on a December night! The play takes place in four different scenes, with audience standing and walking between each scene. These can be found and managed in most places. Do you want to offer your parish? Refreshments are offered at the end.

Animals

We need a donkey, two or three reasonably tame sheep, and three horses to be ridden by the Magi. Do you know anyone who might provide them?

Sound

The play is performed in narrated mime. We will probably use professional PA, but are open to offers from amateurs

Lighting

Can be simple but needs to be effective. We have used a spotlight and halogen work lamps, mains operated with cables run from nearby venues.

Props

Very simple: straw bales for seating, a crib (big enough for a real baby), shepherds' crooks for shepherds, gifts for magi. Van to transport items.

Costumes

We may already have suitable ones made for Easter Story

Site Management

It is important to have people looking after each scene.

Stewarding

With a potentially large audience including children, and possibly roads to cross, stewarding is important

There are other needs, but Philip needs to know whether the above can be covered before we go ahead, so if you think you, or anyone you know, can help, please contact Philip as soon as possible - Philip West 01964 603199



WORDS FROM THE LAIRD

The Earth has now done one full orbit of the Sun since I was licensed as vicar to the Benefice, joining you in the midst of a pandemic lock-down.

Hopefully it will prove to have been a unique experience for all of us in our lives! There are still people I have not met and some I have met but cannot recognise because I have only ever seen them with a mask on, but notwithstanding the exceptional situation it is good to be here and Ann and I have been made very welcome. Thank you.

Even now many of our annual routines remain uncertain. It is difficult to plan ahead with confidence, and a significant proportion of the population seem to be taking a precautionary approach to mixing and travelling. Hopefully, once we are through this coming winter we will all be much clearer about where we stand and how to go forward.

Most of us can cope well enough with a bit of change and uncertainty, but too much of either and many people begin to really struggle. Looking ahead it seems that dealing with the consequences of a pandemic may prove to simply be a warm up for dealing with the amount of change and uncertainty that 'global warming' may bring.

Christian faith has always been based on the understanding that the world does not stand still. Life and faith are not about being part of an endless unchanging cycle, but about an unfolding story where the world as we know it, and our own lives, have a beginning, move on towards an end, and have an ultimate resolution in the face of God's holiness and truth.

All of this happens within the oversight and presence of a holy love. However many times we may get to orbit the Sun we are all given a solid place to stand to face the changes and uncertainties of life. A solid rock of holiness and love that will not be moved or undermined, so Jesus is able to tell us (at the end of John 16):

"I am not alone because the Father is with me. I have told you all this so that you may have peace in me. Here on earth you will have many trials and sorrows. But take heart, because I have overcome the world."

If we are feeling unsettled or worried for the future may we trust those words, as so many have done who have already been this way before us. May we have courage, be of good cheer and share the road together—walking the way of Christ.

God's peace be with you,
Alisdair



SERVICES IN SEPTEMBER

There are services in each of our six churches during the month, and everyone will be welcome at all of them. If you need transport to get to a service, then please shout – there is a list of people you can shout at the end of The Edge. None of them bite!

St.Nicholas, Keyingham

Sunday 12th – 10.30 – Holy Communion

St.Wilfrid, Ottringham

Sunday 5th – 10.30 – Morning Prayer

Sunday 19th – 10.30 – Holy Communion

St.Germain, Winestead

Sunday 26th - 10.30 – Benefice Holy Communion

St.Patrick, Patrington

Sunday 5th – 11.00 – Holy Communion

Sunday 12th – 10.30 – Holy Communion

Sunday 19th – 10.30 – Morning Prayer

St.Mary, Welwick

Sunday 19th – 11.00 – Holy Communion

All Saints, Easington

Sunday 5th – 9.30 – Holy Communion

Sunday 19th – 9.30 – Holy Communion



Afghanistan: A Personal Response by Philip West

Recently I read this description of Western culture:

that people in the Western world live immoral lifestyles; that family life has been weakened; that the West is lacking in social courtesy; that traditional deference towards elders has been abandoned; that a high level of alcohol and drug abuse is tolerated and indulged in; that there are high rates of crime, violence and corruption; and that people have forsaken religion and their religious beliefs.

I suspect most of you will agree with at least one of these attributes of our culture, and many of you with all of them, because I frequently meet local people making the same points, commonly older people, but I also hear them from younger folk.

But this description of the West was not made by a Westerner. It is a summary of opinions about us by Muslims across the world in a Gallup poll survey. (To be fair, the survey also showed Muslim approval of some positive attributes, such as our technological achievements and our concerns for justice, toleration, and freedom.)

Another criticism highlighted by the survey was that we arrogantly believe our culture to be superior, and more advanced than theirs. I heard a similar point made recently by a high level army commander much involved in Afghanistan for many years (and the only Westerner I have heard talking about Afghanistan who appeared to know what he was talking about). He blamed the failure of Western forces to make the country secure on our political inability to listen to, understand and respect the very different culture of the Middle East.

A further criticism in the survey is that we too easily interfere in the internal and political affairs of other nations. Because we think of ourselves as superior, we imagine that other nations will jump at any chance we give them to adopt our democracy and lifestyle. But if we listened to them properly instead, we might discover what the survey reveals, that rather than copy us, they are more likely to avoid our culture like the plague.

Our interference in other countries often involves military action, as for example in the invasion of Iraq, the occupation of Afghanistan, and the bombing of Syria. However much we think those actions as justified, to Muslims it looks as if we are trying to impose our way of life upon them. This makes them afraid, and our guns, tanks and bombs drive young Muslims into the arms of the Taliban, Isis and Al Quaeda, to stop a culture they see as corrupt being forced upon them.

I am not denying that these fundamentalist Islamic movements have carried out acts of atrocity and denied the basic human rights of women and girls, and I still regard Christianity as possessing a truth that other religions lack, but I am arguing for a response to the current situation which draws back from a facile condemnation of Islamic extremists, and instead starts from a position of Christian humility.

An approach of humility will be based on Jesus' instruction to remove the log from our own eye first so that we can see clearly enough to remove the speck of sawdust from our brother's eye. This requires us to ask two uncomfortable questions: what right do we have to barge into other countries arrogantly claiming we know what they need, and in what ways do our own actions in the Middle East both create and sustain jihadist groups.

From a personal point of view, and most importantly for all of us, an approach based on humility will require us to take a long hard look at the criticisms Muslim people have of our Western culture, the faults they see in us, and ask how far I contribute to and share in those faults?

More deeply, such an approach will require us to ask, "Do I really love God? Do I serve Him as much as many devout Muslims do? Do I love my neighbour, going out of my way for other people? Do I love my fellow believers, caring for them as best I can; those in my church, my benefice, and further afield? Are my actions such as will draw Muslims or anyone else to follow Christ, or are they such as will make them avoid him like the plague?"



CONTACT!

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