

A few words from the Vicar

'For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven' (Ecclesiastes 3:1)

Well I hope everybody had a good Christmas he said, writing at the end of November due to an imminent Parish Magazine deadline!

I've not reached Advent yet but for you, dear reader, turkey with all the trimmings will be a distant memory as you look forward to yet more turkey soup for lunch.

Even, maybe, New Year has been and gone for you too! And maybe the holiday adverts are on the telly and Easter Eggs are already on sale in the shops!

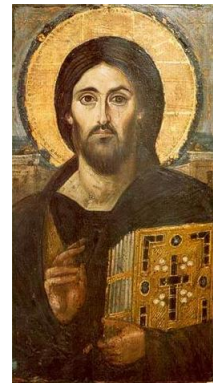
That's it for another year!

There is a pattern to life and, before you know it, it will be Christmas once again!

One of the privileges of being a Vicar is that I get to meet people at the different stages of their lives; in times of celebration and times of sadness; at their beginning and at their ending. For example:

- Although my own childhood is a distant memory, I just love going into our School to take assemblies. It reminds me that I too was young once. And on Friday mornings at 11.00am I like nothing better than wandering across to ABC for a brew and a chat with some of the mums (and dads and grandmas) and toddlers.
- I know it's not everyone's cup of tea but I look forward to our monthly Parade services. I don't mind being daft for the sake of the Gospel (*1 Corinthians 4:10*) and the enthusiasm of our youngsters is infectious; they're so keen to participate and share their good news.
- I meet with young couples to arrange their weddings and to baptise their children – not necessarily in that order and sometimes at the same time! But that's another story!
- I visit the housebound and those living in nursing homes who are no longer able to attend Church or, perhaps, who have been referred to me. What a job! I'm actually paid by the Church of England to drink tea and eat biscuits!
- I visit and pray for the sick. And, if need be, I sit with those at the end of their lives as they prepare to meet their maker.
- I comfort the bereaved and preside at the funerals of their loved ones.

Of course, this ministry isn't mine alone. In fact, strictly speaking, it's not mine at all – it's God's. He has simply extended to me the privilege of tagging along with him in his mission to the world.



But I would be unable to exercise my God-given ministry without those others from this Church who exercise theirs. Those, for example who support the school or are following their God-given vocation as teachers; those who work in ABC, Sunday School and our uniformed organisations; and those who assist me with baptisms, weddings and funerals.

We're a team!

And talking of teams, a new pastoral visiting team has just been set up. This is so that those who are housebound or living in nursing homes can receive a visit from the Church on a more frequent basis than I can manage by myself.

This is an important new initiative, with members of the team being appointed directly by me and working to agreed guidelines.

So, if you would like to receive a visit (or if you know someone who would like one) contact me and I will add you to the list.

Every Blessing

Dave