

**PARISH OF SOUTHMINSTER
MAGAZINE OF THE
CHURCH OF ST LEONARD**



**Operation Christmas Child
Shoebox collection in church**

More details are on page 23.

DECEMBER 2020

God's love was revealed among us in this way:

God sent his only Son into the world so that we might
live through him. 1 John 4:9

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NOTE FROM THE EDITOR:

*Articles for the
January magazine by
Sunday Dec. 13th
please, to Kath Dunstan.
New contributors will be welcome.
If you pay an annual fee for distributed
copies that will be due in January.
Your deliverer will inform you about this
appropriately.*

We wish all our
readers and their
families a truly
Blessed Christmas.

We hope that everyone
in Southminster will
receive our 'normal'
greeting card which
should be delivered
early this month.

We thank all the
volunteer deliverers.

Reflection

As we start to look through the address book at this time of the year, we are conscious of those people who have been an influence to us through the years; some who have drawn close during difficult times, and some who have shared the journey of our lives. Christmas is a time to send greetings, newsletters and updates of what God has been doing in our midst during this past year, and where we think God may be taking us in the future. It is a particularly reflective time for us as we write these cards and epistles, but also a warm time as we remember the love that people have in their hearts for us; to express ours for them and it is so good to hear news from others about their year.

This year may be a little different as all of us have experienced a more difficult time, of how routines have changed and how *this* Christmas is going to be different; with some older folks isolating, travel being more difficult, especially if there are relatives abroad, and the whole concept of 'households mixing' may make this Christmas – prospectively - a very different type of occasion. Yet it **is** still a celebration, and perhaps a pared-down Christmas might make us more reflective on the purpose of the season, that we might actually see that God has sent his *Word* to us.

That one act, vibrantly and with such a powerful dynamic, declares His intentions for all our futures. The message of the greatest Love, came to us who are undeserving, in the person of Jesus, the living Word, and

Jesus came to bring us back to the wider family table of fellowship and love, to share along with others the goodness of a Father who loves and values us all enough to have given to us the greatest gift; His Son.

As we hear the story again, and watch a Nativity (or two!) and realise the unfolding story of faithfulness, obedience, love and purpose, we understand a love that is far greater, far richer and far more consistent towards us – a love that is accepting and unending. The good news is that Jesus came. Jesus came no matter *how* wrong we were; *how* rebellious we might have been; *how* sinful; He came to rescue us just as we are, and He loves us just as we are. The vulnerable child in a crib entering the world, in order to rescue the world. When we watch these Nativity plays, we see the baby whom we want to protect, whom we want to teach and a baby whom we want to save – and yet.... **He** is the one who saves **us**. This child, born in a stable and placed in a manger, willingly visited both by humble shepherds and far-travelling kings, is the one whose light radiates out to the whole world. Jesus was not hidden from us, nor was He a secret: He was revealed to us by the Father to draw us close to Himself. The star was there for all to see, for all to be drawn to Christ the Messiah. Many people missed the sign, took no notice, but it was there for everyone. God draws us to Him, by His signs, by His wonders and by His love; He wants us to know Him and adore Him. Christ is revealed to us all.

Whatever way we are to celebrate Christmas this year, may we know for ourselves the love of God at the heart of it. May we celebrate His presence with us, and rejoice in the Saviour who came, and Whom we can both meet, and know. I bless you, in Jesus' Name, to know Him and receive Him for yourself.

God's love was revealed among us in this way: God sent his only Son into the world so that we might live through him.

1 John 4:9

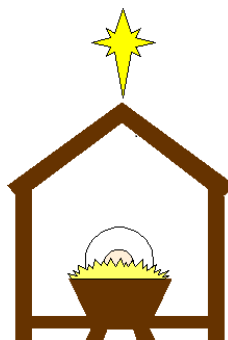
Peter

.... And to continue.....

Dear St Leonard's and St Lawrence's church families,
our good friends:

Fiona and I send our most loving greeting
for Christmas time:

strange as it may be this year,
that you all know, for yourselves,
the great love of God our Father
shown in the gift of the birth
of Jesus His Son,
that He became
the most wonderful gift to us all.



May His Peace rest upon and through you,
to every one of those you love and pray for:

Emmanuel... God is with us... AMEN!

The Banqueting Table

The Kingdom of God in Matthew 22 is likened to a wedding banquet.

In the culture of the time two invitations were expected when banquets were given. The first invitation asked the guests to attend and the second announced that all was ready. Here, in this Matthew passage, the King, portrayed as God, invited his guests twice and each time they refused to come with various excuses. The King then invited people from the streets and the wedding hall was filled. God all through the ages is our King and we too are invited to join Him at His banquet which will last for eternity. That's why He sends us invitations again and again. So, have we accepted His invitation?

In Exodus 24 God gave to Moses His words and laws for righteous living and Moses wrote down everything the Lord said. It became the book of the Covenant and the people responded affirming that they would do everything God asked of them. Then the leaders of the Israelites, with Moses, went up Mount Sinai, they saw God and they ate and drank (v11).

In the ancient East covenants were often concluded with a meal expressive of the bond of friendship.

Today, the Lord's Supper (Holy Communion), celebrates the new covenant sealed by Christ's death (1 Cor. 11:23). Jesus, Immanuel, is God with us and when we invite Jesus to be Lord of our lives and to live in us by His Holy Spirit, He then invites us to His banquet, to eat and drink at the Lord's table. So, as we eat and drink this Christmas time let us remember that Jesus is knocking at the door of our hearts. Will we let Him in to share our meal and our lives with Him in this earthly life and on into eternal life?



I'd like to share with you this poem which I wrote a few years ago now, forgive me if you've seen it before but I felt it reminds us this Christmas time who it is we celebrate, why we celebrate and to include the most precious guest in all our preparations:

The Uninvited Guest

She'd prepared the meal, the table was set,
every detail spoke of perfection.

The glasses gleamed, the cutlery shone,
napkins beautifully folded
sat waiting on a table fit for a King.

She had prepared her home;
her nets were washed and windows cleaned,
dust and grime removed until all was spotless.

She had prepared herself with well cut clothes
adorned with expensive jewellery,
her make up impeccable, her hair her crowning glory.

The gifts she'd bought sat neatly by,
wrapped in gold paper to impress.

She loved her dinner parties,
loved the attention they brought.
She prepared to wait for her guests to arrive.

But then he came, a Carpenter,
standing on the doorstep smiling.
He held out his hand to offer his gift of best wine
hoping she'd take it and invite him in.

She looked down at his clothing,
looked at his well-worn hands,

amazed at his audacity
to invite himself to her party,
her party fit for a King!

She closed the door,
not seeing the tears in his eyes
as he walked away.

Alas, her guests never came,
the dinner spoiled, the gifts sat unopened.

She looked for the man who had come before,
not realising who had come to her table to eat with her
and to share his gift with her, but he had gone.

She had prepared so much but all for nought.
Broken she sat and wept.

“What good is it if a man gains the
whole world but loses his soul”
came to her mind.

The Carpenter had come
to give her the greatest gift of life,
but in all the preparation
and perfection,
the one thing she had forgotten
to prepare was her heart.



Brenda Sheppard

Women's Refuge Collection for Christmas 2020

Fiona Begley

Firstly, a very big thank you to those folks who have been enquiring as to how the collection may be running for this year. I have details now so am sharing for your kind consideration.

THE GIFTS: As in previous years, the request is for *brand new* toys, (none which have been 'previously enjoyed' regardless of how good they look, please) of a non-violent nature, unwrapped but with gift-wrap supplied please. This allows the mums themselves to wrap their child's/children's presents. I've asked about the age range and it can be from babies to teenagers up to 16 year old, and it will be both boys and girls.

With regard to the lovely gifts which you also often most thoughtfully provide for the mums themselves: bear in mind they can arrive at a refuge with their children after a horribly real 'all-of-a-sudden' situation has arisen. Thus there is always a need for nice shower gels, shampoos and conditioners; toothpaste, bath bombs, bath soak liquid, deodorants and eau de toilette sprays. These particular gifts are extremely well-received and much appreciated and help immensely with ladies' self-esteem. Tooth-brushes and sanitary products are already well supplied.

WHEN: All your donated gifts can be brought to St Leonard's Church, Southminster corner of Station Road and Burnham Road on Sunday 13 December *before the service, only between 10:00am and 10:45am* (which is when the service starts) *or after the service from 12 noon until 1pm*, when we will keep the church open for that hour after the service so gifts may be brought along. If there are any queries about any of these details please call me at the Vicarage on 772300.

The gifts are being taken to the Refuge on Monday 14 so please note that *no gifts can be accepted at the church after the SUNDAY drop-off times*: no-one will be there and the church will have had to be shut and locked for us to be properly compliant with current guidelines.



Fiona continues:

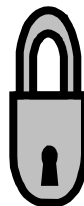
Very sadly, there can be no accompanying toy service for this as is usual at this time, for this 2020 year. The Refuge lady contact is more than happy to come at another time and talk to us all, so we will arrange for this to happen during one of the Sunday 10:45 services and publicise it well in advance.

Very many thanks to you all for your kind hearted-generosity toward those living through such a difficult, and very probably painful, time in their lives...it makes a REAL difference to these dear folks for them to receive these lovely gifts sent with such love and care: please be very, very sure of that... very sure.

God bless and keep you, dear happy and very loving givers.

We are still learning to cope with all the regulations because of the coronavirus pandemic - involving limited gatherings in our church buildings etc. Just remember: God is with us!

To keep aware of what is happening, and to participate on line with services, log into the website <https://www.stleonardsouthminster.org.uk/> and <https://www.facebook.com/groups/stleonardstogetherapart/>



Also, we have a WhatsApp group entitled "Together Apart Our Church". Lots of people are involved in that.

These links have been greatly appreciated by regular Church family members and also by people who have not, to date, attended our church services. In difficult times, like this, we need to 'allow' God to point us in possible new directions and then to respond.

If you would like specific prayer, please contact the vicar. preferably by email but otherwise on 01621 772300



PRAY FOR SOUTHMINSTER:

w/b	6 December	North-East
w/b	13 December	Central - North-West
w/b	20 December	Central - East
w/b	27 December	Central - South

POSSIBLE ROTA DETAILS: YOUR AVAILABILITY FOR 2 MONTHS

We don't know when we shall be able to start worshipping in church again, but, in order to be well-prepared, please let Paul Lucas know if you cannot be available on any of the following dates.

March 2021	7	14	21	28
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April 2021	4	11	18	25
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PLEASE REMEMBER THAT IF YOU ARE UNABLE TO FULFIL YOUR DUTY YOU SHOULD CHANGE WITH SOMEONE AND INFORM THE WARDENS OF THE ARRANGEMENT.

FLOWER ARRANGING

Despite all the difficulties of the pandemic we have been blessed by some lovely floral arrangements in church, especially for some recent special occasions.



Thank you, Flower arranging team.

A notice about our offerings to God.

Many of us use the facility of the offering plate to give our gifts to God. As the church is closed for the moment it may be a good time to think about a standing order to the church so that we are still bringing our gift. Many of us are doing this already – Thank you, but those who may be wondering how they can continue their giving through Standing Order the details of the church bank are here:

St. Leonard's church: Barclays Bank Sort code: **20.54.30**
A/c No. **80825107** Made payable to: Southminster
Parochial Church Council.

St. Lawrence & All Saints church: Barclays Bank
Sort code: **20.54.30** A/c No. **60842494**
Made payable to Steeple Parochial Church Council.

May God bless our gifts to Him.

DECEMBER WORSHIP

Details of the December services which will happen on-line and hopefully some in our Southminster and Steeple church buildings (with appropriate sanitisation arrangements being managed of course) are listed here - on pages 12 - 13 so please use them so that we can all be involved in worship together, in church or at home, at this continuing difficult time. The readings of the day and the special prayer (the collect) are shown. Any changes will be on the outside church notice-board.

Wednesday 2nd December

19.00 “Light up a Life” Service for Farleigh Hospice
(outside with limited and distanced attendance)

Sunday 6th December

2nd Sunday of Advent

Holy Communion: 8am BCP & 10.45am CW

Isaiah 40 : 1 - 11

Steeple 9.15 Morning Worship

Mark 1 : 1 - 8

Almighty God, purify our hearts and minds, that when your Son Jesus Christ comes again as judge and saviour we may be ready to receive him, who is our Lord and our God. Amen.

Sunday 13th December

3rd Sunday of Advent

Holy Communion 8am BCP & 10.45 Morning Worship

Isaiah 61 : 1 - 4, 8 - 11

Steeple 9.15 Holy Communion

John 1 : 6 - 8, 19 - 28

God, for whom we watch and wait, you sent John the Baptist to prepare the way of your Son: give us courage to speak the truth, to hunger for justice, and to suffer for the cause of right, with Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Sunday 20th December 4th Sunday of Advent

Holy Communion: 8am BCP & 10.45 am CW

2 Samuel 7: 1 - 11, 16 Steeple 9.15 Morning Worship

Luke 1 : 26 - 38

Eternal God, as Mary waited for the birth of your Son, so we wait for his coming in glory; bring us through the birth pangsof this present age to see, with her, our great salvation in Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

24th December Christmas Eve

No 23.30 “Midnight” service this year

Due to lockdowns and restricted numbers in Church; along with sanitising after a service, we are unable to have the usual seasonal services. We look forward to a time when we will be able to come back into church for morning worship.

25th December Christmas Day

Holy Communion: at 9am BCP & at 10am CW

(no service at Steeple)

Isaiah 62 : 6 - 12

Luke 2 : 1 - 20

Lord Jesus Christ, your birth at Bethlehem draws us to kneel in wonder at heaven touching earth; accept our heartfelt praise as we worship you, our Saviour and our eternal God. Amen.

Sunday 27th December 1st Sunday of Christmas

Holy Communion: 8am BCP & 9.15 CW at Steeple

10.45 am Morning Worship

Isaiah 61 : 10 - 62,3

Luke 2 : 15 - 21

God in Trinity, eternal unity of perfect love: gather the nations to be one family, and draw us into your holy life through the birth of Emmanuel, our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

The St. Leonard's Together Apart Facebook Group

began on 20th March 2020, just a few days before we went into lockdown. The group was created as a way to keep in touch, encourage and support each other during this difficult time. Since then we have shared songs, daily devotions, prayers, church services, Bible studies, Alpha courses etc.

At the present time each weekday looks like this;

6am Daily Devotion including a worship song

11.30am Family Time (Tuesday and Thursday) including Little Lions' singing time, Veggie Tales movies, virtual Sunday School etc.



3pm Bible Study / Reflection

8pm Prayer

Saturday is a quiet day and on Sunday we post the church service and weekly bulletin.

We also welcome others to share encouraging posts on the page too.

Over the last 7 months we have also had several extra events e.g. Spring Harvest at Home, His Presence, Thy Kingdom Come, Alpha course, Testimony.

It has been a real privilege and blessing to run this group, and the bonus has been that I have got to know some wonderful people through the group too.

Karen Flack

ST. LEONARD'S REGULAR MIDWEEK EVENTS

HENRY CLUB (Church Cleaning)

Our team is hoping to meet fortnightly 'as usual' so that means we'll be busy at 9.15 am on **Fridays 4th & 18th December**.

If you have any questions or offers to help please contact Brenda Sheppard who is 'in charge' while Jacky is unavailable.

The **Music Group** would normally meet in church on Fridays at 7.45 pm & occasional Wednesdays, but singing in services is not allowed yet.

Morning Prayer on Mon., Tues, Wed. & Fri. has been suspended but information will be on the notice-board if there is a change.

SOUTHMINSTER MEMORIAL HALL

We still miss the weekly "Chatterbox" meetings which include the Bereavement Group fortnightly.

Similarly there would normally be Monday Lunch Club and various evening gatherings e.g. the W.I. which are dreadfully missed.

The Little Lions meetings have only continued on-line too.

Bradwell-Tillingham-Dengie and St Lawrence Churches

If our Churches are still closed for public worship our church services will be 'Joint Benefice Services' and will be online at; <https://e-voice.org.uk/bradwellchurch/sunday-services/>

If restrictions are removed and public worship is permitted please see <https://e-voice.org.uk/bradwellchurch/> for church services and times for Bradwell, Tillingham, St Lawrence and Dengie.

This website has been adapted to cover all the churches in Bradwell, Tillingham, St Lawrence and Dengie over this coronavirus pandemic period.

BEING BEREAVED

Chris Martin

It is gratifying that I have been asked to write something on this subject and I hope I can find something to say that will be helpful to any reader who has lost a spouse or partner. As some of you may know I do run a Bereavement Support Group (details elsewhere in the magazine) but we have not been able to meet since last winter, though I am hopeful that meetings can begin again soon.

In this instance I will write only about being widowed, although of course that is not the only kind of bereavement there is, and I appreciate that whoever has died leaves a tremendous gap in your life and the loss has to be dealt with in its own way. Having lost my mother, husband and only brother in a period of 4 months I feel I am qualified to say that each loss causes different feelings.

Being widowed often means that the remaining partner is left living alone, so it's a sort of double whammy. First of all you miss the person who has been an integral part of your life for so long – 51 years in my case – but at the same time you have to come to terms with the fact that you are now essentially alone, and you have to face a future on your own, make all your own decisions, take care of yourself and go through life's ups and downs by yourself. I can only tell you how I am dealing with it, which is certainly not the only way but I can only claim that most of the time it works for me up to a point. There's no silver bullet.

When I woke up the day after Mick died nearly six years ago, I said to myself, "Chris, you can go one of two ways: you can sit on the sofa under a duvet for the rest of your life, or you can carry on as well as you can without Mick and make the best of what you have". The way I see it, there are only two ways to go: stay put and deteriorate, or get up and carry on with what life has given you. The first option was way more tempting, but the second way is really the only sensible option.

Physically I have deteriorated quite a lot since January 2015 and apparently this is not unusual. And it's certainly true that I feel better and stronger on a "good" day. In order to have a good day, I find it helpful to have at least one task planned for each day; this is really important. Today for me it's writing this article! It might be baking a cake or doing some housework – any little thing that helps you to feel you have done something at least a little bit worthwhile. If you can get involved in other people's problems and try to help them at all, this is also helpful to yourself. The church has wonderful ways you can help both yourself and others by "getting involved" up to whatever point suits you. The trick is to get your thoughts outside of yourself and to try not to dwell on the loneliness and lack of purpose that you naturally feel. I confess I'm often still in the "What am I still doing on this Earth?/I've achieved all I'm going to achieve/I don't think I want to be here any more" stage and often feel there is no purpose without somebody to share life's pleasures with, but you can bet that as soon as that thought forms in my head, something will happen to get me thinking and acting on something else, be it a phone call, text, email or visitor and I realise that there IS still plenty going on around to take an interest in and get through *one more day*.

The pandemic has meant we can't make plans ahead for outings, visits, holidays, village activities or any of the other ways we normally live. It's particularly hard when we're told not to "socialise" and you can't even see your own children and grandchildren. But we have to be grateful for modern technology and the fact that we have plenty of entertainment on radio and TV. With effort, you can turn your thoughts to anything, and just lately with Brexit, the dreaded Virus, and just this week the USA election, there's plenty to talk about and think about other than how we feel lonely being on our own. Even more important, there are your own friends and neighbours who might appreciate you getting/keeping in touch because we all know that other people have problems too.



It would be easy to launch here into a “there’s always somebody worse off than yourself” theme, because that’s true. However, when you’re suffering through a loss plus you’re feeling lonely, it’s difficult to focus on other people’s troubles and, indeed, on other people’s happier lives!

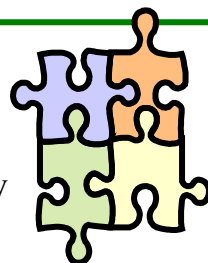
I remember a friend of mine, shortly after her husband died, saying that when she first ventured out (and this is a bigger step than people who have not yet had to do it can understand) she felt like shouting out in the street, “Why are you all talking and laughing? Don’t you know my husband has just died?” I know how she felt; you feel you are standing out in a crowd where nobody understands who you are and you wonder what you’re doing out there at all. This is why recently bereaved people often don’t want to stay out for long when kind people invite them. There is a strong urge to get home within your own four walls. But this passes with time and *effort*. The trick is to get back into normality as quickly as possible, slap a smile on your face whether you feel like it or not, and sooner or later, you find you have more “good days” than “bad days”. People start telling you how strong you are being, and after a while you actually believe it.

Christmastime is always difficult for those who have lost their partners but I hope those of you who find yourselves in this situation will find some kind of Christmas joy in the love and goodwill of your families and friends, and the strength of spirit to guide you.

I hope the above might be helpful to somebody.

Editor’s comment

Life often seems like a jigsaw puzzle with missing pieces, but let’s remember that Jesus is present to help us through difficult stages. This is particularly relevant in this difficult year. “Happy Christmas!”



Just a note



I am pleased to take the Church magazine each month. I know it can be read on-line but I do prefer a paper version. Luckily it is delivered by a member of the Church “family”.

I say this as a non-believer and resident of Southminster. It is interesting to know about our fellow humans, and our interests. The Church here has welcomed non-religious events in the past, be it Music, Quiz Nights, Art and Crafts.

The Vicar, his wife and members, have always offered a smile and friendly attitude. In this day and age, that makes a pleasant change!

Jeanne McLeay

PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE

THANK YOU everyone who filled a shoebox for “Operation Christmas Child” - and particularly the people who hosted the ‘drop-off’ points for us so efficiently: Chapmans Store and Southminster Butchers.

THANK YOU to Karen and Leon who continue to facilitate our on-line worship for adults and children. See page 14

THE ICYCLE RIDE which would normally happen on New Year’s Day will not be happening this year because of the Coronavirus situation. Thanks go to all who would normally have participated - and to the Bikhazis for their organising over the years.

Water and Mission

Ken Dunstan


One way I've been privileged to serve God has been through membership of the Diocesan Environment Group. It exists to urge the Diocese and its parishes to remember the Five Marks of Mission which summarise what the Church is for. In particular, the Group is to focus on the Fifth Mark of Mission, "to strive to preserve the integrity of Creation, and to sustain and renew the life of the earth." That's not just a worthy scientific or political target – though it is both of those. It is, to use theological jargon, "a Gospel imperative." It's an essential part of the life of the Church. It's part of being a Christian and it is as important as the other four Marks.

Recently I've been reading a novel by our Wycliffe Bible Translators partner, Steve Pillinger. It's a bit like "Lord of the Rings". Like Tolkien, Steve makes his Christian faith show through the book. At one point, a character remembers a Bible verse from her youth, "fan into flame the gift of God that is in you." (2Timothy 1:6) That set me thinking about the part my DEG membership should play in my mission. It strikes me that it should at least be expressed in more than going to meetings, sometimes to be a part and sometimes to speak to a Synod or clergy meeting. So I'm offering the magazine some thoughts on our environment, starting with the Diocesan Lent Lectures for 2020 and in particular, one of the last public appearances of Bishop Stephen, who is now Archbishop of York.

One more bit of background: our Diocese is twinned with the Diocese of Marsabit in Northern Kenya, (about the size of England), on the Somali border, which is increasingly a desert region. Stephen talked to us about water. He began with an image. Imagine an Airbus A380 crashing one Monday, killing all aboard. That could be 500 deaths. People would be concerned. Imagine the concern if the same happened on Tuesday. And Wednesday. And every day through the week. 3500 deaths in a week. People would say,

“Something must be done.” In fact, all aircraft would have been grounded on Tuesday for checks. Stephen continued. **“Every eight seconds** a child in developing countries dies because of lack of access to clean, safe water.” I did the sums. That’s an A380-full **every hour**; 75,600 deaths a week. That’s 21 times the rate of repeated air disasters, and actually happening; it’s not a thought-experiment. What’s being done about that? And what does it have to do with you and me?

Kenya used to have a stable climate that included two rainy seasons, one short, one long, and a dry season. When Bishop Stephen visited Marsabit in 2017 it hadn’t rained for eighteen months. The climate is changing. Every year of this century has been hotter than the average for the whole of the twentieth century. Average global temperatures reached 1°Celsius above the pre-industrial average in 2017 and are rising at about 0.2°C per decade. The Inter-Governmental Panel on Climate Change’s 2015 Paris conference agreed that we cannot afford the difference to reach more than 1.5°C. There will be another conference in Glasgow in November 2021. In those six years, little has been achieved. But let’s understand, the warming is caused by human beings. One of the results of the heating we’ve already experienced is an increase in extreme individual weather events as well as climate. So an excessively hot, dry Australia has this year suffered out of control wildfires – as have California and Siberia. Whole towns have been incinerated. Kenya’s farmers have seen vegetation, followed by their animals, die. As waterholes have dried up, people must travel to fetch water, or perhaps move. This has resulted in violent clashes between thirsty migrants and the frightened people who see the incomers as invaders after scarce water. Ismail Serageldin, a former Vice-President of the World Bank, has said, “If the wars of the last century were fought over oil, those of the next will be fought over water.” Bishop Stephen was shocked by the sight of an elephant in Marsabit digging in sand for water in what had been the middle of a wide river.





What can be done? Our Diocese has already bought a bowser that can take fresh water to villages with shortages, and has paid for a borehole and a pump for a village where people had previously had a three hour walk to the nearest water and back. We can, and our Deanery Synod has been asked to promote this, give to

the charity Water Aid – they ask for just £2 a month, £24 a year. We can use less water. Anglian Water’s calculator suggests an average of 150 litres per person per day. The calculator does not include flushing the toilet, which accounts for a third of the average household’s water use. Depending on the age of the toilet, a flush uses between 7.5 and 14 litres per flush. 8 or 9 litres of filtered, clean water to flush a bit under a litre of urine? Is that the best use of water? Bishop Stephen quoted a rhyme much used in Australia: “If it’s yellow, let it mellow. If it’s brown, flush it down. And while we’re on bathroom poetry, Harry Payne once told me another slogan: “Don’t run while you brush.” That’s Australian for “Turn off the tap while cleaning your teeth.”

Other ideas Bishop Stephen mentioned included using water butts to water flower beds without increasing the water bill. How often do we need to wash our cars? Short showers use a third of the water of a long bath.

Why should we do this? Quite apart from Marks of Mission, we are bound by the two Great Commandments: we are to love God with all our being, and love our neighbour as we love ourselves. Loving our Kenyan and other distant neighbours comes in two parts. We must change our habits of consumption, and not just of water. We must learn the meaning of “enough.” And we must act to relieve the thirst of newly desert places as the Bishop’s Lent Appeal has done in the past. Bishop Stephen quoted what he

called the most radical and subversive verse in the Bible, Romans 12:20: “If your enemy is thirsty, give him a drink.” He redefined generosity. It’s not the size of the gift that matters; it’s how much you have left after giving.” Stephen visited a village that he described as “the nearest I’ve seen to people who have nothing.” He went on, “And yet they shared everything they had with us. It was with that in mind, when we give really generously, that Bishop Stephen finished with Isaiah 35:6-7. It is a picture of renewal, where deserts are watered and vegetation flourishes. Christian faith is pretty simple, really. Love God, love others. And a little more complicated: “love your enemies.” (Matthew 5:44)

A summary of what has been achieved this year.

by Peter Begley



Fiona and I were so pleased to be able to take THIRTY EIGHT shoeboxes to the collection staging post in Rayleigh on Monday 16th, and they were thrilled to see all our boxes arrive in the back of the car!! We are hoping to gather the shoeboxes donated by the school either this week or next, and take those along as well. We want to say a massive THANK YOU for the loving generosity packed into each shoe box.. it is immense. The 6 of us who came to the church on Sunday morning just to receive them and had a very good and loving time of prayer over them, blessed each one in Jesus' Name to be absolutely safe in transit and a source of real joy to each child who receives one.

Thank you all once again for your great gifts to these children who have not much of anything. May you all know that joy doubled back to you by God....His promise...we simply cannot out-give Him, the *real* Joy-Giver... Amen!!

See the photograph on the magazine cover.



WHO ARE WE?

Mission Statement

“To be a people offering praise and worship to God and serving him by being the Good News by our words and actions”

Web Site www.stleonardsouthminster.org.uk

Contact: vicar@stleonardsouthminster.org.uk

NORMAL PUBLIC WORSHIP IS STILL A BIT DIFFERENT.

See page 10 and pages 12-13 for some details.

Weekly notices, covering any changes, will be available to read on the outside church notice-board

Sunday Services - will continue on-line, but with occasional permission possible for opportunities for a limited number of people to meet in the church.

(See pages 12-14

for details of special days and readings)

8:00 am Holy Communion (Book of Common Prayer 1662)

10:45 am Holy Communion or Morning Worship

Steeple Services similarly continue at 9.15am

(Our Prayer ministry for any needs will continue even though it happens ‘at a distance’.)

Children and Young people are always welcomed especially for the **Family Celebration Services**



MESSY CHURCH is monthly on Mondays at 3.45 pm in church. The next one will be publicised as soon as it is allowed to happen.

‘LITTLE LIONS’ usually meet on Wednesday mornings in the Memorial Hall during term-time only. It is for babies/toddlers & their carers.



Home Groups are obviously not gathering at the moment.