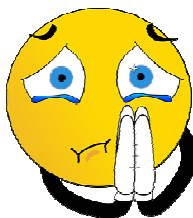


**PARISH OF SOUTHMINSTER
MAGAZINE OF THE
CHURCH OF ST LEONARD**

StL



JANUARY 2021

Jeremiah 29 says

“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.”

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NOTE FROM THE EDITOR:

*Articles for the
February magazine by
Sunday Jan 17th
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're sorry that this month's issue is smaller than usual, but the Christmas season made the planning difficult. I've no doubt that we shall make up for it by having a much larger one at some stage in during 2021.

Kath Dunstan

Reflection

Happy New Year to you, as we enter a new year with renewed hope of a God Who is making all things new. What an outlook for 2021.

When I was in business I really enjoyed the lead up to Christmas, with the optimism, the joy and the celebratory atmosphere that most people had in those preceding weeks. No matter what had happened during the past business year all seemed to be forgotten as we looked forward to Christmas.

The hope of things brighter is an element of every business person, every entrepreneur, nobody thinks that their business is going to fail, rather the opposite is true. People invest of themselves into the business with a confidence of success and better times. Having a perfect business plan and the right people in support will grow the business and targets will be achieved.

The commitment to a plan is crucial for everyone involved, a focus for all to do their best and to maintain the best for the good of all who work within the organisation. Every good business will have a strategy and a well thought-out plan for what the company will be doing in one, three- and five-years' time, and thus are able to map the progress. All the plans are worked out by the management committee and each person accountable for their particular area of responsibility.

How does this fit with entering 2021 and the new year?



The committee of God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit have set a plan that is to the benefit of every man, woman and child, and it has been set in motion from the beginning of time. That plan had an interruption of sin, but did not deviate from the plan.

A solution had already been set in place that, at the God-appointed time, would put everything back on track toward the plan. That solution was the arrival of Jesus, God's own Son, into the world to meet with us and teach and show us a way forward to bring us back to the original plan; to help us to join in the plan and be part of the plan. We have been given a responsibility to deliver that message to those around us and help them to know and understand the future that is ahead.

Jeremiah 29 says "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." As we join in those plans we have a real and grounded hope, a future both here and through into eternity!

We can track the progress of those plans too, as we look at how the good news of Jesus and His reconciling love meets people all around the world; there are very few places in the world now where the gospel has not yet reached, though we are still called to "Go..".

When Jesus walked with His disciples He said "this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the

end will come” (Matthew 24:14). As we see the gospel advancing through the nations we know that God’s plan is coming to fruition and we know that Jesus is coming again, and soon, to make all things new! Hallelujah! Are we ready?

We enter the New Year then with confidence in the plan that is unfolding, the strategy that is perfect and a goal that is heaven itself. We look forward to a year of being able to tell others of the perfect plan that is God’s plan, the wonderful future that is ours as we put our trust in Jesus Christ, and He will make all things new (Revelation 21:5) Happy New Year!

Peter



Operation Christmas Child was very well supported this year as we were able to take 68 Shoeboxes to the collection centre in Rayleigh. The organisers at the collection centre have given a Thank you Poster to us which is on display in the church, but as most people are unable to get to church, I am passing on their thanks.

There will be so many young people who will have some Christmas cheer and a message of Hope given to them, where normally they may not receive anything; so “Thank You” for your generous support and giving in the gift of Shoeboxes.

Peter

Eternal Life

Eternal or everlasting life. Some believe that there is nothing beyond when we die and that this earthly life is all we have. I find this so hard to grasp as I believe totally in eternal life and that this earthly life is just a passing through journey and a learning time on our way to an eternal life in heaven with our Lord.

I have to admit the first time I heard about eternal life was during a time, as a very new Christian, when I was having a lot of anxiety issues and not coping very well. I was taken by a Christian neighbour to meet with the Vicar of the time. He was very kind and prayed with me and said how we will have troubles in this life but as Christians we look forward to an eternal life. I was horrified, as this was the worst thing I could have heard, and I remember saying “But I don’t want to live like this forever, in this anxious state”, not realising that wouldn’t be the case as the Bible says in Revelation 21 ‘God will wipe away every tear from our eyes and there will be no more mourning or crying or pain for those who love Him and dwell with Him.’ I needed time to grasp this concept and over time through reading my Bible and good teaching I came to understand.



So, what must we do to enter in to eternal life? “Jesus said in John 6 :40 “For my Father’s will is that everyone who looks to the Son and believes in him shall have eternal life and I will raise him up at the last day”. John 14 v 6 confirms this when it says Jesus is “The way, the truth and the life.”

St. Paul said “For me to live is Christ and to die is gain.” Paul was imprisoned at the time for his faith but still had that joy and hope in Jesus and he desired to depart this life and be with Him but also wanted to stay on earth to do God’s work in helping others to find that joy that following Jesus brings.

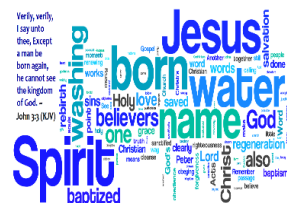
Again, in John 5 v 24 “Jesus said, I tell you the truth, whoever hears my word, and believes in God who sent me, has eternal life and will not be condemned, he has crossed over from death to life.”



So many Scriptures saying the same message, but one of the most remembered and loved is John 3 v 16, “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”

One question that is asked is what does it mean to be a “Born again Christian.” Jesus in John chapter 3 was asked by a member of the Pharisees “How can a man be born again when he is old?”

Jesus said in John 3 v 3 that only those who are Born Again will enter the Kingdom of God. This means we need to be born again spiritually and start the process of growing from babes in to mature Christians. Our lives are given into the hands of Jesus, through His Holy Spirit, who comes to live in us to advise, cleanse and change us. The sin that we acknowledge which has separated us from God is forgiven and reconciliation with Him is ours.



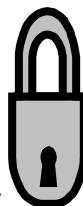
As we begin a New Year, not knowing what it will bring, hoping it will be less unpredictable than last year, let us put our hope and trust in Jesus who will lead us by His Spirit in to the right way, the truth and a new “Born again life”. Trusting in His words in John 14v1 when Jesus said to His disciples as He prepared them for His leaving the world: “Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God and trust also in me” A really good New Year resolution!!!

Brenda Sheppard

We were disappointed that there could be no Christmas Tree Festival this year - and that even the special Carol Service on Christmas Eve had to be cancelled.

However, **Christmas is never cancelled** for those of us who remember it appropriately as the celebration of the Birth of our Lord Jesus.

We are still learning to cope with all the regulations because of the coronavirus pandemic - involving limited gatherings in our church buildings - even no gatherings at all because of the Tier 4 regulations. 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. **God has a plan with hope for future.**

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



PRAY FOR SOUTHMINSTER:

w/b	3 January	South - West
w/b	10 January	Central -West
w/b	17 January	North - East
w/b	24 January	Central - North-West
w/b	31 January	Central - East

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.

April	2021	4	11	18	25	
May	2021	2	9	16	23	30

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 with the lilies for the Christmas season.

Thank you, Flower arranging team.

Thank you, also, to those who decorated the Christmas trees.

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.

JANUARY WORSHIP

Details of the January 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 10 - 11 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.

NB There will be NO ICYCLE RIDE on 1st January this year.

Sunday 3rd January 2nd Sunday of Christmas
Holy Communion: 8am BCP & 10.45am CW

Jeremiah 31 : 7 - 14 Steeple 9.15 Morning Worship
John 1 : 1 - 18

God our Father, in love you sent your Son that the world may have life: lead us to seek him among the outcast and to find him in those in need, For Jesus Christ's sake. Amen.

Sunday 10th January Baptism of Christ
Holy Communion 8am BCP & 10.45 Morning Worship

Genesis 1 : 1 - 5 Steeple 9.15 Holy Communion
Mark 1 : 4 - 11

Eternal Father, who at the baptism of Jesus revealed him to be your Son, anointing him with the Holy Spirit: grant to us, who are born again by water and the Spirit, that we may be faithful to our calling as your adopted children; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.

Sunday 17th January

2nd Sunday of Epiphany

Holy Communion: 8am BCP & 10.45 am CW

I Samuel 3 : 1 - 20

Steeple 9.15 Morning Worship

John 1 : 43 - 51

Almighty God, in Christ you make all things new: transform the poverty of our nature by the riches of your grace, and make known your heavenly glory; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.

Sunday 24th January

3rd Sunday of Epiphany

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

Genesis 4 : 17 - 20

Steeple 9.15 Holy Communion

John 2 : 1 - 11

Almighty God, whose Son revealed in signs and miracles the wonder of your saving presence: renew your people with your heavenly grace, and in all our weakness sustain us by your mighty power; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.

Sunday 31st January

4th Sunday of Epiphany

Holy Communion: 8am BCP & 9.15 CW at Steeple

10.45 am Morning Worship

Deuteronomy 18: 15 - 20

Mark 1 : 21 - 28

God our creator, who in the beginning commanded the light to shine out of darkness: we pray that the light of the glorious gospel of Christ may dispel the darkness of ignorance and unbelief, shine into the hearts of all your people and reveal the knowledge of your glory in the face of Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who is alive.....one God, now and for ever.

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 8th & 22nd January**.

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.

Bishop Peter's New Year Message

The Quality of Life 2020 has been a truly tough year for everyone and as 2021 dawns it seems unrelenting. The brutal coronavirus remains, and even though vaccines are gradually becoming available, many have lost jobs, schools are still disrupted, the economy is uncertain, desperate refugees still arrive and we don't know how our new relationships with Europe and the USA will pan out. Many are anxious and our quality of life is deeply challenged.

As the journey of 2021 begins how will we handle it? All of life is a pilgrimage, a journey through time with God and others. As human beings we are bound by chronological time: past, present, and future. But a Christian is called to view time from the perspective of eternity. Christian eternity is essentially about quality of life rather than quantity. That is what defines our pilgrimage.

In English we have one word for time, but the original Greek of the New Testament uses two very different words. First of all "chronos", where we get the word chronological, meaning measured time, a period of time, say for a journey. The other Biblical word is "kairos". Here the meaning is about the content and quality of time rather than its length: what's going on within the time, eg a time of harvest, a time of temptation.... Even more importantly it's about opportunity and fulfilment, 'the Kingdom of God is at hand!'. What we do for God and others in the time he gives us. How do we use it? What do we put into it? This is the idea of time that is crucial in Christian thinking and discipleship.

As we journey into a new year it is this more Christian view of time I would encourage us all to reflect on. What are we going to put into each day in our pilgrimage through 2021? How are we going to use the time for others? God is concerned about the quality of our lives rather than their length. That is hard for us to accept, but I believe this is real time as God created it.

From the eternal perspective it is relationships, love, and friendship that last, that count most and can change us for the better. Kairos is a life word whereas chronos, by definition, is a death word. In Ecclesiastes 3 the Bible tells us “there is a time for everything, a season for every activity under heaven”. There is a time for everything God wants us to do in our lives. Some of those things are positive: birth, planting, healing, laughing; while some are negative: uprooting, weeping, death..... Both can lead us to God if we throw ourselves wholeheartedly into life’s experience. A verse I came across a few years ago seems to sum it up.

Time is too slow for those who wait,
too swift for those who fear,
too long for those who grieve,
too short for those who rejoice,
but for those who love....
time is eternity.

(Henry Van Dyke)

The longest journey is the journey inward.

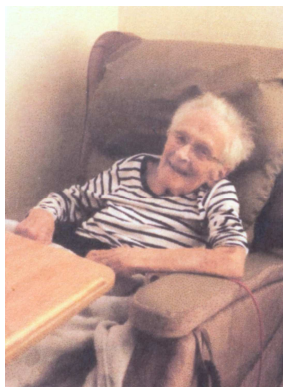
Have a good journey in 2021.



Bishop Peter

Catch up about Sheila Wright

This information has been sent to us by Sheila's daughter Ann. Several of our readers have been missing Sheila.



CHRISTMAS 2020

It has been a strange year for Mum with visiting restrictions being in place since the beginning of the pandemic. Currently, only one nominated person is allowed to visit, which has fallen to Jennifer, the youngest of the Wright offspring as Mum's care home is a short journey from her in Norfolk.

Hill Barn have been brilliant in all that they have done to keep families and residents connected. Mum has found online chats difficult as she is unable to hear very well and she finds the whole experience rather bewildering.

Thankfully there have been no infections in the home, helped by the small number of residents. Mum has stayed reasonably well, with only a few health niggles which is only to be expected at 90 plus! She is very popular with her carers and greets everyone with her lovely smile! She still enjoys receiving letters and cards, especially if they contain photographs, but sadly is unable to write the lovely letters she used to.

Mum's address is

Hill Barn Care Home, Church Lane, Sparham,
NORFOLK NR9 5PP

IMPORTANT INFORMATION: 17th DECEMBER

Downing Street has this morning announced that the Right Reverend Dr Guli Francis-Dehqani will be the next Bishop of Chelmsford.

Bishop Guli is currently Bishop of Loughborough in the Diocese of Leicester, a post she has held since late 2017.

Speaking about her appointment, Bishop Guli said:

“It is a great privilege to be appointed as the next Bishop of Chelmsford. I know there are many challenges ahead both in the church and wider society, not least as a result of the pandemic.

However, I am hopeful about the future. As Christian communities, I believe our task is to be faithful; to share the good news of Jesus Christ and to continue serving the world; to work well together and in partnership with others. In doing this, we'll discover the extent of God's love."

SEASONAL GREETINGS FROM FRIENDS

Our Church family has received greetings from many friends who are now a distance away - including, in random order:

Shirley Chesterton (in Oakham, Rutland)

Tim Chesterton & family (in Edmonton, Canada)

Martin & Dot Cleeve and Ian & Kate Crosher (in Kent)

Gordon & Rita Anderson (in Suffolk)

John & Heather Thain (in Weymouth)

Norman Teece (in Harwich) **David Felstead** (in Braintree)

Pat & Keith Duncan (in Dunchurch)

Paul & Kathrine Haworth (in Normanton)

Steve & Johanna Pillinger (in South Africa)

TIME FOR REFLECTION

This is the time of year when we all reflect on the past year and what it has meant to us. We do it as individuals and then we have the media to remind us what's been going on so it's a time when we consider the recent past and look forward to the future with hope...or perhaps a mixture of hope and trepidation.

I'm writing this on 19th December and at this moment many people, including myself, still can't cast their Christmas plans in stone, thanks to the Dreaded Virus. Whilst we are all taking every precaution to stay healthy and our younger generations are doing their best to "protect" us, any plan we make at this stage still comes with a caveat to do with everybody being Covid-free before we can *definitely* meet up. So I hope by the time you are reading this, you will be looking back on a Christmas that was passed in a way that made you content, even if not quite in the way you might have wished for. This Christmas and its differences will be one of the major events we look back on when thinking about this year of 2020.

One thing is for sure: we will have learned a lot, even if we haven't stopped and thought about the lessons. We will have learned that there are things that we can control, and things that we cannot control and we're affected by all these things.

We've learned a lot about other people and we've learned something, perhaps, about ourselves as well.

About others, I've learned that this situation has brought out the best and the worst in people. We've seen that on the international stage and in the behaviour of those around us. Kind gestures have abounded and I was particularly touched just this week by an unexpected invitation for Christmas dinner. *If you're reading this, you know who you are!!* I was quite overwhelmed and feel I've

already received the best present I'm going to get this year. And I now know I have an acquaintance who has become a friend. People have often offered to pick up shopping for me, knocked to "check I'm OK" or to be helpful in other ways. Even just a phone call, text or email has gone a long way to helping me to deal with the loneliness that this situation has brought to many of us who live alone. There have been some wonderful kindnesses among people I know and it warms the heart to know we live among such lovely folks. On the negative side I'm not sure I've been a paragon of patience and understanding during this difficult year so I am trying not to judge the behaviour of others when I've been disappointed by it. But it's been a difficult year, for sure, and it has put a strain on all of us.

About myself, I've learned, gradually, that I AM all right on my own, and I can manage my time quite satisfactorily even if I'm leading a lazier life than usual. I've learned to appreciate my family and friends even more than I did before and realise how much I rely on them for my well-being. I've learned that I should leave the house daily if I can because it's easy to get into a low mood if you don't go out when you can even if it's only for a stroll around the block.

The end of December didn't bring us the end of this pandemic but it has brought us the vaccine and so we look forward to 2021 as the year when, sooner or later, we'll get back to something like our normal lives, but we will have re-evaluated everything whether we know it or not, and things will never be quite the same. Let's hope that we have learned enough during 2020 to make the very best of 2021 and to be satisfied with whatever blessings come our way because anything that improves on 2020 must be something to be thankful for.

Happy New Year

Chris Martin



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 8 and pages 9-11 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 10-11

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.