



Rector's Letter

We hope you will join us in celebrating the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ this Christmas. There's something special about being in your local parish church at this seasonal time of year.

Whether it's the church bells faithfully rung and singing their song of celebration, or the nativity scene placed in the churchyard to remind us of the Bethlehem story. Whether it's the candlelit church whose stones and windows we instantly recognise as our spiritual home, or the huddle of families in a packed church holding one another carefully in love. Whether it's the familiar carols whose tunes and words we know so well, or a sense of peace and hope, that the world might be a better place as we celebrate that God is with us in Jesus.

On the 25th December, we celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ, the reason for Christmas. This wonderful mystery of God's dwelling among us in the fullness of humanity as Emmanuel, historically foretold by the Old Testament Prophets and born of

Mary. Also known as the Lord, the Messiah, the Saviour of the world, He is recognised as a baby lying in a manger and wrapped snugly in strips of cloth. He was the light for people who walked in darkness, a light that shined on all where death casts its shadow, and He remains the light of the world for us in the present and the future.

As we come to our Christmas services this year we will be reminded of the news of war in Israel and Palestine or as we sing carols such as O little town of Bethlehem, Once in Royal David's city, and others.

Recently, the escalation of violence in Israel

–Palestine has caused me to remember a pilgrimage I went on to the Holy Land nearly 6 years ago. I condemn the violence committed, on both sides, to land and peoples that are so special, whilst remaining confused and perplexed as to why we have not learned the lessons of past times of violence? It is not hard to understand why tensions are riding high. For the Palestinians they resent people occupying their homes and land – often



taken by force – and being ghettoised and controlled: their right to come and go, their water and energy supplies not to mention food and medical supplies. For the Israelis they feel constantly threatened by violent attacks and are baffled that the land they regard as their 'promise' is having to be shared. They assert their right to defend themselves after the horrors of Holocaust, and have built barriers and trained an army to squash any violence towards them. Hate and distrust of the other runs from generation to generation. And yet until both peoples are prepared to learn the lessons of the past there can be no peaceful future.

Many of the problems that now exist in the Holy Land also existed in the time of Jesus – we read about them each time we open the Bible. The same is true for Muslim and Jew when they read their sacred texts. Our Scriptures

contain our shared heritage and the struggles and joys we, as people of God, have endured and celebrated. But our Bible not only recalls past acts, it also looks forward – forward to a time when all creation will be united in God's loving embrace; forward to a time when wars will be no more and all will be subject to Christ's just and gentle rule.

May this Christmas bring us joy and hope in the midst of pain and sadness, and may it remind us of the eternal promise of God: that he will be our God as we will be his people if we walk in the ways of his commandments and the love of his Son for all people.

I do hope that you will take the time to join us in one or more of our Christmas Services. On behalf of St. Andrews church, may I wish you and your families the love of Christ, His peace and goodwill this Christmas season and a new year of blessings.

Terry

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How can we be kinder to our Planet this Christmas?

Re-use cards and wrapping.

Help reduce the huge number of trees that go into making Christmas tags by re-using old Christmas cards. Recycle the section that carries the greeting, cut out the picture and use that as a tag. You could use fabric remnants and ribbons to make simple, drawstring gift bags in various sizes. Use these for your family and close friends and they could be reused for years to come. Recycled brown paper has a much lower ecological footprint than Christmas wrapping paper. Could your church display one card from each person?

Gifts – Try to avoid ‘stuff’ that people don’t want. How about tickets to an event or a promise of some time? Consider ethical toiletries, plants/seeds or food, something made from recycled materials, a sustainable alternative to single use items or even a charity gift. You could combine a bar of fairtrade chocolate with a charity gift of cocoa trees (or some other combination).

Decorations – Buy decorations that you can reuse or use natural materials such as holly and ivy. If you have a real tree, remember to recycle it with the Farleigh Hospice collection service <https://>

www.farleighhospice.org/events/christmas-tree-recycling-2

Food – Try to include more vegetables and vegetarian food. Store leftover food in reusable pots or wax wraps (not cling film) and find recipes to use it up. Don’t forget to boil up the turkey carcass for some delicious stock for soup or casseroles.

Crackers – Avoid crackers with plastic toys that will just be thrown away. You could even try making your own.

Dim the lights but not the joy! – If buying new lights, consider LED or solar versions.

Buy locally - The Art Place Chelmsford Meadows Shopping Centre, Chelmsford. 75 percent of the money goes back to the artist, 25 percent to the charity Ideas Hub which helps a lot of people in need.

Support charities
<https://embraceme.org> Shop ethically with our range of unique gifts, many of which are Fairtrade, fairly-traded or eco-friendly. All proceeds help support our Christian partners in the Middle East as they work to transform lives and restore dignity for

excluded and marginalised communities.

<https://www.goodgifts.org> Good gifts that offer practical help for people in need in the UK or overseas. You can buy a goat for a community recovering from the effects of war, an hour’s respite for the carer of a disabled child or provide hearing tests and hearing aids for a child in Africa.

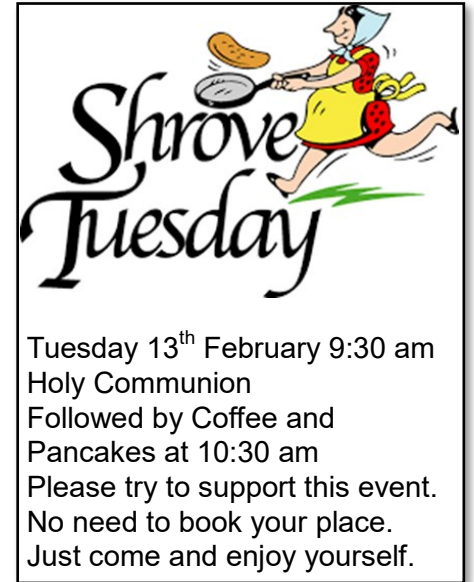
<https://www.worldlandtrust.org> Donate £5 to plant a tree. The world loses the equivalent of 31 football pitches of forest every single minute.

The Robin on my Christmas Card

The Robin on my Christmas Card
Upon a postbox, red –
He fixed me with a gaze quite hard
And this is what he said:

“O, viewer of this Christmas card
“I bet that you don’t know
“Why I upon this card am here
“To bring a yuletide glow?”

I said to him, “O birdie, do
“Reveal your secret deep
“I see you all the yearlong through
“And hear your joyful cheep!”



“So why, O Robin, tell me why
“When you’re around all year
“On lawn, or branch, or in the sky
“Why now this Christmas cheer?”

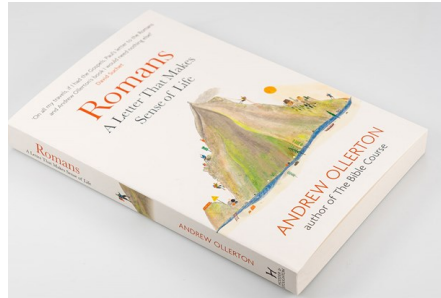
He said to me that long ago
The postmen you would see
Their jackets vivid red would glow
–
“In fact, they looked like me!”

“From then till now my bright red
breast
“And cheery trilling tweet
“Has come upon the Christmas
fest
“To bring a Christmas treat!”

By Nigel Beeton

Advent and Lent - Welcome to The Romans Course

From Saint Augustine to David Suchet, the Letter to the Romans has transformed many lives. That's right, the distinguished Hercule Poirot actor became a Christian while reading Romans. Who knows what will happen as we explore it together? That said, Romans can be challenging. Some verses are hard to understand, and other bits seem controversial in our cultural context. But as we unpack the letter in its original setting, we will see the relevance of the overall message for today. Filmed against the stunning backdrop of Rome the sessions of The Romans Course include video teaching. The Bible Society course 'Romans' starts on Tuesday 28th November for 4 weeks and then 6 weeks in Lent.



The Timetable for Tuesdays will be Tuesday communion at 9:30 am which will have no sermon and so will end at 10 am. Those wishing to join the course may arrive at 10 am for coffee/tea and the course will begin at 10:15 am.

I do hope you will be able to join us and if you need any more information please ask Richard, Judy, Andy or myself. All you need for the course is a bible, notepad and pen. *Terry*

Farming Today

Owing to the continued wet weather, drilling (that is sowing the new crop—Ed) has not been completed. When ground conditions improve, 120 acres of beans and 80 acres of wheat will be sown. Likewise spraying has to be finished.

No rams have been culled this year and lambing is due to start early in February. 'Lambing Live' is planned for half-term weekend, in February 2024

We have a Zimbabwean man working for us now. He has been in the UK now for 20 years so has good English.

45 new trees have been planted in Sandon subsidised by the Woodland Trust.

As a break crop 150 acres of peas are being grown for human consumption. This is instead of oil seed rape as there was a problem with flea beetle.

Speakman family

The Walk

I sit, my mind gently wanders back
To a youth - no cares to speak;
Of youthful thoughts, such blissful track
Perhaps now sharp vision do I lack
When schooldays were the working week.

From home each day I walked the same,
Uphill slowly from my fam'ly home
Through suburbias semi'd streets again
All uphill towards, the daily school game,
Learning, books what seemed like tomes.

If luck was with me on my walk
I'd gain a lift, motorbike ride;
No headed crash helmet me
All grown up, Triumph astride.

My daily walk past views across
The reservoirs, the River Lea
They now seem to me, my aged loss
But walk Epping forest grassy moss
Would always be that preferred by me.

To my left past hornbeam vast
Where it was said stout Henry awaited
Under tree shadow, darkly cast
As Boleyn Anne sadly breathed her last.
As canons fired, from Tow'r gated,

History there laid by, at my feet,
On my walk, upon my street.

A friend or two, met 'pon the way
A walked shared, as days began
These things, these friends imprinted, lay
Remain in mem'ries truncated scan.

Strange, it is, our past remains
Locked in images, cloudy, hazed,
Yet comforting it is to now refrain,
On that 'land of lost content'
Those halcyon days.

*Richard Simmonds
27th August 2023*



Monthly Soup & Sandwich Lunch at St Andrews Church

1st Tuesday of the month

Next Lunch is 5th December
Future dates 2nd January,
6th February, 5th March.

Join us for lunch once a month, for companionship & fellowship (and food of course!!)
We would love to see you.

No cost but
Donations gratefully received

Time: 12:00 noon – 1:30pm
Contact: Judy Cecil for more details on 01245 224747

Chelmsford Foodbank

Dear supporters,
Thank you so much to all those of you who have collected food for Chelmsford Foodbank this harvest time.

We rely completely on donations from the public to be able to provide emergency food for those in our local community who need it. Sadly, due to the increased cost of living, we have seen a 45% increase on the numbers of food parcels given out this April – September (2023) compared to the same period last year; and last year saw the largest number of people ever fed by Chelmsford Foodbank. This is not OK.

Our vision is to see an end to the need for Foodbanks and, together with the Trussell Trust, we are working hard to achieve this. We have developed 'hubs' over the past year so that when people come to us to collect their food they have the opportunity to engage in person with other helping agencies such as the Citizens Advice, Community Money Advice, Peabody and Essex Welfare Services, who can help them address underlying issues to improve their situation and reduce the need for Foodbank help. This is why we are so keen that people come to us to pick up their food; meeting

with our volunteers as well as representatives from these services can bring real breakthrough and lasting change for people.

Despite the crisis we are living through, the public have been so generous and we have seen an incredible response to our harvest appeal. We are so grateful and appreciative of the kindness and compassion of the people of Chelmsford.

With the current situation, your support is even more vital than ever. We would therefore love to encourage you to consider how you could support the Foodbank moving forward. Here are a few ideas:

- Opt in to receiving our e-mailed monthly shopping list and distribute, for example, via a school or church newsletter
- Organise a food collection at another point during the year (preferably between March and July)
- Like and Follow us on Facebook
- Set up a permanent collection point in your work place, school or church to encourage ongoing giving
- **Donate early for a Foodbank Christmas!** Christmas donations need to be at our warehouse by mid-December to give us time to get them out

to people through our centres

Please look on our website for any further information – www.chelmsford.foodbank.org.uk

If you are interested in any of the above, please contact us through info@chelmsford.foodbank.org.uk

Many thanks again for your support and donations.

*Ruth Leverett
Project Manager*

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When I Grow Up

Do we ever look back, reminisce
Thinking perhaps of childhood dreams
A driver in the age of steam
Or perhaps a doctor, medic or a nurse
Or even weirdly drive a hearse.

Thoughts of what we want to be
A prerogative of a child's wild mind
Life was then a bit wait and see
Our outer selves, we left behind;
When we grew up.

A few, the lucky ones,
Got to live out childhood dreams
They had the singular goal to aim
They could proudly say 'I became';
When they grew up

So many now want to be
A music star, a personality
The fame, of life caught by cam'ra
lens

Go to the top, take no corners,
No sharp bends.
To be an internet sensation
Not drive a steam train
To an unknown railway station.
Time must pass, seasons change
As dreams do switch at each
generation

Surely the great childhood joy
Must be to dream of what's in store
Where all things seem possible
Where life is full and more.
All can dream; there's no limit there
Dreams are free and essential yes
As God's given air.

*Richard Simmonds
14 June 2023*

Cousins

In advance of writing this piece I looked up the word, cousin, in our Oxford Dictionary. It is a big dictionary comprising some twenty large volumes. Cousin comes in the fourth volume covering Comm to Cz. Cousin occupies nearly the whole of a large page of small print with different uses of the word. Normally we would think of it as a noun representing a relationship, but there is use as a verb described as drawing someone close to as a cousin might be. However the use of the word that I want to develop in this piece is the conventional meaning as the child of an aunt or uncle. Let's think what that means in terms of our common ancestors. In this sense 2 cousins will have a common grandparent and it is this understanding that I want to work with. The dictionary calls such cousins first cousins and if they each have children those children would be second cousins to each other. Of course, such second cousins share a great grandparent and third cousins will share a great-great grandparent. I shall henceforth write first cousins as 1st cousins and then 2nd cousins and 3rd cousins etc. Some while ago I asked one of our children who their 0th cousins were. I was pleasantly surprised when they, nearly immediately,

said it was the same as their siblings, or brothers and sisters. I agree with them. So 0th cousins share a parent, 1st cousins a grandparent, 2nd cousins a great grandparent etc. Hopefully you can see a pattern emerging. But why should we stop at zero. A number line for many of us happily goes negative. All too easily if it represents money! So what does -1th cousin (that is minus oneth cousin) look like? Don't they share themselves? Aren't you your own -1th cousin? Now if we keep going down the generations for a common relation does that make -2nd cousins one who share a child? So a child bearing spouse becomes your -2nd cousin on this nomenclature. Thus far what I have not done in this theme is to consider what is meant by additional terms like once or twice removed. A whole world of completeness opens up before us as we do so. Let me try to explain how I understand this to work. Two people who have a common ancestor are some sort of cousin. If the ancestor is the same number of generations from both people, then that defines whether they are 1st or 2nd cousins etc. as described above. But if there are different numbers of generations for the different people then they are still cousins but something like 1st cousins

twice removed. In that case the common ancestor would be a grandparent of one of the people but great-great grandparent of the other. The difference between the number of generations is the number of the removed. Using this thinking gets to the idea that uncle, aunt, niece or nephew is a zeroth cousin once removed. An advantage of this nomenclature is that it is gender neutral. And a child might be a -1th cousin once removed. Another example comes from a book I have been reading written by my great grandfather about the land of my daughter-in-law. I mused about what relationship they had to each other. There is no obvious common ancestor but there is a common descendant, our grandson. So the closest person to the one in common is his mother. So if the one in common is a grandparent, we say 1st cousin, if a parent, 0th cousin, if your self minus 1th cousin and if a child minus 2nd cousin. And the difference in the number of generations in this case is 4. So I propose that their relationship is minus 2nd cousin four times removed. I realise I have strayed beyond the dictionary definitions! Currently our grandson is in Hong Kong visiting his other grandfather. Isn't that my minus 3rd cousin? *Richard Cecil*



We meet in the St Andrew's Room on second Wednesday of the month

1:00 pm to 2:30 pm so come along.

Further information
Contact: Alison 01245 474858 or
e-mail: tots@sandon-church.info

Children's version of the Christmas story
When the three wise guys from the east side arrived, they found Jesus in the manger. When Mary heard that she was the mother of Jesus, she sang the Magna Carta. Jesus was born because Mary had an immaculate contraption.

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Sandon WI

September Meeting

A low chatter was heard as members filed into the hall after a month off in August. The hall was set with another bumper trading table manned by Celia Kerlake. The puzzle hire scheme is working well and will improve as the dark evenings approach. Raffle tickets were sold as ladies looked upon the prizes, thanks to Pat Vickers. The top table looked a picture with flowers donated by Val Pryke and a lovely selection of cakes for tea from Eileen Bartrup and Doreen Parker. Our lady chair, Tracy Walters, welcomed all, when opening the meeting. We all stood and sang Jerusalem. Once seated the business was dealt with quickly and Maggie Piper was introduced. The lights were switch off and the projector on. Maggie gave a splendid talk about the National Memorial Arboretum which was very informative. After a vote of thanks to Maggie, tea was poured and the cakes were cut. In an orderly fashion the ladies collected their refreshments. That low chatter became louder while members caught up with each other's recent news, ate cake and drank hot tea. The Sunday Lunch Club organised by Sue Wells at the Hive Oaklands Park is a new

venue for the club and one that will make for much interest. Autumn Soup Lunch in October organised by Sue who will be serving a homemade Vegetable soup with crusty rolls made by Karen West also our secretary. Dessert is a surprise Sue informed us; she hadn't decided what we will be having! Julie Fisher gives more detail about The National Memorial Arboretum. It was the idea of Commander David Childs CBE while visiting Arlington Cemetery and the National Arboretum in Washington. He believed a year-round national centre of Remembrance was needed here in the UK. Little did he know his dream would come true. With not a penny towards the project, The National Lottery was approached and the rest of the monies were kindly donated. The 150 acres of land on which it stands were donated by Redland Aggregates now well-known as Tarmac. The Arboretum is in Staffordshire. All the trees planted, of which 32 of 33, are native to the UK, were set out by The National Forest Company including volunteer help, making the site as you find it today. Elm, Red Wood, Small beach limes and even Strawberry trees can be found. There are now more than 25,000 trees.

Many memorials are now in position ranging from the 49th West Riding Infantry Division to the Lifeboat men and women. There are over 390 memorials so far. Our **October meeting** began early at 12:00 noon as we had one of our annual lunches prepared by Sue Wells. On the menu was Vegetable soup with brown rolls and for dessert we had knickerbocker glory with wows coming from members as it was a memory of times gone by, then followed by tea/coffee. Once lunch was finished our main meeting started. On the top table our President Tracey Walters began the meeting by asking all to stand for Jerusalem. Once all were seated Tracy thanked Sue for all her hard work preparing the soup and desserts. Tracy went on to inform us of members who were unwell and unable to be at the meeting. The cakes were kindly donated in by Dorothy Gray and Pam Knott and the top table flowers were from Iris Watts. Our speaker for the meeting



was Daniela Crick who was demonstrating two table decorations, one Christmas and the other for all occasions. She began by giving us a short bio of her life up to this point, how she got the bug of flower arranging and finally opening her own florists. The tips Daniela gave were most informative and while snipping stalks off, answered all our questions from the floor -multitasking at its best. Two lovely arrangements later Daniela informed us these were for the raffle and then added another two also for the raffle which she had brought along to show two different themes. Once finished, Daniela was thanked by Tracy and after a big round of applause tea was served also by Sue Wells. There was a rush for raffle tickets I don't need to tell you which raffle prizes were chosen first. It was a very enjoyable afternoon and one which we all will remember for a while. *Betty Longbottom*

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A Special Norway Spruce

You see before you a photograph is of a Norway spruce, commonly called a Christmas tree: nothing remarkable about that you might be thinking.

Shortly before Christmas 1964, and having been married for three years, we moved into our new house – where we still abide - on the eastern fringe of Sandon parish. At that time, before starting our family, my wife, Penelope, was commuting daily to, and working in, the City (of London).

Sometime in late December 1964, on her way home to Chelmsford via Liverpool Street rail station, she called in to Leadenhall Market where for four shillings and



sixpence (22.5 pence in today's metric money) she bought our first Christmas tree, complete with its roots.

I guess you've seen where this yarn is leading. Soon after the 12th day of Christmas in January 1965, I planted said Christmas tree where it has thrived in our

Essex clay (as we have several more). To us it serves as a reminder of times gone by and a topic of mild amusement to others when I tell the story of the tree's early life and how Penelope, after lashing out 4/6d, brought it home on the train from London.

*Bernard White.
4th June 2023*

Christianity on the rise despite increased persecution worldwide, report finds

A new study has revealed that Christianity is continuing to spread across the globe despite

believers facing extreme persecution for their faith.

The 2023 "Persecutors of the Year" report by anti-persecution charity International Christian Concern (ICC) details the various groups, organisations and

locations posing a significant threat to Christians worldwide.

The advocacy group claims some 200-300 million believers currently experience persecution for their faith, including torture, imprisonment and murder.

Writing in the document's forward, ICC President Jeff King says he's inspired by the courage and strength of Christians who appear to be "thriving" in their faith, amid "unimaginable pain."

China, Iran and Nigeria are highlighted as key countries where the Church appears to be expanding despite fierce opposition.

The ICC argues Nigeria is one of the most dangerous places to be Christian today. Believers are kidnapped, tortured and killed every week by Boko Haram, Fulani militants and other Muslim extremist groups, while churches and Christian institutions are destroyed and burned to the ground.

"Boko Haram and Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP) have killed tens of thousands of Christians and displaced millions more, to discard western influence and impose strict Islamic Sharia law," it reads.

Yet, the approximately 100 million Christian population is steadily growing in the region.

The report claims that the Islamic Republic of Iran has "one of the fastest-growing churches in the world." While 99 percent of the population is Muslim and Christians there are harshly penalised for practising their faith, ICC reports show a Christian population that has rapidly grown to around 500,000 – 800,000. Iranian Christians face persecution in the form of raids, arrests, fines, detention, torture and death penalties for practising their faith.

China reportedly has between 70-100million "underground Christians". This is despite the communist led country "aggressively suppressing free religious expression" which is seen as a threat to national security, according to the report. House churches face persecution and harassment by the authorities, as they are often unregistered and not sanctioned by the government. Some are denied registration while others choose not to be state-run due to the heavy surveillance and restrictions that are applied.

*From Premier Christian News
with permission*

Church Services

St. Andrew's, Sandon

Services currently planned online via Zoom are shown in italics.

December

Sunday 3rd

Advent 1

10:00 am Sung Eucharist

Tuesday 5th

9:30 am Holy Communion

Wednesday 6th

8:30 pm *Night Prayer*

Thursday 7th

8:30 am *Morning Prayer*

Sunday 10th

Advent 2

8:00 am 1662 Holy Communion

10:00 am Family Service

4:00 pm Christingle Service

Tuesday 12th

9:30 am Holy Communion

Wednesday 13th

8:30 pm *Night Prayer*

Thursday 14th

8:30 am *Morning Prayer*

Sunday 17th

Advent 3

10:00 am Sung Eucharist

3:00 pm Worship at Howe Green URC

4:00 pm Nine Lessons and Carols

Tuesday 19th

9:30 am Holy Communion

Wednesday 20th

7:30 pm Beer and Carols at The Crown

8:30 pm *Night Prayer*

Thursday 21st

8:30 am *Morning Prayer*

7:30 pm Carol Service at Howe Green URC

Sunday 24th

Advent 4

10:00 am Morning Worship

4:00 pm Crib Service

11:30 pm Midnight Mass

Monday 25th

Christmas Day

10:00 am Christmas Communion

Wednesday 27th

8:30 pm *Night Prayer*

Sunday 31st

Christmas 1

10:00 am Sung Eucharist

January

Tuesday 2nd

9:30 am Holy Communion

Wednesday 3rd

8:30 pm *Night Prayer*

Thursday 4th

8:30 am *Morning Prayer*

Sunday 7th

Baptism of Christ

10:00 am Sung Eucharist

Tuesday 9th

9:30 am Holy Communion

Wednesday 10th

8:30 pm *Night Prayer*

Thursday 11th

Sunday 14th

8:30 am *Morning Prayer*

Epiphany 2

8:00 am 1662 Holy Communion

10:00 am Family Service

9:30 am Holy Communion

Tuesday 16th

Wednesday 17th

8:30 pm *Night Prayer*

Thursday 18th

8:30 am *Morning Prayer*

Sunday 21st

Epiphany 3

10:00 am Sung Eucharist

3:00 pm Worship at Howe Green URC

9:30 am Holy Communion

Tuesday 23rd

Wednesday 24th

8:30 pm *Night Prayer*

Thursday 25th

8:30 am *Morning Prayer*

Sunday 28th

Epiphany 4

10:00 am Morning Worship

9:30 am Holy Communion

8:30 pm *Night Prayer*

Tuesday 30th

Wednesday 31st

February

Thursday 1st

Sunday 4th

8:30 am *Morning Prayer*

Candlemas

10:00 am Sung Eucharist

9:30 am Holy Communion

Tuesday 6th

Wednesday 7th

8:30 pm *Night Prayer*

Thursday 8th

8:30 am *Morning Prayer*

Sunday 11th

Sunday next before Lent

8:00 am 1662 Holy Communion

10:00 am Morning Worship

9:30 am Holy Communion

Tuesday 13th

Wednesday 14th

Ash Wednesday

7:30 pm Sung Eucharist and Ashing

8:30 am *Morning Prayer*

Thursday 15th

Sunday 18th

Lent 1

10:00 am Sung Eucharist

3:00 pm Worship at Howe Green URC

9:30 am Holy Communion

Tuesday 20th

Wednesday 21st

8:30 pm *Night Prayer*

Thursday 22nd

8:30 am *Morning Prayer*

Sunday 25th

Lent 2

10:00 am Morning Worship

9:30 am Holy Communion

Tuesday 27th

Wednesday 28th

8:30 pm *Night Prayer*

Thursday 29th

8:30 am *Morning Prayer*

Saint Andrew's Parish Church Contacts

Rector	Revd. Terry Brown*	
	tgabrown@hotmail.com	01245 698988
Church Wardens	Richard Cecil**	224747
	Andy Horne*	475279
PCC Secretary	Judy Cecil**	224747
PCC Treasurer	Nick Bobeldijk*	471756
Safeguarding Officer	Alison Read*	474858
Electoral Roll	Liz Bobeldijk*	471756
Bell Ringing	Mike Worboys	224612
Tiny Tots	Alison Read*	474858
Flower Arranging	Lesley Worboys	224612
Organist	Cathie Horne*	475279
Choir	Gill Haddington	476598
Magazine Editor	Richard Cecil**	224747

Parochial Church Council Members as * above and Colin Bryan⁺, David Farrar⁺, John Gruby, Christine Mennie⁺, and Janet Terry⁺

Authorised to assist in the distribution of Holy Communion

As ⁺ above and Valerie Grimwood, Gill Hodge and Michael Puffett

Regular Events see centre pages for full details of worship.

2 nd Sunday of the month	8:00 am	Holy Communion in Church
Sundays	10:00 am	Morning Worship/Communion
Tuesdays	9:30 am	Holy Communion
	7:45 pm	Ringling Practice
Wednesday (Zoom)	8:30 pm	Night Prayer
сандон-сhurch.info		
Thursday (Zoom)	8:30 am	Compass Churches
compasschurches.org.uk		Morning Prayer
Thursday	7:00 pm	Choir Practice

Zoom services links can be found at the websites just prior to the service.

St Andrew's, Sandon

www.sandon-church.info

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 Copy for September's magazine by 10th February 2024 please.
magazine@sandon-church.info



Howe Green URC

Here at the Chapel we are continuing with our monthly service on the third Sunday at 3:00 pm when we join together in worship and prayer, followed by tea and cake and conversation (the dates are 17th December, 21st January, and 18th February). Do come and join us when you can.

Our annual Carols by Candlelight this year will be on 21st December at 7:30 pm. We look forward to a joyful evening with our friends and neighbours at this special time.

We hope to have a coffee morning on Saturday 10th February (from 10:30 am) but that seems a long way off as I write this, so if you get this magazine in time, we do have a coffee morning on 25th November and we would love to welcome you there.

Pam Knott

Pam will talk at our special Service at St. Andrew's Church Sandon at 10:00 am on 28th January. Do try to support this special service.



We rejoice at the Baptism of Martha Matilda Stoms

27th August



Gablefields Pond Cleaning

On Thursday 19th October, volunteers for the Chelmsford City Parks and Conservation work force met recently in Gablefields to clean out and rejuvenate the pond there.

There were a total of 12 of us working from 10 a.m. to 12.30p.m. on a cloudy but warmish day. Old grass was raked out, reeds and brambles cut back and new wild flower plugs planted.



What I did not know was that the following day Lyn McLay, (Chelmsford City Parks and Conservation) and her helper



came back in a Council lorry to remove the pile of debris that we had gathered. They forked the whole lot into the lorry in rain! Well done ladies!!

Before the works to our pond began the authorities undertook a full ecological and status survey in August of every pond owned by the CCC (81 all told!). As such the CCC might finally replace the wooden safety barrier on the road side of the pond – soon! (or not).

Thanks go to all of the volunteers and the two other Gablefields/ Lintons residents who gave of their time in helping out.

David Farrar



Our Church is open!

The church is open for quiet contemplation and prayer every day from about 9.30am to 5.00pm (exact times will vary).

Christmas Services



Christingle Service Sunday 10th December 4:00 pm

A magical start to Christmas for all the family, with oranges, sweets and candles. The orange represents the world God created, the sweets all the good things in God's creation, the candle Jesus, the light of the world, and the red ribbon the love of Christ for his world. There will be a collection for the Children's Society. The lights on the Christmas Tree outside will be turned on after the service with a carol and hot chocolate drink.



Sunday 17th December 4:00 pm

This is Sandon's version of King's College Cambridge! Our choir and singers from Sandon School offer music alongside the Christmas readings to set the Christmas celebrations going. This candlelit service really captures the wonder of Christmas.



Wednesday 20th December 7:00 pm

With free Mince Pies. This is a great way to enter the festive period, with a drink in one hand and a carol song sheet in the other! No pressure to sing - but come and meet us, invite your friends and join in with the fun. Starting at 7pm in the Crown. We'd love to see you.



Christmas Eve 4:00 pm—Crib Service

A Service especially for families. If possible children dress up in costumes of the kings, shepherds, angels, donkey, etc. There will be some costumes available in church.



Sunday 24th December 11:30 pm

Midnight Communion Service

Come and welcome the new born Christ child. Arrive early to obtain a seat at this popular service.



Monday 25th December 10:00 am Christmas Day Service & Communion

Please bring an opened present to show us at the service.




Sums up Christmas

Three phrases that sum up Christmas are: 'Peace on Earth'; 'Goodwill to Men'; and 'Batteries not included'.

Thank you for your donation

Hi Terry,
We have allocated this gift by BACS payment to our General Fund on behalf of Sandon Chelmsford St Andrew. If you would like the money to go to a specific appeal please email us at ipunit@christian-aid.org or call 020 7523 2492. Thank you for your generous donation of £270.78. This gift from Sandon Chelmsford St Andrew will have a real impact on our global neighbours and we're extremely grateful for your support.

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Christian Aid

Demographic Decline: The Real Population Crisis

Following decades of rapid expansion and warnings of an overpopulation timebomb, one would be forgiven for assuming the world's population is multiplying dangerously out of control. Indeed, the total population may still be growing – but the fact is that the timebomb ticks the other way, towards dangerous demographic decline.

Outside of Sub-Saharan Africa and Central Asia, barely a handful of countries produce enough children even to sustain population levels. In regions like Southern & Eastern Europe and East Asia, demographic decline is acutely underway, with the Total Fertility Rate (the average number of children born per woman of childbearing age) well below the 'replacement rate' of 2. [1] South Korea's TFR is a startling 0.78 and keeps dropping. Although for now the world continues to grow on the strength of Africa, the rest of the planet shares the same fate: demographic decline and ageing societies. These mark the real population crisis.

Ageing societies mean fewer and fewer workers but more and more elderly people. The implications are stark: depleting tax revenues, fewer generators of goods,

strained social services, pressure on intergenerational relationships; meanwhile, greater expenditure on health and social care, spiralling public debt, increased loneliness, and much more. Short of syphoning workers en masse from other nations – many of which will be suffering decline themselves – the majority of countries face decades of disruption: economic, social and relational.

In the UK, the public has not awoken to the demographic factor amidst our wider socio-political malaise. For example, while newspapers rush to blame NHS waiting lists on austerity or Brexit, they seldom account for the fact that there are vastly more older people today requiring care. 1 in 6 Britons were over 65 in 1999; in 2019 it was 1 in 5, and will reach 1 in 4 by 2039.[2] Life expectancy has also soared: British women live 6 more years on average than they did in 1980, while men have gained an extra decade! This only compounds the problem, however, since many medical ailments exacerbate with age. 'Healthspan' has not kept up with lifespan. And Britain is one of the better performers amongst economically developed countries, with a Total Fertility Rate (TFR) of 1.6.

Yet Britain's complacency is not shared by countries like Italy and Japan, who have allocated substantial resources towards stemming decline. Till now, alas, to little effect: Japan's population has fallen by 5 million since 2010, with the prime minister despairing that the nation is "on the brink of not being able to maintain social functions." [3]

Globally, there are broadly two policy approaches towards demographic decline: 'conservative' and 'progressive'. The conservative approach involves boosting a country's native population through incentivising women to be stay-at-home mothers. This usually involves tax cuts, debt forgiveness and free fertility treatment, while often involving restrictions on immigration and abortion/contraception.

This approach has most famously been adopted by Hungary, but also by Poland and (to some extent) China.

Meanwhile, the progressive approach aims at sustaining higher birth rates through reducing financial costs of parenthood and enabling both parents to work. Common policies include lengthy parental leave, gender equality legislation and

state-subsidised childcare. The progressive approach is about making parenthood – especially motherhood – compatible with a career. It is championed in Scandinavia, with elements also present in Japan and Western Europe more generally.

Yet neither the conservative nor the progressive approach has produced success. Scandinavia has seen sustained TFR declines since 2010, with rates between 1.4-1.7. Even Denmark, long the holdout, now follows suit: its 1.55 TFR in 2022 lags well below the replacement rate. Meanwhile, although Hungary's muscular approach did heave births from 1.2-1.6 in a decade (costing 5 percent of GDP annually), it has begun to dip in the 2020s. Encouraging, but not good enough, and a far cry from the elusive 2.1 needed to avoid decline.

The common error in both approaches is the framing of falling birthrates as primarily a financial or material problem. 'Here's the cheque, now go forth and multiply'. To clarify, such subsidies are welcome where childcare and housing costs encumber young couples. Yet their effect will always be limited, no matter how generous, because they do little to counteract the

cultural and ideological forces which undermine childbearing. Forces like environmentalism, anti-natalism and radical individualism have dampened the desire, and even the cultural acceptability, of having children. [4]

Although material factors drove population expansion in the 20th century, the fight against decline in the 21st lies in cultural values. Demographer Paul Morland observes “a decoupling of population and economics”, with “cultural and personal preferences rather than economic factors increasingly shaping demography...”[5] Reversing demographic decline requires grappling with the influences which discourage and complicate family formation.

It is worth examining the one country which has escaped the rut of decline: Israel, and more specifically Israeli Jews. Despite Jewish TFR stagnating to 2.6 between 1960-1990, it has now recovered to 3.1 – far and away the highest amongst OECD countries. Ultra-orthodox families have contributed to this increase, but even secular Jews have children above the replacement rate. This rise has coincided with Israel’s transition into an advanced economy, with high

female employment. Although Israel is something of a demographic enigma, the following have been regarded as influential to its success: community support for families, geographic proximity of grandparents, and an unashamedly pro-natalist culture.

The solution, then? Cultivating cultures which promote families (big families!) and facilitating support networks of extended families within local communities. Of course, alleviating financial pressures is important. But young couples must be assured that having children is both feasible and fulfilling, and that they are not isolated but can depend on the help of neighbours and relatives. Governments can play a role in guiding such change; but ultimately, change must come from the bottom up, from communities. It is perhaps no coincidence that many churches’ biggest community presence is in crèche ministries – imagine a whole country similarly dedicated towards celebrating and supporting families! As the prophet foretold in his vision of God’s new creation:

“Old men and old women shall again sit in the streets of Jerusalem, each with staff in hand because of great age. And the

streets of the city shall be full of boys and girls playing in its streets.” (Zechariah 8:4-5)

Indeed, it may be in Jerusalem’s cobbled streets that we find our answers to demographic decline.

[1] Consider Bulgaria, which has lost over a quarter of its population since 1980, mainly due to migration to other EU countries. Many emigrants are educated professionals or key workers. Beneficiary countries, like Germany and the UK, often neglect the plight of countries left behind. The UK – in violation of international restrictions – persists in recruiting medical staff from countries like Ghana, which has a dire shortage of practitioners. See the following: [Britain is a parasite on poor countries by poaching their doctors and nurses | The Independent](https://www.independent.co.uk/voices/foreign-aid-covid-vaccines-doctors-nurses-trained-abroad-b1864069.html) (https://www.independent.co.uk/voices/foreign-aid-covid-vaccines-doctors-nurses-trained-abroad-b1864069.html)

[2] Overview of the [UK population - Office for National Statistics](https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/populationandmigration/populationestimates/articles/overviewoftheukpopulation/january2021) (https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/populationandmigration/populationestimates/articles/overviewoftheukpopulation/january2021)

[3] [Japan's population fell by 800,000 last year as demographic crisis accelerates | CNN](https://edition.cnn.com/2023/07/27/asia/japan-population-drop-2022-intl-hnk/index.html) (https://edition.cnn.com/2023/07/27/asia/japan-population-drop-2022-intl-hnk/index.html)

[4] The present author explored ethical implications of these forces in a previous paper, which can be found here: [Too many people on Planet Earth? Family size and new ethical considerations for Christians \[OEB\] - Cambridge Papers](https://www.cambridgepapers.org/too-many-people-on-planet-earth-family-size-and-new-ethical-considerations-for-christians-%EF%BF%BC/) (https://www.cambridgepapers.org/too-many-people-on-planet-earth-family-size-and-new-ethical-considerations-for-christians-%EF%BF%BC/)

[5] Paul Morland, Tomorrow’s People – The Future of Humanity in Ten Numbers, 2022, pages 7 and 12

29th September 2023
By Matthew Ferguson

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Danbury & Villages Rotary

Dear Readers,

Bicycles - Bicycles – Bicycles

Through the kind support of readers we have serviced and supplied well over 100 bicycles to refugees for ladies and gents and youngsters. With the support of the charity SVP we supplied 22 bicycles to local refugees.

But more adult bicycles are urgently needed. If you have one in your garage or shed that is not being used and you wish to donate it, please contact me and I will collect, unless you can kindly deliver to Little Baddow.

Father Christmas

This year he will be visiting Danbury and surrounding locations. We know that last year he attended special events organised by individual streets. Because we have a good connection to the North Pole, if you would like Father Christmas to make a special visit your location, please do let us know and we will consider what can be done.

Disaster Response

Through our events we raise funds for use locally, nationally and internationally. Following the very sad and unfortunate earthquake in Morocco, we have donated to Rotary's secure Morocco disaster response fund. This ensures that the donated funds get to the people who need

them. We have also donated funds to Shelter Box, which provides essential survival equipment to areas that have suffered disasters like floods, earthquakes or hurricane damage. For this we are always thankful to all who help us with our fund-raising efforts.

Offer of Help

Rotary's motto is SERVICE ABOVE SELF. We aim to help where possible. If we can help your charity or organisation, please get in touch with us. For example, we can help with setting up events, marshalling, manning stalls etc – in fact, anything that would help your event to run smoothly.

At the same time, we would welcome more people joining us to help with the good work that we do.

Contact

For more information please use the links

<https://danburyandvillagesrotary.co.uk>

For up to date information on what we have been up to, please visit our Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/danburyandvillagesrotary>

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Keep well, Soroush Ebrahimi

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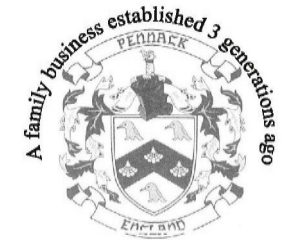
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Israel-Gaza Conflict UK faith leaders call for solidarity

The Archbishop of Canterbury was recently joined by Muslim and Jewish leaders at Lambeth Palace to condemn the sharp rise in antisemitic incidents since the start of the war in Israel and Hamas. Against the backdrop of the war, they called for unity between British faith communities.

Archbishop Justin Welby, Sheikh Ibrahim Mogra and Rabbi Jonathan Wittenberg stood together outside Lambeth Palace and delivered statements calling for solidarity and unity between communities in the UK, and rejecting any form of hatred or discrimination.

Sheikh Ibrahim Mogra is a scholar and imam from Leicester, and a former Assistant Secretary-General of the Muslim Council of Britain. Rabbi Jonathan Wittenberg is the Senior Rabbi of Masorti Judaism UK, and Rabbi of the New North London Synagogue.

Church of England invests £30m in net zero plans

Thousands of churches, cathedrals, schools and clergy houses in England will benefit from a first phase of grants and

projects worth £30 million, as part of the Church of England's ambitious plan to achieve net zero by 2030.

The aim is to support the Church in reducing carbon emissions from the energy used in churches, schools, cathedrals, houses and other buildings, saving money by improving the energy efficiency of buildings, and switching to cheaper, more reliable, renewable energy sources.

"The ambition to be net zero by 2030 is at the core of the Church of England's response to the climate crisis – to help safeguard God's creation and achieve a just world," said the Bishop of Norwich, Graham Usher, the Church of England's lead Bishop for the Environment.

"Climate change is hitting the poorest people of the world hardest. We are already seeing the devastating effects of climate change and we must act now. The Church is called to be a people of hope; to live in harmony with our world; to treasure God's creation and to love our global neighbours."

Dioceses, and their parishes and schools, can now take advantage of the first round of grants from the Church of England's Net Zero Carbon Programme, made possible by funding from the Church Commissioners for England.

There Exists a Special Silence

There exists a special silence
Of evenings by the sea
When darkness falls and lights go
on

It's as if people simply disappear;
They are no longer here.

As deep goes the raven black -
slowly,
Couples walk in whispered tones;
Tight arm in arm along by the sea
Whilst single men amble -
listlessly

Shuffle - aimlessly.

The waves are at their quietest
ebb
Lapping gently they greet the
shore;

No birdsong or gulls loud squawk
Gone to their nightly roosts -
retired

As lone night couple gently walk,
In their smart ev'ning dress attired

Day trippers, bagged towels in
hands

Have long deserted
Their sandy posts;
Retreating the sleep-tired day
Only remnants of their short stay
A battlefield, be-papared, bottled
sand,
Along the beach at Overstrand.

The seaside air envelopes all
As coal black sea meets ink blue
skies

And the day tiptoe dies.

All now dreamlike soft
Awaiting on that magic time
For that special silence to appear
In that salted, ozone atmosphere.

*Richard Simmonds
30th May 2023*

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Lemon Hummus

Ingredients

2 cups (500 ml) dried chickpeas
6 cups (1500 ml) water
2 tablespoons tahini,
2 teaspoons salt,
freshly ground black pepper,
1 preserved lemon,
1 clove garlic,
grated zest and juice of 1 fresh lemon,
2 tablespoons olive oil,
1 cup (250 ml) cold water,
Maldon salt to decorate.

Cover the chickpeas with water and soak overnight.
Drain and then put them in a large saucepan with the 6 cups of water.
Bring to the boil and simmer for about 1½ hours. Drain and discard any skins that have fallen off.

Place the chickpeas, tahini, salt, pepper, garlic, preserved lemon and lemon juice in a blender and whiz together while slowly adding the olive oil, followed by cold water until it's the consistency you like.

To serve place in a bowl and garnish with the grated lemon zest and sea salt.

Preserved lemons can be bought in jars from good food stores.

Narelle Arnold



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- The dedicated team will swing by to collect your tree from outside your home.
- You won't have to wait in a long queue at the rubbish tip or book a time slot to visit.
- You won't have a car boot full of pine needles.
- Your tree won't go to waste. Instead, it will be chipped and used for biomass fuel or on pathways in local cemeteries and parks.
- Most importantly, your donation will help Farleigh Hospice to continue providing care to those affected by life-limiting illness and bereavement.

Last year, close to £40,000 was raised from the donations received. This support means everything to the hospice and it has had a lasting impact on the lives of those they care for, allowing the people of our local community to live well and die well. With your help, they hope to raise a similar amount again.

For any questions please contact the Fundraising Team on treecollection@farleighhospice.org or 01245 457411.



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SCAN HERE to register

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