

REACHING OUT

from the Cockfield Benefice

Church of England Parish
Churches serving the villages of:
Bradfield St Clare, Bradfield St
George w Lt Whelnetham,
Bradfield Combust, Cockfield,
Felsham, Gedding, Gt
Whelnetham & Stanningfield



February 2025
Issue 123

From the Rector's desk:

It felt like a long January this year. The weather has been miserable, and the news even more miserable. Conflict in the Middle East and Ukraine continues, even with a glimmer of hope in Gaza the news is often quite grim. The Los Angeles wildfires were shocking, and the recent storms that have wreaked havoc in the UK and elsewhere have proved yet again that humankind is not in control of the earth.

But against this backdrop of bleakness, we have been hearing from our Scripture readings in Church the stories of how Jesus was revealed to be the Son of God. The first miracle that Jesus performed was at a wedding in Cana, when he turned water into wine, a sign of things to come. We know that there are still miracles out there in the world, and we occasionally hear about them on the news. I was reading yesterday about a grey seal colony on Orford Ness that has seen a 70% year-on-year increase in pups, which is great news. We need more positive news to help us recover from our January blues!

February can be a challenging month too, but I guess that's why Valentines Day can be a bit of a lift in the month. We know that February has long been celebrated as a month of romance, and that there are several myths about the person named 'Valentine'. The Catholic Church recognizes at least three different saints named Valentine or Valentinus, all of whom were martyred. If Valentine's Day is not for you, don't worry, there are other things happening in February to help you through the month. One of them is the concert at Felsham Church on Sunday 2nd February at 3pm (more details

further on in this issue of Reaching Out). I do hope you will come along and enjoy a wonderful afternoon of entertainment.

Finally, many of you will know that our Diocesan Bishop, Martin Seeley, retires this month. He has served almost 10 years in our Diocese, and has come to love Suffolk as we love it. I have worked with Bishop Martin as Chair of the House of Clergy of Diocesan Synod, and will be saying a few words of farewell at his leaving service at the Cathedral very soon. He leaves behind a large hole and a very different diocese to the one he came to, but we hope that a new Bishop will be found by this summer. In the meantime, Bishop Graeme Knowles, who is retired and lives in Bury St Edmunds, will be overseeing the Diocese until the new Bishop arrives. Please pray for Bishop Martin, and for Bishop Graeme, as the diocese enters a new phase. Please also pray for our Archdeacons, David and Rich, as they take on most of the running of the diocese. We pray for the person who will heed God's call to be our new Diocesan Bishop, and for all those in senior positions in the Church of England during these challenging times.

May God bless you throughout this month,
with every good wish

Sharon

Rev Canon Sharon Potter
Rector, Cockfield Benefice
revsharon2@gmail.com, tel: 01284 828599 or 07825 086063

Christmas Songs and Carols

The results are in from our Christmas Song and Christmas Carol surveys that we carried out over Christmas. Interestingly our benefice went with the national view that 'Last Christmas' by Wham was the favourite. It had a clear lead over Chris Rea's 'Driving Home for Christmas' and Slade's 'Merry Christmas Everybody'. My own favourite, The Pogues' 'Fairytale of New York' came fourth. The least popular was Chris de Burgh's 'A Spaceman Came Travelling'

As far as carols were concerned your number one was 'Hark the Herald Angels Sing' with 'Silent Night' and 'In the Bleak Midwinter'. I am glad that Christina Rossetti's beautiful poem with its wonderful tune by Holst made it into the top three. At the bottom of the table came 'We Three Kings' and 'While Shepherds Watched'.

Of course this was a bit of fun. We all have our personal favourites and those we can't stand. The point is that the songs we want to hear often have a nostalgic tug on our hearts at that time of year and that is why we love them. Of course, the carols are there to tell us something of the Christmas story and to remind us of the love, joy and peace brought to Earth by Jesus Christ. Perhaps, on that basis we shouldn't just sing them at Christmas? The full result will be posted on Facebook and on our benefice website.

Rev Richard

A light in the darkness

"Then God said 'let there be light'; and there was light. And God saw that the light was good; and God separated the light from the darkness" *Genesis 1.3-4*

The creation story from Genesis is one of the themes that a group of us have been exploring in a recently formed discussion group led by Rev Richard Stainer. It conjures up all sorts of images and ideas and is a subject that is constantly used throughout the bible, theatrical plays and poetry. Macbeth, Romeo and Juliet and numerous other plays emphasize the idea of a battle between the good and the bad, the light and the darkness.

We constantly hear depressing news of what we associate with darkness: wars, conflict, violence and disagreements; between communities and nations, people living in poverty, hungry and without shelter and, violence and abuse. I could go on, but there are too many other topics to mention and it's not the whole reason for acknowledging our need for something that is beyond us:

"The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it." *John 1.5*

I suggest we underestimate ourselves, the light we emit in our everyday lives. The volunteering we do, caring for our communities, sitting with the unwell, the lonely and the depressed; and praying for every one of them and just simply talking to those who need human love and companionship. To whomever you help, or give your money to and your time, to those whom you love and care for, you leave a bit of yourself behind; a light in the darkness.

Do not underestimate the effect that this light has, it shines through who we are and what we do. This faith, this Church we believe in has, despite the headlines, much more light than darkness.

In this early part of the year, let us be optimistic and positive and realize that we, our politicians, communities, most people we meet, socialize and worship with, are here because 'we want to make a difference' - a much-used cliché, but words that sum up our innate need to shine a light in areas we hope we can influence and help.

Steve Smith

Village Friends (*our over 65's friendship group*)

The February Village Friends meeting will take place on **Thursday 20 February** at Felsham Village Hall, from 2-4pm. This month we will be making pancakes. Please let Canon Sharon know if you'd like transport. Contact her on 01284 828599 or 07825 086063, or email. revsharon2@gmail.com.



Big Green Challenge for February



The wildfires that scorched the Los Angeles area last month were the result of high winds and dry conditions. The influence of the climate crisis is making such blazes more common and devastating. Roughly 50,000 people were ordered to evacuate and at least two people were killed amid three large, fast-moving fires that engulfed thousands of acres

Until just two years ago, California was in the teeth of a decades-long drought that was part of a broader “mega drought” across the US that researchers estimate was the worst in at least 1,200 years. Rising global temperatures, caused by the burning of fossil fuels, have caused an increase in “fire weather” days due to the drying out of vegetation and soils and lowered humidity.

Fires in the US west are becoming more frequent and larger, scientists have found, with climate change raising the risk of fast-moving fires by around 25% in California. Ten of the largest California wildfires have occurred in the last two decades, with five of these fires occurring in 2020 alone.

Researchers have calculated that the human-caused climate emergency has contributed to a 172% increase in California’s burned areas since the 1970s, with a further spread expected in the decades ahead. *Source: The Guardian*



Gt Whelnetham Church will be holding a
Plant and Tool Sale
on **Saturday 29 March**
10.30am-12.30pm

At the Church - refreshments will be available and a Tombola.
Proceeds will be divided between the Church and the Bury Drop-in Centre

Kagera visit February 2025

Four of us from the benefice are visiting our link diocese of Kagera in the first 11 days of February. We are going to continue to build our links of friendship and prayer across the two dioceses and also to introduce our new World Development Adviser, Mark Sheard, to the people of Kagera.

It should be a packed programme of visits to churches and projects. We look forward to sharing with you what we have seen and learnt when we return and in particular at 6 – 7 on the 2nd March. In the meantime, we would be grateful for your prayers while we are away. Please pray for our safe travels and open minds and hearts as we meet with friends old and new.

Rev Richard

Real Easter Eggs

I am very happy to order Fairtrade Easter Eggs from the Real Easter Egg Company. We need 18 eggs to get free delivery and a price reduction. Each egg costs £5.50. Could you let me know how many eggs you would like by the end of February? The 2025 design includes:



Large 24 page Easter story-activity book
£200 prize competition

Super thick milk chocolate egg (150g) with a lovely creamy taste. 30% cocoa. Palm Oil free & Plastic free

All the chocolate is Fairtrade. This means the farmers receive a fair price for their sugar and cocoa and an extra Fairtrade Premium cash payment which

they can use to invest in their community, buying everything from schoolbooks to solar panels and providing fresh water supplies.

Dark chocolate eggs are available at £6.50 each but I would need an order of 6 to get them at that price. Please email / phone me or catch me in church to place your order.

Rev Richard

ST PETERS CHURCH FELSHAM IP300PJ

FUND RAISING CONCERT

TICKETS: £7.00 INCLUDES REFRESHMENTS

SUNDAY 2ND FEBRUARY AT 3PM

St Edmund Octet Director of Music: BENEDICT COLLINS-RICE
WITH SPECIAL GUESTS CLASSIC FEMME

performing music from Palestrina via the 40s to Sea Shanties, Shows and Classic Pop

ALL PROCEEDS FOR REPAIRING THE FABRIC OF THE CHURCH

Do you have some good news or an article you'd like to be published in Reaching Out? If so, please email revsharon2@gmail.com by 20 February for the March issue. Thank you.



You are invited to a fundraising talk in aid of **Little Whelnetham Church**

Healing the Hands of Malawi

an illustrated talk by Tony Barabas

Consultant Plastic & Hand Surgeon in the NHS Cambs. formerly of Little Whelnetham

on

The LION project:

a 5 year plan introducing hand surgery to Malawi

Saturday 8 March 2025

7 for 7.30

Bradfield St George Village Hall, IP30 0AS

Tickets £20 Including a 2 course hot meal

Bar and raffle

Available from

Jan Golding: janblof@aol.com 07768180695

Sue Smith: 01284 388311 calafell@btinternet.com

Alix Barabas: 01284 386305 alixbarabas@hotmail.com

Please advise of dietary requirements when booking.



Cockfield Benefice Services and **Events** - February 2025

Sunday 2 February Candlemas	9.30am Holy Communion - Stanningfield 11am Holy Communion - Bradfield St George 6pm Six2Seven - a talk on 'Tools with a Mission' by John Harper at Felsham Village Hall, all welcome
Sunday 9 February 4th before Lent	10am Morning Prayer - Cockfield 11am Holy Communion - Bradfield St Clare 6pm Praise & Worship - Gt Whelnetham
Sunday 16 February 3rd before Lent	9.30am Morning Prayer - Stanningfield 10am Praise God Together - Felsham 10.30am Holy Communion - Cockfield 4pm Evening Prayer - Bradfield St Clare
Tuesday 18 February	11am Holy Communion - Felsham Village Hall (followed by soup and sandwiches)
Thursday 20 February	2-4pm Village Friends at Felsham Village Hall (over 65s friendship group)
Saturday 22 February	2-4pm Knit'n'natter at The Rectory, Cockfield
Sunday 23 February 2nd before Lent	9.30am Communion - Gt Whelnetham 10am Holy Communion - Gedding 10am Worshipping Together - Bradfield St George
Sunday 2 March Next before Lent	9.30am Holy Communion - Stanningfield 11am Holy Communion - Bradfield St George 6pm Six2Seven - Felsham Village Hall

There is normally Celtic-Style Morning Prayer at Cockfield Church on Tuesdays at 9am, and at Stanningfield Church on Thursdays at 9am.

For up-to-date details on services go to www.cockfieldbenefice.com.