

**ST PETER'S CHURCH. BRACKLEY**



**“LOVING GOD,  
LOVING EACH OTHER,  
LOVING BRACKLEY”**



## ***Revd. Rich Duncan writes.....***



The Assisted Dying Bill is due to come before Parliament this month, with a second reading on 29<sup>th</sup> November and a free vote to follow. The last time there was a parliamentary vote on this issue (also known as assisted suicide or euthanasia) was in 2015, when it was overwhelmingly rejected by 330 votes to 118. This time round, it seems likely that terminally ill adults (who meet stringent criteria) will soon be given the right to seek medical assistance to end their own lives.

The calls to legalise are emotive, powerful and compassionate. Anyone who has watched a loved one die gradually will be deeply sympathetic to the cause. Extreme cases of prolonged terminal suffering reinforce an instinctive sense that this push for 'compassion, choice and dignity' at the end is necessary and urgent. To many Baby Boomers, who have experienced unprecedented levels of autonomy over all aspects of life, it seems bizarre not to have the same control over death. And wider public opinion largely agrees: surveys suggest that 60-75% of British adults now support legalisation.

However, the well-intentioned calls to legalise are, I believe, misguided. In fact, the Archbishop of Canterbury was right to call them dangerous in a recent interview. Many simply do not realise where this leads. Of course, such 'slippery slope' arguments can themselves be a bit slippery: an easy excuse to jump to an unlikely worst case scenario. But this is no such scaremongering. The inevitable slide into ever broader legalisation has been played out too many times before.

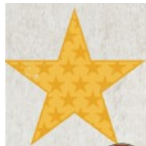
In the US state of Oregon (cited by campaigners as a 'safe' form of the legislation and a model for UK proposals), the provision has been widened to include non-terminal conditions. In Canada (where assisted dying is now the fifth most common cause of death), it will become legal for the mentally ill from 2027. It already is in the Netherlands. In Belgium, assisted dying is now available to children.

Some UK campaigners reject this idea that a change will be the thin end of a wedge. Others though, openly admit and welcome it. Matthew Parris, wrote in *The Times* earlier this year, "A taboo will be lifted... What today is criminal could... within a decade or more be seen as a normal road for many to take, and considered socially responsible — and even, finally, urged upon people... What's wrong with the thick end [of the wedge]?"

In the same newspaper in April, Alice Thomson wrote a moving article called, "Why I changed my mind over assisted dying." She had witnessed her father's 20-year battle with dementia and had been an avid right-to-die supporter. Gradually however, she came to see the direction of travel in other countries and found it chilling, "I started wondering, what would have happened to my anorexic cousin, my schizophrenic aunt or my father in these places? Our NHS is appallingly overloaded and both my elderly parents spent days in an overstretched hospital. Were they bed-blocking? What would start as a choice could become an expectation."

The biggest impact of all this would be upon those who are already most vulnerable in society: the elderly, the disabled, the poor, the mentally unwell, the long-term sick, the lonely and isolated. A culture that increasingly prizes productivity and utility will unwittingly, or deliberately, pressurise people not to be a 'burden' to their family or nation. At that point, society risks viewing some lives (with reduced mental or physical capacity) as less valuable than others, and we realise the current calls for 'compassion, choice and dignity' actually cut both ways.

I am conscious this is an incredibly sensitive topic. I hesitate to tread on such painful and contentious ground. You may well disagree with me and I'll understand if you do. But Christians were at the forefront of palliative and hospice care in the 20<sup>th</sup> century (google 'Dame Cicely'), and I believe Christians should be at the forefront of protecting the vulnerable in the 21<sup>st</sup> by praying against the Assisting Dying Bill this month.



# *St Peter's Church*



## *Christmas Tree Festival*

**2024**

Open to ALL local groups and organisations

Artificial Tree maximum height 3ft

Battery Operated Lights allowed

Decorated with reference to your organisation.

Deliver to the Church

on Saturday 30<sup>th</sup> November between 10-2pm

and place on a window sill



**ALL trees must be removed by**



**Saturday 4<sup>th</sup> January**



Further info  
from Caroline  
07845 397168





I hope you enjoyed the Harvest displays in church. Thank you so much for your generous donations towards the harvest flowers. The flower team always appreciate your support.



Now we start to plan Christmas which is a busy time for the flower team. We will be running three Wreath Making workshops and one tabletop decoration session to help raise funds for St Peters Church.

The wreath making sessions will take place on Saturday Nov 30<sup>th</sup>, Tuesday December 3<sup>rd</sup> and Saturday December 7<sup>th</sup>. Almost all tickets for the three events have been sold. During the sessions we provide refreshments. I have helpers to serve refreshments on the first session. If anyone would like to help serve refreshments on the following two sessions please see me, we would be very grateful.

The Christmas tabletop session is a new fund-raising idea that has come about through requests made by different members of the congregation. This will take place during the afternoon of Saturday December 14<sup>th</sup> FROM 1.30-3.30. During the afternoon the flower team will display a range of different Christmas table decorations. We will demonstrate how to make one or two of the displays. I will demonstrate the arrangement which you will then make yourself, to take home with you. During the afternoon we will raffle the arrangements on display and will provide a glass of mulled wine and a mince pie to add to the festivities. The cost of the afternoon is £25. All materials will be supplied, just bring secateurs or scissors. We will be providing candles for the arrangements but if you have a favourite candle (not too thick) please bring it along and we will try to incorporate it into the design. Come along and have a festive afternoon full of fun, foliage and flowers with St Peter's flower team.

Sally Hughes – flower team co-ordinator



# Operation Christmas Child



Please return  
filled shoeboxes  
by Sunday 10<sup>th</sup>  
November

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## **Would you like to hear more from St Peter's?**

If you would like to receive an update by email from Rich every few weeks, including news and information of upcoming events at St Peter's, you can subscribe to the email list by sending an email to [brackleyvicar@gmail.com](mailto:brackleyvicar@gmail.com) and ask to receive the bulletin



## Mouse Makes



### READ

the story in  
**John 13:1-17**

### "DO AS I HAVE DONE FOR YOU."

The disciples had met with Jesus in an upper room to share a meal together, but there were no servants to wash their dusty feet. Jesus got up from the table, took off his outer clothing, wrapped a towel around his waist and began to wash the disciples' feet just like a servant would do.

Then Jesus said:

*"Do you understand what I have done for you? Now that I, your Lord and Teacher have washed your feet, you also should wash one another's feet. I have set you an example, that you should do as I have done for you."*



By washing his disciples' feet, Jesus showed that as God's people we are never too important to serve and care for others.

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## **Environmental action at St Peter's**

We're excited to be applying for the Eco Church Bronze Award very shortly. This is organised by the charity 'A Rocha UK' who aim to work to protect the world and equip churches to do the same. The Church of England has its own environment programme which includes for all churches to be carbon zero by 2030. We're already making a big difference at St Peters through the ongoing works in and around the building, encouraging recycling wherever possible, and encouraging everyone to spend time in nature to name but a few!

We want to encourage everyone to consider how they can make adaptations to their lifestyle to help God's glorious creation and live sustainably as Christ's followers.

One of these will be an 'Easy Eco Tips', inspired from Wild Christian, in the monthly magazine. Hannah Griggs

Here is the first one:

### **November's Easy Eco Tip**

**Green your home.** Identify and seal drafts around your home. Not only will this combat climate change but will reduce your heating costs too! Pray for those who might be struggling with the cold over the winter months.

**If you wish to donate to  
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## Our Royal Army Chaplains

For centuries, armies worldwide have taken their clergy to war with them. And while over the years the roles of chaplains may have changed, still their presence among the troops has remained as important as ever.

For the British, it was in 1796 that the Army Chaplain's Department was founded by the Revd John Gamble, who became its first Chaplain General.

In 1854, the Crimean War found it had 26,000 troops depending on only one chaplain: the Revd Henry Press Wright. The Society for the Propagation of the Gospel (SPG) hastily financed more chaplains, and eventually 60 were sent out.

In 1879 the Revd James William Adams became the first chaplain to be awarded the Victoria Cross – for his brave actions during the Second Afghan War.

During the First World War (1914 – 1918) chaplains became known and loved for their bringing of comfort, care and compassion to the troops.

In 1919 the King honoured the army chaplains by granting them the prefix 'Royal' .

The Second World War (1939-45) saw chaplains learning new skills like parachuting with the Airborne Forces. During those years of violence and turmoil, Royal Army Chaplains were everywhere, even sustaining captives in Far East prison camps and on the Burma-Siam railway.

Since 1945, Royal Army Chaplains have continued to serve wherever British soldiers are sent. The wars may vary in shape and locations, but the need for care, compassion and prayer for the soldiers remains constant.

"It may to us be the smallest example of our vocation - listening, comforting, advising, praying - but to those we serve, it can be a life changing encounter."

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## Chuckle Time

Have you heard about the agnostic dyslexic insomniac who lay awake at night wondering: "Is there a Dog?"

Thursday at 10am there will be a meeting of the Little Mothers Club. All those wishing to become little Mothers are welcome to meet our new minister in the vicarage....

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