

Vol.65 No 2 February 2025 *Online Edition*

ST PETER'S CHURCH. BRACKLEY



“LOVING GOD,  
LOVING EACH OTHER,  
LOVING BRACKLEY”



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



How is your **news anxiety**?

When I bump into fellow dog walkers, the first topic of conversation is of course the weather (naturally, and long may it continue). But increasingly, the next most common topic is how depressing the news is.

The word 'doomscrolling' has been added to many dictionaries in recent years, describing "the tendency to continue to surf or scroll through bad news, even though that news is saddening, disheartening, or depressing" (Merriam-Webster). Mental health charities highlight the over consumption of bad news as a major cause of modern day anxiety.

Yet, Jesus Christ didn't want his followers to panic about awful news, "You will hear of wars and rumours of wars, but see to it that you are not alarmed" (Matthew 24:6). So what practical wisdom does the Bible give as an antidote to this anxiety? In short, a huge amount. But in an effort to keep things simple, let me just focus on one passage in Philippians and pass on 3 tips:

1. Remember,
2. Roll, and
3. Replace

### **1. REMEMBER!**

Step 1: remember the Lord.

Philippians 4:5 says, "The Lord is near."

Stop and think about that. The Lord is near to his people: right there with you now as you read this! It is incredibly simple, but the moment we start to realise it is true, it becomes absolutely wonderful. When my children have nightmares, they ask me to sit in the chair in

the corner of their room. My simple presence can be profoundly calming to them, even though they can't see me and even though the circumstances haven't changed. The same is true of God's presence with us (Isaiah 41:10, Psalm 23:4).

In Bible terms, we should actually swap our fear of life with fear of God. Does God want us to fear? No and yes. The most frequent command in Scripture is "Do not be afraid!" Fear and anxiety are clearly things Jesus has come to release us from, "There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear" (1 John 4:18). But again and again in Scripture we are called to fear God – not in the sense of being afraid of him but rather having an awe, respect and reverence for him. The fact is, the more we fear God in the right sense, the less we will fear what life can throw at us (see Exodus 20:20). So step 1: remember the Lord!

## **2. ROLL!**

Step 2: roll your burdens onto the Lord.

Philippians 4:6-7 says, "Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus." Prayer punctures anxiety. We are not big enough to carry all the burdens the news cycle places on us. But God is. So "cast [or roll] all your cares onto the Lord for he cares for you" (1 Peter 5:7, Psalm 55:22). We are not just permitted or invited to do so. We are commanded.

When George Müller was asked how he could stay so calm while running numerous nineteenth century orphanages on a shoe-string, he replied, "I rolled sixty things onto the Lord this morning." How did he handle the burden of caring for thousands of orphans? He took them off his own shoulders, one by one, and rolled them onto God's in prayer.

So, step 2: roll those burdens!

### 3. REPLACE!

Step 3: replace bad news with good.

Philippians 4:8 says, "Whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things."

It is right to stay informed, especially if it spurs us on to pray or lobby for change. But there is no moral duty to doomscroll and overfill our minds with all of the worst stories that news editors can find from around the world. We are not selfishly turning a blind eye when we fill our troubled minds with better things.

This could take many forms: a good book, uplifting music, an interesting podcast, a fun hobby, meeting with people, phoning a friend. Ultimately though, the best replacement for bad news is good news – THE good news ('gospel'). If Christ has died for you, then you have everything going for you: forgiveness for the past, friendship with him in the present, and a wonderful hope for the future, that no one can take away.

I recently finished 'Patriot', the memoir of Alexei Navalny, who died in a remote Arctic prison last February serving a 19-year sentence for challenging Putin's corruption. One of the most remarkable aspects of Navalny's diary was his striking lack of fear and worry. The book ends with these words, "Being a believer makes it easier to live your life... Are you a disciple of the religion whose founder sacrificed himself for others, paying the price for their sins? Do you believe in the immortality of the soul and the rest of that cool stuff? If you can honestly say yes, what is there left for you to worry about? Don't worry about the morrow, because the morrow is perfectly capable of taking care of itself."

So there you have it: 1) remember the Lord, 2) roll those burdens, and 3) replace bad news with good. I very much need to practise these myself! If we do, the apostle Paul promises in Philippians 4:9, "Whatever you have learned from me... put it into practice, and the God of peace will be with you."

May you know that peace this February.

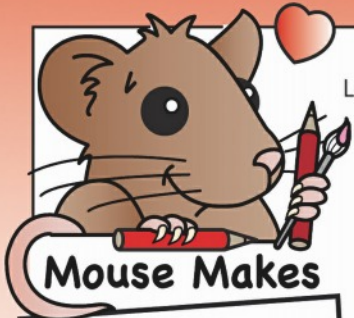
As I write this article for the church magazine the Christmas flowers are still beautiful even though it is over three weeks since we decorated the church for Christmas. Thank you to those of you who contributed towards the cost of the Christmas flowers.



I will not be making collections for donations towards the cost of flowers at Easter and Harvest this year, as I normally do. Rich agreed that the flower team and the church would share the profit from wreath making so that we can fund our flowers throughout the rest of the year.

I thought it might be nice to introduce a new idea regarding flowers in church. If you would like to dedicate the church flowers to someone special, particularly those who are no longer with you but still in your heart and thoughts, you can do so by donating towards the cost of the flowers for the fortnight and we will do our best to use the colours of your choice. It might be that you ask for this on the anniversary of their passing or a date that is special to the deceased person e.g. birthday or anniversary. If this is planned in advance, I can make sure the name of the person whose flowers are dedicated to, will be mentioned in the flower article in the magazine or the weekly notices. Alternatively, this can be kept private with no mention of names at all, whichever you prefer. I know many churches adopt this idea as a beautiful way of remembering loved ones, with flowers in church. If you wish to dedicate flowers to someone, please speak to me in church or call me on 01280 700778.

Sally Hughes – flower team co-ordinator



## Mouse Makes

"Love is

love is \_\_\_\_\_  
 It does not, \_\_\_\_\_  
 it does not \_\_\_\_\_  
 it is not \_\_\_\_\_  
 it does not \_\_\_\_\_

others, it is not self -

it is not easily \_\_\_\_\_  
 it keeps no record of \_\_\_\_\_

Love delights in \_\_\_\_\_  
 it always \_\_\_\_\_

from 1 Corinthians 13:4-7

The steadfast **love** of the Lord never \_\_\_\_\_;

His \_\_\_\_\_  
 never come to an end;  
 they are new every

Lamentations 3:20-23



I pray... you will understand...  
 the greatness of Christ's **love**,

how \_\_\_\_\_  
 and how \_\_\_\_\_  
 and how \_\_\_\_\_  
 that **love** is.  
 Ephesians 3:18-19

God is **love**.  
 whoever \_\_\_\_\_  
 in **love** \_\_\_\_\_  
 in God, and God \_\_\_\_\_  
 in them.

1 John 4:16

Give \_\_\_\_\_  
 to the Lord, for He is \_\_\_\_\_  
 his steadfast **love**  
 endures \_\_\_\_\_

Psalm 136:1

HOW DOES  
 GOD **LOVE** ME?

**God sent me a saviour:**

He sent His one and only  
 Son into the world so  
 that we might have  
 eternal life through Him.  
 1 John 4:9

**God gave me His spirit:**

He has given you the  
 Holy Spirit to fill our hearts  
 with His **love**.  
 Romans 5:5

**God called me His child:**

See what great **love** the  
 Father has for us that He  
 would call us His children.  
 1 John 1:3

DID YOU KNOW?

Jesus told us to:  
**LOVE** the Lord your God with  
 all your **heart**, all your **soul**  
 and with all your **mind**.  
 Matthew 22:37

**LOVE** your neighbour the  
 same as you **love** yourself.  
 Matthew 22:39

P T Y D E B P O P T E L T  
 E R D L N M A Y R F D G R A  
 A U G O D J T H O P E F U L  
 C S K V U U I K T S F L T O  
 E T P E R S E V E R E S H Y  
 K I N D E T N B C S N L F A  
 M N I Y S L T W T S D M U L  
 I G R A C I O U S E S K L I  
 H U M B L E S E L F L E S S

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 JUST • TRUTHFUL  
 TRUSTING • LOYAL  
 HOPEFUL  
 PERSEVERES  
 ENDURES  
 HUMBLE  
 SELFLESS  
 PROTECTS • DEFENDS

## Cathedral in Crisis

Dear Friends

Safeguarding concerns have presented a big challenge for the Church of England nationally, but, nearer to home, the now well-publicised financial issues facing our Cathedral have helped to bring home the challenge we are all facing, whether as individuals or as parishes, to make ends meet or to fund properly the ministry and mission of our church. Jesus said, *"the poor you have with you always"* – and it can sometimes seem as if we are always poor! From a Cathedral



perspective it's disappointing to be facing yet another financial pinch point when we've done so much to improve our financial management, and been so creative in the delivery of a fantastic array of exhibitions, events and activities. But like every other business, we've all of us been facing the same issues; Covid, the cost of living crisis, the rising costs of fuel and employment – they've all continued to pile pressure on our balance sheets.

We have launched an emergency appeal here, and we pray that that may be fruitful. *But "we are afflicted but not crushed, perplexed, but not driven to despair"* writes St Paul in 2 Corinthians, and Jesus again and again called us not to be afraid or anxious because *"your heavenly Father knows you need all these things"*. The real challenge for us all is not one of systems, or process, or finance or funding – but faith.

Whatever we face as individuals or as communities - and we need to be responsible in our stewardship and disciplined in our actions – but above all we need to renew our trust in the living God: *"strive first for the kingdom of God... and all these things shall be given to you as well"*. (Matthew 6.33)

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Chris Dalliston". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

The Very Revd Chris Dalliston      Dean of Peterborough

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### **National Nest Box Week – 14<sup>th</sup> to 21<sup>st</sup> February**

Where can family-minded birds raise their young these days? As our gardens and parklands become smaller and tidier, too many natural nest sites – such as holes in trees, old buildings and unkempt hedgerows – are rapidly disappearing



No wonder that our sparrows, greenfinches and swifts are in precipitous decline, and that one in four of our UK bird species are now under serious threat.

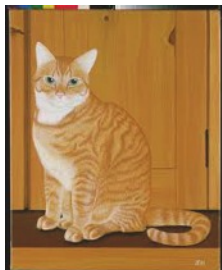
This makes it more important than ever to care for our remaining birds. By feeding, providing water and putting up nest boxes we can give them a safe space to raise their chicks.

The National Nest Box Week initiative encourages bird conservation across the UK, and it's easy to get involved, whether you're a teacher, part of a local wildlife group, or just wanting to boost the bird numbers in your own garden.



## **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



### **That marmalade colour in cats**

It has been a mystery for cat lovers everywhere: what makes some cats ginger?

Now - after 60 years of searching - scientists have good news. They have finally found the chunk of DNA that is responsible. The so-called Garfield gene is Arhgap36.

Arhgap36 has been hiding away on the X chromosome, of which males have one copy while females have two. When the Arhgap36 gene is present on a cat's X chromosome, it forces the pigment-making cells in the skin to produce more pheomelanin, leading to the orange morph.

It seems that if a male inherits this gene from either parent, he will be Garfield-ginger, while a female will usually turn calico or tortoiseshell.

This may sound simple, but it took two teams of scientists, one at Stanford University in the US and one at Kyushu University in Japan, to find the Garfield gene independently, thereby solving a 60-year mystery.

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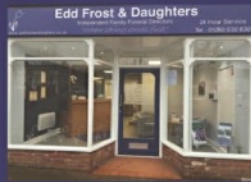
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