

Thoughts and Prayers for the Week

Sunday 25th December 2022



Christmas Day

Lord Jesus Christ,
your birth at Bethlehem
draws us to kneel in wonder at
heaven touching earth:
accept our heartfelt praise
as we worship you,
our Saviour and our eternal God.
Amen



Readings this week:

Isaiah 9: 2-7

Psalm 96

Titus 2: 11-14

Luke 2: 1-14, (15-20)

Follow the Star – The Great Invitation from Bishop Graham

As our ‘Thought for the Week’ for Christmas, we’re sharing this year’s Christmas message of invitation sent out to all by the Bishop of Norwich:

‘If I’m out late in a rural part of the diocese I’m always struck by the brightness of the night sky. There are more stars across the cosmos than I can count; their sparkling taking light years to reach us.

And as I drive home, I pass homes with their lights on, and I wonder about life within them. This Christmas I’m well aware that some of those homes will not be warm places, or will lack food, or might not be safe for all who live there.

But what I want to say to people behind every front door in Norfolk and Waveney is that there is a light on in a church near you this Christmas. It’s a light that guides you to a place of companionship. Guides you to place of warmth in the cold. Guides you to a place of hope even in the face of the fears around war and climate change and the cost of living.

Like the Magi following their star, the lights on in our churches guide you to meet Christ’s love.

Day in, day out, I’m humbled by our churches that are providing practical help in their communities. School uniform exchanges and Foodbanks, debt-relief advice and planting trees, walking with the bereaved and supporting young people, or providing warm hubs for those who can’t afford fuel, or social events for Ukrainian refugees.

And why? Because people down the centuries, even in the bleakest of mid-winters, have travelled with the Magi to take a look into the stable of Bethlehem. There they have seen in a baby, God coming to be together with us, and lighting up the world.

This may seem a bleak mid-winter for many. But the Christmas carol asks us, “what can I bring him?” Well, we can bring ourselves – so that, with others, we can be together this Christmas. Togetherness – being with others – is an incredible gift. It makes lives sparkle.

So, I invite you. Follow the star to church this Christmas – you are invited.’

The Rt Revd Graham Usher, Bishop of Norwich

Here in our Hempnall Group, there is a service in each parish on either Christmas Eve or Christmas morning. (See details on back page). All are very welcome.

We wish you all a joyful Christmas and a peaceful New Year.



Thoughts and Prayers for the Week

Sunday 1st January 2023



New Year's Day

God in Trinity,
eternal unity of perfect love:
gather the nations to be one family,
and draw us into your holy life
through the birth of Emmanuel,
our Lord Jesus Christ.
Amen



Readings this week:

Isaiah 63: 7-9

Psalm 148: [1-6], 7-14

Hebrews 2: 10-18

Matthew 2: 13-23

A New Year beckons...

Being from Tyneside, I have always regarded New Year (and specifically New Year's Eve) as special. As a child it was the only occasion when I was allowed to stay up late, with excitement increasing as midnight approached. Long before New Year's Day became a statutory bank holiday across the UK (in 1974), it was celebrated in the North-East of England, as in Scotland, as a major secular festivity, an occasion to make a transition and to look forward.

It came as quite a culture shock, when I pitched up in East Anglia, to find it described as 'Old Year's Night' which seemed to alter the emphasis to a more sombre occasion of retrospection, seemingly focussed on endings rather than beginnings.

Over time I've remained resolutely in the 'onward and upward' camp when it comes to New Year. But wherever we position ourselves on this backward/forward-looking spectrum, here are some thoughts to take with us as we approach 2023:

*Look back and remember He was with you.
Stand still and realise He is with you.
Walk forward and trust He will be with you always.
(Contributed by Penny Wall: source - Bible Reading Fellowship)*

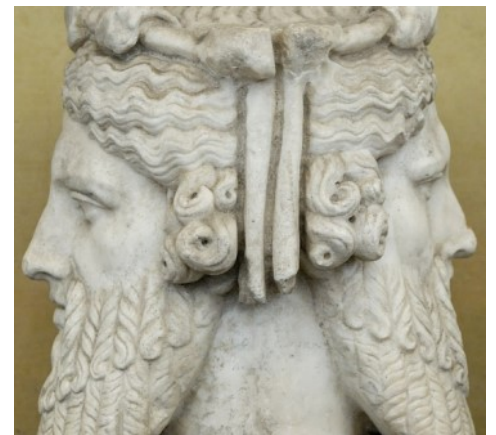
And this, from our Thoughts and Prayers a year ago but worth repeating:

*May God make our year a happy one!
Not by shielding us from sorrow and pain,
But by strengthening us to bear it if it comes;
Not by making our path easy,
But by making us sturdy to travel any path;
Not by taking hardships from us,
But by taking fear from our heart;
Not by granting us unbroken sunshine,
But by keeping our face bright even in the shadows;
Not by making our life always pleasant,
But by showing us when people and their causes need us most,
and by making us determined to be there to help.
God, make our year a happy one...*

(First published - author anonymous - some 50 years ago in the January 1973 issue of the inter-faith magazine 'Guideposts': this version is adapted from the original)

May we all have a peaceful and happy New Year.

~Liam Pilgrim~



Statue representing 'Two-faced Janus' in the Vatican Museums - image: Wikipedia

Let us continue to support and strengthen each other

- ◇ Daily, by saying The Lord's Prayer together, morning and evening
- ◇ Lighting a candle at home 10.00am on Sunday if we are unable to come to church

Our Services:

Sunday 18th Dec 2022 4th Sunday of Advent	9:30am Group Eucharist Revd Cate Turner (Assistant Curate, Bramerton Group Ministry)	Woodton Church
	6:30pm Carols by Candlelight	Fritton Church
	6:30pm Carol Service	Hardwick Church
Sunday 25th Dec 2022 Christmas Day	9:30am Carols and the Christmas Story	Hardwick Church
	9:30am Christmas Family Service	Woodton Church
	11:00am Family Communion on Christmas Morning Revd Coryn Stanforth (Assistant Curate, Tas Valley Benefice)	Morningthorpe Church
Sunday 1st Jan 2023 New Year's Day Service	10:00am New Year's Day Service	Topcroft Church
Sunday 8th Jan 2023 Epiphany	11:00am Epiphany Eucharist Revd Lynn Chapman (Rural Dean, Priest in Charge of Brooke Benefice)	Morningthorpe Church
	4:00pm Family Praise	Hempnall Church

This week we pray for:

- ◇ In the morning: the day and its tasks; the world and its needs; the Church and her life
- ◇ The Church, especially in places of conflict
- ◇ The Holy Land, for peace with justice, and reconciliation
- ◇ Refugees and asylum seekers
- ◇ Homeless people
- ◇ Families with young children
- ◇ In the evening: peace; individuals and their needs

Food Bank

Items for our Food Bank are still needed; we are very grateful to all who continue to contribute during this difficult time.

Our next collections will be on:

Sunday 8th JANUARY 2023 Any items can be left at Hempnall Church Office Mon-Thu, 9am-12:30pm. Please phone before arrival - 01508 498157

URGENTLY NEEDED FOOD ITEMS

SUGAR
 UHT FRUIT JUICE
 INSTANT MASH

WE'VE GOT PLENTY OF

PASTA
 CEREAL
 SOUP

WE REMEMBER:

Martin, Molly, Ian

Hempnall: Lesley and family,

Phillip, Sophie, Ross

Bedingham/Woodton:

Sheila, Hilary, Peter, Liz, Anne, Chris, Barrie

Topcroft: Gerald

LONG TERM CARE:

Bedingham /Woodton:

Dennis, Shirley, Jacob, Myrtle, Rudolph

Fritton/Morningthorpe: Beryl



RECENTLY DIED:

Geoff Moulton, Jim Pulford

Please ring us if you need:

Group Office: Mon-Thurs 9am-12.30pm

01508 498157

Email: hempnallgroup.office@btinternet.com