

Dear Friends,

How will you celebrate Christmas? Of course, there are the family traditions; the decorations, Christmas trees and all the rest; great food and drink. There are the parties and Christmas cards and phone calls. What perspective are we to have as Christians?

Christmas is about the humility of God in Jesus Christ. That Jesus would leave the glory of heaven, to become a human being, so that we could know God and receive the grace of his rescue, is breathtaking. Every year, it is astounding to be reminded of the incarnation, that Jesus became flesh **“The word became flesh and made his dwelling among us.” John 1:14.** Yet of course, to celebrate this, means as his followers we seek to be humble like he was. We are glad to serve, with the example he gave us and commanded us to follow. There are so many opportunities to serve others at Christmas, whether it is washing up on Christmas day, hosting international students or the lonely or helping with our church activities. Let us be humble servants like our master.

Christmas is about the love of God in Jesus Christ. That Jesus would not only become man, but that as a man he would humble himself, “even to death on a cross” (Philippians 2:8) should melt our hearts and inspire us to love others like he did. He has taken the judgement we deserve. We know the love of God through his substitutionary death - he died in our place. So, let us love, like he has loved us this Christmas. Let us go the extra mile for others to hear of his love and their need to repent. Let us love our children not just by buying them stuff, but reminding them of the love God has for them through Jesus Christ. How helpful Christmas scripture reading, Bible advent calendars, Christmas songs and the like can be in reminding us of the love of God in Jesus. What a joy it is! (To find out more about resources do try the Good Book Company.) How easy it is to get caught up in the busyness, and not spend time expressing love for God in prayer or love for others in our marriages, families and even in our church life. Let us be those who show love to God, to each other and to everyone this Christmas.

Christmas is about the goodness of God in Jesus Christ. Of course, we are surrounded by the idea that we owe God no praise or thanksgiving for the food we eat, the presents we enjoy and the entertainment we consume. Yet, all good things proceed from the creator who has given us all good things. As Paul says of Jesus “All things were created by him and for him.” Colossians 1:16. So whatever we are enjoying; carols by candlelight; Christmas dinner; shopping for presents; minced pies and mulled wine; the smell of the Christmas tree; the latest iPhone or new computer; the series on TV that we look forward to watching; the warmth of our homes; let us be those who are thankful and full of praise to him which is his will for us in Christ Jesus. So, may we celebrate with humble service, with love for God and neighbour and for a deep sense of gratitude and praise to him. Let us lift our voices every time we have opportunity and join in that first song of the angels – “Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace to those on whom his favour rests.” Luke 2:14. And surely, amazingly, wonderfully, his favour rests on us!

With much love this Christmas,

John Parker

Keep Watch!
Matthew 25:1-13

COLLECT: Almighty God, give us grace to cast away the works of darkness and to put on the armour of light, now in the time of this mortal life, in which your Son Jesus Christ came to us in great humility; that on the last day when he shall come again in his glorious majesty to judge the living and the dead, we may rise to the life immortal; through him who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God now and forever. Amen.

Fire Evacuation: In the event of a fire, exit via fire exits and gather in the field opposite the John Owen Barn at the fire assembly point

Driving: Please drive very carefully in the car park and access roads as there are often small children about.

FURTHER AFIELD

CHRISTMAS SERVICES

SUNDAY, 23 DECEMBER – 6pm

Eight Ash Green Lessons and Christmas Carols

MONDAY, 24 DECEMBER – 3pm

Fordham Children's Nativity

MONDAY, 24 DECEMBER – 6pm

Fordham Carols by Candlelight

TUESDAY, 25 DECEMBER – 10am

Fordham All Age Christmas Service

NEW YEAR

SATURDAY, 26 JANUARY – 7.30pm

'REAL LIVES' – Cheese & Wine Evening at the John Owen Barn. Hear how Christ makes a difference in people's lives. Everyone Welcome.

SCHOOL SERVICES FOR THE TERM AHEAD.

Please do come along to welcome the school children and their families to our church

Christingle Service for Fordham School @ 2.15pm on 7th December in Fordham Church

Carol Service Holy Trinity School @ 6pm on 10th December in Fordham Church

Carol Service Fordham School @ 2.15pm on 19th December in Fordham Church

DATES FOR THE DIARY

CONTAGIOUS CAMPS - EAST – 17-23 August Royal Hospital School 2019. Over the Christmas period, many of us may be booking holidays. Can we encourage you to consider sending your child/teenager on a contagious camp? These are simply brilliant holidays for young people to help them follow Jesus Christ and receive the support and friendship they need to keep following him. The Bible teaching is of the highest quality as is the food, the fun and the joy of all on the camp! Not to be missed! 421 leaders. If you cannot send your child for financial reasons – do contact John Parker – bursaries are available.

IS YOUR CHURCH BIBLICALLY INCLUSIVE? – January 12th 2019. Whilst it is right to be politically engaged about how we uphold biblical marriage, equally, we need to ensure that we are obeying the Bible in how we welcome and love those who have same sex attraction. This is a day of training run by Sam Alberry and Ed Shaw, who both experience same sex attraction and are also convinced that Jesus teaching is for such to remain celibate. This is for all concerned about helping a church live out Biblical inclusiveness in welcoming and support those with these convictions to be part of a loving and supportive Christian community. To see more visit <http://www.livingout.org/local-essex> Cost is £10 for members of EELPS, which Fordham is.

ESSEX AND EAST LONDON PARTNERSHIP SYNOD (EELPS) – we had a great time together on 3rd November hearing from Bishop Andy Lines about the work of the Anglican Mission in England. There was great encouragement from John 4 about the great harvest of people that Jesus Christ can bring about for his Kingdom. The next Synod is on March 9th, 9am – 12 noon. Venue and speaker to be confirmed.

CHRISTIANITY EXPLORED COURSE - the next course will run from Monday 4th Feb continuing on Monday 11th & 18th Feb 4th, 11th, 18th & 25th March. It is a great course to investigate the Christian faith as we read through the gospel of Mark and any question is welcome. You will not be asked to read anything out loud, pray, sing or do anything embarrassing! Do come along to "Real Lives" on January 26th in the John Owen Barn to find out more.

PRAYER - We can do nothing without God. Do join us to pray for the preaching of God's word at 9.35am. Also, at 10.45am in the vestry for EAG 11.15am, 5.30pm in the main JOB hall for Sunday@6.

ALL SAINTS CLUB – Next Week – Luke's First Christmas

Luke 1:26-45

God's Gift to Mary – Jesus is both God and man and that He is the Forever King of God's Kingdom

SEARCH FOR US ON FACEBOOK - @ascfordham.org.uk

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**To know Jesus Christ
and make Him known.**

02 December 2018

Fordham Family Service

A WARM WELCOME to any visitors. Please ask our welcome team (who gave you this sheet) if you need help at any point, including directions to toilets. Our children will be staying in the hall for the whole service. Don't worry about noise, this is a service for all the family! The service will finish at 10.45 with time for more conversation and activities. Do stay for a drink and a chat.

UPCOMING SERVICES

All are welcome at our Services

NEXT SUNDAY:

10.00am	Fordham	Morning Service	Matthew 24:1-51
6.00 pm	John Owen Barn	Youth Service	New Family

COMING UP

PRAYER FOCUS – THURSDAY 6 DECEMBER – The John Owen Barn – 7.45 for 8-9.

'TIME TO REMEMBER' – Sunday 2nd December 2.00pm Eight Ash Green. This is an opportunity to give thanks to God for those we have loved and for whom we grieve. Many from the parish come who have had links with the church through bereavement. Do come for encouragement and to support others. It is good to have those attending who are not necessarily attending for their own benefit but to talk to others. Light refreshments will be served after the service.

FLOWER ROTA – Is anyone interested in joining the church Flower Rota? If so, please contact Christine Willetts 01206 240314

CAROLS IN THE PUB – Come and sing carols and bonhomie in the Three Horseshoes on December 19th from 7.00pm onwards. The vicar will share a word and maybe this could lead on to discussion? Come and take the opportunity.

CHRISTMAS – Please do sign up to deliver invites and invite our neighbours to hear of Jesus Christ. Also, if you can help with our Christmas activities – do please contact the church office.

CHRISTMAS READING - Do consider buying the book "Making Sense of God" by Timothy Keller. As always, this book is full of careful explanation of the Christian Gospel. It is aimed particularly at the skeptical, who are the majority in our country now. So this will really help those of us who are

skeptical or those who are affected by other people's skepticism – which is all of us! It is a snip at £7 (Amazon 7.99).