

Dear Friends,

Happy New Year! Thank you to all who served us faithfully over the Christmas period, whether this was serving in decorating the church building, playing music, moving chairs, inviting people to hear something of the gospel or praying. We can all play our part in the work of the kingdom, “good news of great joy that will be for all the people”! We continue to seek to serve this cause in the days ahead. Do be considering someone you can invite to our “Real Lives” evening on January 26th – venue to be confirmed. This will hopefully encourage people to attend our Christianity Explored Course beginning in February (details overleaf). This is our priority; reaching others with the gospel as Jesus commanded us **“All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore, go and make disciples of all nations...” Matthew 28: 18-19.** Because Jesus is Lord and God, we seek to pray for and encourage others to recognize this truth and live by it whole heartedly ourselves.

However, there are other matters not directly related to these things, which we need to consider. Jesus continues in Matthew 28 **“Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.”** The leaders of the church are to be involved in baptizing all who seek to be disciples of Jesus Christ. What is baptism? Article 27 of the 39 articles of the Church of England provides us with a helpful summary: *“Baptism is not only a sign of profession, and mark of difference, whereby Christian people are discerned from others that be not christened, but it is also a sign of Regeneration or New Birth, whereby, as by an instrument, they that receive baptism rightly are grafted into the church; the promises of forgiveness of sin, and of our adoption to be sons of God by the Holy Spirit are visibly signed and sealed; faith is confirmed and grace increased by virtue of prayer to God....etc”* What is this saying? It is saying that baptism is more than an external thing in which people get wet. It is an outward sign of an inward reality. The water doesn’t do anything to people, it is a sign. But, as we obey the command of Christ, to baptize those who believe in Jesus as the Christ, the Son of God (or the children of those who believe this), God is at work. He works through the prayer of his people by his Spirit to bring grace into the lives of his people who are those who, by faith in Christ, are born again, adopted as his children and joined to the church. Baptism is a sign and seal of this. It is faith alone that brings new birth, but baptism is a sign of this regeneration. The two sacraments of Baptism and the Lord’s Supper, because they were instituted by Jesus Christ himself, and because he commands them, are means of his grace. Why is this important to be reminded of? The Bishops in the Church of England have issued guidance, which cannot be easily dismissed because it carries legal weight, that those who transition gender can be baptized using current liturgy. This places transitioning gender on a par with the sacrament instituted by Jesus Christ. You will be aware that this is not something I can do. Do pray for me and for PCC as we meet this week to consider how we respond to this, yet we can all be confident that Jesus Christ is still Lord on earth!

With much love in the only Lord, John Parker

God Made People in His Image
Genesis 1

1. To be Like God

2. To Rule Creation

3. To Relate as male and Female

COLLECT: O God, who by the leading of a star manifested your only Son to the peoples of the earth: mercifully grant that we , who know you now by faith, may at last behold your glory face to face through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, 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

DATES FOR THE DIARY

IS YOUR CHURCH BIBLICALLY INCLUSIVE? – January 12th 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.

CHRISTIANITY EXPLORED COURSE - the next course will run from Monday 4th February, continuing on Monday 11th & 18th February, then 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.

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.

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.

C2 LEADERSHIP FACE-TO-FACE SAFEGUARDING TRAINING EVENTS – There are two, new opportunities to attend the C2 Safeguarding Training – **16th March 9.45am–12.30pm at St Leonards, Lexden** and **30th March, 9.45am-12.45pm at the John Owen Barn, Fordham.** If you would like further information or would like to book for attendance at one of these venues, please see Linda Stenner or ring the church office on 01206 243262

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 – Jesus our Peacemaker **Colossians 1:15-23**

God the Son had to become man so that He could die to make friendship with God possible.

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

06 January 2019

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

THIS SUNDAY:

11.15am	Eight Ash Green	Holy Communion	Genesis 1
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NEXT SUNDAY:

10.00am	Fordham	Morning Service	John 1:35-50
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COMING UP

LADIES PRAYER BREAKFAST – Saturday, 19th January - “Through our Friendships” from 8.15-9.30am in the John Owen Barn. The topic is Cards are available at the back of the church with further information.

‘REAL LIVES’ – Saturday 26th January – 7.30pm Cheese & Wine Evening. Hear how Christ makes a difference in people's lives. Everyone Welcome. Venue to be confirmed.

MENS BREAKFAST – Saturday 9th February 2019 – 8-10am Cricketers Pub – Steve Curley - Scripture Reader at the Colchester Garrison. This is not to be missed! We have a chance to meet up and be encouraged over a full cooked English breakfast. Steve came to faith whilst serving in the British Army and combines his military experience and Christian faith to read the Bible with those currently serving in Colchester. Come hear how the Lord brought him to faith and how he now helps others in the same direction. A great event to invite friends to.