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Briefing 56: Wednesday 24th March, 2021.

Dear friends,

New City Catechism Question 12: What does God require in the 9th and 10th Commandments?

Ninth, that we do not lie or deceive. Tenth, that we are content, not envying anyone.

The 9th and 10th Commandments not to lie or covet sound simple enough, but as always there is a huge amount in these commandments to challenge us.

As Mike said on Sunday, God is a God of truth; he cannot lie, so as his children we need to behave like our Father and be those who speak and love truth. Telling lies, half-truths, fibs or being 'economical with the truth' should therefore be alien to the Christian. That may be the way of the world, but it can't be the way Christians live.

I don't underestimate how difficult that can be, particularly when the truth we need to speak is uncomfortable, challenging or may get us into difficulty. There have been a number of cases recently where Christian ministries have hidden or ignored the truth of misconduct through fear of repercussions or even for the sake of 'the reputation of the gospel.' But just as the gospel is the truth, so we need to practice truth and speak up, even when the truths are difficult to hear.

As for not envying, the apostle Paul says that *godliness with contentment is great gain*. (1 Timothy 6:6) Being content is a great gift, and especially so when our contentment is based on the riches we have in Christ. So often we spend our time and effort and energy to acquire things (objects, opportunities, experiences) that offer us some temporary happiness but no permanent joy. And if we spend our time and energies seeking after these things, and envying those who have them already, then not only are we showing that our contentment is not in God, but we will never find the contentment that we are seeking.

This sin of envying is not linked to how much we have. Rich, poor, somewhere in between; all of us can easily fall into the trap of thinking that if only we had such and such a thing, then we would be content. This is not just envying; it's also breaking the 2nd commandment – for the things we envy are also the things we worship. As we approach Easter and see the enormous sacrifice Jesus made for us, let us fix our eyes on him, the author and perfecter of our faith, for only in Jesus will we find the rest and contentment everyone is seeking.

Yours in Christ,

Dave

Notes from St Nicholas PCC Meeting - 23rd March 2021.

As well as beginning in prayer and worship and considering Article 21 of the 39 Articles of Religion, receiving reports from various officers and making preparations for the APCM, the PCC ...

- agreed to dispose of the old wooden chairs and to apply for a faculty to replace them with 40 stackable metal framed wooden chairs. The cost of this is being met from a legacy received late last year. If you'd like to take one or more of the wooden chairs, please speak to one of the church wardens.
- agreed to set up working groups to put together a welcome pack for those moving in to the parish and to coordinate plans for the 2021 Passion for Life Mission. If you'd like to join these groups, speak to Dave.
- reviewed some of the Living in Love and Faith materials and a sub group of the PCC will be working through the course to help us work out the best way to engage with the process.
- discussed appointing a new member of staff and agreed to look more closely at a Children's, Youth and Families worker, and a Parish Evangelist. We hope to have more details ready for the APCM.

IMPORTANT STUFF – DON'T JUST GLANCE- TAKE IT ALL IN!

Come and pray

How do we tell the health of our churches? By the programs we run? By the numbers coming along week by week? By the buildings and facilities we have, or the amount of giving that we receive? According to Charles Spurgeon, the great 19th-century preacher, the health of a local church is shown most clearly in the desire amongst a congregation to pray together. So here are 3 opportunities to gather in prayer.

Friday night at St Nicks from 8pm. Bring a Bible, and join us to pray for ourselves, for the church + our town.

Private prayer in church. St Nicholas will usually be open Tuesdays from 2 – 4pm, Wednesdays 12 noon – 2pm, and Thursdays 10am – 12 noon.

Next Tuesday from 7am-8am. Our regular early morning prayer meeting. Contact Dave for a link.

WORKING PARTY AT ST NICHOLAS: Thursday 1st April – 9am to noon. Provided the relaxation in Covid rules happens, and the weather is kind Paul Drakes is organising a working party to get the churchyard looking as good as it can for Easter. This may include painting the white lines on the steps, giving the benches a once over, clearing fallen branches and picking litter from the church yard, in addition to the usual Thursday jobs. The rule of 6 will come into force, so people will be able to work together, bring along your own coffee and snack for a mid-morning break. Contact Paul via enquiries@saintnicholaschurch.org.uk to let him know you are coming. Graveley church will be doing something similar in the coming weeks. Watch out for the details.

EASTER EVENTS: along with our usual services on Sundays, the following events are planned.

From Monday 29th March for 2 weeks: Easter treasure hunt in St Nicholas churchyard. Simply collect a pack from the Lych Gate and wander round searching for the clues. 10 Easter eggs are up for grabs!

Mundy Thursday at 7:30pm at St Nicholas Church: A service of Holy Communion. This will not be streamed.

Good Friday at 2pm at St Mary's Graveley: service of hymns, meditation and silence Good Friday.

Booking forms for the above will be available from Monday.

ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHURCH MEETINGS: St Nicholas APCM will be after the morning service on Sunday 18th April, St Marys APCM will be after the morning service on Sunday 25th April. If you have been worshipping with us regularly for 6 months, or you live in the parish, and are not yet on the electoral roll and would like to be, forms will be available in church this Sunday, and a copy is attached to this email. Both churches will be looking for new PCC members, and St Mary's Graveley are seeking a new treasurer. Please get in touch with me if you want more details.

THINKING OF BAPTISM OR CONFIRMATION? If you are considering having your **children baptised**, please do get in touch with me. Our next 3-session baptism preparation course will take place after Easter, but it would be good to get dates booked in the diary. If you are looking to be **confirmed** into the Church of England, St Nicholas will be hosting a confirmation service on the evening of Monday 7th June, with the Bishop of St Albans presiding. Do speak to Dave if you'd like to pursue confirmation or would like more details.

SOME ITEMS FOR YOUR ENCOURAGEMENT:

A wonderful old hymn with words of great comfort and hope. [Oh The Deep, Deep Love - Sovereign Grace - YouTube](#)

We'll be taking part in the **2022 Passion for Life Mission**, and to help churches and people prepare, a new podcast has been launched. The last 2 which feature an interview with Rico Tice were particularly good. You can find them via your podcast provider or here: [Podcast – A Passion for Life](#)

CHILDREN'S WORK ON SUNDAYS: Under current restrictions, we are unable to hold separate children's work in church. However, activity packs will be available to tie in with the talk and the question from the New City Catechism, so do bring your children along. They are a treasured part of our family and we love to see them. We are planning on restarting our Sunday children's work on Sunday 18th April. Do keep an eye out for details and do pray for the team.

BRIDGEBUILDERS CHRISTIAN TRUST: Bridge Builders, a mission partner for both churches, has a new website. Do take a look! [Bridge Builders Trust](#)