



Rev Dave Brown  
Rector of St Nicholas Stevenage & St Mary Graveley  
2a North Road, Stevenage. Herts. SG1 4AT  
Tel: 01438 213587  
[Email: revdmbrown@gmail.com](mailto:revdmbrown@gmail.com)



Briefing 81: Tuesday 14<sup>th</sup> September, 2021.

Dear Friends,

They say that buses don't come along for ages, and that then they come along in pairs. The same is true for clergy conferences! I have the Diocesan Conference this week and then the ReNew conference (where Mike and Karen will join me) the week after. Hence the shortness of these notes for the coming 2 weeks and any delay in answering any emails or telephone calls you may make to the vicarage!

Firstly, let me reiterate a thank you from Judy and I to everyone who came and cut and chopped and weeded and trimmed on Saturday. Our garden is in a far, far, far better state because of it... and you've lifted a heavy burden from our shoulders.

Secondly, a reminder about the resources (listed below) to help you continue to think through the issue of men and women and church ministry. The PCC will spend a few minutes discussing the issue when we meet in a couple of weeks' time, so do pass any comments onto them. It may be that we set aside some time for a longer and wider discussion – and if you think that would be useful, please do let me know.

Thirdly, a Thanksgiving Service for the life of John Taylor- an active member at St Nicholas for many years and a former church warden and treasurer – will be on Monday 27<sup>th</sup> September at 12noon. Church family are invited to attend, and if you have a long memory of John serving here, I'd love to have some memories and thoughts from you. Please keep Roma and the family in your prayers, along with others in the church family who are grieving the loss of loved ones.

Finally, in my Bible reading this morning I came across a wonderful verse in Zechariah chapter 8. The prophet was speaking of a day when God would bless his people again, bringing peace and making his home amongst them once more. The news of God's blessing would spread so wide, he said, that... '*people of all languages and nations will take hold of one Jew by the hem of his robe and say, "let us go with you, because we have heard that God is with you."*'

My prayer for us in our churches is that God would be so much at work in our lives and amongst us as we meet, that the Spirit would move in a similar way in our town and village, drawing people to Jesus. Will you join me in praying for that either on your own or at our prayer gatherings this autumn? In these times of struggle and fear, where so many are weary and burdened and without hope, it's what our benefice most needs.

Grace and peace,

*Dave*

**Video, audio and a PDF** of the text of the talk from Sunday can be found here: [The Pastoral Epistles: 1 Timothy 2 Men and Women in Ministry – St Nicholas Church \(saintnicholaschurch.org.uk\)](https://saintnicholaschurch.org.uk/the-pastoral-epistles-1-timothy-2-men-and-women-in-ministry/)

**3 great talks** on this issue from Hugh Palmer at All Souls Langham Place, giving it the time it really needs, can be found here: [All Souls, Langham Place : H009 Men, Women and Ministry](https://allsouls.langhamplace.org/hugh-palmer-h009-men-women-and-ministry)

A great **podcast** with a discussion between 2 women who take opposing views on this issue can be found here: [Unbelievable?: Egalitarian and Complementarian views on Biblical Womanhood - Beth Allison Barr and Rachel Green Miller on Apple Podcasts](https://apple.podcasts/unbelievable-egalitarian-and-complementarian-views-on-biblical-womanhood-beth-allison-barr-and-rachel-green-miller)

**2 BOOKS: God's Good Design**- What the Bible Really Says About Men and Women- Claire Smith. Thorough and very readable, Claire makes the case for a complementarian understanding of women in the church.

**Women and Authority**- The Key Biblical Texts by Ian Paul. Ian looks at the key Biblical texts and although he arrives at a different conclusion to me, his thinking is clear and thorough. It's a very short book and I have 2 copies to lend...

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



**TUESDAY MORNING PRAYER GATHERING:** 7:00AM-8AM– ask Dave for a Zoom link.

**FRIDAY NIGHT at St Nicks Church from 8pm-10pm.**

Come + join us and pray with us for our churches, parishes and God's world.

**Private Prayer in St Nicholas church THIS WEEK and NEXT WEEK.**

Tuesday 14<sup>th</sup> from 2pm-4pm, Wednesday 15<sup>th</sup> September 12noon-2pm, + Thursday 16<sup>th</sup> 10am – 12 noon.

Tuesday 21<sup>st</sup> from 2pm-4pm, Wednesday 22<sup>nd</sup> from 12noon-2pm, + Thursday 23<sup>rd</sup> from 10am – 12 noon.

**LITTLE LAMBS** - Our toddler group for preschool children and their parents, grandparents etc! Fridays in term time from 9am-10:30am in the Parish Room. Do come and bring your friends!

**ST NICHOLAS SUNDAY KID'S WORK** Whilst we are aiming to run our groups on alternate weeks, due to the availability of leaders, S Club for children in years 2-5 will be running again on the 26<sup>th</sup> Sept. Our S Club Minis (nursery-Y1) + S Club Max (Y6-Y9) groups will be held this Sunday (19<sup>th</sup>) and on 3<sup>rd</sup> Oct. There will be colouring sheets available for younger children this Sunday.

**CHRISTIANITY EXPLORED** - Starting Thursday 14th October, at 7:45pm. Ideal for those wanting to refresh themselves on the basic truths of the Christian faith, and for those wanting to explore the identity and mission of Jesus for the first time, CExp is a 7-week course which takes participants through Mark's Gospel answering questions about who Jesus is, why did he come, and what does it mean to follow him. **It's free, there's no singing or prayers,** and there's no need to say anything if you just want to listen. But it's a great opportunity to ask questions too! Karen and Philip Walker will be running the course- why not chat with them and go along yourself, or take a friend with you. (See the flyer attached)

**GIVING A LIFT TO CHURCH:** I'm still searching for someone to offer a single, double-vaxed lady, who lives in Great Ashby, an occasional lift to church. Do speak to Dave if you are able to help.

**VIDEO UPDATE FROM JIMMY AND KATIA ROCKS- St Nicholas Mission Partners in Brazil – can be watched here** [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dzGopsm\\_UDI](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dzGopsm_UDI)

**OPERATION CHRISTMAS CHILD:** Last year our churches sent almost 100 boxes and St Nicholas was the collection point for hundreds more. This year we're doing it again! Details of how to fill a box yourself or fill one on line can be found here: [Operation Christmas Child \(samaritans-purse.org.uk\)](http://Operation Christmas Child (samaritans-purse.org.uk)) But we need volunteers to help with receiving boxes at St Nicks from 15<sup>th</sup>-21<sup>st</sup> November from 10-4pm each day and with wider collections the week after. Can you help? Contact Stuart Marshall on [enquiries@saintnicholaschurch.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@saintnicholaschurch.org.uk)

## EVENTS IN THE COMING DAYS

**TALKING WITH MUSLIMS ABOUT JESUS:** Tuesday 14<sup>th</sup> September from 7pm in St Nicks Church, lower Parish Room. Come and gain a better understanding of what Muslims believe and learn how to start having conversations with them about Jesus. No need to book, just come along.

**ST NICHOLAS DOOR-TO-DOOR TEAM:** The team will be going out this week on Wednesday morning. Please do pray for them. If you'd like to join the team on their visits- please contact Karen Walker or Steve Bamford.

**ST NICHOLAS WALKING GROUP:** The next walk will be on Thursday 16<sup>th</sup> September, meeting at church at 9:45am then driving to near Church Farm Ardeley. There is a pub and a café on site for refreshments afterwards. No need to book, just come along!

**READINGS FOR THE NEXT FEW WEEKS:** The readings for the next 3 weeks are as follows:

19<sup>th</sup> Sept: 1 Timothy 5v1-6v2a

26<sup>th</sup> Sept: 1 Timothy 6:2b-10

3<sup>rd</sup> October: 1 Timothy 6:11-21

**HARVEST THANKSGIVING:** Sunday 26th September - As usual, our churches will be beautifully decorated and there is an opportunity to bring gifts (food or financial) to be given to the poor and needy. At St Mary's Graveley, all food gifts will be taken to the Haven homeless shelter, with all financial gifts being sent to Rachael and Bernie in Uganda, to distribute to those in need in their community.

At St Nicholas, food gifts will be taken to the Food Shed run by the Vineyard Church, whilst financial gifts will be sent to the Barnabas fund to help Afghan Christian refugees.

Please give generously. Any financial gift should be placed in an envelope marked 'harvest gift'. Thank you.

**EDEN CONSORT RECITAL:** Saturday 25<sup>th</sup> September from 1pm at The Palladian Church, Ayot St Lawrence, AL6 9BZ. Andrew Lewis will be playing two organ pieces and accompanying the Eden Consort (a group of 4 singers) in some of their music. There will be a variety of classical styles and eras. ([See the attached flyer for further details.](#))