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**Briefing 88: Tuesday 2<sup>nd</sup> November, 2021.**

Dear friends,

From this coming Sunday we will be spending 3 weeks working our way through the letter of Paul to Titus. Chronologically, this letter falls in between the 2 letters to Timothy, and so perhaps unsurprisingly it covers some of the same ground. However, a concept that pops up in every chapter is the word **HOPE**.

It's a word we use a lot, but it's a word which has a wide variety of meanings. We **hope** the weather will be nice on Sunday. That's a gentle wish but we have no idea whether it will come to pass. We **hope** a good friend pulls through a difficult operation. That's more like a prayer, or at least a deep, earnest desire. Once again, there's no guarantee of the right result, but we are more emotionally invested in what happens.

Then we come to **CHRISTIAN HOPE**. This is in an entirely different category, because the end result is absolutely, 100% guaranteed. It's hope only in the sense that we haven't received it yet, but we can be totally confident that what we are waiting for is coming. Of course, that hope is a matter of faith and trust, but faith and trust in someone who is utterly dependable.

This is the kind of hope of which Paul is an apostle. This is the kind of hope that means that Christians are willing to organise their churches according to God's standards, and not the world's. This is the kind of hope that makes Christians treat one another differently, living to different standards than those who do not share this hope. This is the kind of hope which drives us to good works as we wait for our hope to come.

What is this hope? Where does it come from? And how do we grow in it? We will be thinking more about those things on Sunday, along with some of the implications of a life lived in Christian hope. I look forward to seeing you there.

Grace and peace,

Dave

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

**LITTLE LAMBS UPDATE:** over the last few weeks we have attempted to publicise Little Lambs to encourage more mums, dads and carers to come along, and in church we've tried to build up a team to take this ministry forward. Sadly, the numbers coming have dwindled to literally nothing, and the number of volunteers has diminished rather than grown. We've therefore taken the decision to suspend Little Lambs for the time being. We are sad about this – but we trust that the Lord will breathe new life into this work in his good time.

**CHRISTMAS PUBLICITY:** do you have the gift and skill to design eye-catching flyers for print and social media? If so, Dave, Mike and Karen would love to hear from you. The immediate task is to design flyers, posters and social media posts to publicise our Christmas services. Templates from previous years are available to help you. Do please get in touch if you can help in this way.

**THE CHRISTMAS JOURNEY:** We are hosting Bridgebuilder's Christmas Journey again this year from the 6<sup>th</sup> – 10<sup>th</sup> December. Judy is looking for volunteer actors, helpers and refreshment providers, as we present the

wonderful Christmas story and the good news of Jesus to children aged 6 and 7. Will you help? If so – please speak to Judy on Sunday, call her on 01438 213587, or email her on [enquiries@saintnicholaschurch.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@saintnicholaschurch.org.uk)

**Come + Pray!**

**Prayer is the engine room of the church. It's how we show we are dependent on God, and the means through which God works in his church and world. WON'T YOU COME AND JOIN US?**

**Tuesday mornings 7am-8am:** 26/10, 2/11, 9/11, 23/11, 30/11, 7/12

**Wednesday evenings 7:45pm-9pm:** 17/11, 1/12, 15/11

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

Tuesday 2<sup>nd</sup> from 2pm-4pm, Wednesday 3<sup>rd</sup> from 12noon-2pm, + Thursday 4<sup>th</sup> from 10am - 12noon.

Tuesday 9<sup>th</sup> from 2pm-4pm, Wednesday 10<sup>th</sup> from 12noon-2pm, + Thursday 11<sup>th</sup> from 10am - 12noon.

**“Our Father in Heaven... I'm afraid I'm lost for words!”**

### **LEARNING TO PRAY OUT LOUD**

Following on from suggestions at recent PCC meetings, we're also going to be running a short course on prayer, with a focus on helping us grow in confidence with praying out-loud with others.

These will be held from 4pm-5pm on Sunday 14<sup>th</sup> November and Sunday 21<sup>st</sup> November and between 5pm and 6pm on Sunday 5<sup>th</sup> December.

If you lack confidence, or have never uttered a word out loud with prayer, then this is for you. Sessions will be very practical. You'll need a pen and a Bible.

Please let Dave know that you'll be coming.

**GRAVELEY PCC UPDATE:** Graveley PCC met just over a week ago, and as well as receiving reports from the rector, churchwarden and deanery synod rep, we planned the timetable for our Christmas services and noted with great thankfulness that the bank holiday fundraising event raised over £1800. To help us write our next Mission Action Plan, we also spent some time discussing things we'd love to see at Graveley over the next few years. Some of these were as follows:

1. More young people and children in attendance.
2. Once a month Sunday school in the vestry.
3. Better Fellowship- such as men's + women's groups or bi-monthly coffee evening with visiting speaker.
4. Evangelistic, door to door visiting in Graveley and Great Ashby.
5. People coming to faith each year.
6. Making more of our church history- updating the guide book with information from Hilary.
7. Renewing our worship and widening and updating the hymns by purchasing a new set of hymn books.
8. Pushing ahead with a building project to provide us with a more welcoming and flexible building with space for meetings, a toilet and a small kitchen.

The PCC will continue to work on this plan in the New Year.

**OPERATION CHRISTMAS CHILD:** Christmas is approaching and it's almost time to fill those boxes. All the details can be found here, along with a great video showing what happens to the boxes [Operation Christmas Child \(samaritans-purse.org.uk\)](http://OperationChristmasChild.org.uk) There are plenty of flat-packed boxes available at the back of the church.

More ways to help: **BE A DRIVER...** delivering the boxes to the depot in St Neots from 22<sup>nd</sup> – 26<sup>th</sup> November – if you can help for a few hours on one of the days, contact Stuart on [enquiries@saintnicholaschurch.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@saintnicholaschurch.org.uk)

Or sign up in church if you can help for an hour or two with receiving boxes at St Nicks from 15<sup>th</sup>-21<sup>st</sup> November. The church will be open from 10am-4pm each day.

**GOING DEEPER: SHOULD ONLY MEN LEAD CHURCHES AND PREACH?** Following the recent sermon on 1 Timothy 2 and 3 a few weeks ago, both PCCs have suggested a follow up session to examine the Biblical material in more detail and to allow time for questions and discussion. This will held be on Sunday 28<sup>th</sup> November from 7pm. There's no need to book, but if you're interested in coming, please let Dave know.



**GRACE COMMUNITY CHURCH - 18-30s Social:** Saturday 27<sup>th</sup> November from 6:30 – 9pm at Grace Community Church, Hydean Way – come along for a fun evening with a version of 'The Cube' – drinks and desserts provided! Please let Matthew & Jo Dear know on [enquiries@saintnicholaschurch.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@saintnicholaschurch.org.uk) if you'd like to attend so they have an idea of numbers.

Also, Grace Community Church have a small team looking to set up a **CLOTHES BANK** to provide children's clothes for families in need. Some of their church members have already donated a variety of clothes, but they particularly need donations in the **3–9 year-old range**. If you have any suitable clothing in this age range to donate, please bring to St Nick's in the next 2 weeks.

**BIBLE BY THE BEACH:** In the few years prior to Covid, a good number of us from St Nicholas took a few days away over the first May Bank Holiday to attend the Bible By The Beach convention in Eastbourne. Judy and I will be attending again this year, and wondered if anyone would like to join us for a weekend of great Bible teaching on the English Riviera, with the sung worship led by All Souls Orchestra and fellowship. There's a full programme of fun and teaching for children too. Details are here! [Bible by the Beach 2022 - Bible by the Beach](#) If you would like to go, do let Dave know. If there are 10 or more of us, we can get a group discount. *Please note: the ticket price doesn't include your food or accommodation; you will need to organize and pay for that as well.* If you'd like some more information, do come and chat with us!

## EVENTS IN THE COMING DAYS

**WALKING GROUP** – The re-arranged walk is on Thursday 4<sup>th</sup> November, walking on Pegsdon Hills. Meet at The Raven pub at Hexton at 10.30 am. Robust footwear will definitely be required and appropriate waterproof walking clothing as the weather is changing. And bring a drink.

**ORGAN RECITALS: GEORGE PARSONS**, our former worship coordinator (Dave + Judy's son) is giving 2 organ recitals – the first this coming Saturday lunchtime. Details are below. Both are free and he'd love to see you!

**Saturday 6th November, 12 noon** - St James Muswell Hill. Music by Messiaen, Bach, and Widor.

**Sunday 14th November, 4.30pm** - Christ Church Roxeth. A recital of remembrance for Remembrance Sunday, including music by Elgar, Barber, and Bach.

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

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

7<sup>th</sup> November: Titus 1: 1-16    14<sup>th</sup> November: Titus 2:1-15    21<sup>st</sup> November: Titus 3: 1-15

**THANKSGIVING SERVICE FOR THE LIFE OF MATILDA ROGERS-WRIGHT:** 3pm, Wednesday 17<sup>th</sup> November at St Nicholas Church, followed by some light refreshments. All welcome.

**ST NICHOLAS DAY:** Once again this year we will be singing carols at the St Nicholas shops as part of the St Nicholas Day celebrations. More details nearer the time, but do save the date: the afternoon of Saturday 4<sup>th</sup> December!

**WELWYN GARDEN CITY BRASS BAND-** Christmas Concert in aid of Bridgebuilders Christian Trust. Saturday 4<sup>th</sup> December, in St Nicholas Church. Tickets £7:50- pay on the door. See Poster for more details.