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Briefing 89: Tuesday 9th November, 2021.

Dear friends,

This coming Sunday is Remembrance Sunday, and both Sunday services, at St Nicholas at 9:30am and at St Mary's at 11:30am will include our acts of remembrance. Do come and join us.

One of the most moving sights I've ever seen are the vast acres of tended white gravestones in the war cemeteries of France and Belgium. Rows upon rows of memorials inscribed with the dates and names of the men who fell in Flanders fields or on Normandy beaches and many other blood-soaked sites. It's a humbling thing to walk amongst such places and imagine the last moments of these men and the grief of family and friends left behind. They did give the very last ounce of their devotion to freedom and country.

If that all seems such a long time ago now, it's sobering to think that even since the close of the second world war, men, and some women, from this country have died or been mortally wounded in many other places across the globe: from the far east to the middle east, from Africa to South America; at home as well. We may take it for granted, but our current freedom and liberty, along with that in other countries, was purchased at a terrible price, and as many continue to mourn the loss of loved ones in this way, so we must remember to give thanks for their sacrifice and appreciate the freedoms they died to win or defend.

For all its glories and heroic victories; war is a terrible thing. But sometimes a great sacrifice is required if a great evil is to be defeated.

Despite the numbers who died in both wars, and since then in wars and conflicts across the globe, the greatest battle in history was won by just one man; the God-man, Jesus. Like many who die in war, Jesus was innocent- totally innocent and morally perfect in his case. Like many who fight till the end, Jesus died surrounded by his enemies, taunted, abused, ridiculed, tortured. But what looked like a great defeat, became a history-changing victory. From death came life; from darkness, light; from fear, hope.

The allied invasion of France in June 1944 led to the final defeat of Hitler in 1945. There were bloody battles and many more deaths in the meantime, but D-Day made victory certain. In the same way, the years since that first Easter have been marked by battles, strife and persecution. Since then, the casualty list is long, and we continue to see those we love taken by that great enemy, death.

But Jesus' final victory, won on the cross, secured at the empty tomb, will eventually come to pass. His kingdom will come, and one day his perfect will will be seen to be done on the renewed, perfected earth, as it is in Heaven, as all things are brought under the rule of King Jesus. On that day there will be no more war, or death, or hate, or envy. On that day the battle will be over and peace will reign.

Until then, we continue to remember those who died to win us freedom, and mourn as new names are added to that number. But we do so with the certain hope that a better day is coming.

Grace and peace,

Dave

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

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 Tuesday 7th – Friday 10th 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.

Come and 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: 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 9th from 2pm-4pm, Wednesday 10th from 12noon-2pm, + Thursday 11th from 10am - 12noon.
Tuesday 16th from 2pm-4pm, Wednesday 17th from 12noon-2pm, + Thursday 18th from 10am - 12noon.

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

LEARNING TO PRAY OUT LOUD

Last call for participants! Following from suggestions at recent PCC meeting, we're going to be running a short, 3-week course on prayer, with a focus on helping us grow in confidence with praying out-loud with others. Sessions will be held from 4pm-5pm on Sunday 14th November and Sunday 21st November and between 5pm and 6pm on Sunday 5th 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.

OPERATION CHRISTMAS CHILD: Christmas is approaching and it's 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://samaritans-purse.org.uk) There are plenty of flat-packed boxes available at the back of the church. Filled boxes should be brought back to church next weekend or the weekend after.

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

FOOD DONATIONS - Chris Taplin has recently got involved with a new initiative run by the Barnabas Fund called **Food.gives** which gets dry non-perishable food stuffs to persecuted Christians abroad where there is greatest need. They send you a kit to make up boxes + stickers etc, which you then fill with dry foods such as flour, lentils etc. No liquid, glass or cans allowed and sell by dates must have at least 10 months life. Chris has just filled his 1st box and taken to a local shop where DHL pick it up. It is super easy and can literally mean life or starvation to people in poor parts of the world. His kit only took about 5 days to arrive with full instructions. You can send boxes on a monthly basis or just donate money to **Food.gives**. If you need further details you can contact **Food.gives** on 02476 231923 or try their website.

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 28th 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 27th 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 if you'd like to attend so they have an idea of numbers.

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

ORGAN RECITALS: GEORGE PARSONS, our former worship coordinator (Dave + Judy's son) is giving an organ recital this **Sunday 14th November, 4.30pm at Christ Church Roxeth.** It's a recital for Remembrance Sunday, including music by Elgar, Barber, and Bach. It's free. Do go along.

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:

14th November: Titus 2:1-15 21st November: Titus 3: 1-15 28th November: Revelation 1:4-18

THANKSGIVING SERVICE FOR THE LIFE OF MATILDA ROGERS-WRIGHT: 3pm, Wednesday 17th 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 4th December!

WELWYN GARDEN CITY BRASS BAND- Christmas Concert in aid of Bridgebuilders Christian Trust. Saturday 4th December, in St Nicholas Church. Tickets £7:50- pay on the door. Do come along and invite your friends. Welcomers and refreshments givers required.