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Briefing 111: Wednesday 20th April, 2022.

Dear friends,

I know many of you were shocked and surprised at the announcement on Sunday. Sadly, for legal reasons we weren't able to make the news public until that time as the announcement had to be here and in Newton Abbot on the same day. Judy and I want to thank you for the many kind messages we've received. After 11 wonderful years, moving away from Stevenage and Graveley was always going to be difficult, but we felt for a while now that the Lord was calling us to consider a new challenge, and when I was offered the position of Team Rector in Newton Abbot, both Judy and I felt that it was the place God was calling us to go.

It will be hard to leave. We've made so many good friends here and seen the Lord work amongst us in so many ways – but as I said on Sunday morning, it is the risen Lord Jesus who is our hope, our strength, our song – not me or any other Rector - so I have no doubt that as long as you all stay grounded in the scriptures with your eyes fixed on Jesus, then both Churches will go from strength to strength in the coming years.

The job in Newton Abbot will be very different. Instead of 2 churches I'll be overseeing 6. And instead of being pretty much alone I'll be working alongside 2 other full-time clergy, and a curate, with several readers and retired clergy as well to help share the load. I've been told that amongst all the large and medium sized towns in Devon, Newton Abbot (population around 30,000) has the lowest proportion of residents attending Anglican churches, so there is a lot to do. So please keep us in your prayers.

But we haven't left yet! Our last Sunday in the benefice is likely to be 14th August, so there will be plenty of time for goodbyes and celebrations in the weeks and months to come. Judy and I also hope that some of you might even be able to make it down to my installation on Tuesday 20th September, and you are, of course, welcome to pop in and see us any time you find yourself down in the west country.

In the meantime, Saint Nicholas has it's APCM on Sunday, do pray for that, after which both PCCs will start to get things in place to advertise for and appoint a minister to replace me. Next week we have the **Passion for Life** mission in Letchworth. Do pray for these events. Which talks would be most appropriate for those of your friends and family members who are not yet Christians? There are hardcopy flyers in church, and the digital version for the main events is attached to this email, along with details about three other extra events.

Right now though, Judy and I are battling a different issue, having both tested positive for Covid. Thankfully, our symptoms are mild, little more than headaches, light coughs and aching limbs, but it's meant we've had to cancel a number of events this week and rearrange others. We would, obviously, both value your prayers for a swift recovery so that we might even be able to join you all on Sunday.

In the meantime, you remain, as ever, in our prayers.

Grace and peace,

Dave

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

ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHURCH MEETING: the St Nicholas APCM will be on Sunday 24th April, and will start straight after the morning service. The electoral roll has now closed, but nominations for church wardens and 3 more PCC members are still open. If you are interested in serving in this way do have a chat with Dave and look out for the sign-up sheets in church.

PASSION FOR LIFE WEEK: 26th-30th April at Letchworth Free Church. Flyers now available. Who will you be inviting? Perhaps the night with interviews with **Bill McCurrie**, an ex UVF Terrorist, **Yvonne Edwards**, a former drug addict with a powerful testimony and **Jeremy Marshall**, a businessman with terminal cancer- with talks from **Roger Carswell**.

Remember we're also hosting a special lunchtime event with **David Moss at 12:30pm on Tuesday 26th April**. Come and hear his story of how a Jewish footballer came to know Jesus over a light lunch. Book in with Dave/ Karen.

EVENTS THIS WEEK:

Benefice Prayer Gathering at St Nicholas: Wednesday 7:45-9pm

The church will also be open for **visitors and private prayer** on Tuesdays from 2-4pm, Wednesdays from 12noon-2pm and Thursdays from 10am-12 noon

UKRAINE. We're still collecting **TINNED FOOD** (that can be opened without a can opener), cup-a-soup packets and energy bars; **BLANKETS**; or **GOOD QUALITY WINTER CLOTHES**, particularly coats – please do bring them along to church. These will be sent via the Barnabas Fund.

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

24th April: Matt 28: 16-20

1st May: Psalm 16:1-11

8th May: Psalm 18:1-50

SAFEGUARDING: As part of our commitment to safeguarding, those serving in various roles in the church (eg with children, on our pastoral team or PCCs) need to complete certain training courses, most of which are now on line. If you are informed by one of the safeguarding team that you need to complete such a course, **please do so as soon as practicable!** We shouldn't need regular reminders to do the right thing. Thank you!

ADMITTING BAPTISED CHILDREN TO COMMUNION BEFORE CONFIRMATION. At its last meeting, St Nicks PCC voted unanimously to seek feedback from the church family on the idea of admitting baptised children of committed church families to communion prior to their confirmation. This would only be with full parental support and after a short preparation course. If approved we would apply to the Bishop of St Albans for permission to adopt this practise from September 2022. Whether or not you have children, (but especially if you do!) we'd like to hear your views on this, particularly on the following 2 questions:

1: Would you support such a move? (*we'd love to know your reasons either way*)

2: We envisage that this would apply to children in school year 2 and up (roughly 6-7). *Is this age about right?*

Please email your responses to Alison by 15th May on admin@saintnicholaschurch.org.uk so they can be discussed by the PCC at our next meeting. Thank you

OTHER DATES FOR YOUR DIARY:

New all age service starting at St Nicholas at 9:30am on Sunday 15th May. We'll start together, break into groups (some for a main talk, others for discussions or some art and craft work) then come back together

Wednesday 11th May, 9:30am-3pm: Diocesan Evangelical Fellowship Conference with Paul Harcourt, *leader of the New Wine network of churches-* at St Nicholas. The theme for the conference is **HOLDING TO TRUTH AND LOVE** and all are welcome to come along. Tickets which cost £13 per head (unless you are helping with the catering – see Amanda for that!) can be booked here... [2022 Annual Conference with Paul Harcourt – St Albans Diocesan Evangelical Fellowship \(stalbandsdef.org.uk\)](https://2022annualconferencewithpaulharcourt.org.uk)

Flower Festival at St Nicholas Church: 16th – 19th June