

## DATES FOR DECEMBER

**Monday 5<sup>th</sup> Prayer Gathering St Luke's 7.30-8.30pm**

*A small group have expressed a desire to meet more often for prayer.*

*please feel free to join them if you are able.*

**Tuesday 6<sup>th</sup> Afternoon Fellowship Holy Trinity 2-3pm**

**6-8<sup>th</sup> Fellowship Groups St Helen's & St Luke's**

**Sunday 11<sup>th</sup> Advent Open House the Rectory 3-5.30pm**

*Mulled wine & mince pies*

**Monday 12<sup>th</sup> Prayer gathering St Luke's 7.30-8.30pm**

**Monday 19<sup>th</sup> Prayer Gathering St Luke's 7.30-8.30pm**

*w/c 19<sup>th</sup> Fellowship groups may wish to meet*

**Bible Book of the Month - Revelation -**

*(Home study in preparation for a sermon series on Revelation beginning in January)*



# WATERFRONT BENEFICE NEWSLETTER



*St Helen's, Holy Trinity, St Luke's*

**DECEMBER 2016**

<b>4<sup>th</sup> December</b>	<b>St Luke's Holy Trinity</b>	<b>8.00am 6.00pm</b>	<b>Holy Communion Nativity Service with Cantus Firmus Trust</b>
<b>11<sup>th</sup> December</b>	<b>St Helen's Holy Trinity St Luke's</b>	<b>9.30am 11.00am 11.00am</b>	<b>Morning Worship Holy Communion Holy Communion</b>
<b>18<sup>th</sup> December</b>	<b>St Luke's Holy Trinity St Helen's</b>	<b>4.00pm 6.00pm 6.00pm</b>	<b>Family Carol Service Carols by Candlelight Lessons and Carols</b>
<b>24<sup>th</sup> December</b>	<b>St Helen's Holy Trinity Holy Trinity</b>	<b>4.00pm 5.00pm 11.15pm</b>	<b>Nativity Service Crib Service Midnight Communion Service</b>
<b>25<sup>th</sup> December</b>	<b>St Luke's St Helen's</b>	<b>10.00am 10.00am</b>	<b>Christmas Day Celebration Christmas Day Celebration</b>
<b>1<sup>st</sup> January</b>	<b>St Luke's</b>	<b>10.30am</b>	<b>Benefice Holy Communion Service</b>



<http://www.ipswichwaterfrontchurches.co.uk>

**“Greet all God's people in Christ Jesus. The brothers and sisters who are with me send greetings.” *Philippians 4:21***

We're approaching that time of year when we express what people really mean to us. For all the spiritual and theological significance of Advent and Christmas, in practice we use this end-of-year time to tell people how much they mean to us. I'm sure all of us are beginning to think of what Christmas presents to buy our family and perhaps our very close friends; we're writing (or will soon be writing!) Christmas cards, sending season's greetings and expressions of love. We're communicating through these Christmas-season traditions how special people are to us and how much we love and appreciate them.

That's something we must do in church life too. It's something the apostle Paul made a point of doing, in virtually all his letters to the New Testament churches. We greet one another, to express our love, care and gratitude for other people in the family of God.

As we approach Advent, I'm increasingly aware of the many people I want to greet. The King James version uses a different word: '**Salute** every saint in Christ Jesus.' The dictionary says that to salute means both 'greet' and 'show or express admiration and respect for.' As a noun, a salute is 'a gesture of respect and recognition.' There are lots of people I want to greet and express my admiration and respect for – the value I set on our Christian fellowship, the gratitude and respect I feel for what they have done to support the work of the gospel through their churches.

Some of these are **people outside our immediate church families**, people we may not usually be aware of – the *Cantus Firmus Trust*, for example, who are partnering with us and working incredibly hard to make sure our benefice advent service is an event to remember (at Holy Trinity, December 4th at 6pm). There's Bishop Martin and Bishop Mike, and the Diocesan senior leadership team, offering their support, advice and expert know-how as we consider what the Benefice proposal might mean for us. Then there are friends outside of Ipswich. Maybe you know missionaries serving the Lord overseas; we must greet such

people at this time of year, telling them that we value them and the work they do, and that we remember them in our prayers. I am mindful of two Christian friends of mine in London who work as architects, who have offered to produce some drawings and artists impressions of what a modern, refurbished Holy Trinity might look like – part of the additional information our PCCs asked for. People like that are amazing – giving their gifts and time freely at the busiest time of year, to help out churches they don't even know.

But we especially want to salute one another, the people within our churches. Each person in our churches is important, and deserves a greeting (though I'm not promising Christmas cards!) But as the year draws to an end, I particularly want to thank those who make sacrifices week in week out for the sake of others, in order that people may have the opportunity to hear the gospel of the Saviour's love. Such people would be mortified if I named them – they wouldn't want the recognition. But I trust we know who they are, and what they do out of love for Christ, and we want to greet and thank them.

Finally, we want to thank those who have been at the heart and soul of our churches over many years but have decided that it's time to move on. People like the Sims and the Nasmyth-Millers have put in so much at St Helens that we may wonder how we can go on without them. Losing them after Christmas will leave a huge hole in the church, most notably in the children's and music ministries. Hard as this is for us, we trust that the Lord will provide and help us move forward. As they prepare to go we want to thank them for all they have done over so many years (and continue to do right up to Christmas), assure them of the place they will always have in our hearts and wish them God's richest blessing as they look elsewhere for Christian fellowship, knowing that 'He will meet all your needs according to the riches of his glory in Christ Jesus.' (Phil. 4:19)

This Christmas, let's make sure we tell **all** God's people how much they mean to us.

With my greetings to you all,

Tom