



Letter #79 Church Family email 19/08/2021

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Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

“Out of His fullness we have all received grace in place of grace already given. For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.” (John 1:16,17)

Not all of us will have been away on holiday this summer and those who have been away will not necessarily have gone to the coast. But summer holidays are always linked in my mind to the seaside. So perhaps you can join me in my imagination looking out as the waves roll in. You follow one wave and see it crash on the beach, but it's then inevitably followed by another and yet another. That's the picture that we are given in John 1:16 of the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. Not just a one-off experience of grace, but 'grace upon grace'. Whether you are currently by the sea or not my prayer is that amid all the challenges and pressures of life we will each experience wave after wave of God's undeserved grace, filling, sustaining and carrying us.

Prayer focus

1. Please pray for Gavin and Janet McGrath as they return from sabbatical and holiday, that the Lord would use them richly in the period before Gavin's retirement.
2. Please also pray for our Sunday services – for John preaching on Psalm 20 at Lady Boswell's, for Nic on Psalm 95 at the evening service and for me on Judges 7 at the joint morning service at St Nicholas. Pray that the Lord would clearly speak to build us up and encourage us to live faithfully for Him.
3. Pray for the Contact Houseparty which runs from Sunday 22 August to Sunday 29 August. Pray that it would be an encouraging time for all involved. Pray especially for James Heather providing the main teaching input.

This Sunday at St Nicholas

As mentioned in the July letter, we expect and recommend the wearing of face masks at all services, but we will have the opportunity of singing congregationally, with masks. Please follow the guidance of the church wardens and stewards on the day. We continue to offer livestreams for all our main services.

Summer Focus

We have two further Summer Focus meetings on Tuesdays at 8pm. On 24th August Adelbert Jennings is speaking on Revelation 3:7-13 and at the final meeting 31st August Tom James is on Revelation 3:14-22.

Nurture Groups and daytime groups

Our new Nurture Groups along with our existing daytime Bible study groups will all be restarting in September. All members of the new Nurture Groups should now know which group they are in. If for some reason this has not happened, please contact the Church Office. If you didn't respond to the invitation to join a Nurture Group earlier in the year but would now wish to do so, again please feel able to be in touch as we would be delighted to make provision for everyone.



Whilst writing about the Nurture Groups and daytime study groups I'm aware that there will be understandable uncertainty about how the groups meet, especially in the next month or so. We are very happy to leave this to each group to work out. Some groups will be eager to start meeting in person whilst other groups will initially wish to meet on Zoom. For all groups there will be the need to listen to each other's concerns, bearing with each other and seeking to please one another before ourselves (Romans 15:1,2).

What God has to say about our bodies | Sam Allberry

Sam's latest book has just been published and it's an excellent and timely look at what the Bible says about our bodies. Our culture and the church have often been gripped by a view that owes more to Greek philosophy than the Bible. This leads to the sort of view which says that the 'real me' is inside and my physical body is an encumbrance which I can eventually be rid of one day. A genuine Biblical understanding is very different, and Sam helpfully sets things out and applies the Bible's teaching in his usual lively and well applied style. Sam will be preaching both morning and evening at St Nicholas Sunday 29th August 2021.

Scams!

I am aware that over recent weeks and months several people have received either emails or texts purporting to come from me in which a favour is requested. The next stage is usually a confidential request for some financial assistance on behalf of someone in the church family. Please be assured that there will never be any circumstances in which I seek confidential financial assistance from a member of the church family! I am very sorry that such emails and texts are prevalent. Please be vigilant and if anything doesn't look quite right then please always feel able to check with the church office.

Gavin and Janet McGrath

Gavin will soon be returning from sabbatical to resume his ministry amongst us before retiring at the end of September. His last Sunday as Associate Rector will be Sunday 26th September 2021. Gavin will have served for over 9 years at St Nicholas and in this time many of us will have benefitted richly from both his ministry in various ways. I am sure you will want to join with me in wishing Gavin and Janet every blessing for their retirement so please [click this link](#) to sign a farewell card for them and if you would like to contribute to a leaving gift, please send your contribution to St Nicholas PCC General Fund Transactions Account, Sort Code 60-19-02 / Account number 23242469, reference GJMgift (signatures and contributions by Friday 24th September please).

Finally, a song and a prayer

The song this week is the much loved ['When I survey the wondrous cross'](#) sung by the choir of King's College Cambridge.

The prayer is the Collect for this week, the Eleventh Sunday after Trinity:

O God, you declare your almighty power most chiefly in showing mercy and pity: mercifully grant to us such a measure of your grace, that we, running the way of your commandments, may receive your gracious promises, and be made partakers of your heavenly treasure; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.

Warmly in Christ,
Angus MacLeay