

Peninsula Post 6

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Church of England Parish of Harwich
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Won't somebody think of the children!

This was the regular cry from Maude Flanders, Ned Flanders's wife in The Simpsons cartoon series. It is always worth a church asking, 'Who is thinking about the children?' But there is more ... because the children are thinking about us.

Near the end of 2025 we marked, belatedly, the ministry of Tracey Tyrrell our Children and Families Worker. We have Tracey for a few years with funding from the diocese and Church of England. Most parishes would give anything to have such a resource. At the service which welcomed her and prayed for her after anointing, Ian told the story that had just happened to him. Walking on the beach a lady stopped him to say that he'd spoken with her son while he waited for the Guy Festival procession to pass. The lad goes to St Joseph's Primary School and had drawn a picture of Ian and written about meeting someone who represented God and that he liked him. We perhaps have, for good or ill, more impact in children than we realise.

Sometimes children are called the church's future which is a terrible thing to say. They are either part of the church now, attending and participating, or they are not yet part of it. But if we think of them as future church, we either commodify them or ignore them, until of course they come of age. We can help all children by being the light of Christ to them. How might we do that?

How hard is it to smile at them? To include them in the conversation without talking down to them; to use appropriate humour and seriousness. Children do like to laugh but they often carry deep questions, or they want to be heard. Ian told of his frequent experience of children wanting to say to him that a sibling, grandparent or pet had died. They sometimes wanted to know why; sometimes ask a question about what happens to the body or more usually wanted the fact and experience to be noticed by an adult. Do we come across as safe and warm enough that they would want to talk and share important things?

And children are explorers. Long gone are the days of telling children what to think in a Bible story or pick out a moral. They want to discover and reflect; they have insight and would like to speak that out.

So, we in the parish have the amazing privilege of Tracey but my goodness some volunteers and helpers could help this ministry to children and families go further or deeper so please pray for her; seek her out and ask God, should I also be there?

KILL THE BBC!

Are you a household that arranges the Christmas dinner around the royal broadcast? If you do, you are likely to watch on BBC, as families and people have for years. Perhaps you purchase a Radio Times and circle the programmes you will watch or listen to over the holiday season. Perhaps some of your favourite and long-standing viewing or listening has been with the BBC. Whatever your answer you may not be aware that there are those who want to kill the BBC.

Perhaps that language, that word, is too strong; perhaps we should say reduce or curtail or trim or reform the BBC. Perhaps a phrase like – lets open the BBC to competition might be used. Others might have no plan but say things like:

Have you seen how much they pay X? Is he/she really worth that?
It is run by a left-wing group with an agenda!
The programmes are rubbish these days. Or repeats.
They jolly well ought to give pensioners a free licence!

You may not be aware how much of this kind of language has been encouraged and coaxed by a group with their own agenda; a group largely unanswerable to anyone; deeply biased and without any reliable data or evidence to back up the criticisms of the BBC. Their finances are somewhat opaque but multi-millionaires and Dubai based investors are often behind them. I'd like to take the opportunity, while it is under attack, or let's say scrutiny, of speaking up for the BBC. It is partly after reading a book on the subject; it's partly as a result of years of appreciation of the BBC both here and while I lived overseas and it is personal, as a cousin of mine was a BBC producer until her retirement; she has now died and was a woman of profound integrity, honesty and compassion.

The book is by Patrick Barwise and Peter York and has the longest title I can think of: 'The war against the BBC – how an unprecedented combination of hostile forces is destroying Britain's greatest cultural institution ... and why you should care'. It was published in 2020 and is just under 500 pages long. In painstaking, and I have to say at times tedious detail, it gives evidence of a most remarkable group intent on criticising the BBC and seeking to disparage it, with the minimum of fact and maximum of exaggeration; with their true intent masked.

In effect a small group of media giants, Rupert Murdoch among them, want to extend a private empire of TV and newspapers, which they will control the editorial content of. They find, in the BBC, the most consistently respected and extensive alternative to them – they need to kill it or at the very least reduce it to a shadow of itself. Oh, and of course the licence fee will be cut or go and your viewing all with them on contracts.

Occasionally, and recently, the BBC has not helped themselves with a crashing failure of governance and internal investigation – the most recent and public being the manipulation that resulted in the Princess Diana interview on TV with Martin Bashir and the silly edit of a Donald Trump speech which has brought the threat of legal action. But in 100 years the failings have been few and the BBC critics, among the newspapers for example, took their own time to come clean about phone tapping and recording on a massive scale, with cases still being settled at huge cost in court.

If the BBC should go or be severely curtailed be ready for what will go; everything that is not profitable. The nature programmes are costly and take years to make and edit – they will go; local and very varied radio – that will go. Advert free listening and viewing – that will go. Those feeding the most negative and sustained attack on the BBC are not neutral nor without their agenda. The wise will be aware of that and how many are being manipulated towards the curtailing or end of one of the cultural giants in this land.

All Saints - 900 – items – DONE!

It is with pleasure that I can report that we reached (and passed) our target of 900 gifts, given to share our celebrations of All Saints anniversary. There just remains one or two to be collected.

I am sorry that I am unable to give exact details of numbers but have to confess I have mislaid that piece of paper.

Gifts were given to QVSR (Seamen), local charities The Hive who support babies and children to the age of 11 and also run a Hygiene Bank. Home Start whose most needed items were first size cardigans and pram blankets. which we were pleased to supply. Twiddle blankets and muffs were given to the Dementia group and toiletries to Safe Refuge.

The giving was not confined to our local area, hats for children in the Ukraine, and poppies for decorating the Pier at Southend were also knitted by our very willing helpers. Nativity sets were knitted and given to Tracy our Children and Families worker. Acorn Village were pleased to receive craft materials for use in their workshops. We even had our own 'Repair Shop' when Dilly repaired a special sweater that the moths had eaten.

Thank you to everyone who has supported us either by making or donating. Your help has been appreciated.

Jean Craig

Heaven - A Poem

Heaven is love made perfect within God's gracious plan.
Heaven is love completed beyond life's little span.
Heaven is love's true homeland where kindred souls abide
Where death has no dominion and nothing can divide.
Heaven is love's tomorrow, unmarred by doubt or fear.
Heaven is where we harvest the seed scattered here.
Heaven is love's fulfilling the promises made good
Of all that we have dreamed of but never understood.

Janet Goodall

OUR HIGH SCHOOL – Kirsty Emerson

As the Pioneer Team Vicar for our Parish, the Rev. Kirsty Emerson has been working on increasing our engagement with Harwich and Dovercourt High School (HDHS). The vast majority of secondary school aged children in our Parish attend HDHS. As part of this ongoing work, since the start of the academic year last September, all Year 7s (the first year of secondary school) have walked to All Saints church for one of their Religious Studies lessons. Following this, Kirsty has been invited to attend the Year 7 Religious Studies Christianity based lessons from March this year to the beginning of May. This is a fair commitment but fits well with Kirsty's ministry for our Parish and enables continued Christian input for our young people.

Kirsty is able to commit to HDHS due in part to the ministry of Ian. As the Team Rector for our Parish, Ian focusses on other work in our parish which enables Kirsty to focus more on Pioneer ministry. They have distinctive roles, but their ministry dovetails very well together and this dovetailing enables a broad range ministry that is often unseen but reaches across our parish and beyond our church walls.

Over the last issues we have covered a great many topics. Please do make sure you collect a copy of Peninsula Post each time it comes out as it will have material that we do not have space for in the notice sheets.

In the coming year you may see more and more events coming under the umbrella of LYCIG – Leading Your Church Into Growth. This was agreed by the PCC and they and the Ministry Team all had a session helping them to understand what it is and how we are implementing it.

In essence, through the year we are seeking to be deliberately and intentionally PRESENT at as many things going on in the town as possible; we want to give opportunities for us as a congregation to PRAY and encourage others into PRAYER. We will seek to offer PATHWAYS towards the Christian faith for those who are enquiring and PERSUADE people of the truth and beauty of the Christian faith. We will look for opportunities to PROCLAIM the Gospel of Jesus – of peace, healing, assurance, purpose and love. And amid some of the things we already do, we will seek to PERK them up and add a bit of sparkle and be unembarrassed about our faith.

So, look out for the new things! And may we find JOY IN THE NEW:

- new people discovering God and entering into life
- new ways to meet and worship and learn
- new levels of growth – numerical, spiritual and in service.

Your Team Rector – *Ian*