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**January 2025**

Now is the time when we all encourage others (and ourselves) to take up new habits, and perhaps throw some away as the new year begins. I'm not sure how I feel about making resolutions, as it often feels like we're setting ourselves up to fail. Having said that, I've been making a few myself but have decided to keep it simple.

Throughout the Advent and Christmas period, I've been speaking and preaching quite a lot about seeing the positive in life, and in the world. I feel this is essential as we hear so much bad news ALL THE TIME whether we are watching the news, seeing it ping up on our devices or if we actually buy a newspaper. It can very easily drown out all the good which also goes on around us, often unseen. Somehow, this doesn't get reported, as it is not as dramatic, does not incite outrage and won't make the front page.

*So, this year, I am encouraging us all to simply look up more, rather than down, to be curious and to wonder....*

I was inspired by this image on the side of a box containing a telescope, a present from Williams' godfather at Christmas. My eldest has shown quite an interest in the stars, and can name quite a lot of them and knows all the constellations. On clear nights, even in Alderley, you can see quite a lot of them. Here's the thing; if we don't look up, physically and metaphorically, we miss a whole lot of beauty and wonder. All we see is the stuff going on around us.

When we look up, we begin to see new possibilities, new ways of being and of living in community. When we take time to imagine, we draw others in and more people are encouraged to look up and see something new. This year we have seen so much violence, warfare and injustice. But we have also seen great compassion and love in our communities and further afield. We need to make sure that we speak of this and spread the light rather than darkness.

*How curious are you when it comes to 2025? Do you feel as if you can make a difference?*

St Paul in many of his writings, was trying to encourage his followers to keep on going, to face up to the trials of life and those things which go against the teachings of Jesus and to make a change. It's probably my job as Rector to do this (in a small way) too.

As 2025 begins, perhaps think about how we can make a change which not only gives us an alternative view of this amazing world we live in but can also make it a better place for all. I'll be starting by look up and wondering.

How can I spread light and joy, in a world which seems so dark and hopeless?

*I wonder....*

The Revd Canon Nathan Jarvis

**Church news**

A very happy new year to everyone, we hope you all had a lovely Christmas. As ever the Church looked gorgeous, decorated especially for Christmas, although lighting the candles is quite a task! Thanks to Nathan for Christmas drinks at the Rectory, nibbles and all! The crib service & Christmas day morning service were both very busy, with lots of new faces and an amazing number of children, on Christmas morning, who didn’t seem to mind being away from their presents.

As it’s the new year, if you’re not involved in the **St Marys** **200 club this is your chance to join!** Just click the following link and that will take you to the Church website, where you can join up: <https://www.alderleychurch.couk/200club/> it’s a great way to have some fun AND help St Marys. ***See winners below.***

Fiona has asked me to thank all those who gave donations towards our Sunday coffee fund, both monetary and cakes! Please let Fiona know if you’d like to take a turn (or help) with the coffee rota or sides people, we are a bit “thin on the ground”. We are pulling together a proposal to make the coffee servery area permanent, more news in due course.

An update on the clock, you may have noticed the missing hands, which have been removed as part of the restoration, we are expecting them back and the clock working shortly. So far, the appeal for clock and heating has raised a total of £12,200, although we need around £30,000 in total! We’ve also started draught-proofing the Church doors, most noticeable on the front door, which now requires a “good shove”. Also, thanks to the Maynards for their generosity, our door curtains have been cleaned and are once again hanging in all their colourful glory.

**Diary dates**

Saturday 4th January - **Walking group – warm up! Led by Will Ablett**

Sunday 5th January 9.45am BCP ***Nathan***

Sunday 12th January 9.45am BCP ***Linda***

Tuesday 14th January 10am **Coffee at the De Trafford Arms, Alderley – All welcome** Saturday 18th January - **Walking group led by Don**

**Sunday 19th January 5pm (no morning service) Prayers for Christian unity *Nathan***

Sunday 26th January 9.45am ALL AGE SERVICE ***Nathan***

And finally a big thank-you to everyone who works in the background to make St Mary’s success.

**200 club winners: 1st Roger Swales, 2nd Lesley Kershaw, 3rd Lesley Marsh.**